

HOW TO DEVELOP ATTENTIVENESS

Discover the true meaning of ATTENTIVENESS

I. What is Attentiveness?

vs. Distraction **ATTENTIVENESS** is Showing the worth of a person by giving undivided concentration to his words.

The meaning of attentiveness:

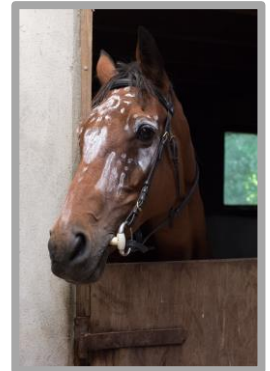
The Hebrew word for *attentive* is *qashshab*, which means “to prick up the ears,” as in the action of a horse or a donkey.

The Greek word for *attentive*, (ek-KREH-mah-my), means “to hang upon the lips of a speaker; to listen closely.”

Scriptural synonyms of attentive-ness include giving ear, listening, heeding, attending, hearkening, hearing, *and* considering.

Attentiveness is defined in the dictionary as “the ability or power to concentrate mentally; a close or careful observing or listening; the acts of being considerate, courteous, and thoughtful.”

As we sit up, lean forward, and concentrate on what is being said, we are demonstrating the true meaning of attentiveness.



II. How does God command ATTENTIVENESS?

1. Be attentive to God.

“**Give ear**, O my people, to my law: **incline your ears** to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 78:1). “. . . **Hearken** unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments” (Deuteronomy 30:10).

2. Be attentive to your parents.

“My son, **hear** the instruction of thy father, and **forsake not** the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 1:8).

3. Be attentive to your conscience.

“My little children, let us ... love . . . in deed and in truth. . . . For if our **heart condemn us**, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (I John 3:18-20).

4. Be attentive to your elders.

“Likewise, ye younger, **submit** yourselves unto the elder . . .” a peter 5:5). “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour...” (I Timothy 5:17).

5. Be attentive to your civil authorities.

“**Hear** instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not” (proverbs 8:33)” **Submit** yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” (I Peter 2:13).

6. Be attentive to your employer.

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in **singleness of heart**, fearing God” (Colossians 3:22).



III. How did Jesus demonstrate Attentiveness?

1. He listened to God.

From a child, Jesus listened to the Scriptures and then studied them for Himself. Thus, He grew in wisdom. (See Luke 4:16-22.)

2. He listened to His parents.

Jesus was attentive to His earthly father's instruction in the family carpentry business and to His parents' Wishes. (See Luke 2:51.)

3. He listened to conscience.

Jesus spent hours in prayer to discern the will of His Heavenly Father. He did nothing of His own will. (See Luke 6:12.)

4. He listened to elders.

When Jesus came to the Temple at the age of twelve. He astonished the elders by the way He listened. (See Luke 2:46-47.)

5. He listened to rulers.

Jesus was attentive to all civil authorities. He listened to their instructions and also their questions. (See John 3:1-21.)

6. He listened to employers.

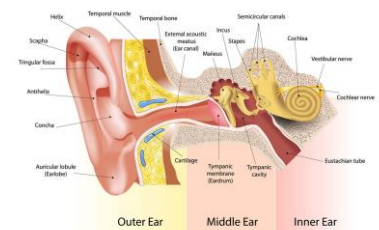
The wise insights Jesus gave on employment relationships were no doubt derived from His experience in His family business. (See Matthew 20.)

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

IV. How does God demonstrate the importance of Attentiveness?

The outer ear catches sound vibrations, which travel through the auditory canal until they strike the eardrum. The hammer, anvil, and stirrup bones transmit the vibrations across the air-filled middle ear. Then the spiral cochlea with its tiny hair cells converts sound waves to nerve impulses, which are carried to the brain by the auditory nerve.

The importance, which God places on hearing is demonstrated by the fact that the ear is the first of the five sensory organs to function in the womb and the last to stop functioning at death.



V. How does the wood duck illustrate Attentiveness?

A pair of wood ducks work together in building their nest and preparing it for their young. When the nest is complete, the mother wood duck lays one egg each day for twelve to fifteen days.

