

Read: Deuteronomy 4:1,2,6-9

Listen!

Deuteronomy 4:1,2,9

Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you. Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Henry was not happy. He lowered his head at his desk and was holding back the tears. He couldn't believe what he saw on his history test—a big, red F. Meanwhile, Harriet next to him was nearly bouncing out of her chair. She couldn't believe it either! Her test had a big, red A+ and a smiley face on it. They both sat through all the same classes together, but their grades were so different. What happened?

Well, Henry did not take history very seriously. Every day he drew silly pictures while the teacher talked instead of taking good notes. He *heard* what the teacher said, but he didn't really *listen* to the teacher. Because he didn't listen carefully, Henry remembered nothing on the test. He ended up leaving out some important information, and he even added some wrong things to the questions about Abraham Lincoln.

But Harriet did just the opposite. She knew that history class was very important. She listened very carefully and took notes so she would remember everything. She even reviewed and studied a little bit every day so that she would be ready for the test. Sure enough, Harriet passed the test easily because she listened, she was careful, and she remembered.

When it comes to God's Word, are you more like Henry or more like Harriet?

Just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Moses gave them one final speech. He wanted to teach them to be like Harriet—to listen to God's Word, to be careful, and to remember. Sadly, most of the Israelites were more like Henry. They *heard* what Moses said, but they didn't really *listen* to him. They forgot many of God's commands. They left out things in his Word and they added some of their own things. When it came to temptations and tests, they failed miserably and sinned. Many failed so badly they even fell away from God.

We can learn from the Israelites. It's so important for us to hear God's Word *and* listen carefully. That means that we listen to God's commands, we talk about them, and we work on remembering to keep them. That means that we listen to the good news of God's forgiveness for all of our sins, we talk about it regularly, and we encourage each other with that good news. Moses was right! It's important to treasure God's Word every day, and it's important for parents to teach it to their children. When God's Word is the center of your life, many blessings will follow! May God help us to hear his Word *and* to listen to it carefully.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- When are times that you can hear God's Word?
- Why do we want to listen carefully to God's Word?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Describe the attitudes and behaviors of people who don't listen to God's Word.
- Describe two ways that you can be a better listener to what God says.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree/Disagree: It's not a big deal to miss going to church for a week or two here or there. Explain your answer.
- When you grow older in life, how will you make God's Word a regular part of your life?

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, always open my ears to hear your Word and then open my heart and mind to listen to what you have to say. Amen.

Hymn: CW 376:3-4 – Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness

Lord, I believe your precious blood, Which at the very throne of God
Forever will for sinners plead, For me—e'en for my soul—was shed.

Lord, I believe were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,
You have for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.