

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

James 2:8-13  
Lesson #10  
Selective listening  
05/02/2021

If you want to acquire wealth, fame, and power in this life **avoid**:

1. Negativity
2. Dream killers.
3. Jesus' and his Apostles' teaching.



1

To be a Disciple of Jesus you must:

1. Assume an alien status in AMERICA.
2. Die to the dream of this world's power and wealth.



3. Listen to Jesus and his Apostles.

2

James Kingdom Living in a Broken World

2:8-13

Listen up!

This is what we should know	This is what we should do		
Life's trials contain hidden blessings. 1:1-18	Transition verse "quick to hear" "Listen up" 1:19-2:13	"slow to speak" "Shut up" 2:14-3:18	"slow to anger" "Calm down" 4:1-5:20

James 1:19

"But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

3

## Context

"Be quick to hear"

- Are we listening and what do we hear?
  - What are we hearing?
  - God's call to the Way of the Cross?
  - God's heart for the "have nots"?
    - God's choice
    - God's church
    - God's call
- Our response to the "have nots" will reveal who or what we are listening to?

4

Hearing is hard when your not listening, waiting to talk, or talking over people.



"I Can't Hear You, & I Don't Care To!"

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“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; **courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.**”

Winston Churchill



6

“His key to success as president of Yale University was to **grow antennae, not horns.**”

James Rowland Angell



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### A key to the front door to God's Kingdom

**listening**  
 respecting questioning  
 partnership participating  
 working smart  
 communication unity discussing  
 assistance helping persuading  
 teamwork creativity  
 alliance



**It is also a key to opening the doors for ministry to a broken world.**

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### James 2

“8 If, however, you are **fulfilling the royal law** according to the Scripture, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.”

9

“11 For He who said, “*Do not commit adultery*,” also said, “*Do not commit murder*.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by **the law of liberty**.

13 For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.”

10

### The POINT in a Nutshell

- **Selective listening limits hearing.**

**You can't pick and choose your “truths”.**

**“Kingdom ethics are not a “self serve” buffet, but eating what is put before you.”**

**You can't say “I love God” and then “dishonor those He loves.”**

James 3



“9 With it (tongue) we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been **made in the likeness of God**; 10 from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.”

11



1 John 4

"11 Beloved, **if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** . . .18 There is **no fear in love**; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 **If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar;** for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that **the one who loves God should love his brother also.**"

If we truly love God, we should never:

- **Fear missing out on life by following him.**
- **Avoid caring for the "have nots" among us.**

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"The quality of our listening is seen in what we actually hear."

Robert Fripp  
(song writer)

13



As a blessing from God **be thankful & enjoy.**

As an opportunity for ministry **be a responsible steward.**

 What does the N.T. teach us about Worldly Wealth 

As a dangerous deception **don't let it be our security or identity.**

As a desensitizer to God and people, **don't let it keep us from listening.**

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Recognize that we see our world through lenses.



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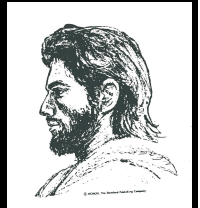
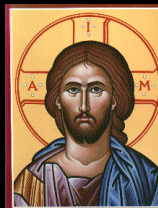


"The idea of god was nothing more than a symbolic representation of the collective values of the society that worships (itself through) him, she, or it."