Amazingly, the egg that was laid on the fifteenth day hatches on the same day as the egg that was laid on the first day!



How does attentiveness allow baby wood ducks to hatch on the same day?

All the eggs hatch on the same day because the mother and father wood ducks begin “talking” to their young while they are still in the eggs. In this way the young ducklings learn to be attentive to the voices of their parents.

As the day approaches for hatching, the mother wood duck begins giving instructions to the un-hatched wood ducklings. Before long, a chorus of “peeps” and “kucks” comes from the eggs, as the ducklings respond to their parents and to one another.

These “conversations” between adult wood ducks and their young bond them together and help to synchronize the hatching process so all the ducklings break out of their shells within minutes of one another!

VI. How Attentiveness saves a wood duck’s life

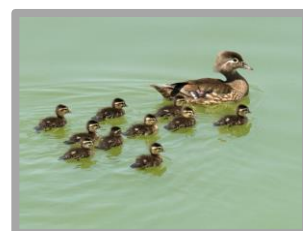


When the ducklings are less than twenty-four hours old, their mother flies to the base of the nesting tree and calls up to her ducklings to leave the nest. This instruction could mean a jump of up to fifty feet for the ducklings.

Ducklings that were attentive to their mother’s voice before hatching scramble up the side of the nest and jump. Usually all the ducklings (called a *clutch*) jump out of the nest in less than five minutes.

This quick response is necessary because hungry predators also hear the mother’s call and will come to devour the mother and her ducklings if they do not find safety in a nearby pond.

In the pond the ducklings continue to be protected by being attentive to their mother’s warnings. When they hear a warning, they must remain motionless until the danger is passed.



How a child’s attentiveness begins in the womb

The ability of unborn children to respond to the voices of their parents is now an established fact.

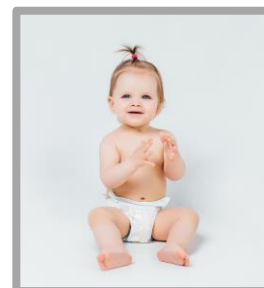
God’s Word affirms that children can be attentive in the womb when it points out that John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb when he heard Mary’s voice. (See Luke 1:44.)

Whatever the child hears in the womb he will be more attentive to after he is born. One father discovered this phenomenon shortly after the birth of his son.

The baby was screaming with pain due to a physical problem and could not be quieted. The father simply spoke to him. Immediately the baby stopped crying, turned toward his father, and became attentive to him. The medical personnel were then able to proceed with the special care he needed.

Parents who have carried out pre-birth training have even been able to effect a change in the baby’s position in the womb and have therefore avoided a c-section delivery.

In another situation a father talked to his child who was under extreme stress in the womb. As soon as the father started talking to his unborn child, the fetal monitor showed an immediate change, and the baby’s heart tones remained in the normal range for two hours so a natural delivery could occur.



VII. How did Attentiveness prepare a boy to be President?



John Adams was the second President the United States and the father of John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States. The older Mr. Adams gave his son special training on how to be attentive in every area of life.

When John was eleven years old, he accompanied his father on a dangerous voyage to France. During that trip his father wrote in his diary, “Johnny’s behavior gave me a satisfaction I cannot express. Fully sensible of our danger, he was constantly endeavoring to bear it with a manly patience, very attentive to me, and his thoughts constantly running in a serious vein.”

1. He saw life through the Bible

In earlier years John’s father had written him the following letter:

“It is essential, my son, in order that you may go through life with comfort to yourself, and usefulness to your fellow-creatures, that you should form and adopt certain rules or principles, for the government of your own conduct temper... [They are] in the Bible, you must learn them, and from the Bible how to practice them. Those duties are to God, to your fellow-creatures, and to yourself.

“‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and love thy neighbor as thyself.’ On these two commandments, Jesus Christ expressly says, ‘hang all the law and the prophets,’ that is to say, the whole purpose of Divine Revelation is to inculcate them efficiently upon the minds of men.”

