

A Focused Heart

Shalom,

Jesus explained in the parable of “The Sower and the Seed” that there are **different levels of hearing** that determine whether fruit will be produced, and how much. When we listen to God with proper attention and focus to His Words **with our hearts**, there will always be corresponding **rewards and fruitfulness which are a direct result of our listening and understanding that manifest as His blessing**. His teaching and instruction, when heard, understood, and followed, will always release the blessing He has laid up for us.

“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.” Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” (Mark 4:3-9 NIV)

We sometimes find that we cannot recall what we have just read? We may listen to a message, or a teaching, and discover that we can’t remember what was taught. This problem with our retention of information stems from being distracted and lacking focus toward things that really matter.

This week’s Torah reading that is found in **Deuteronomy 7:12–11:25** is called **Eikev** which should be translated “**Because**,” but has been named “**Reward**” by Jewish scholars, because it records the **Reward** that YHWH has ordained for those who hearken to the Word. It is always exciting to talk about the reward, but certainly more important to understand what needs to happen so that we might always be positioned to receive that reward. Let us consider that a **better title** for this portion should be, “**Because you really hear.**”

“Because you are listening to these rulings, keeping and obeying them, ADONAI your God will keep with you the covenant and mercy that He swore to your ancestors. He will love you, bless you and increase your numbers; He will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground—your grain, wine, olive oil and the young of your cattle and sheep—in the land He swore to your ancestors that He would give you. You will be blessed more than all other peoples; there will not be a sterile male or female

among you, and the same with your livestock. **ADONAI will remove all illness from you**—He will not afflict you with any of Egypt's dreadful diseases, which you have known; instead, He will lay them on those who hate you.” (Deuteronomy 7:12-15 CJB)

“This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances, and you observe and perform them; Hashem, your God, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.” (Deuteronomy 7:12 The Artscroll Series / Stone Edition THE CHUMASH*)

I believe that everyone would admit that, at times, we are prone to half-hearted and unthinking listening that produces little, or nothing, in our lives. With that in mind, it surely makes sense to make adjustments that result in continual listening, or **hearkening, to the Word of God**. We know that Jesus taught that when one **hears without understanding**, the devil comes and **steals the Word** that was heard, or when **what is heard is mingled** with all of the cares of natural life, the Spirit life that flows from the Word **gets choked off**. He also taught that the Word that is **received**, or **really heard**, causes a wonderful transformation in the minds and thinking of those who **really hear** that changes minds to a level of complete transformation by that which is heard.

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Messiah.” (Romans 10:17 TLV)

“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2 TLV)

“For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor secret that shall not be known and come into open view. So pay attention how you listen. For whoever has, to him more will be given. And whoever does not have, even what he supposes he has will be taken away from him.” (Luke 8:17-18 TLV)

Conformity to the things of the world begins with listening, or paying attention, to the wrong things; but if we choose to be selective with what we hear and refuse to hear voices that are in discord with the Word of God, we will direct our thinking to that which is good, acceptable, and perfect.

The key to **this kind of listening** is that, as we hear and hear what God says, **His Word becomes implanted in us**, and delivers us (saves our souls) from wrong or compromised thinking to thinking by the anointing, or with the mind of The Messiah.

*“So put away all moral filth and excess of evil and receive with humility the **implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.**” (James 1:21 TLV)*

We receive His reward, not because of our works of righteousness, but only because of His great love manifested through the covenant He has made for us through the body and blood of Yeshua, the Messiah. **Our part is to really hear Him to know in our hearts what He has freely given us by faith.** Make this your own confession: **“I choose to always, really hear what the Holy Spirit teaches me through the Word of God so that I may always do what He says.”**

*“Yes, **keep this book of the Torah on your lips,** and meditate on it day and night, so that you will take care to act according to everything written in it. Then your undertakings will prosper, and you will succeed.” (Joshua 1:8 CJB)*

Diligently listening,
Terry

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