



SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians 4:6

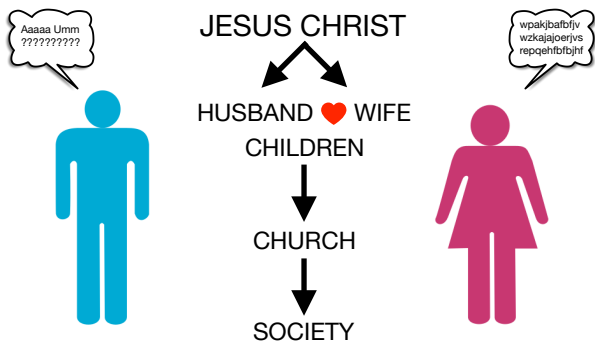
Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

INTRODUCTION:

COMMUNICATION is the key to any successful relationship. From God to man to each other, it is the bridge to peace, unity, and understanding. Poor communication is the number one cause of conflict and irritation. In order to restore a broken relationship, the art of communicating is essential.

Language is a gift from God. If man rebels against God, there will be division and confusion (Gen. 11:1-9). If man repents towards God, there will be unity and clarity (Acts 2:1-12). God's desire for man is to be unified to Him through Christ and His Word. As people draw closer to God, they draw closer to each other. This applies specifically to a husband and wife, family relations, friendships, and working relationships. Lacking the fruit of the Spirit will always hinder effective communication (Gal. 5:19-26).

It is important to remember that our adversary, the Devil, has many different wiles and devices. He is a master at breaking down communication in order to cause division and destroy anything that God has put together. The first line of communication that was broken was in Genesis chapter 3:1-6 as the Devil muddied the water of God's Word to create a division between God and man. This was also the origin of conflict between mankind (Gen. 4:8). The Devil knows that if he can breakdown communication in a marriage, it will trickle down to the family, church, and society.



- The Devil corrupted God's Word to bring confusion.
- The Devil will use lies to break down communication.
- The Devil went after the first marriage and family.
- Sin breaks down the line of communication.

In this devotion, we will examine the importance of a personal relationship with the Lord and how it affects your communication with others. Take some time to meditate on the Word of God and consider how important your communication is (Prov. 18:21), and how it can improve.

DAY ONE

(Psalm 119:105) – GOD

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

God's Word is the source of light and revelation that shines a clear path in the way we should go. It allows us to clearly see, not only our immediate step, but also the direction down the path. Because God is the Lord of language, He is a Master at communicating. Throughout the Bible, He spoke through diverse ways including an audible voice, angels, dreams, prophets, a burning bush, circumstances, God in the flesh, and the Scriptures. Today, God's infallible means of communicating with us is through the Bible (II Tim. 3:16-17) (II Pet. 1:16-21) (Jn. 17:17). The Devil hates God's Word and attempts to snatch it away from the hearers (Mt. 13:18-23). This is why it is so important in how we hear (Heb. 2:1) (Rom. 10:17).

We can learn how to better communicate with each other from the way God communicates with us:

- Our words should be clean (Ps. 119:9).
- Our words should not cause someone to sin (Ps. 119:11).
- Our words should be enjoyable (Ps. 119:103).
- Our words should not contain lies (Ps. 119:160).
- Our words should magnify the Bible (Ps. 138:2).
- Our words should not be perverse (Prov. 8:8).
- Our words should testify to Jesus (Jn. 5:39).
- Our words should encourage faith (Rom. 10:17).
- Our words should encourage good fruit (James 1:18).
- Our words should lead people to Christ (James 1:21).

As God communicates with us, we receive, believe, and become more like Him (Rom. 8:29). As we become more like Him, we begin to think like Him (I Cor. 2:16) and therefore talk like Him. This is what it means to be a "Christian." Much of God's Word has to do with reconciliation, grace, peace, and love. These are qualities that will not only be seen in our lives (I Jn. 3:18), but will also be heard in our words (Col. 4:6). The Holy Spirit is where we get the power to do this. The Spirit brings unity and peace. *"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:3). If we can be filled with the Spirit, our communication will not be overtaken with fleshy carnal influences. Read James 3:13 — 4:3 and see if you can identify yourself:

<u>GODLY COMMUNICATOR</u>	vs.	<u>UNGODLY COMMUNICATOR</u>
wise		bitter
knowledgable		envious
good works		strife
mEEK		liar
pure		worldly
peaceable		sensual
gentle		devilish
easily entreated		causes confusion
merciful		evil works
without partiality		fleshy lusts
without hypocrisy		prayerless

As you can see, whatever is on the inside will eventually make its way to the outside and affect your communication. Jesus said, *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man”* (Mt. 15:18).