Emile Durkheim 1858-1917

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Pick YOUR Jesus



17

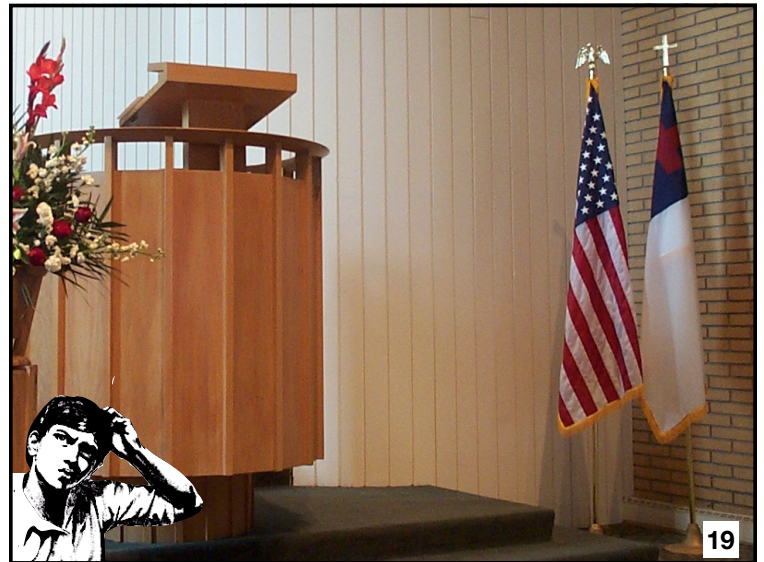


**Our culture loves Jesus as a means to the good life not as the model of that life.**



**Jesus**  
“Chaplain of the American dream”

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**American exceptionalism (in a spiritual sense) must be nuanced very carefully.**

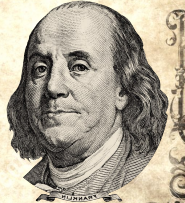
<b>Patriotism</b> “render to Caesar”	<b>Nationalism</b> “the city on a hill”
<b>Pay taxes</b> <b>Honor officials</b>	Put USA first Defend USA policy Export USA values USA (OT promises) USA savior of world USA is the new Israel

Nationalism places hope in **the world’s power** to bring security and quiet **our fears**.

**“Christian Nationalism”** is contrary to the teaching of Jesus and Apostles.

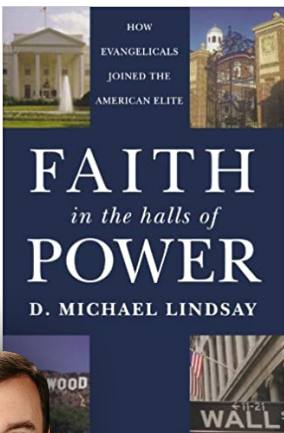
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“When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, ’tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one.”

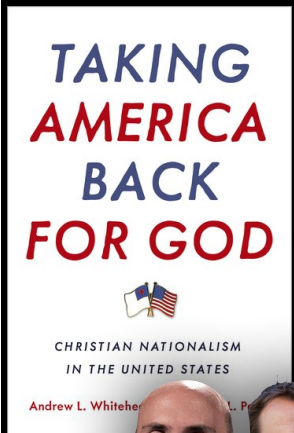


Benjamin Franklin

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Michael Lindsay



Andrew Whitehead  
Samuel Perry

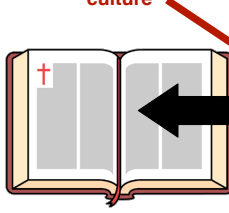
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**It is hard to critique our culture’s lens.**

**Traditional cultures**

Ancient culture

Early American culture




ancient cosmology, political dueling, concubines, slavery, etc.

**Modern Western culture**

Pragmatism  
Individualism  
Permissiveness

Pluralism  
Autonomy  
Democracy  
Narcissism  
Materialism  
Nationalism



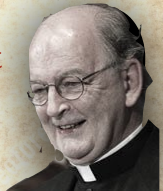
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“What we have in modern American politics is not disagreement. Disagreement is dignified by sharing a common world view and mutual good faith in dialogue and debate.

When there is no respect for truth, power is the only game in town.”

Richard John Neuhaus



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**Some examples of failing to listen**

- **Native American inculturation**
- **Rebuilding Iraq after “desert storm”.**
- **Race relations in America**
- **E Pluribus Unum**

**This leads to:**

- **Misunderstandings**
- **Misrepresentations**
- **Missed opportunities for trust, wisdom, & civil community**



“I Can’t Hear You, & I Don’t Care To!”

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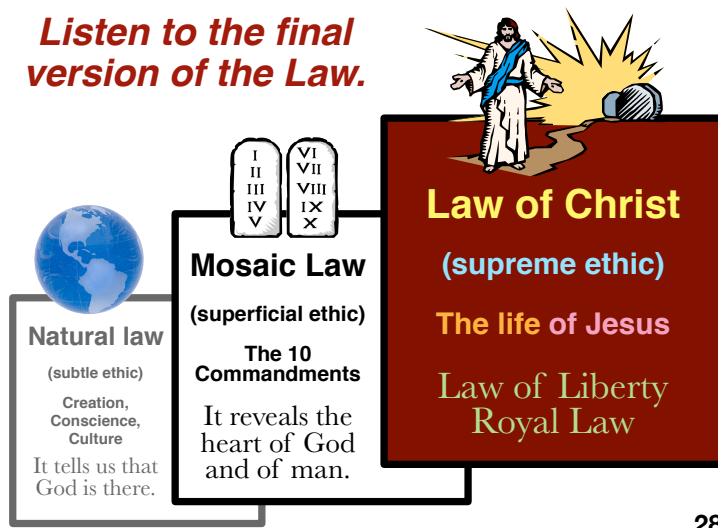
“I Can’t Hear You, & I Don’t Care To!”



