

Date: _____



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions
Fitting In and Finding Friends Series, Lesson 20

Lesson Title: Real Friends Really Listen

Take Home Point: Real friends really listen like
God listens to us.

Warm-Up:

I know a number of people who can talk to anyone. They will introduce themselves and tell their life story or current circumstances at the drop of a hat. In our culture they are initially considered friendly. Unfortunately, some of these same people have no idea how to stop talking about themselves long enough to listen to the other person! Then how long does that perception of friendliness last? It quickly changes from, "Oh, this is a friendly person," to "Oh, brother, this person doesn't care about a word I have to say. I can't even get a word in! How can I escape?" People like that remind me of the old Foghorn Leghorn rooster cartoon character. He's always so busy correcting others, telling them what to do, and giving advice that no one wants to listen to him. It gets him in trouble. And no one considers him a friend. We all want to be heard,

Read: James 1:19 and Psalms 116:1-2

Observation (What happened?):

What specifically are we to be quick to do and slow to do?

According to David, what cry does the Lord hear?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think James considers it wise to be slow to speak and quick to listen?

What limitations does David indicate the Lord has in listening to us?

Insight:

What do we gain by listening? Remember last week's lesson about building up others? How can we possibly know what specifically will help them if we don't listen to them express their thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes, and so much more? How can we develop compassion and be kind? What we gain is an appreciation for that person as a fallen human being in need of God's grace expressed through us. What does the other person gain? A sense of worth; they are worthy of our time and energy, valued simply for relationship. God made us for relationships. Ponder these same questions in our relationship to God. He listens to us, showing he values us. God wants us to know how much we are worth to him. When we listen to him, we receive his compassion and kindness, and learn what it means to be his friend. That's what Jesus calls any who are his disciples. Read John 15:9-17 to see how much he wants a relationship with us,

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Think about what makes it hard to listen to others. What can you do this week to get rid of those attitudes so you can listen with an open heart?

Think of one person you know who needs you to listen to them. Pray to be a good listener who builds them up.