

YOUR ONE

How to Walk with Your ONE Through Storms

PART 1:

Practice Active Listening...

When we think about investing in our ONE, we usually think of **talking**.

But, **listening** is often a neglected skill in intentionally investing in your ONE. I recall a mentor say, "God gave us two ears and one mouth, and we should take the hint!" If we listened twice as much as we spoke, our words might connect more deeply with people's souls.

Walking with your ONE through storms in their lives begins with listening – listening to God and listening to others.

Listening to God

Rick Richardson, author of *Reimagining Evangelism*, has called this "dual channel listening." We listen to God as we listen to people. We listen for where God is already at work in another person.

In describing himself as the Great Shepherd, Jesus said that "his sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:4). Over time, we can increasingly distinguish Jesus' voice over others inside us.

Listening to People

One of the greatest gifts we can give someone is being fully present in the moment! Giving a person our full attention — free from distractions — communicates genuine love, respect, dignity, and value.

Jesus himself was a great listener. In his conversation with a Samaritan woman in John 4, she spoke four times more than Jesus did!

In his book, *Listening Well: The Art of Empathetic Understanding*, William R. Miller writes:

It matters not only what you say but how you say it... What will keep you on the right track is the mindset and the heart-set beneath your listening... When you listen with curiosity, compassion, patience, and a genuine desire to understand, you're unlikely to stray from the path.

It is easy for us to hear someone without listening. We may hear the facts, but miss the underlying feelings. Consequently, we fall into traps as we think or speak by trying to fix their problems, focusing on ourselves and our experiences, acting superior, or giving simplistic responses. Instead, people first often simply want us to empathize with them. Even being skilled at asking good questions is different than active listening. As one writer has said, "Listening is 'hospitality'—making space for the guest of honor!"

So, how do we listen to your ONE well?

1. **Listen for clues of God at work.** Notice issues they are facing. Underneath loneliness, fear, insecurity, anger, and doubts are often deeper longings for security, love, belonging, justice, or meaning and purpose.
2. **Pay attention to pain.** Tears, a pause, or a hesitation often indicate something stirring deeply within their souls. It's a sacred space. Honor it!
3. **Respond with reflective listening.** Making an empathetic comment ("That sounds really difficult.") and asking questions about what it was like for them builds trust and often opens a person to deeper levels of sharing. It shows that we are taking them seriously, like God does.
4. **Connect their pain and longings with Jesus.** I like asking people where they look for the power to change or deal with something, or if the timing is right, I may ask them, "Have you ever considered how God may be able to help?" As the Holy Spirit leads, often I can share a story from my own life tying it back to my own need for Jesus.

Check out [this short video](#) with 6 tips on Active Listening!