2. He recorded what he saw and heard

Young John began a journal in which he wrote out the important things which he saw and heard. Because of his commitment to being a wise leader, he became attentive to details and to the needs of people. His application of attentiveness earned him many public offices. After his term as President, he was elected to the House of Representatives.

VIII. What is the key to Attentiveness? Having “Spiritual Ears”

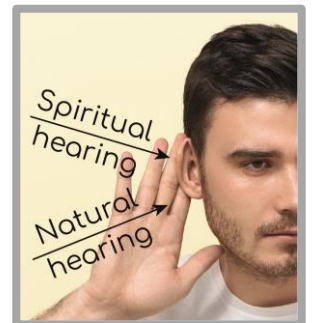
1. Scripture teaches that there are two types of hearing—spiritual and natural

Our natural ears can distinguish the meaning of audible sounds. Our “spiritual ears” can recognize the voice of God as He “speaks” to us through the Bible.

Having “spiritual ears” is far more important to learning attentiveness than any physical listening we may do. In fact, without “spiritual ears” it would be impossible to achieve the level of attentiveness necessary to be successful in life.

Notice the distinction between spiritual and physical hearing in the following verse:

“For this people’s **heart** is waxed gross, and their **ears are dull of hearing**, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and **hear with their ears**, and should **understand with their heart**, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:15).



2. How to get “Spiritual Ears”

“Spiritual ears” begin to be developed as we listen to our consciences tell us how we have broken God’s holy Law.

God has written His Law in our hearts, and early in childhood we break every one of His Ten Commandments, which are:

1. Thou shalt have no other gods.
2. Thou shalt not make any graven images.
3. Thou shalt not profane God’s name.
4. Thou shalt honor the Sabbath.
5. Thou shalt honor thy parents.
6. Thou shalt not kill (get angry).
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery (lust).
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

The just punishment for breaking any one of these Laws is physical and spiritual death. However, God is not only a just God; He is also a merciful God.

In mercy, God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the full penalty for our breaking His Law. If we listen to the Holy Spirit convicting us of our sin, repent, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the full payment for our sin, we will acquire “spiritual ears.”

You can become a believer in Christ by sincerely praying the following:

“God, I confess that I have broken Your Law. I deserve to die, but I do now repent of my sin and receive Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the full payment for my sin. Amen.”

IX. How To Be Attentive

1. How to Be Attentive to God

We will never learn how to be truly attentive to others until we first learn how to be attentive to God.

The lessons we learn on how to concentrate on God, Whom we cannot see with our physical eyes, can be easily transferred to being attentive to people, whom we *can* see.

Attentiveness to God is based on an awareness of our need, just as a deer pants after the water brooks.



Spend time with God

The first step in learning to be attentive to God is to spend time with Him. God gives us precise instruction on how to go about arranging for a time to be alone with Him. *“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6).*

Seek the face of God.

When God turns His face upon us. He is pleased with our motives and purposes in seeking Him. When His face shines upon us, we are able to become more like Him and will receive the desire and the power to do His will. (See Psalm 67:1-2.) Our primary goal in getting alone with God is to seek His face. *“When thou saidst. Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek” (Psalm 27:8).*

Remove thoughts that distract from God

While we seek to be attentive to God, thoughts will often come to our minds. If we ask God for wisdom. He will reveal which thoughts are not from Him and which thoughts *are* from Him, such as clearing our consciences or fulfilling a promise. Write these thoughts down.

Listen to the Word of God

God “speaks” to us from the Bible. The Bible was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When we become believers, the Holy Spirit unites with our human spirits and teaches us how to apply God’s truth to our lives. God promises/ *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein...” (Revelation 1:3).*

Develop a hunger for the Word of God

God compares the Bible to milk for a newborn baby. (See I Peter 2:2.) This analogy emphasizes the vital necessity of daily Bible reading. Many have found that making a vow to read the Bible at least five minutes every day has given them the consistency they have needed to grow in the Lord and to be attentive to God.

Meet early in the morning with God

Jesus rose “up a great while before day” and became attentive to His Heavenly Father. (See Mark 1:35.) David said, “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Psalm 5:3).



