

## Are You Listening

“If you’re God’s child, you are blessed with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. The question is, are you listening?

It is possible to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, saved by his blood, and still have a hard heart. So the warning of Hebrews 3:12–13 is much needed by all of us: “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

It is tempting to not listen to the protective promptings of the Holy Spirit because you think you have a more accurate view of yourself than you ever really have. Since sin is deceitful and since sin still remains in us all, there are places in our lives where we are deceived into thinking that we’re better off spiritually than we actually are.

It is tempting to resist the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit because so few of us actually believe that we need the sight-giving ministry of others in our lives.

Because we do not believe this, we have not opened ourselves up to the gospel community that is one of the primary tools of conviction that the Holy Spirit employs.

It is tempting to harden your heart against the ministry conviction of the Holy Spirit by arguing for your righteousness when a sin, weakness, or failure is revealed.

It is tempting to refuse to listen to the convicting voice of the Spirit by comparing yourself to other believers and arguing that you are surely more righteous than they are.

It is tempting to resist the personal insight-giving ministry of the Holy Spirit by confusing biblical literacy and theological knowledge with the evidence of a transformed and God-pleasing life.

It is tempting to run from the Spirit’s restoring and protective work by rewriting your history, swindling yourself into believing that your wrongs are not so wrong after all.

It is tempting to resist the Spirit’s loving work of conviction by confusing ministry skill, experience, and success with personal spiritual maturity.

It is tempting to resist the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit when he uses an instrument who you think is unqualified or less mature than you.

But be comforted. You serve a dissatisfied Redeemer who will not turn from his work of grace even when you fail to esteem it and work to resist it. With patient grace, once more he calls you to listen. Do you?”

Excerpt From New Morning Mercies Paul David Tripp

*REACTION:*

## **‘Contemplative Listening’**

In this narrative, the architecture of holiness shifts. No longer is sacredness located in physical structures or ritual boundaries, but in the attentive stillness that arises in response to Presence. Mary’s posture, seated at His feet in contemplative silence, reveals the true sanctuary: the soul that consents to be reordered by God’s proximity ... Martha thus becomes the archetype of outward religiosity—active, sincere, and yet fragmented by its own activity. Mary becomes the archetype of contemplative fecundity (richness, fruitfulness, abundance)\* —interiorly unified, hidden, and profoundly attuned. The former acts upon the world, the latter is acted upon by the Divine. Crucially, Mary does not simply hear. She receives. Her stillness is not inert (inactive)\*. It is generative. She is the listening womb in which the Word implants itself....

This condition is endemic (widespread, prevalent)\* to modernity. Our age has sacralized utility, curated distraction, and elevated output over ontology (the nature of being)\*. We perform for God, but we do not encounter Him. We engineer ministries, compose liturgies, defend doctrines—yet seldom descend into the silence required for true communion. Like Martha, we labor from the periphery while the One Thing Necessary sits unreceived at the center.

This is the pathology of spiritual performance: it permits one to labor for God while evading encounter with God. It is possible to remain near the Incarnate One and yet never permit Him to reorder the soul.

Steve Hermann - Desert and Fire

*\* are my insertions of definitions*

### **Reflection Questions**

What does it look like to be reordered by God's proximity?

What does it mean to sacralize utility?

Where are you challenged to change?