Give me your tired, your poor,  
your huddled masses yearning  
to breathe free, the wretched  
refuge of your teeming  
shore, send the homeless,  
tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside  
the golden door!

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**Listen to the final version of the Law.**



**Natural law**  
(subtle ethic)  
Creation, Conscience, Culture  
It tells us that God is there.

**Mosaic Law**  
(superficial ethic)  
The 10 Commandments  
It reveals the heart of God and of man.

**Law of Christ**  
(supreme ethic)  
The life of Jesus  
Law of Liberty  
Royal Law

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**What does it mean to fulfill the Law of Liberty?**

1. It probably does not mean the Law of Moses from which believers are set free.
2. The moral standard for Christians is Christ (the Way of the Cross).

**1 Corinthians 9:21**  
(I have become) to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but **under the law of Christ,**

3. **Implication:** You can’t socially discriminate and claim to be a disciple of Christ.

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**“law of liberty”**

**2 Corinthians 3:17**  
“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**”

**2 Corinthians 5:14**  
“For the **love of Christ controls us,**”

**Galatians 6:2**  
“Bear one another’s burdens, and thus **fulfill the law of Christ.**”

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### Galatians 5

“<sup>13</sup> For you were **called to freedom**, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care **lest you be consumed by one another.**”

- We are to live free from the Law's condemnation but **not free from the law of love in Christ.**
- If we fail to love others, **don't be surprised when you are not loved by others.**

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### James 2

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### So what can we do about it?

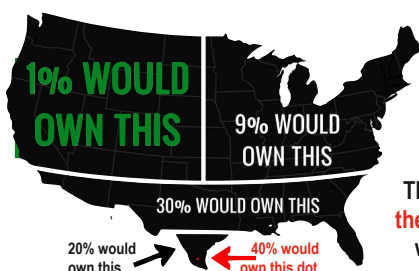
1. We can shut up and LISTEN more and better.

**LISTEN**  
contains the same  
letters as the word  
**SILENT.**

2. We can face some uncomfortable facts.

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If U.S. land were divided like U.S. wealth



Like Jesus we need to hear the cry of the poor.

The problem with **the 40% in the red dot** is that their lack of wealth is linked to dignity, access to goods and services, influence, and opportunity.

The challenge is to produce a more just distribution of goods & services without killing freedom and productivity.

The biggest worry with **concentration of wealth** is that **the 1%** will buy themselves favors from government.

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### Material poverty has a profile.

% of each group that is under the poverty level.

- Dropping out of high school (**36%**)
- Single female with children (**46%**)
- From a poor home (**50%?**)
  - African American (**30%**)
  - Hispanic (**31%**)
  - Native American (**26%**)
  - Children under 18 years of age (**22%**)
  - Elderly over 65 years of age (**22%**)

Material poverty is indexed to stress:

- Crime and social unrest
- Marriage & family disfunction
- Personal physical and emotional health
- Social / racial discrimination

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## So what can we do about it?

1. We can shut up and LISTEN more and better.
2. We can face some uncomfortable facts.
3. We can realize the power of listening to others.

“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.”

**Bryant H. McGill**  
(American author)

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“Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.”

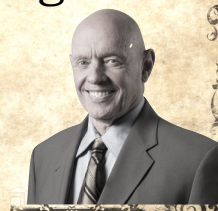
**Joyce Brothers**  
(psychologist)



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“When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air.”

**Stephen Covey**



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## So what can we do about it?

1. We can shut up and LISTEN more and better.
2. We can face some uncomfortable facts.
3. We can realize the power of listening to others.
4. We can take steps to change.

Jesus' mission is not a drone strike  
but boots on the ground,  
**through the church.**

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### Practical steps to start

- Be quick to hear (listen)
  - **Learn to ask good questions.**
- Pray
  - **to be God's answer to someone else's prayer.**
- Act
  - **expose yourself to a rescue mission or prison.**
  - **cultivate relationships with “have nots”.**

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“The first duty of love is to listen.”

**Paul Tillich**



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