



Listening is Loving

Communication 101

LISTENING IS LOVING

WHY LISTEN?

I was in church a while back and I was standing between two gentlemen who were exchanging stories about their lives. One man would tell a story and then the other guy would tell an even better story. I thought of a story that I could chime in with but before I could the other guy started with a new story. This went back and forth a few more times and each time I could not get a word in. I finally walked away. They are still there talking away today.



As I walked away, I realized that if I had a chance to speak, I would have done the same thing as them. I would have just told

another story. I asked God why that felt so repulsive, and I concluded that it was because no one was listening. Well, no one was listening to understand or to receive insight. I resolved to be better at listening. I told my wife about it and immediately thought "I am so intent on telling her something that I am not listening to her either! Argh, how can I escape this bad habit?"

Over the next few months, I had many more examples. Maybe I was more sensitive to the talk, talk, talk...but I was convicted to shut my mouth. I am not a "talker" per se. So, I thought that must mean I am a Listener. This is not necessarily true. I noticed that while people were talking that I was drifting off or distracted by things around me.

I want to be a better listener, but I was not sure how or where to start. How do I learn to listen? Do I know someone who is a good listener? I have a lot of bad examples.

I feel it is important to start with Why? Why listen and why should I want to be a better listener?

Let's start with the word of God.

James 1:22 MSG Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear!

James 1:19 NIV My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak.

There is a reason God gave us two ears and one mouth.

We have had a large number of couples either in counseling or in the marriage class that just don't listen. They don't listen to their spouses, and they don't listen to counsel. They are so busy thinking of their side of the story or so intent on what they want to say that they don't hear a word. Oh yes, they acknowledge that you spoke, but it is in one ear and out the other.

The most important part of communication is...**Listening**

Not just hearing but hearing to understand; hearing to love. Listening is a form of love, an expression of love, and a way to show that you care.

There are some steps to being a good listener, but the steps will mean nothing if there is not a desire to be a better listener. So, take a minute and ask God for help. The real healing must start and end with Him and his help.

Prayer: "Father God, I know that you are listening. I know that you love me and that you care. My desire is to be like you in all things and today I ask that you help me to be a better listener. Give me the passion to seek to bless, to love and to show love by hearing and understanding. In Jesus name."

Challenge: Today, take some time to reflect on the delightful sensation of being heard and comprehended. Then make an effort to bestow this gift upon your spouse by actively listening and striving to truly understand their perspective.

THE GOAL

The goal is to be more Christlike. The focus is the "posture" of MY heart. For out of the heart the mouth speaks. Ask yourself, "Would Jesus have just said that?" That will be your check for every action. It is like the red light on the dash of your car. You don't curse the light; you stop and check the oil.

Jesus is the model that I want to pattern my life after. I find that when I say mean things to my spouse, it is more about where my heart is at and less about her actions.

1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Our goal is to be more Christlike and live as Jesus did. So how did he live?

*Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just **as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless "*

What if marriage is not so much about being happy and is more about holiness? There is a tension in marriage that helps us grow. Plants that live in a greenhouse don't send down deep roots, so they discovered that by putting a fan in the room to create resistance and tension the plants sent down deep roots and were healthy. We also need our spouse to expose the flesh in us. If we were living by ourselves, we would never know if we were

selfish, by doing what we want, when we want. We cannot get away with that in marriage.

"The need of every husband is that he portrays Christ to his wife. That need if left unattended manifest in many ways:

- 1. Lack of understanding his wife***
- 2. Substance abuse***
- 3. Demeaning and disapproving looks or words***
- 4. Devoted more to job than to his wife and family***
- 5. No satisfying physical relationship***
- 6. Refusal to communicate (1)***

Jesus knows us intimately. He knows our heart; He understands and covers his bride with his own sacrifice. We reflect the light of God, so also our wives reflect our spiritual light or lack of light. So, talking to the men; how well do you know your wife? **God made your wife to be a gauge** for how well you are doing. She responds to how much you are like or not like Christ.

