

SESSION 6

The Fundamental Rules for Godly Communication

One of the most common roots of problems in the home is without question unbiblical communication patterns. If husbands or wives fail to express themselves clearly (or at all), or if they fail to listen attentively, relationships flounder. Unbiblical communication becomes a wedge used by Satan to disrupt the family and results in anger, hurt, ignorance and disunity.

THE PRIORITY OF GODLY COMMUNICATION

A. Our Communication is Important to God.

“Communication is extremely important to God. It involves self-control and discipline character qualities that the Christian must possess. Communication involves ruling our spirit, our tongue, and our body, and going against our feelings when they contradict what we know to be true. Communication involves the heart, which is of the greatest importance to God. He often addresses our communication to expose the heart, because our communication is ruled by what is in our heart.”¹

Matthew 12:36-37 *“But I tell you that **every careless word** that people speak, they **shall give an accounting for it** in the day of judgment. For **by your words** you will be justified, and **by your words** you will be condemned.”*

Matthew 15:18-20 *...the **things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart**, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man*

Luke 6:45 *The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil. **For his mouth speaks from the abundance of his heart***

B. Our Communication is Important to Our Family

Communication is the vehicle that is used to accomplish many responsibilities and relational aspects of the family. Without it, we cannot fulfill our roles properly, express love effectively, address important issues, or resolve conflicts. Every command of the Lord for the family requires godly communication in order to be followed. Husbands living with their wives in an understanding way (**1 Peter 3:7**). Wives submitting to their husbands (**Ephesians 5:22**). Children obeying their parents (**Colossians 3:20**). And parents not provoking their children (**Ephesians 6:4**).

“Wherever you find marital failure, you will find a breakdown in real communication. Wherever you find marital success, you will find a good communication system...good communication is essential to the development of genuine oneness.”²

¹ Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband, p. 228

² Wayne Mack, Strengthening Your Marriage, p. 56

THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A. Communication is a Reflection of the Heart

Matthew 12:34 “...for the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”

Proverbs 18:4 “The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters...”

B. Communication is Corrupted by Sin

Adam & Eve’s communication with God went from openness and honesty to some of the following ways of communicating in Genesis 3:7-12.

Genesis 3:7 Instead of being honest, they **covered the truth**

Genesis 3:8 Instead of being honest, they **avoided conversation**

Genesis 3:10 Instead of being honest, they **only told part of the story**

Genesis 3:12 Instead of being honest, they sent a “back door” message and **shifted the blame**

C. Communication Can Be Constructive or Destructive

CONSTRUCTIVE: **Building Up, Helpful, Useful, Edifying, Calming, Encouraging**

Proverbs 15:1 “a gentle answer turns away wrath...”

Proverbs 16:24 “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

1 Thessalonians 4:18 “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

DESTRUCTIVE: **Tearing Down, Unhelpful, Futile, Hurtful, Provoking, Discouraging**

Proverbs 11:9 “With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor...”

Proverbs 15:1 “...a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 15:4 “a soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit.”

D. Communication is More Than Just Words

The majority of our communication is non-verbal. We must pay attention to how we display ourselves to one another, and we must be careful how we interpret non-verbal communication.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

Volume of voice	Tone of voice	Facial expressions
Hand gestures	Sighing	Rolling of eyes
Body posture	Touch	Look of amazement or disgust
Arms crossed	On the phone	Multi-tasking

E. Good Communication is Dependent On Good Listening

Effective communication is the process of sharing information with another person in such a way that the sender's message is understood as he/she intended it.

Communication is a 2-way street (it involves speaking and listening)³

How to Speak Well:

Desire to please God with your communication more than anything else

Speak with humility, patience, and love

Remember that you are accountable to God for everything you communicate

Think before you speak and be slow to speak

How to Listen Well:

Concentrate on and carefully consider what the other person is saying.

Do not interrupt.

Do not formulate what you are going to say while the other person is talking.

Do not talk too much. Allow breaks in the conversation so another person can have time to process information, formulate what they want to say, and then say it to you.

Always ask for clarification

Do not talk when someone else is speaking

F. Avoid Deficient & Excessive Communication

Deficient Communication (The Under-Talker)

Sometimes, people struggle with communicating the wrong things or with failing to communicate the right things. But communication is a learned behavior and requires growth just like every other area of their lives.

Excessive Communication (The Over-Talker)

Proverbs 18:2 *“A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.”*

Proverbs 10:19 *“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable...”*

³ Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband, p. 230-231

THE PREPARATION FOR GODLY COMMUNICATION

Ephesians 4:1-32 – Integrity, Honesty, Truth

1. We Must Speak Words Worthy of Christ

Ephesians 4:1-3 *Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to **walk worthy** of the calling with which you have been called, with **all humility and gentleness**, with **patience**, **bearing with one another in love**, being **diligent to keep the unity** of the Spirit in the **bond of peace**.*

To “Walk Worthy” conveys the idea of daily, habitual, continual living or conduct equal to the standard and calling of Christ. Our life must match our identity in Christ. Worthy talk is part of a worthy walk.

