

Kind Listeners

by Frederick William Faber

Kind listening is an essential virtue that requires self-awareness, humility, and a willingness to learn from others.

Scripture: Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 18:13, Proverbs 21:23, Colossians 4:6, James 1:19

Topics: "Christian Communication", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

Frederick William Faber emphasizes the importance of kind listening and speaking, highlighting how attentive and compassionate listening can lead to gracious and thoughtful speaking. He warns against various negative listening behaviors such as being distracted, interrupting, or making conversations about oneself, stressing the need for gentle and considerate listening as a form of interior mortification. Faber connects kind listening to kind speaking, suggesting that those in positions of authority must practice both to avoid offending God and falling into secret sins.

Transcript

"To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose them that are appointed to death"

(Ps. 102:20).

There is also a grace of kind listening, as well as a grace of kind speaking. Some men listen with an abstracted air, which shows that their thoughts are elsewhere. Or they seem to listen, but by wide answers and irrelevant questions show that they have been occupied with their own thoughts, as being more interesting, at least in their own estimation, than what you have been saying. Some listen with a kind of impudent ferocity which makes you feel that you are being put upon your trial, and that your auditor expects beforehand that you are going to tell him a lie, or to be inaccurate, or to say something which he will disapprove, and that you must mind your expressions. Some interrupt, and will not hear you to the end. Some hear you to the end, and then forthwith begin to talk to you about a similar experience which has befallen themselves, making your case only an illustration of their own. Some, meaning to be kind, listen with such a determined, lively, violent attention, that you are at once made uncomfortable, and the charm of conversation is at an end. Many persons, whose manners will stand the test of speaking, break down under the trial of listening. But all these things should be brought under the sweet influences of religion. Kind listening is often an act of the most delicate interior mortification, and is a great assistance towards kind speaking. Those who govern others must take care to be kind listeners, or else they will soon offend God, and fall into secret sins.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/frederick-william-faber/kind-listeners/>

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