Ephesians 5:28 "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as

their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church".

"Women have spiritual and emotional needs to which we as men must be sensitive."(1) Being a provider is more than meeting her material needs.

Just as Jesus was sacrificed and was put to death, so I must also die and put to death my flesh in how I treat my wife.

How often do you affirm your wife? Take a moment and write 3 things that you appreciate about her.

Lies about Women

1. The Lie that Women are impossible to understand.

ISV 1Peter 3:7 In a similar way, you husbands must live with your wives in an understanding manner, as with a most delicate partner. Honor them as heirs with

*you of the gracious gift of life, so that
nothing may interfere with your prayers.*

God says to understand my wife! That means that it can be done. If somewhere in my heart I am saying 'women are impossible to understand', then I am creating a self-defeating prophesy. Notice the reason for doing this. "*so that nothing may interfere with your prayers.*" So, my prayers will not bounce off the ceiling. That is not what I want, but sometimes I shrug my shoulders and walk away without even trying because it is easier. This is something that can and has to be learned.

2. The Lie that Women are the Real Problem.

We had spent some time with a couple and the husband said, "if only Eve had not fallen". This is the blame game and the same thing that Adam was thinking. He did not take responsibility for his lack of leadership. He blamed Eve and he blamed God.

NIV Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden...

In verse 18 is the start of God creating Eve. So, Eve wasn't even around when God said, "do not eat of the tree..." That means that it was Adam's responsibility to lead his wife away from this evil. I also imagine that the snake talking to Eve happened over a course of days. He wore her down, "look at this", "it looks good", and "did God really say that"? Adam was standing right there watching her eat the fruit!

Most husbands feel like, since they are bringing home a paycheck, they are providing for their family. Since I am doing this, I expect something in return. Some feel like since I keep giving and giving, what am I getting back? This sounds like a vending machine.

When a wife says, "you don't care about me," the husband will get defensive and say, "I bring home a paycheck, put a roof over your head, put clothes on your back. Can't you see all this? Why do I even try?"

In other words, the woman is the problem, and like a vending machine it needs a couple of kicks to get it working again. The kicks may be verbal or emotional and he believes the treatment is warranted.

Here are some actions or “kicks” that may happen as a result of the vending machine attitude...

"Not talking, severe looks, belittling words and attitudes, yelling, ridiculing, blaming, condemning, passivity, needling, arguing, defending, mocking, walking away in disgust, rejection, disrespect, not seeking resolution, de-prioritizing her, negative reports about her to others (children, friends, relatives, etc.)"
(1)

All these responses are of the flesh and unchristian like! Men avoid looking at themselves and instead react in these ways to divert the blame away from themselves.

So, the correct response is to think like Jesus. What is really going on in this situation? Women have much more sensitive spirits than men do, and, as long as I am blaming my wife, I will never see the problem much less be sensitive enough to help in any way. By reading between the lines with discernment, her message may be as simple as, "I feel that my heart is not being cared for".

3. The Lie that Women are Inferior to Men

Some of this lie comes from the true statement in I Peter. 3:7 "the weaker vessel" or "a most delicate partner." In most cases the wife is not as strong physically, but God looks at her as equal. Notice the rest of the verse says, "*Honor them as heirs*". The Passion version says, "co-heirs", the Message says, "you're equals" and the New Living says, "she is your equal partner".

Galations 3:28 NIV There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

In KJV Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

That word is 'help meet'. Ken Nair explains it like this... "*God had just finished creating woman and has named her 'helper'. Were there any children? No. Were there any houses? No. Were there any clothes to launder? No. Any dishes to do? No. So, isn't it reasonable to conclude that we can eliminate those activities as the purpose*

behind the title helper or help meet?"

"God in anticipation of that event, (the fall and separation from God) ... invented a helper, one who could serve to accomplish God's purpose of reestablishing spiritual sensitivity."

