

Do You Communicate or Just Talk?

<u>Hebrews 10:24</u>: (NASB) And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.



Without communication, human life would cease to exist. We need to express ourselves, and we need to absorb the expressions of others. People's need to be heard and to share their thoughts, feelings and lives with one another gave birth to the phenomena of social media, and here is where we need to pause and consider. Somewhere along the line, our ability to actually communicate has gone down a diminishing pathway while our desire to "be seen" and "weigh-in" has blossomed. This trend affects all generations but seems to be especially powerful among those who have never known anything but the

internet. In our desire to seek consensus and belonging, we seem to have forgotten our need for honest one-on-one communication. How do we stop the trend? How do we rekindle the deep and life-sustaining value of sincere mutual understanding?

(1) Losing our listening, Five Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure, TED Talk

• I said at the beginning, "We're losing our listening." Why did I say that? Well, there are a lot of reasons for this. First of all, we invented ways of recording: first writing, then audio recording and now video recording as well. The premium on accurate and careful listening has simply disappeared. Secondly, the world is now so noisy, with this cacophony going on visually and auditorily, it's just hard to listen; it's tiring to listen. Many people take refuge in headphones, but they turn big, public spaces like this, shared soundscapes, into millions of tiny, little personal sound bubbles. In this scenario, nobody's listening to anybody. We're becoming impatient. We don't want oratory anymore; we want sound bites. And the art of conversation is being replaced, dangerously, I think, by personal broadcasting.



Many people in public spaces are wearing headphones. That is announcing to others, "Whatever is happening around me is irrelevant, because I am doing something else."

How has our understanding of communication changed since biblical times?

The Bible does not talk about communicating in the way that we often refer to it - from the standpoint of understanding feelings. It does, however, give a number of examples of communicating through co-laboring and through common cause. Here is biblical communication:

Communicate: Strongs #2841 koinoneo to share with others

<u>Galatians 6:6</u>: (KJV) Let him that is taught in the word <u>communicate</u> <<u>2841</u>> unto him that teacheth in all good things.

<u>1 Timothy 5:22</u>: (KJV) Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker <2841> of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Communicate: Strongs #2842 *koinonia* partnership

<u>Hebrews 13:16</u>: (KJV) But to do good and to communicate <2842> forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The apostle is saying, "Do not forget to be partners in the gospel."

Communicate: Strongs #2843 koinonikos from 2844; communicative

The only use of Strongs #2843:

<u>1 Timothy 6:18</u>: (KJV) That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate <2843>.

All of these words carry the sense of *support and participation in another's life* and not merely contributing input to it. They seem to imply an understanding - a sense of "being on the same page."

What page are we all supposed to be on for our "communication" to be in high gear?

<u>Hebrews 10:21-25</u>: (NASB) ²¹And since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope **without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful (the communication is for the purpose of building one another up); ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (works), ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together (we are valuable to each other), as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works - This was the first verse and program theme used on Christian Questions radio broadcast over 20 years ago and was also the theme of our first broadcast. One of our goals was to provoke one another to love and good works (KJV).

Our Christian life is entirely built around the faithfulness of Jesus and our invitation to follow him. As we communicate, we MUST always keep in mind that we are connected to each other through Jesus.

There are several New Testament "one another" commands. These serve as powerful communication guidelines. For a list of the "one another" commands in the New Testament, please see the Bonus Material at the end of the CQ Rewind Show Notes.

John 13:34-35: (NASB) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Christian communication means we must be engaged in the lives of the brotherhood.





Now that we know something about what communication is, what do we do to communicate successfully?

To be able to connect with others is an art. Most of us do not naturally have an understanding of how this actually works, so we will break it down into four basic areas of learning. Our first stop on this journey has to do with the side of communication that we probably do not think about too often - it is all about listening.

Not my boots, The Importance of Communicating Clearly, Karyn Buxman

One of the things that we have to deal with is communication, and sometimes we think we're doing a good job of communicating, but really people are not hearing what we're saying. I remembered this incident that happened back when I was in Pre-K. And it was the end of the day, and all of us were to get on our coats, and our

boots, and our mittens; we were sitting on our little red benches when I looked over and my best friend Jill who's got eyes as big as saucers - she was just sitting there just sitting there. Mrs. Ciely looked over and saw her sitting there, and she goes, "Jill, Jill get your boots on!" And Jill simply looked at her and said, "I can't get these boots on." So, Mrs. Ciely goes over, drops to her knees, and she starts shoving and shoving and shoving, and working up a sweat. And she finally gets one boot on, and then other she shoves and shoves and shoves, and she



finally gets that boot on. She's like, "Jill, these boots, they barely fit you!" Jill looks at her and said, "They're not my boots."

