

## **Are You Listening?**

Brother V. E. Howard preached on the radio for thirty-five years. The program, called the “Gospel Hour,” aired mainly in Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and other parts of the Midwest. He and his brother, Alton, had interest in the chain of Gibson Discount stores, the forerunner of K-Mart and that other “Mart” we all know well. When bro. Howard wanted to emphasize a point or say something that should be remembered he would say, “Are you listening”? He became identified with the phrase.

Listening is something many people find difficult to do well. Sometimes, we are more interested in responding and thinking about what to say in response and we fail to listen to the one talking. Sometimes we ignore people while they are speaking, even our spouses and family members. When we listen patiently to someone share their thoughts and ideas, we show respect and honor for the individual. When we don’t listen, the opposite is true. The consequences can be even greater when we fail to listen to God.

The emphasis in scripture on listening cannot be overstated. We can hear but not listen. Moses said to the Israelites, when they refused to go into the land of Canaan, “So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen” (Deuteronomy 1:43a). Isaiah prophesied that the people in Jesus’ day would not listen: “Hearing you will hear and will not understand” (Matt 13:14a). In each letter to the seven churches in Asia, as recorded in Revelation, Jesus closes with, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says ---”, i.e., they must hear and understand the things He has written against them in the letters. When we truly listen to God’s word, a response is expected.

We are very blessed at Karns to have a steady diet of excellent preaching and Bible classes. I don’t know of any congregation of our size that has as many capable preachers and Bible class teachers as the Karns congregation. Week after week we are presented God’s word in varied styles and in such a manner it is difficult to not understand, if we will listen. Are we listening?

When we are in the Bible classes, listening to the sermon on Sunday, devotional on Wednesday, or engaged in the various acts of worship, we need to remind ourselves of the importance of truly listening with the view of making application in our lives. ‘Are we listening’ as we should?

*For the elders (Don Denton)*