We men continue to operate in the flesh and need this sensitivity to the spirit that is provided by our helper, our wives. *"God provided a man with a tangible, visible means of discerning whether or not he is on track about becoming more like Christ and sensitive in his spirit to the Spirit of God."* (1)

God created Adam from the dust, and he made Eve from the side of Adam. Adam was made in the image of God. In other words, God took out of Adam those qualities that are woman, meaning that God has male and female qualities. Many times, we get hung up on the visual of God the Father and Jesus his Son. Both male images. But God is not a man or a woman! We can only begin to start to understand God because we are "made in his image."

KJV Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God

created he him; male and female created he them.

I was amused by the movie "The Shack", in how they portrayed God the father as a woman. At first, I was thrown off. But as I thought about it, the more I appreciated the liberty taken. Who has seen God? Our best visual is that we are made in his image.

My point is this. Knowing your wife is to know a side of God and knowing God is to know your wife.

Your wife is not your sidekick, like Batman and Robin. **Your wife is your gauge to how you are doing in being more like Christ.**

What if God wanted to show me a trait or habit of mine that was turning people away from him? I can hide that trait from almost everyone, but at home there is no place to hide. My wife sees those things that most others cannot. Am I open to my wife telling me if I am not being Christ like? Or do I send it right back in her face? When we were first married, I told my wife, "If you get mad at me, I will get even madder". I was not ready to listen; Not to God and not to her.

So how do you hear the heart of someone?
"To hear the heart of someone is to recognize and honor the emotions of others". I am usually very insensitive to emotions of others, and I need my wife to help point that out. "When we can sense the needs of our wives' (hearts) spirits, it will develop our ability to hear and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

Do I really get that? When I am sensitive to my wife, I am more sensitive to the Holy Spirit!

4. The Lie that Men are Supposed to be "The Boss"

This teaching is not about headship and submission, but the attitude required to hear from God through others, especially our spouse.

You have heard the saying that 'A man's home is his castle', and that seems to imply that he is the king of that castle. If my wife is my gauge to if I am being Christ like, then wouldn't that be a threat to my authority? (1)

My wife and I work together and once (a long time ago) I told her, "I am the dollar, and you

**The opposite of Faith is not Doubt,
it is Control!**

are the dime". My meaning was, I'm the boss. I am the expert.

There is a huge lack of honor in that statement. The problem is that I will never get that God is trying to tell me something because of the pride that comes from that attitude. I am blind and heading for a crash and I think I am doing just fine. I am shutting down one of Gods ways of speaking to me, through the ones I supposedly love. But that attitude does not show love.

The Boss attitude originates from the desire to Control. "If you must resort to manipulation for a desired outcome, most likely that desired outcome is wrong (or selfish). Even if the outcome is in-itself not sinful. The willingness to sin for it has created an idolatrous desire. This is a form of witchcraft." (2)

*1 Peter 5:2 NIV Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but **eager to serve;***

*v.3 **not lording it over those***

entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

v.4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

v.5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

v.6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

(1) Ken Nair - Discovering the Mind of a Woman Self Study Guide 2005

(2) yasmeensuri.com

CHANGE FOCUS

My fleshly DNA is always focusing on me. From the day I was born, I whined and cried to get my needs filled. Now that I am an adult, I sometimes act with the same tantrum-like attitude to get what I want.

God uses marriage to expose my flesh. He uses my spouse to reflect my image, like a mirror. If I am Christlike, she will reflect that image.

James 1:23, 24 MSG "Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes



later have no idea who they are, what they look like".

The part of my flesh that raises its ugly head again and again is my selfishness and pride. I want what I want. I think that I am right. That is the flesh. The only way to combat the flesh is in the spirit. I cannot stop being selfish by gritting my teeth and saying, "don't be selfish". I can only do this with God's help.

HOW?

I need to **work on my part** in the situation...

If I am 10% wrong and my spouse is 90% wrong, then I will work on my 10%. This is the part I can control. I pray and keep trusting God for my spouse. The Holy Spirit is a far better teacher than I am.

