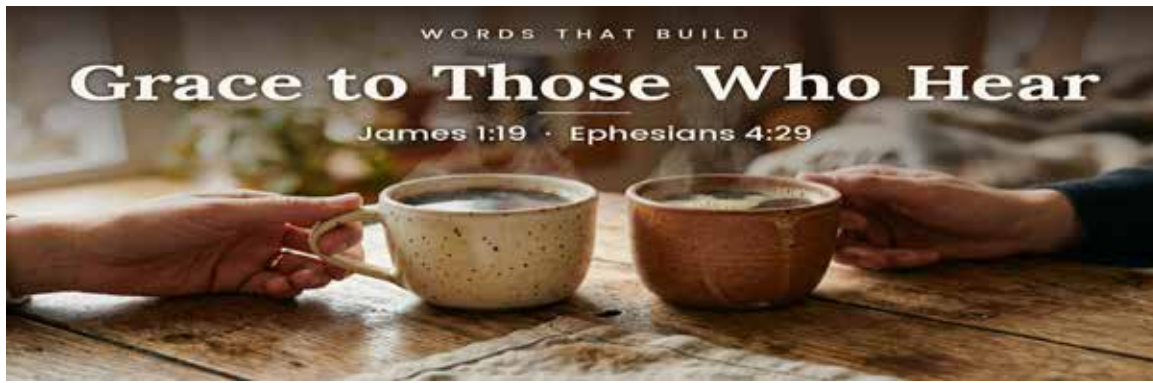




When God wants to help us, He usually sends a person. When you were headed the wrong way, who stopped you? God could write a message across the sky. That's not how He works. He sends people. When help comes, what do we do with it? Today, we're going to talk about listening, and especially about listening when what we hear is hard.

### I. Quick to Hear

- A. James 1:19: *My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be \_\_\_\_\_, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Listening comes first.*
- B. What to do with what we hear:
  - (1.) James 1:21: *Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, \_\_\_\_\_ the implanted word, which is able to save your souls; and*
  - (2.) A proud heart argues with the word. A humble heart lets it in.
- C. Don't hear the truth and walk away unchanged:
  - (1.) James 1:22: *But be \_\_\_\_\_ of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

### II. Why We Stop Our Ears

- A. Pride or Weariness. See 1 Kings 12:8 and 2 Timothy 4:3.
- B. Solomon said:
  - (1.) Proverbs 27:6: *The wounds of a friend are \_\_\_\_\_, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive;*
  - (2.) Proverbs 12:15: *A fool's way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is \_\_\_\_\_;* and
  - (3.) Proverbs 12:1: *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but one who hates correction is stupid.*

### III. When Refusing Becomes the Problem

- A. Constant refusal will keep you stuck.
  - (1.) Proverbs 29:1: *One who becomes \_\_\_\_\_, after many reprimands will be shattered instantly— beyond recovery;* and
  - (2.) God is patient. He sends the word again and again.
- B. A heart that keeps saying no is a heart that's slowly hardening.
  - (1.) Hebrews 3:13: *But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is \_\_\_\_\_ by sin's deception;* and
  - (2.) Hebrews 3:15: *As it is said: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*
- C. Psalm 145:5: *Let the righteous one strike me— it is an act of faithful love; let him rebuke me— it is \_\_\_\_\_; let me not refuse it.*

### IV. Look to Jesus

- A. Jesus taught hard things (John 6:60). What does it look like when we stop listening?
  - (1.) John 6:66: *From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him;* and
  - (2.) Jesus asks: *"You don't want to go away too, do you?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life.*

### V. Grace to Those Who Hear

- A. Ephesians 4:29: *No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace \_\_\_\_\_.*
  1. It's meant to reach us. If we refuse it, we;
  - (2.) Ephesians 4:30: *... \_\_\_\_\_ God's Holy Spirit; and*
  - (3.) Don't shut your ears to instruction, even when it comes through the mouth of a friend.

### VI. As We Close

- A. The people God has put in your life are part of His answer to your struggle.
- B. They're carrying grace to you. Please receive it.

## Questions

1. Why do we speak and get angry so quickly when someone tells us what we don't want to hear?
2. Rehoboam only listened to what he wanted to hear. What draws us toward the voices that tell us what we want to hear? How does 2 Timothy 4:3 describe the pull?
3. How does pushing away the people of God sends to us make hardening more likely?
4. What practical steps can help us receive a hard word well, especially in the first moments we hear it?
5. Is there a hard word someone has given you, more than once, that you need to go back and listen to?

## Answers

- Grieve
- Quick to listen
- Wise
- Doers
- Trustworthy
- To those who hear
- Stiff-necked
- Humbly receive
- Oil for my head
- Hardened