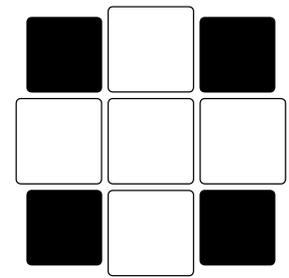


Draw Near to Listen

Scripture: **Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**

Sunday, January 6, 2019



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Overview

As we enter another new year, it's common for us to examine poor choices and bad habits we made and developed during the prior year, as well as lament the time wasted. Along with pondering such regrets, it's also common for us to take for granted the number of years God has given us, which should motivate us to make better choices—and better use of our time—in the coming year. However, just because we take a step in the right direction doesn't mean we've removed the dangers that may confront us. Therefore, we need to watch our step, and we need to maintain a healthy fear of God. Also, as Solomon instructs us, we should guard our steps when we enter the house of God. We should come to the house of God with a posture of our heart and mind ready to listen. We draw near to God in order to hear Him better, since it is God's agenda—not ours—that we need to be open to hearing and receiving. Indeed, this is how we should worship. Moreover, our joy in our walk with God is contingent on *how* we worship. Thus, **true joy is found in whom and how we worship.**

Corroborating Texts

1 Samuel 15:22; Hebrews 1:1-3

Discussion Questions

1. As it says in today's passage, "To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools..." (Eccl. 5:1). How does this passage relate to the warning that Samuel gave to Saul in 1 Sam. 15:22? Why does Samuel admonish Saul that obeying the voice of the Lord is better than sacrifice?
2. Are you sometimes tempted to offer sacrifices to God (of your time, your money, your ministry, etc.), yet neglect to listen to or obey God's voice? What changes do you need to make in the coming year to draw closer to God in order to listen to His voice?
3. Are you currently cultivating joy in your walk with God? How is your worship of God connected to joy? What specific circumstances or practices are hindering joy in your life?
4. Anxiety, frustration, and worry can be calmed by hearing the Lord speak. In what ways does God want you to cultivate peace in your spiritual life? In which areas of your life are you currently waiting on God to reveal His plans and purposes? Are you trusting in His timing?
5. As Solomon instructs us in verse 2, we should weigh our words carefully because God takes our word seriously. Therefore, we should also weigh our commitments carefully. In which areas have you made commitments (to your church, your family, your workplace, etc.) yet have not quite lived up to them? In which areas do you intend to make commitments in the coming year?