



Episode 3-19: Godly Wise Communication

Resources:

Books

[Praying the Bible - Donald Whitney](#)

[Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God - Tim Keller](#)

[Communication and Conflict Resolution - Stuart Scott](#)

[War of Words - Paul David Tripp](#)

[Marriage Conflict: Talking as Teammates - Steve Hoppe](#)

[Respect the Image - Timothy Shorey](#)

Podcasts/Sessions

[9 Tips for Making the Most of Your Bible Study - Jen Wilkin](#)

[Four Rules of Communication Lecture - Rob Green](#)

Blogs

[What to Do in an Emergency: Someone Has Gossiped About You or Slandered You - Jocelyn Wallace](#)

Website

[Faith Bible Seminary](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Okay, this is Janet back for another episode with my trusty co-host, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: Hi friends.

Janet: And today we're gonna talk about talking since we do quite a bit of that. Actually, officially, godly wise communication, but basically how we talk.



Jocelyn: I love this topic. So today what I'd like to do is divide this episode into three main sections. The first section I just wanna talk about what Godly communication even is. And we're gonna do that by interestingly, looking at some of the ways that God has communicated with humans. Isn't that

Janet: Excellent.

Jocelyn: a novel idea? I'm excited about it. Secondly, I just really wanna talk about what communication is, just pure and simple. When someone says the word communication, what does that actually mean?

Janet: Which is so interesting 'cause we use the word all the time.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But if you were gonna ask someone to define it, It'd be interesting what they come up with.

Jocelyn: And when I think about communication as having been a major in communication, I have a very specific thing that I mean by it.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And when other people say that, I think sometimes I don't think we're talking about the same thing.

Janet: Yeah, probably not.

Jocelyn: And then thirdly, we're just gonna be looking at a couple passages from scripture to investigate what God says wise communication will look like. And one of the reasons I wanna do this topic is because I know about it. This was actually my major in college. I graduated from Purdue with a degree in communication and a lot of my classes specialized in marriage and family communication. But I regularly, every single class I took, I was like, I could probably get a master's in this. No way. I could probably get a master's in this. Like I love interpersonal, I love symbols and dialects. I love negotiating. My favorite class was interviewing. It's like I just love everything about communication. And my family used to joke like there is no better major for someone who talks a lot than communication. It's like only you could have a whole major after your strongest and weakest character quality.

Janet: But at least you're learning how to do it well if you're gonna do it a lot.



Jocelyn: Exactly. And you know, another reason I wanted to talk about this is, When I think about godly wise communication, I don't honestly have a bunch of readily available resources that pop into my mind about this.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I can think of maybe a couple of books and I can think of a couple of sermons where components of biblical communication has been broken down, but I've never heard like a Christian communication class that just teaches you if you're gonna communicate, here's how to do it in a godly way. So, I think it's really important that the average person knows at least a little bit of basic stuff about Godly communication.

Janet: Well, we're all obviously already talking a lot, so why do you think it's that important that we understand this part of it?

Jocelyn: Well, so much of who we are as humans, responding to our creator, or humans functioning in the creator's world, require the ability to communicate, and without thinking about it a lot in advance, there's just gonna be a lot of potential to communicate in unwise, unbiblical, and unloving ways. I remember when I was homeschooling the kids, probably like in middle school, we were reading their English book and the whole first chapter, it was a Christian English book, but the whole first chapter was why it's important for humans to know how to communicate because God, their creator, made them as communicators

Janet: Love it

Jocelyn: And he wants them to communicate with him and with each other.

Janet: And I would imagine that if we just do what comes natural, it's not gonna be,

Jocelyn: It's not gonna be good.

Janet: So if you put it that way, okay, we're all communicating, we're all receiving communication all day long, and it's the primary way that we're gonna learn anything about God.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Because that's how he's designed for us to know him. He's communicated who he is.

Jocelyn: Especially when you think about now with the word of God being complete.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: We're not hearing new words from God, from prophets and stuff. We have to be able to read what he has communicated with us. So it's really



Janet: Yes. With comprehension. Yeah.

Jocelyn: Yes. So the first section that we're gonna talk about is godly communication. And the baseline of thinking about this is what is God's intention for communication? And even kind of like higher level, why does language even exist? So let's think about the first question. What is God's intention for communication? God created humans 'cause he wanted to accomplish some purposes. John 17:3 tells us, God created us to know him eternally. And in John 17:3, Jesus is praying to God. And in that prayer he reveals that he knows his mission is to restore humans who are under the curse of sin to a proper relationship with God. So God created us to know him and to live in a good relationship with him. Deuteronomy 6:5 and 6 tell us that God created us to love him with all of our heart, soul, and might. All of who we are in our inner man and our outer man. And then Revelations 4:11 tells us God created us to glorify him, to magnify him, to highlight his wonderful character and personhood. And Psalm 16: 5 through 11, among other places, tells us that God created us to enjoy him and to find joy in his presence. And so what's a common element to all of those purposes That God created humans for, Janet?

Janet: He had something in mind for us before he even created them. He already had a purpose for us.

Jocelyn: Right. And how did those humans find out from God why he created them?

Janet: Well, he had to tell them. He had to communicate it to them.

Jocelyn: Exactly. Where do you see that?

Janet: Well, probably in your very favorite place in scripture, right?