It is necessary to communicate clearly.



Stephen Covey, in his 1989 book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, gave massive insights to communicating.

Habit #5: Seek to Understand, then to be Understood.

Listening is for the purpose of understanding.



<u>Hebrews 4:16</u>: (NASB) (Because of Jesus) Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

God is a gracious listener:

<u>James 1:19-22</u>: (NASB) ¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

We often look at these words as admonitions to listen. They are, but it is deeper than that:

²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

This is about listening to God's word. If we listen to His word first, listening to others is so much easier:

²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

It does not end with hearing - we then must be *doers of the word*. This opens the door to gracious listening.



We certainly cannot listen like God can. How much of someone's story or issue should we listen to?

We should listen to all of their story since it is important to them. Do I want others to care enough about my story or issues? It is "give and take." When we listen to someone's whole story, we are telling them they are important.

Often, stories we share have other people involved. In the process of listening, we need to be careful not to listen to gossip. How do we listen to somebody's story without listening to gossip? It helps to reframe parts of the story - "I understand that is how you feel, but are you able to read anybody else's heart? Let's say what they did came across as wrong." It is also important to not listen to things that are not appropriate.

Conscious listening, Five Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure, TED Talk

• This is a serious problem that we're losing our listening. This is not trivial, because listening is our access to understanding. Conscious listening always creates understanding, and only with conscious listening can these things happen. A world where we don't listen to each other at all is a very scary place indeed.

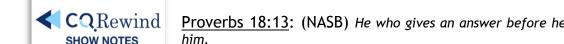
A "one another" command:

<u>Galatians 5:13-15</u>: (NASB) ¹³For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

What better way to serve someone than to really listen? We need to listen to know their needs.

Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with openhearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand. – Sue Patton





Proverbs 18:13: (NASB) He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.

Some simple listening tools:

- Put aside distractions and focus on the person speaking, even if it is on the phone.
- Position yourself to listen and take notes if appropriate.
- Repeat what they said back to them: "So, what you are saying is... Wait - let me see if I got this... Help me understand... What I hear you saying is..."



Proverbs 17:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. ²⁸Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.

There is wisdom in being quiet and listening.



Listening is foundational, but any good conversation is a two-way street. What should we be saying?

One of the key factors to that two-way street being truly profitable for everyone is to not be thinking about what you are going to say while you pretend to listen. It is so easy to want to jump ahead to "my turn." The danger here is missing something key in the other person's story or reasoning.

When we are not consciously listening, it is a lack of respect for the other person.

(1) My brother's, The Importance of Communicating Clearly, Karyn Buxman

Mrs. Ciely's face became pale. She dropped to her knees, and she starts pulling and pulling and pulling, and she gets a boot off. Pulls and pulls, finally gets the other boot off. Holds the boots up to the class. She goes, "Alright, alright, whose boots are these?" Jill looks up at her and says, "They're my brother's."



Communicate with



Monitor what comes out of your mouth.

We should have thoughtful speech.

<u>Covey Habit #2: Begin with the End in Mind</u>. There is no better way to monitor our words than to ask ourselves what the reason is for speaking them. Provoking? Sarcasm? Judgment? Contribution?

The story of the boots reminds us of a story we heard this week from one of our CQ volunteers. Melinda said to her son, "Lucas, bring me the towels from your bathroom so I can wash them." Lucas comes down with an armful of folded clean towels and dumps them in the "to be washed pile." Melinda said, "What an example of non-effective communication! I will definitely listen to Monday's podcast."

From Melinda's standpoint, she knew exactly what she meant. Lucas took it literally and happily fulfilled his mother's request.



Ephesians 4:25-32: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood,

speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

All truth is not to be spoken at all times (more on this later).

Truth should come out of our mouths. Anger, while acceptable, must be bridled.

²⁸He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

Transform from being "a taker" to being "a giver." This is a transformation in what our life communicates. Communication is not just words, it is also actions.

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
³⁰Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Be in the present and speak the words of one who truly and deeply cares about others.