Use fasting to concentrate on God

By going without food for one or more meals and devoting that time to Bible reading and prayer, we become far more attentive to the voice of the Lord speaking through Scripture. God also promises to reward those who fast for this purpose. (See Matthew 6:16-18.) Fasting provides an excellent opportunity to memorize and meditate on Scripture. Meditation on God’s Word brings true success. (See Psalm 1.)

2. How to Be Attentive to Your Parents

God promises that things will go well for us if we honor our parents. Attentiveness to parents is a basic aspect of honoring them. (See Ephesians 6:1-2.) God warns that those who despise their fathers or push away their mothers will become a prey to the destroyer.

Honor the presence of your parents

Respect for a person is the first prerequisite to attentiveness. Soldiers demonstrate respect for an officer by standing at attention and saluting him. God commands respect for older people in Leviticus 19:32: *"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord."* The same type of respect should be shown to your parents to honor them. When they speak to you, stop what you are doing and listen to them.



Look at the faces of your parents



Parents communicate many important instructions through facial expressions without saying a word. If you do not see their facial expressions, you will miss much of their message to you. Words can have different meanings based on the facial expressions that accompany them. By looking at your parents, you are saying, "I am ready to hear and respond to what you have to say to me."

Look into the eyes of your parents

The eyes are the window of the soul and reveal the emotions of the heart. By looking into the eyes of your parents, you can tell when they are weary, sad, anxious, disappointed, or concerned. God emphasizes the instruction given through eyes in Psalm

32:8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Any guilt in your life will hinder eye contact.

Affirm the words of your parents.

When your parents speak to you, nod to them. A slow nod means, "I understand what you are saying to me." A faster nod means, "I understand and agree with what you are saying." Adding a smile to your nod means, "I appreciate you and am receiving what you are saying." When appropriate, give verbal acknowledgment such as "Yes, sir" or "I understand what you are saying."

Clarify the instruction of your parents

When instruction is given, clarify what you have heard. You might ask, "Let me see if I understand what you are saying," then summarize the key points of the instruction. If you do not understand what your parents are telling you to do, you will not be able to obey them.

Remember the words of your parents

The purpose of attentiveness is to have the words of your parents guide you as you act upon them. This goal is explained in Proverbs 6:20-22: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." A practical way to remember your parents' words is to write them down.



Be within hearing distance of your parents

Your parents should always know where you are so they can reach you with important information. You cannot be attentive to your parents if you cannot hear what they are saying to you. If you need to go beyond hearing distance, ask them for permission so they will know how to contact you at all times.

3. How to Be Attentive to Your Conscience

Your conscience will tell you when you are doing right and when you are doing wrong. When you listen to your conscience. God will protect you from the destructive consequences of temptation. If you disregard your conscience, you will experience guilt and reproofs of life.

Understand your conscience

Your conscience is the quiet “judicial branch” of your heart. God has written His Law into your conscience so you instinctively know right from wrong.

The interaction between your conscience and your mind is described in Romans 2:15: “Which shew the work of the *law written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their thoughts* the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”



Make a friend of your conscience

Your conscience will often disagree with the things you want to do. This conflict occurs because you have God-given desires that Satan wants you to fulfill in wrong ways. If you overrule your conscience, you will experience guilt. Guilt brings depression, damages your fellowship with God, and contributes to a whole array of mental, emotional, and physical illnesses.



Clear your conscience

When you become a believer, the Holy Spirit enters your human spirit and establishes fellowship with God. (See Romans 8:16.) God’s Spirit then bears witness with your spirit when you do right or wrong. He reminds you of people you have wronged in the past. He gives you strength and courage to go to each one and ask for forgiveness by stating how you offended that person and asking him if he would forgive you. As you do this, you will again enjoy a good conscience.

Strengthen a weaker conscience

It is possible to dull your conscience by rejecting the voice of the Holy Spirit. Your rejection will then grieve the Holy Spirit and quench His power in your life. However, by reading and meditating on God’s Law, you will strengthen your conscience. (See Psalm 19:7; John 17:17.)