Jocelyn: Probably.

Janet: The creation mandate is at least one obvious place in Genesis 1: 26 to 28.

Jocelyn: So I actually have this written out to read because I want you to listen to the communication that happens between God and humans. This is what the passage says. I'll highlight and emphasize some of the words: then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them, and God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. So God had this purpose for humans before he ever created them. He created them and then he communicated his purpose to them so they would know. And I think that in itself is really cool. Like we're not left wondering. We're not left guessing.



Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: And a lot of people who have a wrong view of God, that is what they believe about God. If there is a God, he spun the world into action then and he walked away. But that's not what the Bible says.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: He created us and then he communicated.

Janet: And very quickly, which I loved.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: It's not like he waited till we had faltered around. He told them,

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: This is why you're here.

Jocelyn: And so as the creator, he's always the one initiating. He's leading, he's purposing. And as the creation, we are the ones that are receiving and responding and obeying. So God has a message that he wanted the humans to receive and understand and implement.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Like it was like, Hey, here's your job, people. He used communication to convey that message so that we would understand and implement the meaning of the message into our lives.

Janet: I guess in some respect, people are probably listening to that and going, that's kind of obvious. But I don't think we actually think, at least I don't think about it even that much, that God had a good reason for making me and he had to communicate that to me, so I would know it. Okay. So far so good.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So let's think about the second question. Why does language exist? The previous question we saw that God's intention in communication was to convey a message to humans that they would understand and implement. So what's the means through which God communicated with his humans? A common language that both parties understood and I personally don't think what anyone talks now is what they talked in the Garden of Eden.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: Like there was probably a different language that was, you know, changed.



Janet: You don't think it was English?

Jocelyn: I don't think so. If anything, maybe it was Hebrew or something or-- No. But like the Tower of Babel really affected language.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: But God used a common language that both parties understood. And he could have made his purposes clear in any number of ways. Like he could have just zapped it into their brain or touched them with his feet.

Janet: Absolutely.

Jocelyn: Like whatever, I don't know.

Janet: He's not limited.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So when we think about what language is, it's important to understand this. It's just a system that includes, sounds, symbols, and words that are used to convey meaning, idea, or thought. And so language is used orally and in writing as well as through body language, although that's not quite as clear as like just coming out and saying something. So to be sure we don't know what language God used, but we do know that he spoke and they understood. And so when you look a little later in Genesis, it also says that God used language to communicate to humans about specific jobs he was creating humans for, and he used language to warn them about danger. Genesis 2:15 through 18 tells us, the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the Lord God warned him, you may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die. Then the Lord God said it is not good for the man to be alone. I'll make a helper who is just right for him. So you can see. Then God parades this, you know, line of animals in front of Adam, and he was naming them as he was looking for a helper to see someone who was suitable and helping him accomplish his mission. So language was given by God as a way of ordering God's universe. And I first heard that concept in a teaching that Brent did one time in a BCTC session. He used language to order the universe, and then he gave Adam the job of mirroring him when Adam named and organized the animals. So God gives humans a framework to order reality, which helps them to do their mandate to subdue creation and defeat chaos. And God communicated to Adam what his job was, and what he should keep himself safe from. And something that's really interesting is that God expected Adam to then communicate that to Eve.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: And also Adam was expected to communicate with Eve about how she should help him accomplish the mission. I think it's really cool and you just have to read the scripture to see like



God communicated to Adam and the expectation was he would use language to communicate with Eve, in part to help keep her safe.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So God gave language so humans could know each other more, and also collaborate in executing the mission that God had given them. So there's just so much potential in that. He gives us his purposes. Then he gives us powerful tools: communication, using language to accomplish his purposes in his created world.

Janet: All right, so basically we have language so we can communicate with God and with each other. And since it is a gift from God, we should use our language the way he wants me to use it. We're supposed to somehow display his character by what we say and how we say it, and then we have his word in a written language so we can even know him.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So cool. And we're not gonna dive too deep into this, but it is interesting to point out that one of the ways that humanity's choice to Sin and Rebel had profound effects on communication and language. Can you think about what that might be, Janet?

Janet: Oh, the Tower of Babel. And I still remember when Brent, first time he spoke in Brazil and was with believers and they were all praying and he said, it's so hard to be somewhere where you don't know what they're saying.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Like they're all praying in Portuguese and he can't enter in. Yeah. And to know that they never experienced that till the Tower of Babel.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: When they couldn't understand each other.

Jocelyn: So you see in Genesis 11, this really terrible story, and it goes like this. At one time, all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. They began saying to each other, let's make bricks and harden them with fire. Then they said, come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and help us to keep from being scattered all over the world. So Janet, why was using language to collaborate in that way wrong?

Janet: Well, it's fascinating. God had already told them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Jocelyn: Yeah.



Janet: They were to spread out across the whole world, reflect his image and have bright lights of his image everywhere. And then we see them saying, actually let's not spread out and actually let's not image God. Let's make a name for ourselves. And the way they were gonna work together to do this was to use the language skills God gave them.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: To build a tower to exalt themselves.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Which was the exact opposite of why they even have language.