The first step is to be aware of when I make a mistake. I cannot brush this aside. The Holy Spirit is making me aware. Listen. My first impulse may be to justify or excuse the mistake. "She made me so mad that I had to..." Is not an excuse before God. I must own up and confess it to God. I ask Him to step right in the middle of that character flaw. I ask Him to cut it out of my life. I ask for forgiveness from God and from my spouse. My spouse may or may not respond in the way I think they should. I still do my part and deal with my percent of the issue, and I trust God to do His part.

My attitude must be like Jesus and He is gentle and humble. This is Jesus speaking...

*Matthew 11:29, 30 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, **for I am gentle and humble in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Does how I talk to my spouse sound like Jesus? Reflect on these areas...

Love and Compassion: Jesus spoke with love, patience, and understanding, even to those who opposed him? Does your communication show similar qualities of empathy and kindness, even when you disagree? Do you seek to understand your spouse's perspective before responding?

Humility and Forgiveness: Jesus demonstrated humility and was always ready to forgive. Are you quick to admit when you're wrong, and are you willing to offer and receive forgiveness generously? Do you prioritize reconciliation over being "right"?

Honesty and Truthfulness: Jesus was truthful and honest in his interactions. Is your communication with your spouse authentic and transparent, avoiding manipulation or deceit?

Respect and Honor: Jesus showed respect to everyone, even those of lower status. Do you treat your spouse with respect, valuing their opinions and feelings? Do you listen actively and avoid belittling or condescending language?

Service and Selflessness: Jesus prioritized serving others. Does your communication reflect a desire to meet your spouse's needs and contribute to their well-

being? Do you put their needs before your own at times?

Gentle Persuasion: Jesus used gentle persuasion rather than force or coercion. Do you engage in respectful dialogue and seek to understand and persuade rather than control or dominate the conversation? To answer the question honestly, reflect on specific interactions with your spouse.

Consider:

Tone of voice: Is it kind and gentle, or harsh and critical?

Word choice: Are your words uplifting and encouraging, or negative and hurtful?

Body language: make eye contact. Do your actions reflect respect and love, or dismissive and angry? Establish eye contact.

Listening skills: Do you truly listen to your spouse, or are you just waiting for your turn to speak?

By examining these aspects of your communication, you can gain a clearer understanding of whether your interactions with your spouse align with the teachings and example of Jesus. If not, it's an opportunity for growth and improvement in your relationship.

Challenge: Think of a time when God did a miracle. Remember that feeling. Do my words feel like that? Does my attitude feel like that?

BID FOR CONNECTION

Let's say your spouse lets out a sigh. You have a choice: you can ignore this, or you can ask, "What's on your mind?" This may seem like a small thing, but it is the little things that build up to make or break your marriage.

This sigh is called a "Bid for Connection". **It is an invitation for communication.** You are standing at an emotional relationship crossroad. You can reject their bid and turn away or you can accept and turn toward.



What to do?

First, you must notice the sign, be aware of the invitation. Pause your TV. Put down your phone. Show that you are interested. Ask Questions. Nod and listen without interrupting.

You are on the right track!

VERBAL OR NON- VERBAL?

Your spouse may be communicating in a different way than how you do or that you are familiar with. Understanding this can really help.

My spouse was telling me something the other day, and I was ready to jump in with a solution. She said, "wait, just let me process".

The **Verbal Communication Style** figures things out as they talk it out. Most of the time they just need you to listen and let them vent. Sometimes this is not pretty.

I believe King David in the bible was a verbal processor. Read most of the Psalms and it starts out very dark and desolate and you wonder how this guy can even love the Lord. But he is processing and by the end of the chapter he is saying "praise the Lord" and "I will worship you all of my days"!

My **Non-Verbal Communication Style** is very different. When I am processing I "go to my cave". I go inward. I am thinking of all the pros and cons. I am working through my self-talk. This style can also be disconcerting to my spouse as it may seem like I have checked out. I sometimes share, "give me some time to think about this".