Listen to your conscience

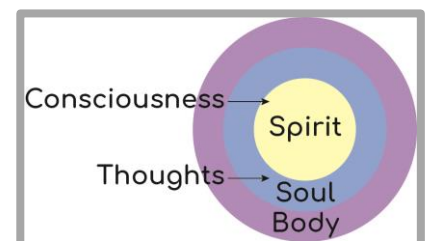
Listen for the cautions of your conscience before speaking any word or carrying out any action. “... *Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*” (James 1:19). The voice of your conscience will be very quiet. Its first words to you will usually be “Is what you are about to do really right?”

Agree with your conscience

The slightest caution from your conscience should be interpreted as a flashing red light to stop and rethink what you were planning to say or do. To disregard your conscience would be to dull its effectiveness and grieve the Holy Spirit.

Reject rationalizations of your conscience

If your mind, will, or emotions wants to do what your conscience says is wrong, you will find your reasoning power instinctively justifying your intended action. The “reasons” you think up are rationalizations. Rationalizations are dangerous, because there is no sin that you cannot rationalize away.



Check up on your conscience

We are to “... *exhort one another daily . . . lest any . . . be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*” (Hebrews 3:13). Daily exhortation requires openness and accountability with parents and others. God also designed the communion table as a regular time of examining the conscience in the presence of God. (See 1Corinthians 11:28-32.)

4. How to Be Attentive to Your Elders

The character quality of attentiveness (or the lack of it) will be obvious to everyone when you are in a group listening to a speaker. To the degree that you are attentive, you will not only receive more from what is spoken, but you will also encourage the one who is speaking.

Know your elders

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake...”
(1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Qualified elders have learned valuable Scriptural truths and important lessons in life in order to reach their present level of spiritual maturity. Take the initiative and spend time with your elders. Your attentiveness will motivate them to share with you the rich spiritual treasures which they have gleaned over the years.



Share needs with your elders

God gives special spiritual authority to the elders, which they are able to draw upon when we have needs. When we are sick, we are instructed to call for the elders of the church to have them pray for us and anoint us with oil. At the same time we are to confess our faults one to another and pray for one another, that we might be healed. (See James 5:14-16.)



Practical Ways to Demonstrate Attentiveness in a Group Meeting

Sit up and lean slightly forward

Your posture, especially the way you sit in church, communicates powerful messages about your attitudes. Your posture also affects your ability to hear what is being said. Slouching down in your seat says, “I don’t want to be here. I’m bored, and I’m not interested in what you have to say.” Sitting up straight and leaning slightly forward means, “I am interested in what you are saying and eager to hear every word.” Your posture will not only affect you and those around you but will also motivate or discourage the speaker.

Look at the speaker

Looking around shows disrespect and inattentiveness to the speaker. If you look at others, you distract them and communicate to the speaker, “What is happening around me is more important or interesting than what you are saying to me.”

Don’t watch your watch

If you look at your watch during a message, you say to the speaker, “I think you’re speaking overtime. I’m bored, and I wonder how much longer I have to sit here.” Such a gesture, when observed by others, communicates not only inattentiveness, but rudeness as well.

Take notes on what you hear

Taking notes on a message is a powerful way to demonstrate attentiveness. Note-taking is also a practical way to remember what you have heard. Your note-taking says to the speaker, “What you are telling me is so valuable that I want to make sure I do not forget it.”

Stifle yawns, coughs, and sneezes

Yawns are contagious to those around you, and coughs and sneezes are disruptive. Sometimes they are unavoidable; however, certain steps can be taken to lessen their disruptive force. If you feel a yawn coming on, take a deep breath and keep your mouth closed. (A yawn means you need more oxygen, and probably more sleep.)

Try to stifle sneezes in your handkerchief if remedies to avoid the sneeze do not work. If you have a cough, make sure you bring cough drops that you can quietly put in your mouth. Avoid the noise of unwrapping cough drops. If you must clear your throat, do it quietly. Do not chew gum. It is considered poor manners.