Romans 6:4-14 **walk in newness of life** – united with Christ; not letting sin reign; presenting the instruments of our body as instruments of righteousness

Galatians 5:16-26 **walk by the Spirit** - the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want...the deeds of the flesh are evident...enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envying...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...walk in step with the Spirit. Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another.

2. We Must Understand Our Fallen Nature

Ephesians 4:17-18 *Therefore this I say, and testify in the Lord, that you **walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk**, in the **futility** of their mind, being **darkened** in their mind, **alienated** from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **hardness of their heart**. And they, having become **callous**, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness*

“When a person determines to think his own way, do things his own way, and pursue his own destiny, he cuts himself off from God. When that happens he cuts himself off from truth and becomes spiritually blind and without standards of morality. Without standards of morality, immorality becomes a shameless and calloused way of life. When that is continued it destroys the mind's ability to distinguish good from evil, truth from falsehood, and reality from unreality. The godless life becomes the mindless life. That process characterizes every unbeliever. It is the direction that every ungodly person is headed, although some are further along than others.”⁴

⁴ John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians, p. 172.

“The new walk in Christ is the exact opposite of the old walk of the flesh. Whereas the old is self-centered and futile, the new is Christ centered and purposeful. Whereas the old is ignorant of God's truth, the new knows and understands it. Whereas the old is morally and spiritually calloused and shameless, the newest sensitive to sin of every sort. Whereas the old is depraved in its thinking, the new is renewed.”⁵

3. We Must Reprogram Our Mind & Our Speech

Ephesians 4:20-24 *But you did not learn Christ in this way— if indeed you heard Him and were taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus— to lay aside, in reference to your former conduct, the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

Brainwash: to force someone to believe and do things; indoctrinate, condition them, convince and persuade them; teach and alter their thinking. We need our hearts and minds continually washed by the words of Christ. We must think & speak like Christ. Stop thinking, speaking for ourselves. You have to see and discern things the way they really are, not the way you have been programmed by this world system. We all have baggage, sin, wrong thinking, that we strive against in this present age. We must put off the old way of communicating and put on new communication.

Christ washes our minds and hearts with His Word. This is how He sanctifies us.

Ephesians 5:26-27 *He sanctifies his church, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

Romans 12:2 *...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Colossians 3:10-11 *...put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— a renewal in which... Christ is all, and in all.*

⁵ John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians, p. 173.

FOUR FUNDAMENTAL RULES FOR COMMUNICATION

Ephesians 4:25-32

PUT OFF & PUT ON PRINCIPLE:

Put Off: Cease doing what you once were accustomed to doing, stop living this way, remove these habits and manners from your life; lay aside the former life

Put On: Literally to Clothe or Dress. Begin living, practicing, training yourself to think, speak, live like Christ. This is the character that should cover & adorn your life.

1. **BE HONEST**

Ephesians 4:25 *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **speak truth** each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.*

In the family, everything must be on the table. Nothing is off limits. There can be no hidden compartments; secret habits; “things we just don’t talk about.” We must think, speak, live with honesty, integrity, and truthfulness. Be truth-tellers.

Put Off: FALSEHOOD (Pseudo) All pretending, anything false, spurious, untrue. Everything that is fake, not real, and not genuine (for self-gain & glorification)

Lies, deceit, manipulation, misrepresentation, flattery, exaggeration everything fake & untrue, anything that distorts truth, paints things in a way that isn’t totally true, all words and ways that make you look better than what you truly are, empty promises, 100% words (Always, never) – **all HYPOCRISY**

Colossians 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you put off the old man with its evil practices*

Put On: TRUTH Real, honest, accurate, genuine, correct, sincere, exactly representing reality

SPEAK THE TRUTH...

Consistently *Proverbs 10:9 - He who **walks in integrity** walks securely, But he who makes his ways crooked will be found out*

Continually *Psalm 86:11 - Teach me Your way, O Yahweh; I will **walk in Your truth**; Unite my heart to fear Your name*

Comprehensively *Ephesians 4:15 - **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is Christ*

Clearly *Matthew 5:37 - let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of the evil one.*

Carefully *James 4:19 - ...be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...*

Compassionately *Colossians 4:6 - Let your words always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should answer each person*

2. KEEP CURRENT

Ephesians 4:26-27 ***Be angry**, and yet **do not sin**; **do not let** the sun go down on your anger, and **do not give** the devil an opportunity.*

Solve today's problems today. Sin and conflict are inevitable within the family. Unresolved anger gives Satan an open opportunity to divide and destroy relationships. Be angry, but **NEVER** (emphatic, insistent, absolute) **sin**; **NEVER suspend** unity; **NEVER subject** yourself to Satan

“There are two principles concerning when we should communicate. We must communicate as soon as time and situation will allow, and at a good time. We must not put off saying what needs to be said or dealing with conflict any longer than is necessary. When we wait without good reason, we are giving the devil an opportunity to use the situation for evil.”⁶

