

What Looks Good to God (Part 1)
“Big Ears—Listening to Others”
James 1:19-25

[Statements from insurance forms from drivers who summarized accident details]

Our culture is obsessed with the outward appearance, a person’s looks. The covers of magazines features supermodels, actors, and actresses who are the most handsome or the most sexy. Inside those magazines, the photos and articles feature the celebrities’ results of cosmetic surgery. There is also the popular TV series “Nip and Tuck.” We know what looks good to our culture, but what looks good to God? What pleases God? One thing that God is pleased with is big ears—people who listen to Him and to others.

Why should I listen to others?

1. Because it is the mature thing to do (1:19-21)

“...Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak...”
“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak...” (NIV)

James wrote his letter to Jewish believers because he was addressing the problem of on-going conflicts in the church. One of the conflicts was the problem of not obeying God’s Word, or living out God’s Word in their everyday life. James told these believers that spiritual maturity comes from listening to God’s Word, and obeying it in everyday life. Proverbs 19:20 says: “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.” When you listen to God’s Word, and when you are sensitive to God’s Spirit speaking to your heart, you are being a mature believer. Listening to the people God has placed in your life will make you a more mature person. In Proverbs, it says that a wise person has many counselors. When you listen to others, you are being wise and showing maturity. Do you want to be mature? Listen to God’s Word and listen to others.

2. Because it shows that you care (1:19, 25)

“...Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger...”

Paul said in Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” When you listen to others, you are saying that you care about them and what they are saying. Jesus listened to individuals who came to Him for help. Jesus communicated that He cared for their lives because He listened to what they had to say. When you and I are quick to hear and slow to speak, we are saying to others, “I care about you and what you have to say.”

3. Because God listens to you (1:20)

“...For man’s anger does accomplish God’s righteousness.”

Listening to others is not only mature and showing that you genuinely care, but it is being Christ-like. God listens to you and me, and His Spirit even prays for us when we can’t pray. David says in Psalm 4:3b: “...The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” David also says in Psalm 69:33b: “The Lord hears the needy and does not despise His captive people.” Are you being held captive by an addiction, financial problem, or family or health issues? Pray to God and He will hear your prayer. When you call on God to give you strength and hope, He will hear you. In Jeremiah 33:3, God told His people who were in captivity: “Call to Me and I will answer You and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” What looks good to God? God likes big ears! He is honored when you and I listen to Him and His Word, and when we listen to others. Do you have big ears? Are you listening to God and His Word? Be mature, show that you care, be Christ-like—be a good listener.