

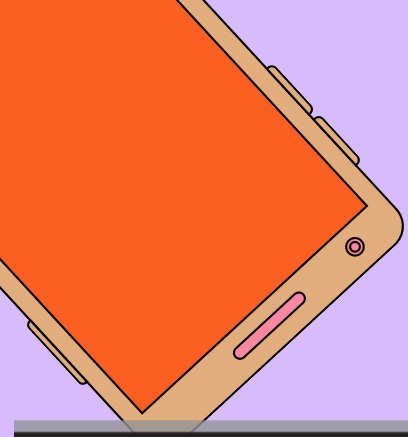
STRAIGHT TALK

biblical communication

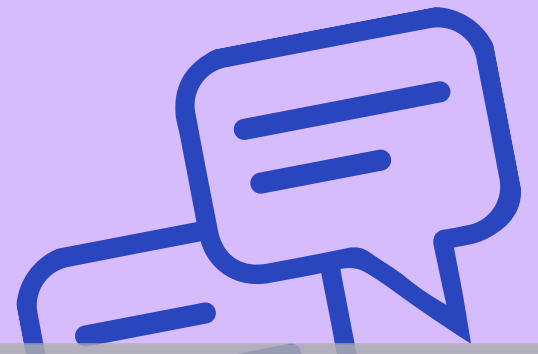
**Listen
Before
Speaking**



Week 1
10/8/23



WELCOME



Welcome to the Fall 2023 Life Group Series! For the next seven weeks, we will be learning about Biblical communication principles.

Why are we learning how to communicate? Haven't we been communicating for as long as we can remember? Yes! But things have changed. Technology has had a huge impact on how we communicate with one another. Twenty years ago, we had an easier time getting along with friends, family, and coworkers because most of our communication was verbal. We talked in person or called people on the phone.

When we disagreed with someone in conversation before smartphones, we tried to do it gently. Say something nasty to someone in person might get you punched in the face. Say it on Facebook, or over a text, and you'll just get unfriended or blocked. COVID, the culture war, and smartphones have drastically altered how we communicate - even with our own family and loved ones. A lot has changed, but the principles of Biblical communication have not changed. They are...

1. Listen before speaking.
2. Be open to correction.
3. Tell the truth.
4. Hold one another accountable.
5. Handle conflict in a way that leads to peace.
6. Use speech that edifies.
7. Forgive one another.

We hope you enjoy this time COMMUNICATING with your Life Group as we teach one another how to honor God and one another in our speech.



THINGS TO DO BEFORE LIFE GROUP

- If you're bringing a new person to the study, we recommend getting them study materials ahead of time so they can feel prepared.
- Pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to receive the lessons he has to teach you in the study.
- Read the scripture focus for the study.
- Go through the questions and think about how you might answer them. We've provided space in the study for you to write down your answers if you'd like.





INTRO

"Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt." This quote has been attributed to Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, and Confucius! Why wouldn't we attribute this pithy, obvious advice to pithy, wise men? While the advice might seem obvious, we have difficulty following it. In the age of social media, hot takes get clicks and attention, but getting attention should not be the goal for Christians. Rather, we should seek to glorify God and bring attention to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT



James was Jesus' half-brother and the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Most Christians at the time of the letter were from a Jewish background and struggled with the concept of God's grace. They incorrectly believed good works could grant people salvation. Yet, the gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that we are incapable of keeping the law, that Christ kept the law perfectly, that our sin has been punished in Christ on the cross, and his righteousness from living a perfect life is credited to us. It's truly good news.

Yet, some might want to take advantage of the situation. Since we're forgiven, then can't we just sin? James' intention in his letter is to show the church that good works will flow from God's people as evidence of their saving faith in God. One way Christians bear fruit of their saving faith is by listening before speaking so that we might not harm others through our careless words.

COMMUNICATION TIPS



How to become an Active Listener...

1. Pay attention. Focus on what the speaker is saying. Try not to let your mind wander, but give the speaker your undivided attention.
2. Show you're listening. Speakers need to know you're paying attention, so tell them! Use body language like nodding your head. Verbally affirm that you're hearing the speaker.
3. Reflect the information back to the speaker. We've all been in a situation where we were saying one thing and the person listening to us heard something else. Confirm with the speaker that you're hearing correctly. Say, "What I'm hearing is..." or, "It sounds like you're saying..."
4. Don't interrupt. Let the speaker say his/her piece before bringing your objections. Do them the honor of hearing them out.
5. Respond appropriately. Treat the speaker as you would like to be treated. If you object to the speaker's point of view, do so respectfully.

LET'S

TALK

ABOUT IT

Notes

What We Believe

1. Read James 1:19-21. What should Christians be quick to do?
2. What should Christians be slow to do?
3. What does anger fail to produce? Why do you suppose anger fails?
4. What should Christians put away? What should we receive?

God Speaks to Us

1. As a group, name three benefits of listening before speaking. Name three drawbacks of speaking too soon.
2. Share a time when you spoke before listening. Did it end well? Did you learn anything from the experience?

God Speaks to Our Family

1. Read James 1:22-25. When children disobey their parents, the parents often ask, "Why didn't you listen to me?" We expect children to hear AND do what's required of them. What can parents do besides telling their children what to do so that they won't only be hearers of God's word but also doers?
2. What benefits do husbands and wives enjoy when they listen well to one another? What problems can arise when husbands and wives don't listen well to one another? What practical tips would you give to a couple struggling to listen to one another?

LET'S

TALK

ABOUT IT

Notes

God Speaks in Our Worship

1. Worship is a dialogue between God and his people. What do you love to hear in worship?
2. When does God listen to us in worship? Is it important to you that God listens to you? Why or why not?

The Gospel Call

1. Sometimes, the church gets tunnel vision. We only hear the needs of our church community. What does the church gain by listening to our neighbors?
2. How has the church listened well to our neighbors? What's been the result of good listening? How has the church turned a deaf ear to our neighbors? What's been the result of poor listening?



Lined area for taking notes, resembling a sheet of paper with a torn top edge.