



[Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions below the discussion questions.]

LISTEN UP

May 29, 2022

This is the third week of our spring teaching series, “The Good and Beautiful Life,” in which we’re looking to Jesus and the early church to show us how to live good and beautiful lives that bless other people. Throughout this series, we’re revisiting five practices we talked about a couple of years ago in a series called “BLESS”: **B**e in prayer. **L**isten with care. **E**at together. **S**erve with love. And **S**hare your story. This week, Pastor Bryan helps us think about the power of listening.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q – The sermon for today is called “Listen Up,” and the topic is listening well. When was the last time someone *really listened* to you? As we get started, let’s take a few moments for each of us to share about a time when another person really listened to us, in a way that made us feel heard, understood, and cared for.

Q – In the first part of the sermon, Pastor Bryan helped us think about the kind of listener Jesus was by reflecting on the questions Jesus asked: “Jesus teaches us that a good question invites reflection, vulnerability, and discovery. And best of all, perhaps, it draws people into relationship with each other. . . . One of the greatest gifts we can give a person is to ask a good question, and then listen to the answer.” Bryan noted a few examples of Jesus’s questions: “What do you want?” (John 1:38); “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6); “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15/Mark 8:29/Luke 9:20)

- What makes these such good questions? More generally, what constitutes a good question?
- How can we grow in our ability to ask good questions?

Q – The key text for the sermon is Acts 8:4-8, 26-35. Let’s read verses 26-31 together. *[Invite someone to read Acts 8:26-31 out loud for the group.]*

- What are all the ways in which Philip shows himself to be a listener in this passage? To whom does he listen? What are the results?

Q – In v. 29, we read that “The Spirit told Philip, ‘Go to that chariot and stay near it.’” Bryan invited us to reflect on whether we have ever experienced the Lord saying something like that to us. “Have you ever sensed the Spirit prompting you to get closer to someone; to reach out to someone you would otherwise have no reason to reach out to? Has the Lord ever called your attention to someone and asked you to ‘stay near’ them for a while, to strike up a relationship with them, even though you have no idea why?”

- What was that experience like? How did you respond? What was the result?

Q – One of the key points of Bryan’s sermon is that “The more you listen, the more they hear.”

- In your own words, what does this mean? Why might this be true?
- What is one way you could stretch yourself to become a better listener?

Q – We all have opportunities to listen with care to the people God places in our lives, whether those are lifelong relationships or fleeting encounters. As Bryan noted, “When we listen well, we bless people. We offer them the gift of being heard and valued and understood. And as we listen to them, they have a chance to listen to their own hearts, and to whatever God might be stirring in them.”

- How can listening to someone with love and attentiveness be a part of a process that could eventually open that person’s heart to Christ?
- Think of one person in your life to whom you could give the gift of listening. How might truly listening to that person bless them? How can you make space in your life this week to listen to that person?

HOW TO USE THESE STUDY GUIDES

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.

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