³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Communicate kindness. Our communication should reflect the life of one who has been forgiven themselves.



While this all sounds good, what should I do when I just do not feel like I can get to such a spiritually high level when I need to communicate?

Righteous communication, which is not necessarily spiritual, can be kind, loving, caring, helpful and encouraging, and hopefully God-honoring. Even if we are in a place where we cannot key in on spirituality, key in on the basic instinct of righteousness.

Romans 12:17: (NASB) Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

The tongue is the only tool that gets sharper with use. - Washington Irving

<u>Proverbs 25:11-12</u>: (NASB) ¹¹Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances (think before we speak). ¹²Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

 (\neg, \neg) Silence and the mixer, Five Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure, TED Talk

Good. The first one is "silence." Just three minutes a day of silence is a wonderful exercise to reset your ears and to recalibrate, so that you can hear the quiet again. If you can't get absolute silence, go for quiet, that's absolutely fine. Second, I call this "the mixer." (Noise) So even if you're in a noisy environment like this - and we all spend a lot of time in places like this listen in the coffee bar to how many channels of sound can I hear? How many individual channels in that mix am I listening to? You can do it in a beautiful place as well, like in a lake. How many birds am I hearing? Where are they? Where are those ripples? It's a great exercise for improving the quality of your listening.

<u>Proverbs 29:20</u>: (NASB) Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

If our words feel like they want to burst out of our mouths, that can be a sign of an unbridled tongue:

James 3:8-10: (NASB) ⁸But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

Reactive words are not thoughtful and do not generally build others up.

<u>1 Thessalonians 5:11</u>: (NASB) Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.



We have talked about loving one another, serving one another, being kind to one another and building up one another. These are all ways for us to communicate.





Listening is the foundation, and our words are the building. The question is, whose design is it?

As important as our words are, the source from which they are formed is vital. There are two primary places that words are born. The first place that we will examine is our hearts. This source can be just as wonderful as it can be devious. Heart-based communication will impact others for better or worse.

(I))Mittens, The Importance of Communicating Clearly, Karyn Buxman

• Now, I thought Mrs. Ciely was going to cry. She drops back down to her knees, shoves, shoves, shoves, shoves, shoves. When she finally stands up, she's like, "Jill, where's your mittens?" "In the boots." As a leader you gotta be listening and communicating clearly.

Sometimes listening is asking the next question. Listening provokes more communication. If the teacher had taken a moment to ask the next question before she responded, she may not have had to take the boots on and off so many times.



When we think about managing the contents of our hearts, we need to think about - "What would Jesus say?" His heart was pure.

<u>Covey Habit #3: Put First Things First</u>. To manage your heart, see it through Jesus' eyes.

<u>Mark 7:20-23</u>: (NASB) ²⁰And he was saying, That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²²deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

The point is clear - we are solely responsible for the communications that proceed from us. I also own whatever I write on social media.

SHOW NOTES (SHOW NOTES)Savoring and listening filters, Five Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure, TED Talk

Third, this exercise I call "savoring," and this is a beautiful exercise. It's about enjoying mundane sounds. This, for example, is my tumble dryer. It's a waltzone, two, three; one, two, three; one, two, three; one, two, three. I love it! So, mundane sounds can be really interesting - if you pay attention. I call that the "hidden choir"- it's around us all the time. The next exercise is probably the most important of all of these, if you just take one thing away. This is listening positions - the idea that you can move your listening position to what's appropriate to what you're listening to.

If we embrace the noise we cannot control, it makes it easier to deal with the noise. We have a choice.

Position ourselves to listen and focus on what is being said. Example: when someone is offering a prayer in a group, we should put ourselves in a position to clearly listen to the words and not be distracted with our own thoughts.

There is a difference between commanding respect and commanding attention.

Commanding attention - celebrities, sports figures and politicians do this often. They do not capture people's hearts; they capture their imagination.

People's ego and imaginations follow them:

<u>Acts 8:9-10,12-13</u>: (NASB) ⁹Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; ¹⁰and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, This man is what is called the Great Power of God... ¹²But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. ¹³Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Commanding respect - leaders, true heroes, those who have accomplished truly magnificent things and those who set an example for us, are instinctively perceived to be in this category. People's hearts follow them.

Peter and John show up and miraculously bestow the Holy Spirit:

<u>Acts 8:18-24</u>: (NASB) ¹⁸Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹saying, Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit. (Simon wanted to command attention.) ²⁰But Peter said to him, May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity. ²⁴But Simon answered and said, Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.

