

Learning to Listen

by Max Lucado

Equipped with the right tools, we can learn to listen to God. What are those tools? Here are the ones I have found helpful.

A regular time and place. Select a slot on your schedule and a corner of your world, and claim it for God. For some it may be best to do this in the morning. Others prefer the evening. Others prefer many encounters during the day.

Some sit under a tree, others in the kitchen. Maybe your commute to work or your lunch break would be appropriate. Find a time and place that seems right for you.

How much time should you take? As much as you need. Value quality over length. Your time with God should last long enough for you to say what you want and for God to say what he wants. Which leads us to a second tool you need—*an open Bible*.

God speaks to us through his Word. The first step in reading the Bible is to ask God to help you understand it.

Before reading the Bible, pray. Don't go to Scripture looking for your own idea; go searching for God's. Read the Bible prayerfully. Also, read the Bible carefully.

Here is a practical point. Study the Bible a little at a time. God seems to send messages as he did his manna: one day's portion at a time. Choose depth over quantity. Read until a verse "hits" you, then stop and meditate on it. Copy the verse onto a sheet of paper, or write it in your journal, and reflect on it several times.

Will I learn what God intends? If I listen, I will.

Understanding comes a little at a time over a lifetime.

There is a third tool for having a productive time with God. Not only do we need a regular time and an open Bible, we also need *a listening heart*. Don't forget the admonition from James: "The man who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and makes a habit of so doing, is not the man who hears and forgets. He puts that law into practice and he wins true happiness" (James 1:25 PHILLIPS).

We know we are listening to God when what we read in the Bible is what others see in our lives.

Paul urged his readers to put into practice what they had learned from him. "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do" (Philippians 4:9).

If you want to be just like Jesus, let God have you. Spend time listening for him until you receive your lesson for the day—then apply it.

From *Just Like Jesus*

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