Put Off: NEGLECT Vengeance, Bitterness, Mercilessness, Avoidance, Disunity, Grudges, Lists

Put On: DILIGENCE Patience, Forgiveness, Mercy, Love, Peace, Unity, Reconciliation

Romans 12:19-21 ***Never take your own revenge**, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

1 Peter 2:21-23 *Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example** that you should **follow in His steps**, who did no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; who being reviled, was **not reviling in return**; while suffering, He was **uttering no threats**, but kept **entrusting Himself to Him** who judges righteously.*

We are not perfectly patient, understanding, wise, or gentle. If we stay angry long, we will inevitably sin. We must be **quick** to forgive; **quick** to show mercy; **quick** to ask for forgiveness; **quick** to pray; **quick** to fall at the feet of Christ

James 4:7 *Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

Never do the opposite Be subject to the devil and let him devour you. Resist the Lord and invite Him to give you over to your sin.

“Choosing the right time to speak will help good communication to take place. It is not being wise to deal with something important when there is really not enough time, when we or the other person are extremely tired, or when we know that the other person is either not in a very good frame of mind or distracted. A wise person will carefully choose his time to communicate.”⁷

Six questions to ask yourself before you speak

Do I have the facts right?	Should love hide it?
Is my timing right?	Is my attitude right?
Are my words loving?	Have I prayed for God's help?

⁶ Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband, p. 238

⁷ Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband, p. 239.

3. ATTACK THE PROBLEM, NOT THE PERSON

- Ephesians 4:29-30 *Let **no unwholesome word** proceed from your mouth, but **only such a word as is good** for building up what is needed, so that it will give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
- Put off: **INSULTS** Words that tear down and **attack the person**. Rotten; unwholesome, harmful, corrupting, unkind words
- Put on: **SUPPORT** Words that build up and **attack the problem**. Beneficial; kind; edifying; helpful; encouraging words
- Romans 14:19 *...pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 *...comfort one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing*
- Colossians 3:8 *But now you also, lay them all aside: wrath, anger, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth*
- “Good communication from God's perspective is sending a message that is holy, purposeful, clear, and timely.”⁸

4. ACT, DON'T REACT

- Ephesians 4:31-32 *Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has graciously forgiven you*
- Put off: **HATE** Communication that is malicious and impulsive
- Bitterness** – envy, resentment, jealousy, dislike, grudges, lists of wrongs
Wrath – flaring outbursts of rage
Anger – internal smoldering; hostility that seeks revenge
Shouting – harsh contention and strife; quarreling, brawling
Slander – speech that injures; defamation that rises from a bitter heart
Malice – the desire to harm others or see them suffer
- Put on: **LOVE** Communication that is gracious and thoughtful
- Kind** – gracious, benevolent; giving good they didn't earn
Tenderhearted – compassionate, sympathetic, loving
Forgiving – offering a gracious pardon to promote reconciliation
- Colossians 3:12-13 *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.***

⁸ Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband, p. 227.

Warning from James:

- James 3:5-6 *...the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And **the tongue is a fire**, the very world of unrighteousness; the tongue is set among our members as that which **defiles the entire body**, and **sets on fire the course of our existence**, and is **set on fire by hell***
- James 3:13-18 *Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good conduct his works in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **This wisdom is not coming down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic**. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is **disorder and every evil practice**. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruits, without doubting, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace*

Wisdom from Solomon:

- Proverbs 11:12 He who despises his neighbor lacks a heart of wisdom,
But a man of discernment keeps silent.
- Proverbs 11:13 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets,
But he who is faithful in spirit conceals a matter.
- Proverbs 12:16 An ignorant fool's anger is known at once,
But a prudent man conceals disgrace.
- Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.
- Proverbs 15:5 An ignorant fool spurns his father's discipline,
But he who keeps reproof is prudent.
- Proverbs 16:27 A vile man digs up evil,
And the words on his lips are like scorching fire.
- Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats a matter separates close companions.
- Proverbs 18:2 A fool does not delight in discernment,
But only in revealing his own heart.

Proverbs 18:6	A fool's lips come with strife, And his mouth calls for beatings.
Proverbs 18:8	The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the stomach.
Proverbs 18:17	The first to plead his case seems right, Until another comes and examines him.
Proverbs 18:23	The poor man speaks supplications, But the rich man answers with strong words.
Proverbs 19:1	Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity Than he who is crooked in lips and is a fool.
Proverbs 19:5	A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who breathes out lies will not escape.
Proverbs 20:19	He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with one of loose lips.
Proverbs 20:25	It is a trap for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!" And after the vows to make inquiry.
Proverbs 25:24	It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
Proverbs 26:18-19	Like a madman who shoots Firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "Am I not joking?"
Proverbs 26:20-21	With no wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, strife quiets down. Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.
Proverbs 26:22	The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the stomach.
Proverbs 27:2	Let a stranger praise you, and not your own mouth; A foreigner, and not your own lips.
Proverbs 29:20	Do you behold a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.