

# **VERTICAL COMMUNICATION:**

Most people want to enjoy relationships with others. But they want those relationships to happen automatically. That just isn't the way relationships are made or preserved. Good relationships require an investment of many qualities — one of which is good communication. Because every relationship will experience problems at some time it is important to be prepared with communication skills that can be used to solve problems and preserve the relationship rather than destroy it.

## **YOUR RESOURCE FOR GUIDANCE**

You may have already noticed that people practice all kinds of communication when dealing with problems. They may have learned these from various sources.

*What are some sources from which people have learned communication skills?*

*To the best of your understanding where did you learn your communication skills?*

God's Word, the Bible, is the source that will be used in this study. You can use God's Word to examine your present communication skills and to learn new ones.

*What reassurance do the following verses give that God's Word is a trustworthy resource?*

- Matthew 7:24-27
  
  
- 2 Timothy 3:16,17

## **YOUR MOTIVE FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION**

It is important to learn good communication skills but we all know that even good communication skills can be used for wrong purposes.

*List some wrong uses of good communication:*

Good communication skills should be combined with good motives for their use.

*What do the following verses indicate should be the motive for all we do?*

- 1 Corinthians 10:31
  
- 2 Corinthians 5:9,10
  
- Colossians 1:8
  
- 1 Peter 4:11
  
- Mark 12:30,31

*Would you say this has been your motive in communication, always, frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never? (Circle your answer)*

*If you answered something other than always, (which I expect you did) when do you find that you are motivated by some other purpose?*

*What do you think is your motivation at those times?*

## FOUR RULES OF GOD HONORING COMMUNICATION

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God's Word provides much instruction on communication. In this study we will cover four rules of communication from Ephesians 4:22-32. When followed they will enable you to glorify God when facing problems with others.

### **RULE ONE: BE HONEST**

"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25)

In *Strengthening Your Marriage*, Wayne Mack rightly says, "One of the most basic requirements of good communication is mutual openness and honesty."

#### **Put off falsehood**

Simply stated God does not want people to lie when involved in problems.

A lie may take various forms:

- Total fabrication – state something that has no basis in fact
- Twisting of the facts – rearrange the facts of the situation to deliver self from any possible incrimination
- Denial – A person might deny the existence of a problem or involvement in a problem that does exist.

Whatever form a lie takes, God wants the individual to be sure to put it off, discard it, and cast such communication away.

Practicing falsehood does not solve problems and build good relationships.

*What may be a motive to speak falsehood?*

#### **Speak truthfully**

##### **1. Speak**

You need to speak

To build relationships and solve problems people need to speak to each other. That means if you have a problem involving someone else, which cannot be covered in love, you need to go and speak to that person.

Warning: Don't assume

Assuming motives of others is a breeding ground for trouble and strife. You can't know for sure what a person's motives are until you speak to that person and then listen to them.



The following questions will help you to determine when to cover an offense in love:

- 1) Is the offense a sinful habit that is regularly hindering the individual in their growth in godliness?
- 2) Is the offense public knowledge that would harm the person's testimony or is it continuing to dishonor God?
- 3) Is the offense a violation of the law?
- 4) Is the offense a clear violation of a Biblical command or principle and not just a matter of personal preference?

We each are in the process of being transformed into the likeness of Christ and in that process we will sin. As we follow these guidelines we manifest the gracious, longsuffering, spirit that God shows toward us.

## **2. In your anger don't sin**

Righteous anger is characterized by right motivation and actions.

- Right motivation: Love for God and others

*What would be an example of sinful motivation of anger?*

- Right actions: actions that glorify God and help solve problems.

Many times the actions of sinful anger involve either clamming-up or blowing-up.

*What would be an example of clamming-up?*

*What would be an example of blowing-up?*

*When you sin in your anger what would you identify as your motivation?*

*When you sin in your anger what actions do you tend to express?*

### **3. Don't avoid solving problems**

As much as possible solve today's problems today. When a problem cannot be solved that day (lack of time, people are tired or not available, etc.) make a plan to solve the problem so that it is not put off indefinitely.

*What does verse 27 say will happen if people don't solve problems?*

*What are some negative results that sin and Satan can produce if people don't solve problems?*

## **Rule Three: Attack the Problem, Not the Person**

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."  
(Ephesians 4:29)

### **1. Words can do harm**

Children have a saying they use when arguing with other children. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me."

*What is wrong with that statement?*

*What results come from sinful communication according to the following verses?*

- Proverbs 16:28
- Proverbs 17:9
- Proverbs 26:21

According to James 3:9,10 why is it wrong to verbally attack a person?

## **2. Words can do good**

In order to solve problems our words need to be solution-oriented.

*According to Ephesians 4:29 what should characterize our communication?*

*What additional direction is found in Colossians 4:6?*

*Give an example of unwholesome, ungracious communication that is not solution-oriented:*

*Give an example of wholesome, gracious communication that is solution-oriented.*

## **Rule Four: Act: Don't React**

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

### **1. Don't react**

Self-control is an important quality for good communication and building good relationships. When selfishly motivated, a person's reactions could be eruptive and damaging.

*What are the words used in Ephesians 4:31 that indicate sinful reactions?*

*What command does God give about such sinful reactions?*

Examine the sampling of verses from Proverbs and record God's instruction about sinful reactions.

- Prov. 15:1,18
- Prov. 17:13,20
- Prov. 18:13
- Prov. 19:19

- Prov. 20:3,22
- 2. Act**

*What words are used in Ephesians 4:32 that lead to solving problems and stronger relationships?*

*What reassurance do the following verses give that it is possible to act and do right instead of react sinfully?*

- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Galatians 5:16
- Philippians 4:13

*Which of the four rules of communication do you find that you neglect the most?*

*When do you find it hardest to practice the four rules of communication?*

*Since your outer actions are an expression of inner desires what inner desires are ruling when you violate any of the four rules of communication?*

*Example: I don't keep current and solve problems because I desire peace. If I bring up a problem I get nervous about how people will respond. If I confront others it may create more problems.*