



# Life Principles Notes™

## How to Listen to the Word of God

### Summary:

**Why is it that some people are inspired and challenged when they go to church and some walk away feeling empty?** Although both groups of people may share similar concerns and burdens, one group receives the strength and wisdom they need to face their circumstances, while the other group doesn't. This can happen for a number of reasons; however, the primary reason may be that one group has learned to listen to God's Word,

while the other group unfortunately hasn't.

So how do we learn from the Word of God? Whether sitting in church or hearing it on the television or radio, we need to know how to glean the life-giving truth from the Bible. It's when we embrace Scripture with our hearts that God can work in extraordinary ways through us.

**Key Passage:** [Nehemiah 8:1–18](#)

**Supporting Scripture:** *Nehemiah 9:1–3; Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10*

### Scriptural Principles:

#### 1 Background information.

After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the people of Judah were liberated by the Persians and permitted to depart for their homeland. The people longed to see Jerusalem again; however, when they did, it was a bittersweet experience because the walls had been destroyed and the city was in ruins. The people didn't know what to do.

As cupbearer for the king, Nehemiah hadn't been able to leave Persia as the others had. However, when he received word of the city's condition, Nehemiah prayed that God would grant him favor with the king so that he could return to Jerusalem and lead the people in rebuilding it. God graciously complied. So Nehemiah assembled a team of committed, godly people and in 52 days they accomplished their goal. They restored Jerusalem to its former glory. Now that they were finished with their task, there was only one thing that they wanted to do—and that was *listen to the Word of God*.

#### 2 Listen to the Word *eagerly*.

The people of Judah had not heard God's Word preached in Jerusalem for more than 70 years, so they were exceedingly eager to hear it. This was a privilege for them because of their intense desire for a relationship with God. Do you go to church with enthusiasm about what God is going to say to you? If you don't have a strong yearning to know Scripture, then perhaps you don't really want to know God. It's through the Word that you develop an intimate relationship with Him.

#### 3 Listen to the Word *attentively and with patience*.

Nehemiah 8:3 testifies that Ezra read "from early morning until midday . . . and all the people were attentive to the book of the law." It's amazing that the people sat in awed silence for so many hours; however, we spend countless hours in front of computers and televisions, concentrating on messages that don't have a fraction of the value that the Bible does. God has important things to say to us and we need to make focused concentration on His Word a priority.

#### 4 Listen to the Word *with trust.*

“Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people . . . and when he opened it, all the people stood up” (Nehemiah 8:5). Why would all the people stand? Because of their reverent trust in Scripture—their absolute confidence in God’s truth. We live in a world of uncertainty; however, the Word of the Living God gives us a foundation we can be sure of.

#### 5 Listen to the Word *expectantly and purposefully.*

When the people of Judah stood to listen to God’s Word, they were also illustrating their anticipation and readiness to receive whatever God had in store for them—they didn’t want to miss any of it.

Do you go to church expecting God to say something to you personally—to give you insight and encouragement for your life? If you come before God with interest and anticipation, He will speak. God makes the most of every opportunity to mold you into the person He created you to be.

#### 6 Listen to the Word *prayerfully and with humility.*

The people of Jerusalem were so grateful to God that when “Ezra blessed the LORD the great God . . . all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground” (Nehemiah 8:6). They recognized that the reason they’d been in captivity for 70 years was because of the sin of their forefathers. Therefore, they acknowledged the value of Scripture with complete obedience and were thankful for the honor of interacting with God.

People clamor to make money and accumulate prestige and power by any means possible. Yet, these things don’t last and often impede a person from obeying God with their whole mind, heart, soul, and strength; and when they die, they can’t take any of it with them. However, when we humbly and prayerfully invite God’s Word to transform our life, we receive a treasure that endures forever.

#### 7 Listen to God’s Word *joyfully.*

When we talk about the promises, the goodness, the faithfulness, and the love of God, we should be inspired to praise and worship Him just as the people of Judah did. Nehemiah tells us that the entire assembly had a magnificent celebration that day, and “there was great rejoicing” (8:17). Why? Because of how awesome God was to share His Word with them. The same should be true for us, because we have God’s Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ living in us, and that alone should fill us with utter joy.

#### 8 Listen to God’s Word *with a repentant heart.*

Probably the most wonderful and powerful thing that God did through the people that day as they listened to Ezra read the Law was to help them recognize their sinfulness and repent of it (see Nehemiah 8:9). If God brings some offense to mind as you are studying His Word, then be honest with Him and confess it immediately. Open your heart to Him completely, because He wants to bless you and set you free.

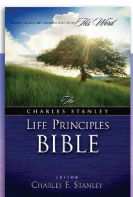
## Conclusion:

Have you asked God to speak to you through His Word? Have you committed yourself to listening to Scripture eagerly, attentively, patiently, prayerfully, humbly, joyfully, with trust, anticipation, purpose, and a repentant heart?

This is God’s will for each of us, because this is the way we develop a deep, intimate

relationship with Him. God will not only speak to you in ways that you’ve never imagined, but He will also help you become everything you were created to be.

Then you’ll be just like those blessed people who are always inspired and challenged when they go to church. You’ll receive the power, encouragement, and wisdom you need to face whatever circumstance may come along, and the joy of the Lord will be your strength (see Nehemiah 8:10). ✨



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