



INTRODUCTION

Part 5 - Listening to Understand

The series, Wise Guy, explores wisdom from the biblical book of Proverbs. Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule God's nation, and He granted the request. We could all use a little more wisdom, insight, knowledge and understanding, too.

Solomon, one of the wisest men who ever lived, penned the Old Testament book of Proverbs to address our need to know and understand life. His insights can help us navigate relationships, work, pleasure, and a host of other challenging situations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Within your family, are you the first person people come to when planning a surprise birthday party, or are you the last person to be told?
2. Among your friends and family, would you say you are known more as a talker or as a listener?
3. Read James 1:19. Why do you think America has become so divided over "hot topic" questions in the last 20 years? From the message: What are some of the barriers affecting this area the most? (Priority Value, Bias/Past Conversations, Rushed Conclusions, Personally Offended, Exhaustion and Emotional Overload)
4. Listening to understand is what often helps a teacher, nurse, or doctor stand out in their profession. If the ability to listen to understand makes them stand out so much, how can we stand out as a mom, dad, friend, or brother when it comes to listening? Will others feel more loved or less loved when you listen to understand?
5. When it comes to being judged, who in your life tends to judge you the quickest? Why do you think they have a hard time listening to you and trying to understand you?
6. Read I Cor. 13:4-7. Notice the order in which patience is placed. Who in your life do you have a hard time listening to understand? Who do you have the least patience with and why? From the message: Using LOL (listen Longer, Openly, Lovingly), can we immediately improve how we LOVE those we struggle to listen to?
7. Read Prov 18:17. Since we know that there is always more to the story, and we are all like onions, who are we going to use the LOL method on this week? How will we pray for wisdom to learn "compassion through understanding," and take the time to peel back the layers to truly understand and love someone?
8. How might you apply this lesson to your life?

APPLICATION

There are times we can find ourselves involved in conversations where we are trying to filter out truth from the rest of what is happening. Emotions, exaggerated responses, and partial information from both parties get in the way of understanding the full truth of a conversation. If we aren't cautious, we might find ourselves judging others or being judged.

Compassionate listening is needed, yet it can be difficult to live out; the truth is that people often don't listen to understand. For some of us, our listening skills with others reflect our listening skills with God. Are we willing to stop talking, and listen to understand what others are saying? ...to what He is saying?

We show love, patience, self-control, and open-mindedness by listening to serve, tuning in without distractions, asking questions, creating unity, listening longer, listening openly, and listening more lovingly. Jesus lived this example, and wisdom can be found when we are willing to do the same.

KEY VERSES

Proverbs 18:13
Proverbs 18:2
Mark 1

John 3 & 4
Proverbs 13:3
Philippians 2:3

Proverbs 20:5
Job 38:4-8, 31-33
Isaiah 55:8

James 1:19
1 Corinthians 13:4-7
Proverbs 18:17