Dress up for church

If you were given the opportunity of a private audience with the President, you would certainly not come in sloppy clothes. How much less should you think of coming to worship the Lord God of Hosts in inappropriate clothing. Dressing up for church communicates reverence for God and respect for others who are there, especially for the one who is speaking. It also causes you to be more attentive to what is being said.

Sit as close to the front as possible



One of the most powerful ways to demonstrate attentiveness and also to encourage the speaker is to sit as close to the front as possible. The very concept of a disciple is one who sits at the feet of his teacher. The closer you sit, the fewer distractions you will have.

Pray for your elders

Paul asked his listeners to pray that he would have the boldness to speak the things he ought to speak. (See Ephesians 6:19.) When you pray for the boldness of your elders, you will be more attentive to what they have to say in order to learn how God has answered your prayers.

Have “attentiveness-training” sessions

Enthusiastically say to your younger children, “Let’s see how long you can sit quietly without moving.” Then have them sit on a chair, and using a stopwatch, see how many minutes (or seconds) they can sit still. When they move, exclaim, “Wow! You sat for ____ minutes (or seconds) without moving! Let’s try this again tomorrow to see if we can do even better!” When they can sit for an hour, they are ready to go to church.

5. How to Be Attentive to Your Civil Authorities

Civil authorities are “ministers of God for doing good.” (See Romans 13:1-7.) They are appointed by God to protect us from being a law unto ourselves and creating anarchy—in which every man does that which is right in his own eye.

Know your civil authorities

The steps taken to be attentive to parents and elders should also be applied to government officials. Begin by learning who your civil authorities are, including federal, state, and local representatives. Then find out as much as you can about them and their families.

Learn how God uses civil authorities

God has chosen to work through civil authorities. They are described in Scripture as ministers of God for the praise of those who do well and the punishment of those who do evil. (See I Peter 2:14.) As you listen to government officials, you must recognize what God is saying to you through them for your good.

Pray for civil authorities



Government officials experience greater pressures than does the average person because of the importance of their jobs. Unwise decisions will have consequences to all those whom they represent. Therefore, we are instructed to make supplications, prayers, and intercessions *“... For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”* (I Timothy 2:2).

Know the law of civil authorities

Government officials are appointed to carry out the law. Those who break the law are attacking the order of God and therefore are in line to be punished. Ignorance of the law is not acceptable as an excuse for violating it. Therefore, it is important that you learn the laws that directly relate to your life. These laws include tax laws, traffic laws, property laws, business laws, liability-for-negligence laws, copyright laws, health laws, and home education laws.

Study decisions of civil authorities

When an authority issues a strict ruling toward an individual or issues a harsh statement regarding some policy, be attentive to the factors which have motivated him to deal in this way.

Often the true intent of an authority is misunderstood by those who feel he is singling them out, when actually his concern is for a different group or situation.



Encourage civil authorities

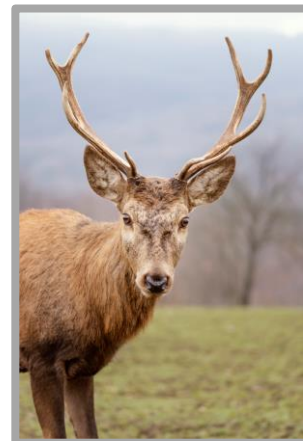
Civil authorities are in the public eye. Whenever something happens in their personal lives, it becomes public knowledge. Often reports are distorted or inaccurate, which only causes further grief to the officials and their families. Be attentive to these situations, and use them for opportunities to write personal notes to them.

Assure them of your prayers for them/ and ask God for an appropriate verse of Scripture that would give them encouragement and direction and draw them closer to Him. Keep your letter or note brief and to the point/ and pray for God to prepare them to receive it.

Look for ways to meet civil authorities

If you have been faithful in praying for your civil authorities and encouraging them during times of need, you may have the opportunity to meet personally with them and become better acquainted. When you meet with a civil authority, assure him of your respect for him because of the instruction in Scripture that he is a minister of God for doing good. (See Romans 13:3-4.)