There seems to be another style that is worth mentioning. It is a very dangerous method when our communication can deteriorate to a

Tired Communication Style. When our words turn to grunts and we don't even want to make time with our spouse. This is the place where we check our hearts. God is our provider, and He will provide us with the energy and patience to walk through this. Remind yourself of this verse,

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Love Language

The purpose of communication is not just to get information from one person to the next. I know many times that has been my goal, and I have lost out on the amazing opportunity to be more like Jesus and really get to know my spouse and to connect emotionally. If my goal is to love my spouse, then I better know her love language.

Love languages

- **Affirmation**
- **Quality Time**
- **Receiving Gifts**
- **Acts of Service**
- **Physical Touch**

Take the Love Language assessment here
The Love Language® Quiz

THE SKILL OF LISTENING

We hear through our different needs. **A woman hears through her need for security.** Listen to the differences in the following statements. “I will do anything for you. You are the more important than anyone or anything else in my life”. Or “Yes, I said I will do it”. The husband’s speech must convey that she's important and not that she is a burden or a pain.

A man hears through his need for honor and respect. Tone and volume are everything with a man. Criticism, dishonor, and a lack of appreciation will cause a man to close up.

Let's learn some Listening skills.

1. Clarify Content – repeating back what I heard helps to make sure the content did not get lost. What I hear is filtered through my life experiences, my attention span, and even my attitude at the time. The most used words in the English language have an average of 3.5 different meanings. There is a lot of room for miscommunication. Ask questions. Say, "so what I am hearing you say is..." Or "explain that a bit more".

Don't jump to conclusions.

Ask, "do you want me to listen or offer advice"?

Don't interrupt. Wait a few seconds just in case there are a few more words to come. These are sometimes the most important words that you will hear.

2. Reflect Feeling –Sift through the words that are spoken to find the nugget of gold of what is the underlying emotion. 50% of people reading this will have a harder time than the other 50%. Yes, that is the men. Most women have a very large emotional vocabulary.

This skill must stem from a heartfelt, genuine place. After your wife shares her thoughts, you might say, "It seems like you're feeling anxious," or whatever emotion you sense. Even if you miss the mark, your sincerity will likely prompt her to clarify, saying something like, "No, I'm not anxious; I'm excited." The aim is to connect emotionally, which is what she seeks, and it requires active listening and discernment.

You can listen accurately to every word your spouse says and still not be connecting if you do not **relate emotionally**. Discerning and naming emotions takes effort and skill and that skill must be developed. The lazy way is to not want to put in the effort.

*1 John 3:18 My dear children, let's not just talk about love; **let's practice real love.***

Pay attention to pick up the emotions that lay just beneath the words. Even if you don't agree, you can acknowledge how they feel with something like, "That sounds so frustrating", or "I can see why you would feel hurt by that" or even "how did that make you feel?" Don't rush to change the topic or lighten the mood. Let silence happen – it can invite deeper expression.

Here are some listed emotions with the less extreme version on the right side to help identify and connect.

Joy	Serenity
Sadness	Pensive
Fear	Apprehension
Anger	Annoyed
Disgust	Bored
Surprise	Distraction
Trust	Acceptance
Anticipation	Interested

Have you ever noticed on TV when they are interviewing people after a big event like the Super Bowl and they ask, “how does it feel to win the Super Bowl?” They do that to create an emotional connection. Most of us will never win a championship and can’t identify with that but we can relate to jubilation. When the winners share that emotion, they let us in, and it **creates a bond**.

Reassure them. “Thanks for sharing that with me. I am here for you.” Touch of affection (if welcome) helps reinforce connection – like holding hands or a hug.

Understanding and identifying your spouse’s emotions starts with knowing your own.

Now what emotion are you feeling? Go back to the list and find something close. Ask Holy Spirit to help you discern.

It is important to note that we are not ruled by our emotions. We identify the emotions and bring the negative ones to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ.

3. Express Gratitude – wake up every morning and thank God for 5 things. Remember your vows to love, honor, cherish, and lay down your life... All these start with gratitude.