How has the Word of God affected your communication lately? Has the Spirit of God ever convicted you of any words that have come out of your mouth? How should the fruit of the Spirit affect your conversations (Gal. 5:22-23)?

DAY TWO

(Ephesians 5:25-26) — MARRIAGE

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”.

One of the amazing things about our Saviour is that He not only told us how much He loved us, but he demonstrated it through His actions (Jn. 3:16) (Rom. 5:8). His love was a sacrificial selfless love. This is exactly how a husband is to love his wife. The more a husband loves the Lord, the more he will love his wife. The better a husband communicates with the Lord, the better he will communicate with his wife. As Christ is the head of church, so the husband is the head of the wife (v. 23). With this comes the responsibility of communication. As Christ pursued His Bride and opened up the lines of communication, the husband is to do the same with His wife. Just as Christ uses His Word to sanctify and cleanse his church, a husband should carefully use his words with his wife. This of course involves the using of God's Word, but it also involves every day conversations.

Here are some ideas on how to improve the communication in a marriage:

- ◆ (S.S. 1:9) Tell her how you value her. She needs to hear it!
- ◆ (S.S. 2:10) Express your desires, need, and intent.
- ◆ (S.S. 4:1-7) Affirm her beauty with endless compliments.
- ◆ (S.S. 7:10) Confirm that she is your only desire.

As a couple grows closer to Jesus Christ, they will grow closer to each other. A marriage relationship is only as strong as the relationship they have with the Lord. It is always important to remember that the wife needs unconditional love and security while the husband thrives off of honor and respect. Words will certainly express this. As each fulfill their Biblical role in marriage, God will pour out His blessings and open the lines of communication. The missing ingredient in every argument is Jesus Christ and His love (See I Cor. 13 for details). Worshipping together, reading Scripture together, praying together, and serving in a ministry together are crucial building blocks for a thriving marriage. The Devil is the enemy to all these things and is desperate to prevent them from happening. It is the husband's responsibility to safe-proof the marriage as Christ does with His Church.

How often do you pray with your wife? When is the last time you complimented your wife? Do you enjoy talking with your spouse? If not, then why? What can you do to change this? Have you ever made the mistake of thinking your spouse could read your mind, only to find out you were wrong? Is there an area in your marriage where the communication could be better?

DAY THREE

(Psalm 128:3) — FAMILY

“Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.”

In this chapter, the Lord describes the blessed family. This family fears the Lord (v. 1), walks in His ways (v. 1), is happy (v. 2), has a fruitful wife (v. 3), and enjoys grandchildren (v. 6). This doesn't happen without good communication. The way to accomplish this is to gather *“round about thy table”* (v. 3). The greatest of memories and the most affective way to communicate is around the DINNER TABLE. Food brings people together in communion (I Cor. 10:16-17). It allows a family to sit at the same table, face each other, and talk. A family that eats together and prays together usually has good communication with each other. Fathers are responsible for turning off the T.V. and gathering the family around the table. Before eating, a short reading of Scripture and prayer (I Tim. 4:5) sets the table for good spiritual dialogue. Whatever happens after that... enjoy, laugh, love and rejoice.

How often do you sit at the same table and eat as a family? How can you make family dinners more enjoyable? What kind of new tradition can you start to encourage more fellowship around the Word of God?

DAY FOUR

(Proverbs 27:9) — FRIENDS

“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.”

The best friends you can have are those who encourage you in the Lord (Prov. 27:17). We must be very careful with our friendships (I Cor. 15:33) (James 4:4). Most of the friction in friendships are caused by PRIDE (Prov. 13:10). Fellowshiping with friends is a great way to stay accountable, encouraged, and motivated. What kind of friend are you to others (Prov. 18:24)? How can you be a better friend? Are you a friend to Jesus?

DAY FIVE

(Psalm 15:1) — WORK

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”

Knowing how to communicate when at work is important. Work is not always easy as emotions can sometimes get the best of us. God's people are never “off the clock.” This means our off-temper should not affect our tongue (James 3). If our temper gets our tongue, it will get our testimony. We should always be careful not to use grievous words to communicate, but a soft answer that reflects grace and patience. Doing this will prevent problems. How well are you at doing this? How does James chapter 3 help you?

CONCLUSION:

Just as we allow the Scripture to interpret Scripture, it may be wise to have the one speaking interpret and clarify what they are communicating. As carriers of God's Word, we are called to be word specialists and world communicators. Here are a few more tips: *LISTEN MORE THAN YOU TALK — ASK QUESTIONS — BE CLEAR — WATCH YOUR TONE OF VOICE — TALK AT THE RIGHT TIME — MAKE SURE YOUR HEART IS RIGHT WITH GOD*