

Understanding context before responding.

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Why is it that some people hear more than other people when they all hear the same thing? Jesus seemed to be alluding to that phenomenon when He said, “Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” (Luke 8:18) It all depends on “how” we hear.

A good listener can hear context in “how” the speaker is sharing. Reading the room, watching the body language, and recognizing the underlying emotion will help us hear more than just what is being said.

In our relationships with others, here are three questions that can help us hear context:

1. Is the person sharing in a way that frames the relationship as business, contractual, and transactional or are they approaching the relationship in a way that is more personal, covenantal, and relational?
2. Is the conversation tricky, difficult, and conflicting or is it easy, relaxed, and synergistic?
3. What is the capacity of the one sharing with you...are they speaking in a way that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually mature?

The answer to these questions could radically alter how we respond in these discussions.

Misunderstanding the context will likely lead to confusion, frustration, and loss.

But hearing well will produce an abundance of understanding that will never be lost.