



GOD OF WONDER, GOD OF WORSHIP "Worship and Listening" James 1:16-27

No. 5432

Stuart Briscoe

Years ago, Mortimer Adler wrote a book entitled *How to Read a Book*. It sounded elementary, but it proved to be absolutely necessary. I suspect that knowing how to listen to a sermon may be equally elementary and necessary.

I. Listening Requires Anticipation.

- A. Anticipation through understanding the place of the sermon.
 - 1. Secular—"a religious talk" or "a long and tedious lecture on behavior."
 - 2. Historical—an exposition of Scripture in the context of worship.
 - a. Fathers. b. Friars. c. Reformers. d. Puritans. e. Victorians.
 - 3. Biblical. See James 1:18
 - a. An opportunity to "listen to the word of truth."
 - b. The "word of truth" is what God chose to use to bring us to life.
- B. Anticipation through understanding the uniqueness of the sermon.
 - 1. Educational theory identifies the different ways that people learn.
 - a. Listening. b. Watching. c. Discussing. d. Discovering.
 - 2. Communications theory identifies how one mind connects with another.
 - a. Messenger (who). b. Message (what).
 - c. Medium (how). d. Receiver (whom).
 - 3. Both theories identify the sermon's uniqueness.
 - a. A messenger who is called, equipped and anointed.
 - b. A message that is living, powerful and life transforming.
 - c. A medium of "words" through which God speaks.
 - d. A receiver comprising a community eager to learn from God.

II. Listening Requires Concentration.

- A. Concentration is necessary because of the hindrances to listening.
 - 1. Overexposure to visual media.
 - 2. Attitudes to messenger/message.
 - 3. The wandering mind.
 - 4. The constant distractions.
- B. Concentration is expected because of the significance of the occasion.
 - 1. The word of God should be listened to because when:
 - a. Implanted. b. Humbly accepted. c. Looked into intently.
 - d. Not forgotten. e. Obeyed...
 - 2. ...it will save, free, direct and bless you. James 1:16-27
- C. Concentration is a discipline that needs to be learned and maintained.

III. Listening Requires Application.

- A. Remember the man in James' mirror—no application!
- B. Application is cognitive (I understand), affective (I feel) evaluative (I'll do).
- C. See Acts 2:36-41 for a good example of great listening.