A heartfelt thank you, a thoughtful gift, a simple act of kindness – the language of gratitude is versatile. Choose the method that resonates most authentically with your feelings and your spouse's personality. Sometimes, the most profound expressions are unspoken, a quiet nod of understanding, a shared smile acknowledging the impact of their generosity.

4. Use the "I feel" Statement – instead of saying "you never take out the trash"! Try "I sometimes feel like I need help keeping the kitchen clean. Can we brainstorm some ideas?"

Resist the temptation to lash out or say hurtful things. take a few minutes to calm down or take a walk. Explain that you need some time.

5. Ask each other "On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you doing Physically, Spiritually, Emotionally and Sexually?" Follow that up with some "why"? Questions. Now what can we do to address these things.

6. Find Common Ground – focus on the things that are good, things you enjoy together, things that you have in common. You have heard the expression: 'making a mountain out of a mole hill.' If you focus on your differences all the time, they will become huge.

*Phillipians 4:8 Summing it all up, friends,
I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds
and meditating on things true, noble,
reputable, authentic, compelling,*

gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.

7. Be Quick to Apologize – Be first to apologize. Suck up your pride and own up to your part. Be quick to forgive.

8. Pray Together – This encourages us to be vulnerable and increases trust. We are naked and vulnerable before God because He sees everything, and He knows what is in our heart. When our spouse hears our prayers before God, they will feel covered and therefore loved.

Every time you complain about your spouse,

your heart hardens toward them.

Every time you pray for your spouse,

your heart softens toward them.

9. Get Help – some of us will need professional help from a Christian counselor. All of us need more knowledge, research and study into building up the skills of listening. It

is worth the investment in your marriage and family!

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

Traps for Listeners

- Interrupting or finishing their sentences.
- Changing the subject too quickly
- Jumping to defend yourself if they share something painful
- Listening to respond instead of to understand

EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Ensure Emotional Safety by creating a space where we can communicate openly and honestly, even during disagreements. Create a signal to pause if emotions escalate, allowing both partners to regroup. Prioritize empathy and understanding, ensuring that both feel valued and secure in expressing themselves.

“How to Create Emotional Safety as a Listener

If you want to create more emotional safety

for your spouse in communication, then start as a listener. You can do this exercise together; then, help one another feel safer to be vulnerable and open. Ask one another questions like:

- What tends to make you nervous or uncomfortable in conversation?
- Are there certain topics or scenarios that make you feel shut-down?
- Is there a time of day when it might be better to have in-depth discussions with you?
- What times of day are not good for you, when it comes to having important conversations?
- How do you respond to feeling upset? Do you withdraw and self-protect, or do you feel a sense of urgency around solving problems?

As you gather this information about yourselves and one another, you'll start to get a better feel for how to create more emotional safety." (3) SYMBIS Listening Part 1

LISTENING TO GOD

How do all these listening skills help me hear from God?

Proverbs 2:9 TEV If you listen to me, you will know what is right, just, and fair. You will know what you should do.

Listening may be one of the forgotten aspects of prayer. Talking to God and laying our cares before him is good; but prayer, like a conversation, must go both ways. Talking to God without listening to God is treating him like Santa Claus. Prayer is not the time to only transfer information to God; it is about relationship. It is about experiencing God. Where light is, there can be no darkness. Where God is, there is healing, restoration and peace.

Zechariah 7:13 TEV Because they did not listen when I spoke, I did not answer when they prayed.

If I pray and don't listen, then I am being selfish, just like if I speak and don't listen.

I was researching recently if Jesus ever did a miracle for his own benefit or his own

pleasure. The closest I could find was when he walked on water, but that was also for the benefit of the disciples. Satan tried to get him to change the stones into bread. That would have been for his benefit as he was fasting for 40 days. He did not give in to that!

Why then are most of my prayers about my needs?

Just like in marriage, listening is where intimacy, trust and honor are formed. Yes, it takes time and effort, but the relationship and blessings are worth it!

Marriages usually mirror our relationship with God. Either we're **devoted** and **yielding**, or we're giving little and expecting a lot. – Make The **Vow** Keep The Vow