Peter alerted Simon about his heart. Simon's heart was not right before God and he asked for forgiveness.



Managing the contents of our hearts may often mean having to clear out what has taken root in exchange for that which is of higher value:

<u>1 Corinthians 12:24-25</u>: (NASB) ²⁴Whereas our more presentable members have no need of *it*. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same **care** for one another.

Another "one another" command - Care for one another.



What is the communication connection with how we think? Should our minds override our hearts?

Even though listening is the foundation, and our words are the building of strong communication, what goes into the quality of those things is paramount. As a Christian we have our earthly minds and the mind of Christ, so we need to be especially aware of which one we are listening to.

This ends up having to be a conscious choice that we make. "Am I listening to the mind of Christ?"

The points are straightforward:

- Respectful listening
- Being careful with our words
- > Thinking before we speak
- Monitoring and managing the contents of our hearts

This segment comes down to, "What would Jesus think?" We are considering the wisdom of Jesus. We often say, "What would Jesus do?" (WWJD, like on the bracelets some people wear.) But if we change that to, "What would Jesus THINK?" we now get into the mind of Christ and then the instinct ought to be, "I want to think like *that*."



<u>Covey Habit #4: Think Win-Win</u>. Because Christianity is all about salvation for all, thinking win-win should come easily - as long as we are using the mind of Christ in our communication.

We should not use our own devices, thoughts and processes - and especially not our preconceived ideas that we would like the Scriptures to fit into.

In our next audio clip, we are dropping into the middle of a conversation. The speaker is holding up a beach ball and asking what color it is. The ball has a set of colors on one side and a different set of colors on the other side. So, one person sees one set of colors and the person on the other side sees a different set of colors. The point is that it is possible to see the same thing through different eyes. This has a lot to do with communication.

(1))Gift of the gap, How to Reduce Conflict and Build Better Relationships, Capstone Publishing

Am I listening to understand or listening to defend? You see, you want to tell me your side of the beach ball, but if I'm not careful I'm interrupting you and going "ah yes, but," "ah yes, but," "ah yes, but." You see, I've learned this with my wife who's also my business partner. There are occasions when she needs to sit me down

and give me a little bit of feedback. And if I'm not careful, I'm listening to her while building up the case for the defense. Do you know what I sometimes need to literally do? I need to shut up and listen. Why not develop what I call the gift of the gap. That's right - not the gift of the gab, the gift of the gap. Actually, press pause, allow some time and space for the other person to talk and you listen. Listen to understand doesn't mean



you're going to listen to agree, but once I understand your side of the beach ball and where you're coming from, perhaps you'd be more open to listening to my side of the beach ball as well.

That is profound. And the interesting thing about all of the audio clips we have played is that every one of them has been about listening. The reason we put it together that way is because listening is the foundation for being able to communicate well. We should take that to heart and listen first and then be really careful with our words.

<u>2 Corinthians 10:4-5</u>: (NASB) ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ - our thoughts need to be captive to HIS way of thinking, even if we do not like it - even if it is contrary to what we would like to have happen.

With this approach, our communication with others on every level will be positive. That sounds easy, but it is so hard to do! It takes work, devotion and dedication. It also takes forgiveness, because when we fail, we ask for forgiveness and then try again. We fail and ask for forgiveness and then get back up over and over again. The point is to keep getting up. If we want our communication to actually be building others up, our mind has to be focused on the right things in the right way. Otherwise, we can stray too easily.

If we are strong, our strength will speak for itself. If we are weak, words will be of no help. -JFK

Words end up being powerful, but not nearly as powerful as what is driving those words if they are out of true godly power and conviction. We just have to realize that that is what this all comes down to - getting the source for our communication clear so that it helps others. What we have been saying throughout this entire podcast is that to communicate how we feel about a circumstance may have its space in a conversation, but it has a *limited* space, and should be put aside.

<u>Romans 12:14-17</u>: (NASB) ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Do not be wise in your own estimation - it is great to try to follow righteousness and godliness, but we should let the estimation of our wisdom come from God and not ourselves. Let's try to take the ego out of all of this as much as possible.

Humility should be front and center. Let's look at humility in relation to strength. Just because we are humble does not mean we cannot be strong.