Jocelyn: It's like nauseating to think about it.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Like God gave us this really cool tool and instead of using it for the purpose he gave it, we used it to, Glorify ourselves.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So Genesis 11 tells us that instead of the post flood world repopulating the world to know love and glorify God, they used it to create a different rebellious plan.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: For their own glory and fame, and to try to keep themselves together instead of scattering and filling the whole earth with God's glory. So I mean it is interesting, especially when you think about parenting, like let the punishment fit the crime. So God decided to confuse their language to stop their rebellious plan. So he took the tool that they had misused and said, I will make the consequence fit with

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: How you used that tool incorrectly. So it really is the goodness of God that he confused their language and stopped them from being even more rebellious and more dishonoring God.

Janet: Yeah. And now because of evil and our sin, it's had a profound effect on language.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And our ability to communicate and now we have to work a lot harder to understand each other.



Jocelyn: I think that's really important for us to see. When communication is hard, it's because we sinned.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's one of the consequences of sin. So instead of it being used to easily collaborate, especially to accomplish the mission, we are able to communicate in ways that are evil and rebellious.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And God had to frustrate that capacity to stop the spread of evil.

Janet: So that should really make us pay attention

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: to the power of communication.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And actually just not be so shocked that it's hard.

Jocelyn: Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

Janet: It's just hard. And especially when I think about our international ministry and I, even when we're speaking the same language, there's different accents and they're coming from different, it's hard.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And we should expect that. And to know, language communication has the capacity to even help our hearts be pulled away from God.

Jocelyn: Yeah. Yeah.

Janet: It can be used for evil ways and purposes.

Jocelyn: And it's just like so much else in life. A tool that God created for us and for our good to complete his mission. It can be really corrupted by the fall.

Janet: Yeah.



Jocelyn: So it's cursed, but it's not ruined and that's one of the big things I want us to take away from it. It's under the curse, but it's not ruined and it's still a really powerful tool, but we will need to be careful with it.

Janet: Because God loves to redeem. And we can redeem that area.

Jocelyn: Yeah. He does. Yeah. So let's think part two. Let's just talk basic elements of communication. So here's something that I really want you to hear. Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages. So like I said previously, you can use a whole bunch of different verbal and nonverbal ways to do that, like speech, writing, even graphs, signs, symbols, behaviors. But here's the key. The point of communication is to exchange meaning. Lemme say that again. The point of communication is to exchange meaning. So you're not just volleying pointless words back and forth, like across a net. The tools you use for communication have the point of conveying a message with meaning that is understood as this person who is speaking intended. So that's what communication is. So basic communication. There's a sender who has this message and they wanna convey it to the receiver. So there's two main players and one main point. There's a sender, and there's a receiver. And the main point is the message being understood as it was intended to be understood. So communication hasn't really happened if I say something to you and you hear it a different way than I had intended.

Janet: Right. If I don't understand it.

Jocelyn: That's not actually communication, that's just talking. And I think that's the big difference between communication and talking is, two people can be talking. Assuming that the other person is hearing what they intended. But communication is, I said something with an intended message and you received it the way it was intended to be received. So in the creation mandate, God was the sender. And who was the receiver, Janet?

Janet: Well, initially Adam and Eve and through the word now us.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So our creaturely relationship with the creator demands that he is the sender and we are the receiver. And that sounds high and lofty and philosophical, but it is very practical because that will affect the way that I read the Bible. Do I read it like I'm searching for some personal meaning, or do I read it like God, his position in my life demands that he is the sender and I am the receiver. I'm hearing what he's trying to convey.

Janet: Which to me is the difference between what did God intend when he said it?

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: And what does it mean to me?

Jocelyn: Exactly.



Janet: Who cares what it means to me? It's what does it mean.

Jocelyn: Exactly.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So the message was the purpose for which God had created humans. There's one big thing that can get in the way of a message being understood like the sender intended. And officially, the big thing that can get in the way of the meaning being understood, like the receiver intended is called noise. So just think of like static. Noise is anything that clouds up the receiver getting the meaning the sender was intending through the message. So like, if I was trying to communicate to you in writing noise might be if I wrote with super bad grammar. Or like I wrote a note to you in Russian and you don't speak Russian.

Janet: Yes. It might be a very good message and I have no idea.

Jocelyn: Or I have super terrible spelling or really bad handwriting.

Janet: Hey. Hey, now you're getting personal.

Jocelyn: Anything that makes you misunderstand the meaning, that's what noise is. If I'm communicating with you verbally, noise might be like I was whispering or a loud plane was flying overhead, or I speak in a different language. If you're the hearer, noise might be that the speaker didn't formulate the message in an organized way. Like it might just be all over the place. Or your own biases or internal judgements are skewing you

Janet: Yes

Jocelyn: to understand the message in a different way than I had intended. So noise can stop the meaning from being properly received.

Janet: Yeah, I think what's important, the one of them that you said when I'm listening through assumptions.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: I think it's really important. My bias can determine what I hear. And probably lots of other things of noise that you didn't mention, but to understand noise is anything that keeps me from understanding accurately what you were intending

Jocelyn: Exactly.

Janet: to convey.



Jocelyn: The meaning of the message. So this is the basic summary. There's a sender. They would like to convey an important message, and they want the receiver to understand the same meaning from the message that they intend.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: But it's possible that noise could get in the way.