Tell him that you are committed to doing all you can to help him be successful in doing good. Ask him if there is any further way that you can assist him, in addition to your prayers. Emphasize that you are not looking for any personal gain or recognition. Your reward will be the joy of seeing him benefit the lives of many people.



6. How to Be Attentive to Your Employer

God gives clear instruction to all employees to do more than what is expected in whatever job is assigned to them. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, *as to the Lord*, and not unto men; Knowing that *of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance*: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24).

Learn the priorities of your employer

Your employer has achieved a level of success because he has learned what needs to be done and how to do it efficiently. Realize that your employer understands or perceives a bigger picture than you do. If he has learned what things are important through trial and error, he will be able to explain them to you, but if he instinctively has wise priorities, you will need to be attentive to the way he does things in order to follow his example.



Protect the name of your employer

Your employer's name is his most valuable asset. The more respected his name is, the more people will trust his product or service. When you become an employee, you represent your employer's name. Whatever you do will cause people to think either more highly or less highly of your employer. By increasing respect for your employer's name, you also increase respect for the work you are doing.



Know the policies of your employer

Every company has written and unwritten policies which are designed to maintain harmony and productivity. Often these policies are not clearly presented to new employees or remembered by long-term employees. It is therefore important to honor your employer by learning and following written and unwritten policies.

Understand pressures on your employer

One of the most valuable ways that you can demonstrate attentiveness to your employer is to be aware of the special pressures that are upon him. He is responsible not only for the success of the company but also for the needs of his wife and children. When unexpected pressures such as lawsuits, physical illness, or financial loss come, he will greatly appreciate words of encouragement or actions to lift his load.

Deflect praise to your employer

Do your work so well that people will be grateful for the way they were served. When they praise you for your work, deflect the praise to your employer and the Lord by saying, "I know that my boss would want me to do the best possible job for you," or "I know that this is the way my boss would have done it, and most of all, I want to please the Lord in everything I do."

Be an “energy-giver” to your employer

There are two types of employees: *energy-givers* and *energy-takers*. *Energy-givers* encourage those around them with a smile, an appropriate word of praise, and diligence in all they do. *Energy-takers* grumble, look for things that are negative, are ungrateful, and generally discourage those around them.

Know what is vital to your employer

The success or failure of a company will usually be determined by details. There are details such as knowing when to encourage a fellow employee or a customer, knowing when to double-check the accuracy of an order or the amount of a bill, knowing how to design a more efficient procedure, knowing when to straighten up the office, and knowing how to take care of tools and equipment.

X. How To Balance Attentiveness With Alertness

While *attentiveness* is concentrating on the words of a person, *alertness* is being aware of our surroundings while we are listening. Both attentiveness and alertness are necessary.

A pedestrian could be very attentive to a green light that allows him to cross an intersection. However, if he is not **alert** to a speeding car that is going to run the red light, his **attentiveness** will become his undoing. His attentiveness will tell him he has the right of way, but his lack of alertness will mean that he is “dead right.”



1. With Discretion

Discretion is the ability to avoid words, actions, and attitudes that can bring undesirable consequences. This quality is vital in recognizing those to whom we should or should not give our attention. Discretion is also necessary in knowing how long we should be attentive. If we demonstrate *only* attentiveness, we will encourage some people to talk longer than they should and say things that we should not hear. *“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).*

2. With Love

It is possible to be attentive to a person out of duty rather than genuine love. Love is giving to the basic needs of others without motive of personal reward. Love must be the motivation to be attentive and the direction for what we hear when we are attentive. Without love, attentiveness can be used for personal gain. An employee can be attentive to the boss when in his presence but then change his attitude as soon as the boss leaves. Love motivates us to be attentive with singleness of heart as unto the Lord. (See Ephesians 6:5-8.)

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Gather your family together and teach on attentiveness. Adjust the material to the age and attention span of your children. Interact with them, even at the teen level. Don't make it a lecture! Write a short report on what you did, who was there and what interaction you had with different members.



Date:

Who:

How:

- Preach on attentiveness. Adapt to the audience. Use many illustrations. Write a brief report below



Date

Where:

Who:

What was the response: