

MONDAY MANNA

16 December 2019

SIMPLY SHOWING SENSITIVITY

By Jim Langley

One of the things in short supply in today's marketplace is sensitivity. This can be defined as "tuning in" to the needs of those who come into our lives every day. We can easily become distant from those we should be closest to, casually tuning them out. But sensitivity can be critical for both business and personal relationships. Demonstrating it makes a tremendous difference in our everyday relationships.

However, sensitivity is not only about the quality and tone of our conversations. It can also require sacrificing a significant amount of time to address the needs of others. This includes active listening, and then responding in ways that show we do care and are putting people's concerns above our own.

Relationships are integral to a meaningful, fulfilling life. As a young boy, my only relationships were with family members; as an only child for 10 years, I never experienced how strong, positive relationships could be formed. The concept of forming lasting relationships came to me later in life, after Jesus Christ came into my life as Saviour and Lord. This took place after two divorces and many missed friendship opportunities. When we are self-absorbed, we put ourselves first, at the cost of relationships.

Much has been written about the "art" of listening. But no one modelled this better than Jesus Christ. What He did best was to add two letters to the word. You could say Jesus added "He" to "art," demonstrating the "Heart" of listening. He was also able to sense the needs of both the masses and individuals as He performed miracles and taught those willing to listen how they could have an eternal relationship with God.

We too have the ability to develop a listening heart, but this comes at a price. It is not something we can turn on and off like a tap. We must remain attuned to the circumstances the Lord puts around us, while keeping in tune with His desires for our lives. This is not easy, but possible through God's power.

In Ephesians 4:22-24, the apostle Paul explains to those who had chosen to follow Christ, *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."* I believe this is the only way to truly discover and learn how to be sensitive to the needs of others.

We do not need to attend sensitivity training sessions to learn how to be sensitive to the needs of others. What we need is a changed heart, along with an understanding of how to love others – even when they aren't lovable. This is how Jesus loved, and how God our Heavenly Father loves us. He is listening to our needs but needs us to allow Jesus to guide us to the only path for lasting peace and true happiness.

Sensitivity comes from "tuning in" to God first. As we do this, He begins the lifelong process of changing our hearts, making us more and more like Him. *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holding and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Romans 12:1-2).

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© 2019, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

What has been your experience with sensitivity in the workplace? How would you describe what sensitivity looks like when it is being properly demonstrated?

How would you describe yourself in terms of being able to show sensitivity toward others?

What are the benefits of striving to have and display sensitivity toward others? Are there downsides of sensitivity in the workplace? Explain your answer.

Do you think that Jesus Christ served as a good example of sensitivity toward others? Why or why not?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says consider the following passages:

Psalm 34:11-16

Philippians 2:3-4

Colossians 3:5-10

Hebrews 4:14-16

1 Peter 3:8-9