Janet: Yeah. So it's a good reminder that it's important to seek to find out if the person I'm talking to really understands. You know, I remember back when I worked at Purdue and we would do all these sessions and one of the steps we would have to teach supervisors, check for understanding. And I think no, but there's a lot of more, there's a reason to that.

Jocelyn: There's a reason. Yeah.

Janet: We really need to make sure that even though it's obvious to me, if they didn't understand it, I need to know that.

Jocelyn: Yeah. Because then you need to adjust how you communicate.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So it's so funny, sometimes when I counsel somebody will say, oh, I'll say like, how did it go? And the person will say, well, like I clearly communicated this thing that needed to be communicated. What we have to remember is that communication doesn't actually happen if the receiver doesn't get the point of the message. It's just talking,

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: at that point. Communication is when the receiver is hearing the message that was intended.

Janet: Yeah. But understanding it might not be a fault of the communicator.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Because the receiver may be hearing through their bias. They may not be paying attention.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So it doesn't mean they were necessarily at fault.

Jocelyn: No.

Janet: But they do need to know



Jocelyn: Something faulty happened.

Janet: The message was not received. Yeah.

Jocelyn: Yeah. Something got messed up.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So if you take this information and translate it back to our relationship with God and we think about how God communicates with us, how we receive the meaning of his message, when the passages that I said before John 17:3 tells us that God created us to know him eternally. Deuteronomy six tells us that God created us to love him. Revelations four tells us God created us to glorify him, and Psalm 16 tells us that God created us to enjoy him and to find joy in his presence. God, as the sender, he's communicating to the humans, the receivers, several messages, and he wants the receivers to get the message. Humans in the early creation in the Old Testament would hear the message from God, the sender, either directly from him or through dreams or visions or through prophets. And I just wanted to address this because now in our current year, since the early church years, we hear direct communication from God through his word. Romans 10: 17 says that faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. So if humans want to hear communication from God in our day and age, what should they be doing, Janet?

Janet: Well, pretty clearly we've got to be reading the words he's already given us.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: And that's so good to for you to say that because, yeah, that's obvious. But how many of us are saying, God, please show me what to do. And we're not reading the word?

Jocelyn: Right. Right. That's where we receive the message

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: that the sender is intending. And so what's some of the noise that could get in the way of you hearing or interpreting God's communication accurately?

Janet: Oh, there's so many things. When when we read the scripture, I think sometimes we don't understand the language of scripture.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So it might be very good words, but I don't know Hebrew, so I need a translation that I understand.

Jocelyn: Yeah.



Janet: So I think that's part of it. It can be not knowing the big picture of scripture so that when I read a certain thing, I don't understand how it fits. So then I kind of make up my own context for it. So not knowing the context. Or I've already decided, I'm just looking for a verse to tell me what I already want.

Jocelyn: Yeah. I was just talking to a really, just a dear friend the other day who was very troubled by a verse that she believed caused her to question her salvation. And I said, I think our whole situation would be changed if we read this verse in its context. So just reading it

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: In its context.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Made her realize it's not even about salvation. It's about something completely different. So it's, it's just so important.

Janet: I found out with the word salvation, it doesn't always mean eternal salvation from hell.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: Sometimes it means delivered from your physical enemy.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But when we read it and just only without context, I could look at that and come to all kinds of wrong conclusions.

Jocelyn: So it's just really important to work through any of the noise that may come up as you interact with God through his word. Because the Bible is there for one point: so God can communicate a message to his humans.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And the point of communication. That the receiver, us, we're hearing and interpreting the message the way that the sender intended the meaning to be understood. So the first application I wanna recommend is that when you're reading God's word, you're reading it with that intent. You're thinking, what is God trying to communicate with me through this passage? And I think you're gonna often find that God is telling humans something about himself, something about the true nature of humans, and something about how God wants humans to function. The point of reading your Bible is not to find some really cool thing for yourself to help you get through the day.



Janet: Bummer.

Jocelyn: I know. Isn't that sad? But the point of the Bible is to understand the intended meaning of the message from God, the sender.

Janet: Yeah. Which I'm gonna also put a plug in for-- because there are people that this is incredibly overwhelming.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: I mean, if you've read a lot of scripture, then that's great, but if you're new to it, it's like, how am I ever gonna understand what he really meant? Within your own church, get in a Bible study.

Jocelyn: Yes, definitely.

Janet: Where you can be learning together and asking those questions. You know, Brent says it this way, it's very similar to what you said, Jocelyn. It's just, I like it 'cause it's really short. The Bible tells us three things, God, man, and God's plan.

Jocelyn: Oh, that's super helpful.

Janet: That's it. So whatever you read, what do I learn about God? What do I learn about man? What do I learn about God's plan? And some of them have more about one or the other, but that's what it's about. It's primarily about God. So we're gonna have a link in our show notes to a podcast on Crossway, where Jen Wilkin goes over nine tips for making the most of your Bible study. And that's gonna reinforce a lot of this too. But don't try to do this alone.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: If this is new to you, get with a group of people under the authority of a church with some good teaching, and let them help you learn how to do that.

Jocelyn: And also, I just wanna say like, a disclaimer, don't hear us dissing you if you have been reading the Bible, but it hasn't looked exactly like this.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Like I'm so excited that you're reading the Bible.

Janet: For sure.

Jocelyn: So



Janet: We just wanna help you.

Jocelyn: We wanna get to the next step.

