



Tuning Your Ear to God's Perfect Pitch

1.6.08 by Heather Goodman

Article:

My dad told me the story.

My husband told me the story.

A friend of mine told me the story.

In other words, I've heard the story.

Imagine this: a group of guys figuring out lunch plans. It's the Wednesday slump, so they all decide to go out for the meal. You pile in a car, maybe two, and about halfway there, you realize they've decided to go to a strip club—for the free lunch.

If I were in that situation, I know the angel and demon on my shoulders would barrage me with their reasonings:

"What else can you do?" the demon says in his gruff voice (because all shoulder demons have gruff voices). "You're already in the car with them. Almost there."

"But you know it's wrong to go into a strip club," says the angel in his angelic tenor.

"So go in and don't look," says the demon. "Turn your back to the girls."

"But tempt yourself?" asks the angel.

"Think about the witness you could be in such a place." The demon sits down, crossing his legs, his ankle over his knee. Relaxed, he says, "These are the people that need you. Plus, they might discuss business, and you know what happened last time you missed a lunch when they discussed business."

Or imagine this: Your boss asks you to adjust the numbers so that they look better for the board. "Just a little bit," he says, "like adjusting your seat in the car to drive more alertly."

Or imagine this: You're tempted to expense a dinner to the company. After all, you're with a coworker and business came up, and you can't afford that hundred-dollar bottle of wine.

Or imagine this: Isn't it easier (and cheaper!) to use the office copier for your Sunday School handouts?

Each of these scenarios raise the same basic question. How does a Christian remain pure when the expectations are otherwise? It's the Psalmist's question in [Psalm 119:9](#). "How can a young person maintain a pure life?" His answer: "By guarding it according to your instructions!"

No doubt, the Bible can be a strange book of instructions. It's the story of our identity, of our Creator and Redeemer, of the hope of our future, but it doesn't give us all the answers. Not flat out, at least. We can't find a guide on expensing business lunches in the first epistle of Donald Trump. Which begs the question, how does guarding a life according to God's instructions necessarily lead to purity?

A musician named Trevor Wye once told me about a time he tuned his harpsichord. He had come from teaching a beginner flute class. Beginner flutists, he explained, may all finger the note "A," but they don't play the same pitch. The sound waves go schizophrenic, wreaking havoc in your ear. Because of this, his first tuning of the harpsichord left much to be desired. His second came closer but still needed help.

Around the third time, his ear began to center in on the correct pitches and wavelengths, until he produced a pure and joyous sound from the instrument.

In the same way, Psalm 119 connects purity and joy with the Word of God. We seek God through God's commands (verse 10) and like the Psalmist we can say, "In my heart I store up your words, so I might not sin against you" (verse 11, NET). When we treasure God's Word, we can tune our lives to his perfect pitch.

What does it look like to treasure God's Word? How do we train our ears? It takes concentration, commitment, and time. Study the Scripture—daily. Seek God in prayer—passionately. And listen for the prompting of the Holy Spirit—patiently. You'll find the purity and joy of a centered life—whether you are making a meal, running the budget numbers, or just making copies.

