

## WILL YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Perhaps you, too, are perturbed by the following situation: you are in a conversation with someone, speaking about a matter of importance, when the eyes of the one to whom you are speaking suddenly glaze over.

He or she is looking into your face, but not hearing you. The mind of the one you are addressing has suddenly switched to (1) planning a response to the subject you introduced, (2) thoughts about a special event coming up that evening, or (3) an important deadline at work; it could be any number of things.

No doubt that happens to you, and it is bothersome when it does. And, I must confess, I have been on the other side of the conversation – not *really* listening to the speaker in front of me.

The question is posed: Does anyone really listen anymore? We become frustrated by shallow conversation with people we encounter. Which brings up this story:

A woman once placed an ad in a suburban newspaper offering to listen to anyone talk for 30 minutes for \$5.

The next thing she knew, her phone was ringing off the hook! People were hungry to be heard, and they were more than willing to pay someone to listen to them. Listening intently with one's mouth firmly shut is an elusive grace.

Dr. David Jeremiah, senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, writes in his book *Turning Points*:



“Not being heard in relationships is equal to not being valued. We can’t always offer a potential masterpiece in our relationship conversation, but we can always respond to others as though it were just that.”

When Jesus came to visit Mary and Martha, Dr. Jeremiah added, “they responded in very different ways. Mary sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to His words, while Martha busied herself in the kitchen. There is a time and place for everything, but the highest priority with each other should be the willingness to listen.”

He cited Luke 10:41-42, with Jesus’ response to Martha: “You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better” (NIV).

Choose what is better: choose to listen.

*My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen closely to my understanding* (Proverbs 5:1 HCSB).