Janet: Get more out of it.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Let us work together. Yep.

Jocelyn: Exactly. So then when you think about communication as the topic, how do humans communicate back to God?

Janet: Well, primarily I think-- only that I can think of is through praying and I am reading an excellent book on prayer right now. That's been so helpful to understand that a praying is a response. You're right. First, I hear from God and his word, and based on what I learned about God, man and his plan.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: It will help to orient what I say back to God.

Jocelyn: Yeah, it's so cool. Like the way we communicate back to God through prayer shows that we are committed to knowing and loving and enjoying and glorifying God. All those main messages that God showed us in his word. Like it's saying this, like we got it . I got the meaning of your message. So if you want me to know you, if you want me to enjoy you and to love you, I am in. I'm so in.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And so I do prayer because that shows him that I want to know him. I want to love him.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I wanna enjoy him. So , I have the means to communicate to God, to have an intimate relationship with him. And language is the way that even our thoughts, our language, like we don't just think pictures. We think words.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: That we're communicating to God, even if it's silently praying. So what are some of the things that you communicate to God about Janet?



Janet: Oh, all kinds of things. And one of the things I'm learning in this book on prayer is, How often I rightly communicate to God about the weights on my heart that is good and right, and about the desires of things I would like to see God do. But many times if my prayers have not been linked to being in the word first, then I have completely missed out on the fact that my biggest treasure is that I get to have this relationship with God.

Jocelyn: Yes. Yes.

Janet: So my prayer becomes, God, how can you do this for me? Because that's what will bring me delight.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Instead of my delight is you.

Jocelyn: It's you.

Janet: So, you know, I get to certainly tell him the things that are on my heart, the difficulties that the people I love are going through, but also just praises and adoring who he is. A book I read recently, Donald Whitney's book called *Praying the Bible*, short little book. And honestly, He repeats himself a lot. I think it's purposeful, so I don't say that as you know, but I'm like, okay, okay. Tell me what it is you're wanting me. Okay, I got it, I got it. But it's like, oh, that's what he's trying to help me. His point is there's so much to talk to God about and that it's easier than we think.

Jocelyn: That's helpful.

Janet: If it's attached to scripture.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: There's so much to say.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And we'll have a link for that. The one I'm currently reading is Tim Keller's book, *prayer experiencing awe and intimacy with God*. And if you've read Tim Keller's stuff, he likes to give you history, things that go, it's just fascinating.

Jocelyn: Oh, that's cool.

Janet: But he's talking about how, how we pray really indicates what I delight in. If I really understand God and in his word, my prayers will reflect that love.



Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: So that'll be part of it too.

Jocelyn: And we did mention the whole Tower of Babel thing. What's so cool in my mind is that no matter that language is now under the curse, God never gets lost in the noise.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: He never misinterprets the message of our communication. He's never sleeping. He's never thrown off by whatever language I'm using. He always understands what we're trying to convey. The scripture even says that the Holy Spirit helps to communicate our hearts when we can't even find the appropriate language to convey.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So I think that's just so reassuring and what a blessing, like language may be messed up, but it's not too messed up to use to love God.

Janet: No. And especially with God, I don't have to be afraid of being misunderstood.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: Now, I should be afraid of being truly seen when I'm wicked.

Jocelyn: True.

Janet: But I don't have to be afraid of being misunderstood.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So section three is just basic standards of wise communication. God communicated in the creation mandate that he made humans for the purpose of being made in his image and bearing his likeness, which means to accurately represent him. So one of the applications of that communication from God is that we should communicate in ways that reflect him, which again, it's like it seems like so simple. Why do we have to talk about this? But literally the way that God communicated is an example of how he wants us to communicate.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So we're just gonna look at some wise ways to communicate with other humans. So the first thing that comes to mind for me is that because God is truth and in him, there is no lie, if we're gonna represent him well, then we are to be people that communicate truthfully.

Janet: For sure.



Jocelyn: Ephesians 4:20 tells us that the truth is in Jesus. And John 14:6 tells us that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Proverbs 8:6 through 8 tells us that we should open our lips to speak what is right, true and just. So a couple of examples of that. Basically, we should just be absolutely devoted to conveying the truth at all times. We need to be devoted to communicating in a way that makes it easy for people to know what the truth is and not have to guess at it. Like we shouldn't be nebulous when we communicate, and we should always communicate in 100% truth, not shades of truthiness.

Janet: I think that's important because I've even heard people say, well, I didn't actually say I wasn't coming.

Jocelyn: Right. Insinuated it.

Janet: So then they think it, it was honest.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: 'cause I didn't tell them.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: When I really meant something different.

Jocelyn: So, I think secondly, that means we restrict ourselves from communicating in a way that in any way hints at untruth. Like obviously that's gonna mean we don't do bold face lying, but it also includes things like not deceiving.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: Not leading somebody on to believe something that's true. Like I can say little snide comments all the time, that would make someone believe something that's kind of true, but not all the way true.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Another thing for me, this also included for me, learning to speak without sarcasm or innuendo. Because those ways of communicating, they often say words that seem to mean one thing, but really when you dig down deep, they mean the exact opposite. So, I even caught myself the other day like saying words that literally did not mean what I intended them to. And I was like, everyone knows that I'm just being, I'm just joking right now.

Janet: Right.



