

# Communication Top 10

## ❶ Please God by Reflecting Christ

*Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.*

*Colossians 3:12–14 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

*James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

*John 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

1. Know God, observe His interaction with people, and do likewise.
2. The foundation for all our communication—we cannot control our tongue but need to be controlled by God then let our communication proceed from a heart controlled by God.
3. Use biblical principles to define how we talk, listen, and think—the Bible shows us how to deal with problems and people.
4. Our primary reaction—praise to God! Our first words of the day: praise to God. Our last words of the day: praise to God. Our constant words throughout the day: praise to God. John 17 shows Jesus' goal to glorify his father through his life and all of his communication.
5. No excuse or reason that we can use to justify selfishness in our communication. Sickness, crisis, pain, and lack of sleep are not reasons to put our Christlikeness on hold. Being mistreated, lied about, laughed at, and forgotten does not give us permission to be self-centered. My life and my communication must please God by reflecting Christ no matter the circumstance even to the point of death.

## ❷ Humbly Speak the Truth in Love


*Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

1. Build on a foundation of love—love that has been shown from the start, consistent in good and bad times.
2. Seek to show grace
3. Share the hard things in a kind way—avoiding the truth is an act that hurts instead of helps.
4. My role should match the way I am communicating—my role as spouse, parent, employer, employee, and citizen will impact how I communicate; regardless of the role, communication should never be done out of arrogance.
5. Believe that you don't know everything, and understand that you don't understand it all—always be ready to add more information, gather more facts, and change your opinion. Your humility will communicate to others that your knowledge is limited and that you need the help of others.

## ❸ Keep Our Purpose in Mind

*Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*


*2 Corinthians 4:17–18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

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1. Unity of purpose can overcome some disfunction of communication
  2. It's impossible to know the intent of another's heart—make sure yours is right, assume the best of others, and don't jump to conclusions where there are gaps.
  3. Sphere of communication should not be bigger than what is needed. Avoid gossip. You do not have to know everything, and you certainly should not share everything that you know.
  4. Regular reminders and adjustments are necessary to keep our purpose our priority. Our enemy works to distract, replace, or reduce the purpose we have.
  5. Faith is believing in the unseen things talked of in the Bible so that we act on their reality—our communication will be about things we cannot see and do not understand. Stay focused on the eternal even though we don't have answers for every question. Ultimately our communication will share what we have faith in . . . what we believe in.

#### **④ Prepare, Work, and Listen to Understand the Context and Audience for the Benefit of the Listener**


*Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.*

*James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*

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1. Know the needs, notions, and characteristics of your audience.
  2. Know the context of your communication including time of the day, schedule before and after, anticipation, expectations, use of humor, surrounding circumstances, cultural events, comfort, and formality levels.
  3. Good communication rarely happens without effort and intentionality—avoid just saying whatever comes to mind first; don't trust your gut reactions; be proactive not reactive.
  4. Learn how to tell a story—every listener enjoys a story, but a story is not for everyone. Learn how to tell stories that help application, understanding, and attention. Work at using words and concepts that are neither condescending nor above your audience. Changing your delivery, vocabulary, and methods may be necessary for various ages and backgrounds.
  5. Communicate within the time limits of the listener—customize your words to fit within the time given. The mind can only absorb what the seat can endure; the comfort of the listener impacts his ability to listen. Too short and you risk not taking advantage of the opportunity to communicate; too long and we risk muddling the message or talking the audience to a point of being zoned out.

#### **⑤ Actively Listen for the Benefit of the Speaker**

*Proverbs 18:2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.*

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1. Be engaged—mutual learning becomes the basis for relationships.
  2. Be actively aware of how your communication is received and the intent of the person talking to you.
  3. Round trip (repeat back) what you believe you just heard in order to help both of you clarify lapses in listening.
  4. Attack the problem, not the person.
  5. Show that you are listening with your posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and an interested, thoughtful demeanor.

