

Be Careful How You Listen

What's the big danger of being part of BEC?

That we receive lots of good Bible teaching through Sundays, Home Groups and our own Bible reading but don't really grow and mature. Does the word of God that we receive remain in us? Does it produce a harvest in us? Are we doers not just hearers of the word?

What's the big aim this term in Home Groups?

... To be those in whom God's Word Dwells Richly (Colossians 3:16)

Notice that this is in a group setting where we're teaching one another as we do in Home Groups. We don't just want the word to superficially dwell among us for 45 minutes and then be lost. We want it to dwell in us richly.

... To be those who store up God's word in our hearts (Psalm 119:9-16, Psalm 95:7-8, Hebrews 3:7-4:7)

Notice that it's not just about more in our minds (though our minds do matter). It's about our hearts because our hearts are the engine of who we are, how we think, what we do and what we say.

... To be Jesus' family who are doers not just hearers of God's word (Luke 8:21, James 1:21-25)

Jesus says that the mark of being part of his family is that we don't just hear his teaching and nod our heads and enjoy it. Being one of Jesus' family is about doing what he teaches. Application is vital.

We want to be the good soil who hear the word, hold it fast, in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. (Luke 8:15)

Luke 8:4-25

What's so special about reading the Bible?

Our Privilege when we read the Bible - Every time we open the Bible in Home Group something incredible happens (8:22-25)

The one who powerfully stills the storm with a word speaks to us every time we open the Bible. Just think about where you read your Bible, picture your Home Group on a Tuesday evening, think of Hall Cross and here on a Sunday - God is speaking to us!

*Fellowship with one another and with God (1 John 1:1-4) (Triangle Diagram)
God wants fellowship with you! He speaks so that we might know him. As we draw closer to him we also draw closer to each other.*

What is our responsibility as we read the Bible?

Our Responsibility when we read the Bible (8:8, 18, 21) - Be Careful how you listen

v8 - Pay attention, listen carefully.

v18 - We are responsible for how we listen and respond to God's word. We have a say in which soil we will be. We're not passive soil.

v21 - We have a responsibility to do what we've heard. That's the real mark of Jesus' family.

"Every sermon increases either our salvation or condemnation" (C Simeon)

Therefore whenever we open the Bible we must be very careful how we listen. We have the most amazing privilege but also a great responsibility.

Suggested Questions for Home Group

Starter Questions - How many times do you think you read the Bible or studied the Bible or heard it preached in 2016? What impact did all this have on you?

The aim here is simply to help us see that most of us take in a large quantity of Bible. This is a good thing, we certainly don't want to encourage our group to receive less Bible teaching. The question is what we do with the Bible that we receive. That's what this session is all about at the start of the new year.

Read Luke 8v4-25

1. Look at v22-25 where Jesus speaks and the storm is instantly calmed. This same Jesus speaks to us with the same power through the Bible. **How should this shape our attitude and approach to reading and studying the Bible?**

Encourage the group to talk honestly about how we approach Bible studies, quiet times and sermons. Do we come to home group expecting God to speak powerfully to us or do we often just go through the motions not really expecting God to speak to us? If we remembered who it was who was speaking to us, what difference would it make?

2. Now look at v8, v18, and v21. **What is our responsibility when we come to the Bible?**

Here we want to see that we are responsible for how we listen to God's word. We are to be those who don't just hear God's word but put it into practice (v21.) We are not just to sit passively under God's word on a Sunday or in Home Group. We are to be active listeners.

3. Now look at the parable of the soils in v4-15. **Use the table to work through the passage.**

For each soil ask "Why does this soil tell us we need to be careful about how we listen?" What's the danger for each soil? Then turn to the application and use the questions to think about what practical things you can do as individuals and as groups to help you be the good soil.