Jocelyn: But I have been very convicted, like I need to use the words that actually convey the words that I'm trying to convey and not do little hidden meanings or be sarcastic.

Janet: And I think we would acknowledge that's different from using figures of speech.

Jocelyn: Oh, totally.

Janet: You know, so there may be, and or even truly joking with my husband.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Janet: We've said in our house sarcasm is not a problem solving tool.

Jocelyn: Oh, definitely.

Janet: So we can't use it there. But you know, if I, with hyperbole, if I say I got a thousand phone calls today, nobody says a thousand, really?

Jocelyn: Really? Come on Janet.

Janet: Or was it really 812? They know I just mean I got a lot. But I can be careful with that and not be known for hyperbole instead of truthfulness.

Jocelyn: Yes, especially like sarcasm is not a tool for communication. So if you're trying to communicate a meaning, no one should ever have to guess

Janet: That's right.

Jocelyn: What you actually mean. That it just needs to be clear.

Janet: One-hundred percent. Yeah. Yep.

Jocelyn: So a second way that God teaches his humans to communicate is to solve problems. In Genesis three, when the humans rebelled against God's purposes. God clearly communicated that there were consequences for their actions, and then he quickly communicated that he had already drawn up plans to solve their problems.

Janet: What a good God.

Jocelyn: Isn't it so cool? So if we think like, okay, if God communicates to be his problem solver, literally when I communicate, that's what my communication should be too. It should be solving problems. So first we should absolutely be devoted to solving problems with our communication. We shouldn't ever have to leave the other person wondering, does this help to solve the problem?



Like was it somehow tied it up in that communication, or is it just clear? Like, I am communicating because I intend to help solve this problem.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: I should be able to communicate in ways that promote peace that comes with having had a solved problem.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So my goal is problem solutions, not leaving things nebulous. Additionally, I should not communicate in a way that exacerbates problems or stirs them up. If I have a problem with a friend, I should go communicate that I'm having a problem and that I wanna solve it. I shouldn't like, say some meaning that I'm not intending and leave the pot all stirred up. I shouldn't go talk to somebody else. Like that's what gossip is.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: That's not problem solving. Slander is not problem solving. It's exacerbating the problem. I also shouldn't avoid talking about problems just 'cause I don't want people to be upset with me. So, God used his prophets to communicate very difficult truths at times, but that's what the people needed to hear, even if it didn't make them happy.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: So I am truthful, number one, and I am a problem solver, number two.

Janet: And you know, if people know that, that should take a lot of fear away. I don't have to wonder what you really mean.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: 'cause you've told me. And even if there's a problem, to quote one of our former pastors, problems are for solving.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: They're not for being frustrated that we happen to have one.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Let's just solve it instead of being shocked that there would be one.

Jocelyn: That there are problems.



Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: So thirdly, God also teaches us in his word to speak in love, in a way that accurately represents his hesed. So he loved first, he loved most, he loved to his own hurt. John 13 shows us how God communicated with his disciples in a way that showed the great lengths he was willing to go to serve humans that were actively hating him. And so let's just think about some of the examples that go along with that. That would look like thinking carefully about the person you're speaking to and considering how to communicate in a way that is easiest for them to hear and understand the intent of your message and not be misguided or misunderstand.

Janet: I think that one's really important because I hear this a lot. That's just how I communicate.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: And it's like, well, if it's not just like Jesus.

Jocelyn: It's just wrong.

Janet: It's gotta change.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: You know, so I'm sorry. , I tend to speak before thinking. Well, and some people do that more than others, and I get that.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But that's not an excuse, that's an area to work on. My communication is not primarily about how I want to communicate.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: It's if I'm thinking hesed love, I'm thinking, how do I need to change in any way or alter my communication, to make it easiest for you, Jocelyn, to understand it?

Jocelyn: Yes. Yes. If anybody needs to suffer or give up something in order for the message to be clear, it should be me.

Janet: Love it.

Jocelyn: I should be the one giving the most to benefit the other person's understanding. And that in reality, that's really hard. 'cause I don't wanna slow down. I don't wanna

Janet: Yep.



Jocelyn: Sit and look at someone's eyes. Sometimes I just wanna text someone and just get the message across.

Janet: Move on. Yeah.

Jocelyn: Yeah. And that's not loving. If someone needs to change for the message to be clear, it needs to be me.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I need to be the one that's bearing the weight of that. That would also look like going out of my way to communicate in a manner that the receiver understands. And it might look like waiting to communicate until there's not so much noise in their life, which is not my favorite thing to do.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: I just wanna get it done.

Janet: Get it over with.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So it also could look like thinking about how I can say what needs to be said in a way that's gonna make them leave that conversation, having felt loved and not attacked.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It definitely doesn't look like dumping communication on people. Just because it gets it off my chest. Like that's not loving.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: That's not self-sacrificial. It doesn't sound like someone who is known for telling it like it is no matter how that affects people.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: That is not godly, loving, hesed-like communication.

Janet: I love that. And I think, you know, some of us, we tend to use too many words and so we want to think about using only the words that we need, but if I want to ensure that you know you're loved, that may take some extra words.

Jocelyn: It does. Yeah.

Janet: They're not words explaining myself. I may spend too much time on that.



Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But I need to spend time on saying, I hope you understand. I'm just like you. Here's where I, whatever I need to do to help, you know?

