

# Ears to Hear

The art of listening, I fear, is a diminishing skill. It is refreshing to find people who practice it intently, focusing on the speaker and the subject, showing sincere interest and comprehension as the conversation progresses. All too often in a dialogue, the person being addressed is so eager to form a response that he or she may not fully comprehend the message.

Author Tim Hansel, writing in *When I Relax I Feel Guilty*, shares a telling incident:

*An American Indian was in downtown New York, walking with his friend who lived there. Suddenly, the Indian said, "I hear a cricket."*

*"Oh, you're crazy," his friend replied.*

*"No, I hear a cricket. I do! I'm sure of it."*



*"It's the noon hour," the friend declared. "There are people bustling around, cars honking, taxis squealing, noises from the city. I'm sure you can't hear it."*

*"I'm sure I do." The Indian listened attentively and then walked to the corner, across the street, and looked all around. Finally, on the corner he found a shrub in a large cement planter. He dug beneath the leaves and found a cricket. His friend was astounded.*

*But the Cherokee said, "No, my ears are no different from yours. It simply depends on what you are listening to. Here, let me show you."*

*He reached into his pocket and pulled out a handful of change – a few quarters, some dimes, nickels and pennies. He dropped the coins onto the concrete. Every head within a block turned.*

*"You see what I mean?" he said as he began picking up the change. "It all depends on what you are listening for."*

Not only must Christians have "ears to hear" (as Jesus instructed in Matt. 13:9), but they must learn what to listen for. And oftentimes, that involves reading the eyes or studying body language.

– Beecher Hunter