Humility is not a lack of strength, nor is it a compromised approach. *Humility is strength that is focused enough so as to not need ego* and clear enough to not need to be seen as "better than the other guy."

This makes us think about the Scribes and Pharisees, always arguing with Jesus, thinking they were above the Jewish nation and everyone else. Jesus tried to teach them for three and a half years, but they just could not get it; they would not listen. They did not want to listen so they could not hear. The communication broke down even though Jesus was able to hear them and read their hearts.

Humility is strength that has godliness just dripping off of it. If the godliness is there and a humble attitude is carrying it, that can only bring something good. You may not succeed in what you are trying to accomplish, but God does take the will for the deed.

(1)RASA and conclusion, Five Ways to Listen Better, Julian Treasure, TED

And finally, an acronym. You can use this in listening, in communication. If you're in any one of those roles - and I think that probably is everybody who's listening to this talk- the acronym is RASA, which is the Sanskrit word for "juice" or "essence." And RASA stands for "Receive," which means pay attention to the person; "Appreciate," making little noises like "hmm," "oh,"
 "OK"; "Summarize" - the word "so" is very important in communication; and "Ask," ask questions afterwards. But I believe that every human being needs to listen consciously in order to live fully - connected in space and in time to the physical world around us, connected in understanding to each other, not to mention spiritually connected, because every spiritual path I know of has listening and contemplation at its heart.

Receive. Appreciate. Summarize. Ask.

If we would take the principles we talked about today and apply them to family relationships as between husband and wife, parents and children, or relationships within our church organizations or work relationships - life will be better when we learn to be the best listener we can be.

The following Scriptures show strength in humility which inevitably brings better communication:

James 3:13-15: (NASB) ¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

We want to be wise and understanding but we need to show that by good behavior and good deeds.

The gentleness of wisdom - Wisdom does not beat people over the head. It walks them to a conclusion. Wisdom does not need theatrics; it simply needs a hearing ear. Wisdom is full of righteousness, godliness and appropriateness working together. It is also appropriate as far as the timing of the words.

Our minds cannot drive our communication if our hearts have jealousy, ambition and arrogance. The heart and mind have to work together:

<u>Ephesians 5:15-17</u>: (NASB) ¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Understanding what the will of the Lord is - we have to redeem the time because we do not have a lot of it. We have to be careful with our days, so our communication through body language, words and actions has to be as pure as we can make it. The only way to understand God's will is to know the mind of God. This is not by instinct. Nobody knows the mind of God instinctively; we know it by knowing the word of God.

Our heart and mind are undeniably connected. Communicate by keeping both Christlike:

<u>Colossians 3:15-17</u>: (NASB) ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you (your mind), with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts - We need the peace of Christ in our hearts because that settles our natural deviousness that comes from a sinful heart.

Let the word richly dwell within you - and where does the word dwell? It has to dwell within your mind. Here is a common mistake many Christians make: they listen to a sermon and think, "I am going to let the word of God come into my heart and everything is going to be fine." No, it is not. Because unless you study and absorb and are diligent to make it a part of your thinking, it will not stay in your heart. That is why the Scripture puts both of those things together so fully.



We started out by saying humanity would not exist without communication. The idea is to learn how to communicate by first listening, because someone has to be the one listening - why not let that person be me? Listen intentionally and with respect. Then, speak with respect and get our hearts engaged into what we are looking at and doing. Finally, make our minds full of the word of God and the mind of God, so that all of these things can come into play.

True, godly communication can change the way our every day goes. It can completely alter every part of our life and change our relationships, perceptions and our effectiveness. All we need to do is go to work on ourselves. Start with listening, monitor our words, look at our heart, and get our mind focused on the mind of Christ.

> So, do you communicate or just talk? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!



Join us next week for our podcast on February 4, 2019: Ep. #1059: "You're a Christian, but Are You Holy?"



Bonus Material

If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own. — Dale Carnegie

A partial list of the "one another" commands in the New Testament. As you go through these, think of them as communication guidelines.