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: We're on the same team.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And we're locking arms to look at Christ. This is not me pointing at you.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: And that may take some extra words on my part.

Jocelyn: Yeah. I mean, there's so many applications. Think about how that applies in marriage and parenting,

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: just in friendships, like there's just bumps. Relationships are hard work. So the fourth thing that I wanna talk to about with wise communication is that God teaches us to also make sure that what's communicated is wholesome and helpful for building other people up. Just like Ephesians 4: 29 says. That looks like choosing to not use words, phrases, or innuendos that would make it difficult for a person to continue thinking godly thoughts while also receiving the intent of my message. Which you know, It's very unlike the world in the way we communicate, because the world just says whatever they wanna say, and if it ends up leaving an ungodly thought in your mind, well, it's a bummer.

Janet: That's on you.

Jocelyn: It's a bummer that you're so easily swayed.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It also means avoiding certain cultural phrases because they could be meant to communicate a slur or an unhelpful message. Like we could just say it's just words. I don't know why they're so offended by it. Or we could say, that person will not be built up by hearing that thing.

Janet: Right. It'll make it harder for them to hear what I'm trying to say.



Jocelyn: Right, right.

Janet: Why don't I avoid what I know? I don't always know. But if I know love would do that.

Jocelyn: It also means like thinking ahead of time about what the receiver or the hearer needs and then crafting my words to be a blessing to them, even while communicating the message that needs to be understood.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And I think of so many parenting applications to this. Like I can communicate the truth that needs to be heard, or I can communicate the truth in a very loving way.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: Where in the end they will say like, I was blessed by that correction. I have had opportunities over time to have to do a lot of like, discipline types of conversation with people who are not my family. And one of my goals was always like when I left that communication, when I left that conversation, I wanted that person to be like, wait. Wait, did I just get corrected?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Like it's so, it's so loving,

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: and gentle. And in the end you feel blessed that you never leave that feeling like I was just totally attacked.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And I feel like a totally miserable loser. It also means no underhanded or hidden messages, like a message within a message. Here's an example of what I mean. Well, when you failed to balance our checkbook, it caused me to overdraw our bank account. So the message I was trying to say was, I overdrew our bank account, but I snuck in this little secret message. You failed at balancing our checkbook, you dork. No messages inside of other messages. So fifth, God also avoids communicating in harsh ways with us, and he expects us to model that model of communicating with gentleness and kindness. Proverbs 15:1 says that a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. So that certainly means that I'm having a disagreement with my husband or my boss. I don't pull out the words that I know will make them angry, and get them all flustered so that I win the argument.

Janet: Yes.



Jocelyn: And I can only share that example because I'm really good at that. I know what ticks people off. I know what gets them all riled up.

Janet: It makes you sound good.

Jocelyn: It makes me sound good and it throws them off and it lets me win the argument.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Which proves what my goal was winning the argument

Janet: not loving.

Jocelyn: it was not communicating in a loving way. Yeah. So I don't communicate with words that appear innocent, but they're intended to provoke. I do purposely wait to speak to someone when I'm not upset, and I do need to choose gentle tones of voice, even when I'm very heated and passionate about something.

Janet: Which may mean like, especially with your husband, if you're already, you're not scheduling a meeting later.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Typically. But I might have to say I need a few minutes.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And I need to go be with Jesus. Like I need a few minutes to deal with my own heart before I try to communicate about this.

Jocelyn: And that's not avoiding conversation.

Janet: No.

Jocelyn: It's just saying I gotta get myself in check.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: Sixth, God commands his children to listen before speaking and also be discerning, not just let anything pour out of our mouths. I'm saying this to me. I need to hear this.

Janet: I'll listen in. Go ahead.

Jocelyn: Proverbs 18:13 and Proverbs 29:20 tells us that if we answer before we hear all the facts, we are fools. And Proverbs 10:19 tells me that when I talk a lot, I am pretty likely to sin.



One time I was talking a lot and my coworker, who now lives in heaven with Jesus, looked at me and said, Proverbs 10:19, Jocelyn. I was like, okay. Rightly rebuked. She was like, in an overflow of words, there is often sin. I was like, okay. Noted. It was like, okay, be quiet right now. So for me, that means I've had to train myself to not just sit around and chat pointlessly. Not that that's bad, but for me, the more I talk, the more likely I am to start sinning. And for me, who likes to communicate, and who likes relationships, I often tend to slide into gossip or slander,

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: without even really wanting to. It also means for me, I have to work really hard to train my mouth to be quieter so that I can hear others better. Hear what they're saying, and I can listen before I speak, which I hate doing. I just like everyone to hear my words immediately when they come into my mind. It also means I have to work really, really hard on not interrupting, which I feel like I'm just a fast listener, like why can't they be a fast talker? That's not loving. And then Psalm 141:3 tells me to set a guard over my mouth and keep watch over the door to my lips. So like he assumes that I actually have filters and a gate over my mouth.

Janet: I've thought about that verse and one of the things that's really cool to me is I think that that verse will be unneeded in heaven.

Jocelyn: Oh, won't that be wonderful.

Janet: Won't be awesome.

Jocelyn: That will be great.

Janet: That I won't need to put a guard over my mouth. Pretty cool. But we're not there, so.