## ⑥ Appropriate Time

*Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*

1. Have compassion for the condition of the listener.
2. Appropriate—content fits context.
3. Ability to recall, review, or look up is many times the reality of appropriate time—many times things must be communicated multiple times with multiple channels of communication; understand the memory, recall limits, and capabilities of your audience.
4. Information management—don't say it too soon or too late; too soon causes the audience to ignore it or ignore everything else till it arrives, and sharing too late does not allow the audience to prepare for the information. You don't always have control of information, but trying to manage it is an act of love for others.
5. In case of untimely communication, make sure you take extra time to record/organize the information in order to improve the timeliness of the communication.

## ⑦ Use Words that Are Clear, Concise, and Complete

*Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*

1. Avoid superlatives unless quoting God.
2. Sweat the details—e.g., punctuation, word choice, double meanings.
3. Avoid big words and jargon that portions of your audience need defined, especially when defining another big word.
4. Say it with as few words as necessary—create jargon and define words to help communicate clearly in future. Notice that numbers 3 and 4 contradict each other; deal with it. Communication is messy and discombobulated. Just because I know a big word and how to use it doesn't mean that I should use it if communication is my goal.
5. Ask questions if anything is not clear, concise, or complete—many times good communication is continuing to ask questions until clarity is achieved.

## ⑧ Context Determines Method


*Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

1. Communicate in person when conflict, complexity, or compassion is present.
2. Define the channels you plan to maintain, then determine how each channel should be used and not used—be intentional about the type of communication on each channel/platform.
3. Understand the size of the stage, permanence/accessibility, values, limits of each channel/platform and the method of communication that you use.
4. Visual aids, object lessons, and pictures can help communicate beyond just words—a diagram or flow chart may help explain words.
5. A big determiner of what method to use boils down to this question: How many questions will this communication create? The speed in which you create questions and need to share answers determines your method of communication. Remember that the question is not one you have but the questions that others have. Chances are your questions have already been answered, and you must remember how many questions you needed answered before you came to your present conclusion.

## 9 Nonverbals Matter


*Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*

*Proverbs 6:12–13 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;*

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1. Nonverbals speak louder than words.
  2. Nonverbals are lost with letters and words, thus the poor substitute called an emoji.
  3. Lack of nonverbals creates a gap that the listener will fill in—all communication has a tone; the more removed the communication is, the more the listener has to provide tone. Often, misunderstanding is a result of unclear tone.
  4. Nonverbals include tone, facial expressions, gestures, posture, closeness (bubble), loudness, eye contact, touch, physical appearance, dress, and objects—the same words can mean many different things depending on the combination of the nonverbals.
  5. Most humor and all conflict need the benefit of nonverbals to come across correctly.

## 10 Own It & Do the Work

*Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

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1. One of the greatest opportunities given to man is the privilege to share the gospel with others, teach the principles found in God's Word, preach the truth, love God and one another, edify one another, sing and praise God and pray to Him—all of these are acts of communication. God has gifted us to communicate. It is part of our purpose. Do it!
  2. It is sweat, toil, tired-at-the-end-of-the-day, lay-my-head-on-a-pillow, out-cold, flat out, hard work—communication is work, and it is worth it! Do it!
  3. You have information—you have a perspective and a presence that puts you in a spot where you know things that no one else does, or you have a perspective no one else has. People are relying on you to communicate, so you can't just duck your head and say nothing. Do it!
  4. You made a decision which impacts others—every decision requires some communication and many times needs lots of communication. In fact, one decision may have led to another, then another. Communication of each decision helps others understand the reasoning and motivation behind multiple decisions. It is hard to catch everyone up to where you are, but it is an act of love for others when you communicate a decision made. Do it!
  5. What does silence communicate? Most folks fill in the gaps of communication with the worst possibilities. Silence says that I don't care, that I forgot about you, and that you are on your own. Silence is a form of communication that kills relationships and hinders teams. Own the responsibility to talk, listen, and think. It's lazy to be silent, and it's work to communicate. Do it!