

How to Develop Active Listening

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **–Revelation 2:7**

If we are going to learn how to develop active listening to the voice of the Spirit, there are a few characteristics that we need.

The first characteristic required for active listening is an open mind. That means, a mind closed to nothing that coheres with holiness. Paul says about this, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure . . .” (Phil. 4:8, KJV).

The second characteristic for active listening is a willingness to let go of our pride, a willingness to be vulnerable.

The third characteristic is that we are always listening out for God’s voice, even when this involves a telling off. God may speak to us through a friend or a stranger; through unanswered prayer or through the withholding of vindication. It may be through disappointment. It can be simply because we see the need. If we are really walking in the light, we will look anywhere for God’s way of speaking.

So often we expect God to speak to us in one way, when all the time He is approaching us differently. Someone has put it like this: God gives hints rather than directions. He lets you come to the conclusion for yourself.

The fourth characteristic to hearing God is that we deal with any impediment that militates against the Spirit, for example, any personal bias that we superimpose upon God, calling it His

will when it's actually our own prejudice, and any grudge or unforgiving attitude.

Again, we must beware of any fleshly appetite that dulls our spiritual outlook: it may be a television program, our choice of reading or of friends. Some things may not be bad in themselves, but we know that they dull our desire for God.

When we learn to develop a lifestyle of active listening, we will hear God's voice much more frequently than before, because now we are beginning to recognize when He speaks.

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