- Love one another John 13:34 and John 15:12, 17
- Forgive one another Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13
- Be servants to one another Galatians 5:13
- Show hospitality to one another 1 Peter 4:7-10
- Pray for one another James 5:16
- Build up (edify) one another Romans 14:19 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Greet one another Romans 16:16 and 1 Peter 5:14
- Forbear one another Ephesians. 4:1-2 and Colossians 3:13-14
- Do not judge one another Romans 14:13
- Do not speak evil of one another James 4:11
- Do not murmur against one another James 5:9
- Do not bite and devour one another Galatians 5:15
- Do not provoke and envy one another Galatians 5:26
- Have the same care for one another 1 Corinthians 12:25-26
- Receive one another Romans 15:7
- Teach one another Colossians 3:16
- Admonish (counsel) one another Romans 15:14 and Colossians 3:16
- Submit to one another Ephesians 5:21-22
- Confess your sins to one another James 5:16
- Do not lie to one another Colossians 3:9
- Be kind to one another Ephesians 4:32
- Comfort one another 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11

11 Ways to Communicate Better (Source: mentalfloss.com)

Knowing how to communicate effectively is the key to any relationship. Whether you're giving a presentation at work, working out a disagreement with your significant other, or just having a chat with a friend, knowing how to articulate your ideas—and listen to those of others—is crucial. But though we spend much of our time each day talking to each other, that doesn't mean we're all great communicators. Communicating effectively can be surprisingly challenging. So, whether you struggle to get your points across or just want to brush up on a few pointers, here are 11 ways to be a better communicator.

<u>1. LEARN TO LISTEN</u>

Active listening is the basis of all good communication. If you aren't paying attention to what others are saying, there's no way you'll be able to respond effectively. Focus on what your



conversation partner is saying, and if necessary, repeat it mentally to make sure you understand the points they're making.

2. PAY ATTENTION TO BODY LANGUAGE

Pay attention to your conversation partner's body language. Are they fidgeting or standing still? Yawning or smiling? Pay attention to your own body language as well—if your words exude confidence, but your body language expresses nervousness, your conversation partner will pick up on that. It's important both to read others' body language, and to pay attention to your own stance.

3. OBSERVE HOW OTHERS COMMUNICATE IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

It's important to understand your audience. If you're giving a presentation at work, study how others do it (or watch videos of famous lectures by academics, business people, or professionals in your field). If you're nervous about how to act at a networking event or party, take cues from the people around you.

4. DON'T BE AFRAID OF A BIT OF SILENCE

Occasional lapses in conversation are natural, so don't sweat it if conversation lags. Plus, letting pauses occur naturally is a good way to make sure you're not interrupting anyone's train of thought.

5. USE ACTION VERBS AND CONFIDENT LANGUAGE

Even if you're not feeling confident, you can still sound confident. One good trick is avoiding filler words like "um" and "uh" by slowing down your speech a bit. Another is using strong action verbs—use your resume for fodder and stick to descriptive verbs like "evaluate," "manage," and "advise."

6. ASK QUESTIONS

Ask clarifying questions: It'll ensure you understand what your conversation partner is saying and show that you're paying attention.

7. FIND COMMON GROUND, EVEN IN AN ARGUMENT

Finding a shared interest or opinion with your conversation partner is always a great strategy it'll make the conversation more enjoyable for both of you as well as show your conversation partner that you've got something in common. But finding common ground in an argument can be just as important. If you disagree with someone, try to find a related point that you do agree with—it'll show you're trying to understand their point of view.

8. BE PREPARED AND KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

Knowing your subject matter will put you at ease and make it easier to communicate your ideas to others. If you're preparing for a job interview, make sure you are familiar with the position and the company; if you're giving a presentation, know your stuff!

9. IF YOU WANT TO SUBTLY CHANGE THE SUBJECT, FIND A VERBAL BRIDGE

We all occasionally end up in a conversation that's not going in a direction we like. Finding a polite way to change the subject can be tough, but one good trick is finding a "bridge." This can mean finding a topic somewhere in between the current one and the one you're interested in or involve using a more general phrase that will help you shift the topic. For instance, phrases like "Yes, but," "What I can tell you is," or "The important thing to remember is," all let you subtly shift the focus.

10. FIND THE BEST WAY TO FRAME YOUR STORY

Whether you're giving a lecture or telling your friend a funny story, it's important to figure out how to frame it to make it interesting and engaging. Identify your hook (What makes your story interesting? Why would others care about it?), and pick a framing device: Are you taking your listener on a journey? Explaining a theory? Or making an argument for something? It's important to clearly define early on where your story is going.

11. RELAX

Though it's important to be self-aware during an important or stressful conversation, ultimately one of the most effective communication strategies is just relaxing, and acting like you would normally-while, of course, remaining professional.