

## Preacher's Pen points

# “In one ear and out the other”

Ann Estile shared this funny story with me:

Three guys are going deer hunting and as they cross the field going to the woods a huge buck jumps up and all three pull up and fire at the same time. The buck drops and as they come up on the buck they realize they have problem. Which one of them shot the deer? As they discuss the problem, a DNR official comes along, and is checking for hunting licenses. He offers to sort out the problem, examines the deer and says, "One of you guys is a preacher, right?" And sure enough, one of them was. "Well, preacher, your shot is the one that got the buck." Amazed the guys asked how he knew one of them was a preacher, and that the preacher's shot was the one that scored? Simple," the DNR guy says, "went in one ear, and out the other."

I got a real chuckle out of that! I don't have any complaint about how people listen to my sermons, but the story reminds me of an important truth. God's people have always needed to be reminded of the importance of retaining and applying the truth they hear from the word.

### Listening Is Important

Even Jesus had to warn people about the age-old tendency of not paying attention to God's words, even when spoken by His own Son. Consequently Jesus often ended His parables with these words: "He who has ears, let him hear" (Mt. 13:9).

Doesn't everyone have ears? Of course, but not everyone who has ears is really listening! Jesus wanted to impress upon his hearers the need to really pay attention to what He had said.

### Admiration for the teacher is not enough!

On one occasion, when Jesus was teaching, a woman in the audience felt constrained to express her admiration for him with a compliment, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed." Instead of politely thanking her for the compliment Jesus volleyed back a challenging correction, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it."

 (Lk. 11:27-28).

### Admission of the need for change is not enough!

James compared listening to the truth to looking at one's self in a mirror. He urged his readers not to stop with just acknowledging the need for change: "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was" (Jas. 1:24-25). All too often we are like that man—we see that changes are needed, but we fail to follow up with change!

### Only doing God's will brings God's blessings!

James gives the only solution to the problem of inattention: "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does." (Jas. 1:23-25). Let's not let this message "go in one ear and out the other". ;>)



—Johnny Felker (www.truthchasers.com)