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## BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER

### REACH+EQUIP+GO

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### “WHAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US”

For use the week of December 4, 2011

#### Read to the group (5 minutes)

“There is a real distinction between merely **hearing the words** and really **listening for the message**. When we listen effectively we understand what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other person’s own perspective. It is as if we were standing in the other person’s shoes, seeing through his/her eyes and listening through the person’s ears. Our own viewpoint may be different and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen, we understand from the other’s perspective. To listen effectively, we must be actively involved in the communication process and not just listening passively.” (retrieved from <http://www.drnadig.com/listening.htm> 12.1.11)

#### CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER (10-20 minutes)

How well does everyone listen? Choose an activity and discover how well you listen:

1. Play the telephone gossip game. The first person writes out a tongue twisting sentence then whispers it quickly to the person on her/his left. Each person, in turn, repeats what was understood, whispering it to the person on her/his left until the sentence is finally whispered to the first whisperer. Now, the first person repeats what was heard and then reads the original sentence. What changed? Where did the distortions occur? How does this simple activity reflect reality?
2. Discuss times when group members either were misunderstood or ended up misunderstanding someone else. What was misunderstood? What was done to improve or correct the misunderstanding? Were there problems you had to deal with during the misunderstanding? Was the misunderstanding ever resolved? Looking back, what might have prevented the misunderstanding, if anything?

#### STUDYING THE SCRIPTURE (20-30 minutes)

*1-2 Now listen, Israel, listen carefully to the rules and regulations that I am teaching you to follow so that you may live and enter and take possession of the land that God, the God-of-Your-Fathers, is giving to you. Don't add a word to what I command you, and don't remove a word from it. Keep the commands of God, your God, that I am commanding you.*

*3-4 You saw with your own eyes what God did at Baal Peor, how God destroyed from among you every man who joined in the Baal Peor orgies. But you, the ones who held tight to God, your God, are alive and well, every one of you, today.*

*5-6 Pay attention: I'm teaching you the rules and regulations that God commanded me,*

*so that you may live by them in the land you are entering to take up ownership. Keep them. Practice them. You'll become wise and understanding. When people hear and see what's going on, they'll say, "What a great nation! So wise, so understanding! We've never seen anything like it."*

*<sup>7-8</sup> Yes. What other great nation has gods that are intimate with them the way God, our God, is with us, always ready to listen to us? And what other great nation has rules and regulations as good and fair as this Revelation that I'm setting before you today?*

*<sup>9</sup> Just make sure you stay alert. Keep close watch over yourselves. Don't forget anything of what you've seen. Don't let your heart wander off. Stay vigilant as long as you live. Teach what you've seen and heard to your children and grandchildren.*

*Deuteronomy 4:1-9 The Message*

- Who is talking here? (see Deuteronomy 1:1) Who is his audience? (verse 1)
- What are they to “listen carefully” about? (verse 1) What 3 warnings are they given as they listen? (verse 2)
- What did they see? (verses 3-4) Read Numbers 25:1-5 for a description of the incident at Baal Peor. What did Moses want the Israelites to remember from this incident?
- Why do you think the Israelites needed to be reminded about Baal Peor? What similarly important events does it seem Christ followers more easily forget? Why?
- Moses shifts gears abruptly (verses 5-6). What do you imagine his “Pay attention” (verse 5) sounded like? What words or phrases did your parents use to assure that you were listening? Parents, what words or phrases do you use with your children when you’re not sure they’re listening carefully?
- What has God used with you to assure that you “pay attention?”
- Describe God’s ultimate desire for us (verses 7-8).
- How well do those desires exist and grow in your relationship with God? What encourages them? What blocks them?
- Moses finishes with 6 additional instructions (verse 9). List the instructions.

## **GROWING TOGETHER (5-10 MINUTES)**

This scripture passage begins and ends with strong warnings to listen and to listen carefully. What does God want you to listen to? What does he want you to remember and to pass along to others?

What can you do this week to increase your listening, not simply your hearing?

Pray together for help from God and from each other to listen carefully to God’s messages and instructions for your life.