Jocelyn: We're not there. So the last one that I wanna share is from James 3:1 through 12, and that just tells us that the tongue is a dangerous tool if it's not tamed by righteousness. And there's lots of different Proverbs that talk about just the totally destructive capacity of our mouth, but it's just helpful to know, if we're trained by righteousness, we'll use our mouth to be understanding and helpful and trustworthy. And if we're not, we'll use our mouth to gossip and judge and destroy.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And just like the tower of Babel passage, like our tongues can be used for massive collaboration, which is awesome, but corrupted by sin. That will be collaboration for dangerous things like violence and horribly sinful, evil things. So there's so much more the Bible says about communication and language and our mouth and the use of our tongue. But what I really wanted to do was just give a big overview. Not everyone's gonna be as fascinated by



communication as I am, but this is the thing. Followers of Jesus need to care. And they need to pay attention to the way they're communicating.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's just important to remember these basic facts about communication and to apply those to help us understand the message that God, the creator, intended when we read the Bible is he wants to communicate a message. So wouldn't it be so great if we could just know how we're doing a communication, like a test or something? Wouldn't that be awesome, Janet?

Janet: Uh oh. Ah, I'm not sure how I feel about that.

Jocelyn: So the summary that I wanna help us think about is found in Luke 6: 45. Just let this sink in as we think about communication. This passage is like a test for whether we are godly and wise in our communication. Here's what it says: a good person produces good things from the treasure of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasure of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart. So earlier we talked about the noise that gets in the way of good communication, and one of the worst noises is the sin that lives inside of our own heart. So

Janet: For sure.

Jocelyn: sin and idolatry will stop us from hearing accurately. Sin and idolatry stop us from speaking biblically. So one of the very best ways to grow, As just a biblical communicator is to pay attention to what's going on inside of your heart. Because what you say, you don't even have to think about it, it pours out of what you think about. It pours out of what you meditate on, and it pours out of what you treasure in your heart.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So if you don't like what you hear pouring outta your mouth, take some time to investigate what's going on in your heart. And as you make corrections with God's word as the standard, you're going to see your communication naturally adjusting.

Janet: If you find that you say this, Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't really mean that. You need to think about that. And if you find, I had someone that I worked with years ago who used to say to me, I don't know what's wrong with me. I'm not like this.

Jocelyn: I don't normally talk this way.

Janet: I'm not like this. I don't normally do this. And it's like, you know what? Maybe a better thing would, why did I just say that?



Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: What's really going on in my heart instead of fooling yourself?

Jocelyn: Yeah. So I'm just gonna close with five reflection questions to think through, and I'll do a larger handout on this that we can include in the show notes for somebody who wants to do a little bit of a deeper dive in this. But here are five questions. Number one, do I communicate in a way that reflects the real character and holiness of God? Number two, am I formulating my message so the receiver has the easiest time hearing the message I was intending? Three. When I read the Bible, am I trying to understand the meaning God was conveying through that passage, or am I looking for something extra special just for me and my day? Four, is my communication wholesome and are my messages helpful for building up others? And five, in what ways do the words that flow out of my mouth show issues in my heart that might need to be resolved?

Janet: I love that. This has focused primarily on the communicator.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: The one sending the message. I just wanna mention, because there may be people listening to this going, I wish so and so had heard this, because the way they communicated to me was not so great. On the receiving end, all those things apply.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah.

Janet: The hesed love. Do I have grace for them?

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: Am I believing the best when it's unclear and asking questions?

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Am I clarifying? Am I realizing I should do all the work. You know, you said earlier if anybody needs to change, it's me.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Well, if I'm the receiver, I should also be the one to do the extra work of helping you be clear if you're not.

Jocelyn: Exactly.

Janet: By saying, can you help me understand? What about this? So either way, if I'm looking at hesed love, Jesus always put it all on him. Let's show each other a lot of grace.



Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: While we keep growing in this and if all of us have that mentality, It's gonna be great.

Jocelyn: And one of the ways that a receiver can be really loving is to say, this is what I think you are just trying to communicate with me. Is that accurate?

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: So you say the message back that you think you heard and it gives them the chance to clarify. So you're right, this is for both the sender and the receiver, but in all, it's just how do we have just a really baseline understanding of what communication is?

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And how to communicate in a wise and godly way.

Janet: So as usual, we like to end with if we know some resources on that. So what, anything that you would recommend for us if we wanna dive deeper?

Jocelyn: Sure. I wrote a blog post a little while ago, I don't remember how long ago, within the last year or so. It's called What to Do in an Emergency: Someone Has Gossiped About You or Slandered You, and that's on our FBCM counseling blog. So we'll put a link to that. And that's specifically if you are struggling with communicating in a situation where you have been gossiped about or slandered.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Just how to interact in that situation. We're also gonna link a resource called Four Rules of Communication, which is just looking at some of the rules in the scripture about communication, specifically from Ephesians four. And then there are is a little booklet called Communication and Conflict Resolution, which is super, super good. We'll link that. And then some longer resources. War of Words. Marriage Conflict, Talking as Teammates, and then a book called Respect the Image. Those are all just a little bit longer, but all of those are about the general topic of communication, and would be helpful if this is something that you should study.

Janet: Excellent. Thank you, Jocelyn. This has been good to take time to think about what we talk about.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And how we talk.



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