

How God Transforms Us

3. Hearing the Word

One bit of Bible prayed over, and bedewed with the Spirit, and made alive, though it be only a short sentence of six words, will profit you more than a hundred chapters without the Spirit. Charles Spurgeon

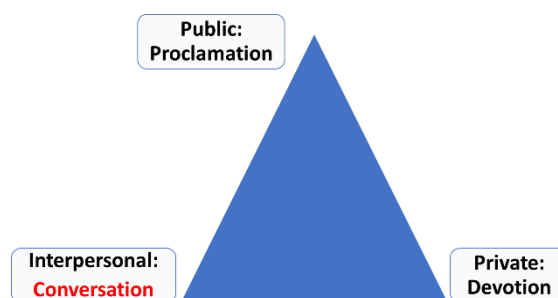
In a nutshell, connect one bit of Scripture to one bit of life. In other words, always ask two questions of yourself and others: What is your current struggle? What about God in Christ connects to this? David Powlison

The Word and the heart

As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. (Luke 8:15)

*They made their **hearts** as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets (Zechariah 7:12)*

Hearing the Word



Discuss: what is the one single most important thing that makes for good conversation?

Listening is hard:

- We love to talk
- We are quick to assume

Discuss: what do you think was Dave's motivation for behaving as he has?

New work pressures develop, and his wife becomes unwell with a kind of chronic fatigue. Feeling stressed and lonely he again finds himself confiding in a female work colleague. And, after a few drinks after work, things do go too far and they end up in bed.

1. Listen long enough to get to the heart

He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person. (John 2:25)

- The question of motivation
- The Velcro analogy

2. Speak wisely from alongside

- Side by side; not over / under
- Not me telling, but us exploring together
- Aiming for encounter... so help a person engage

3. Engage emotionally for change

- Reaching the heart
- Experiencing God's grace

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2:11-12)

- The place of the psalms
- The (surprising) role of narrative

The (lost) art of Christian meditation

A holy exercise of the mind whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves. (Thomas Watson)

*Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)*

By... meditation, I intend the thoughts of some subject spiritual and divine, with the fixing, forcing, and ordering of our thoughts about it, with a design to affect our own hearts and souls with the matter of it... (John Owen)

Reflection

- What's your experience of listening (and being listened to)?
- What strikes you about the practice of Christian meditation
- What questions do you have? (and will you feed them in for tomorrow)?

Further Reading

Cross Talk – where life and scripture meet by Mike Emlet (New Growth, 2009)

Side by Side by Ed Welch (Crossway 2015)

Meditating for a Change by Steve Midgley (Journal of Biblical Counseling, 34:1 [2020])