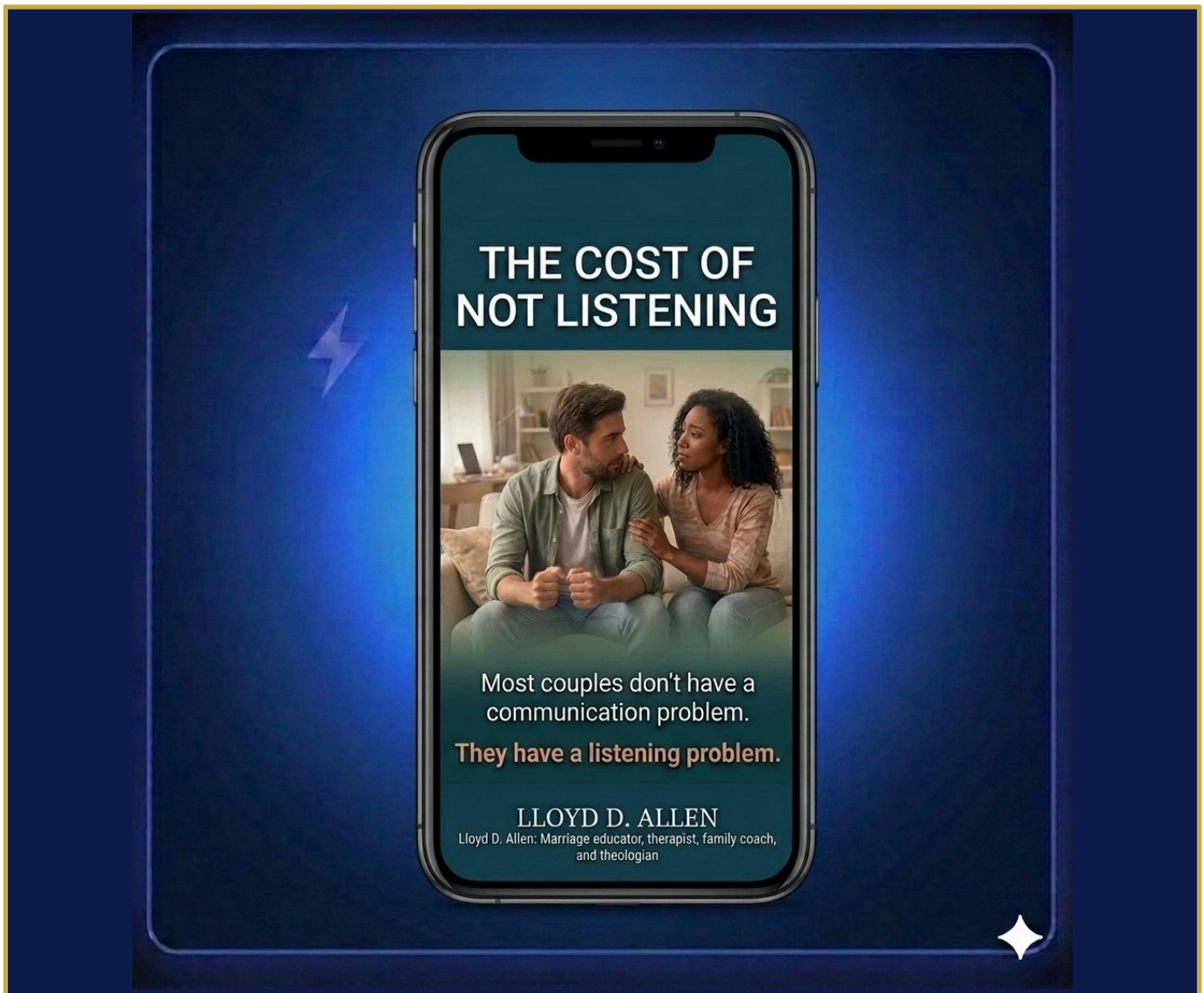


THE COST OF NOT LISTENING

Why Every Unheard Spouse Pays a Price — and What You Can Do About It



“Most couples don’t have a communication problem. They have a listening problem.”

Every unheard word is a wound. Every dismissed emotion is a withdrawal from the marital account. This document explores the true cost of not listening — and the path back to a marriage where both spouses feel genuinely heard.

Most couples don't have a communication problem. They have a listening problem.

01 | THE MISSED MOMENTS

Every marriage has them — moments when one spouse reaches out and the other simply doesn't receive it. Not out of cruelty, but out of habit. The failure to truly listen quietly erodes the foundation of trust and safety that every healthy marriage depends on.

- A wife says “*I'm overwhelmed*” — he hears nagging. She needed to be understood, not fixed.
- A husband says “*I'm stressed about money*” — she hears criticism. He needed support, not defense.
- A teenager acts out — the parents argue about discipline instead of asking *why*.
- One spouse says “*I'm not happy*” — the other dismisses it. Six months later, divorce papers arrive.
- She said it a hundred times. He never really heard it. Now she's done talking.

*“He who answers before listening — that is his folly and his shame.”
— Proverbs 18:13*

02 | THE COST OF NOT LISTENING

The Hebrew word for *folly* in Proverbs 18:13 is *ivvelet* — moral recklessness. The word for *shame* is *kelimmah* — public disgrace. God is not describing a minor social awkwardness. He is describing a character failure with real consequences — consequences that show up in living rooms, courtrooms, and broken homes.

- Listening says: *you matter more than my rebuttal.*
- Not listening says: *my point matters more than your pain.*
- Couples end marriages over wounds that a single honest, unhurried conversation could have healed.
- The affair didn't start in a bedroom — it started when someone finally felt *heard* by the wrong person.

03 | WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

James 1:19 commands us to be “*swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*” Listening is not passive — it is one of the most intentional acts of love in marriage. It requires you to set aside your agenda and make room for your spouse's reality.

- Put the phone down. Make eye contact. Be fully present before a word is spoken.
 - Ask: “*Help me understand what you mean*” — before you respond, defend, or explain.
 - Repeat back what you heard. Not to parrot — but to confirm you actually received it.
 - Let silence breathe. Your spouse may need a moment to find the words that matter most.
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The most powerful thing you can give your spouse costs nothing —
your full, undivided attention.

Listen like the marriage you want depends on it. Because it does.

— *Lloyd Allen | Marriage Educator, Therapist, Family Coach and Theologian*

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