



Encouraging Words

with DARLENE SALA

April 24, 2017

Quick to Listen

A young girl in high school asked her mother if she could drop her Spanish class. Her mom immediately reacted, “No, why should you drop a class?” End of discussion--the girl knew it was a waste of time to talk about it further. She finished the class but never again did she take a Spanish class, even though she was fluent enough to have taken part in the exchange student program.

How miserable her mom felt when later she learned that two-thirds of the students had dropped the class because of the teacher’s bad attitude. If only she had really listened to her daughter before jumping to conclusions!

Do you know what our problem is? We’d rather talk than listen. A cartoon showed two people having a conversation. But the dialogue was pretty one-sided. The caption underneath read, “I’d let you talk more—but you’re not as interesting as I am!”

Most of us will listen to someone share his ideas for only so long before we feel compelled to put in our two-cents-worth. We watch the other person talk, all the while thinking what we’re going to say just as soon as his jaws clamp shut. Imagine how much more we might learn if we just really listened.

James wrote in the Bible, “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). We all nod our heads when we hear that verse. But how hard it is to put it into practice!

The next time someone wants to tell you something, trying looking directly at him or her—even if what the person is saying is boring. Look at their eyes. Concentrate on what they’re saying. When they finish, pause a split second before replying. As James suggests, be quick to listen, slow to speak.

Wouldn’t there be a lot fewer misunderstandings in the world if we would only learn to really listen!