

## How Can I Effectively Reach Out and Connect With Others?

**Galatians 5:13:** (NASB) *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*



Never in the history of humanity have we had such a profound ability to communicate with others. From the palm of our hand, we can see and speak with individuals and groups all over the world at any time of day or night. We can message, share and “like” in countless ways. Yet, never in the history of humanity have we been so disassociated, disconnected and dysfunctional. We are more polarized, more self-centered and more alone than we ever have been. How did we get here and how do we fix it? How do we find our way through this technology-driven world and actually

connect with others? As Christians especially, what do we need to do to connect with those around us in a way that can bless and encourage them?

According to the Bible, what does it mean to communicate and why is it so important in Christianity?

 Defined, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx

- *Communication can be simply defined as the delivering of information. Now, effective communication is when that information is actually received by your audience because it doesn't matter how great your delivery is. Your communication is ineffective if the information isn't actually received by your audience. And I'll take it a step further - not only should information be received by your audience, but it also needs to be understood by your audience. I truly believe that communication is mostly effective when your audience is able to take the information that you've given them and then relay it to another third party.*

Communication is not just talking - it is having our message received, processed and able to be passed on to someone else in its original form, not with our bias. This is a lot harder than we might think.

Biblical communication is based far more on actions than words. When we look at the words used to describe communication in the New Testament, they are all about how we act and not about what we say. Biblical communication is deeper than just trying to understand someone's feelings. It is focused on being involved with that person to build them up.

New Testament words for communication:

**Communicate:** Strong's #2841 *koinoneo*; to share with others (objectively or subjectively)

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

**Communicate:** Strong's #2842 *koinonia*; partnership

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

**Communicate:** Strong's #2843 *koinonikos*; communicative, i.e. (pecuniarily) liberal



## The only use of Strongs #2843:

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

**Communicate:** Strongs #4790 *sugkoinoneo*: to share in company with, i.e., co-participate in

Philippians 4:14: (KJV) *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did **communicate with** <4790> my affliction.*

All these words carry the sense of participation in another's life and not just reaching out.



The main Greek word meaning partnership we described is *koinonia*. The thought of *koinonia* means to be liberal with our money, time and effort towards others. It is friendship, sharing, communion, partnership and participation. It is not just talking to someone - it is contributing to their life so their life can be better.

We want to absorb this as we discuss communication from a biblical perspective. It is the sharing and the contribution from me to you, from my life to your life, and adding some quality to your life because of our communication. That is why in the Bible much of the communication was financially supporting those who were disadvantaged.

 **Ineffective communication results, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx**

- *Number one in the list is wasted time. We waste so much time due to ineffective communication, and I highly doubt anyone here wants to waste their time on purpose. Secondly, we also waste emotions. Because see, along with wasted time, conversations drag on much longer than they need to. And with that, our emotions drag on much longer than they need to. See, ineffective communication also leads to misunderstandings. And misunderstandings could lead to the eventual loss of relationships. No two conversations are ever the same. And that's because no two people are ever the same. Now there may be similarities, but you will never find a carbon copy conversation. So, you have to learn how to navigate through questions and rebuttals. You may need to explain an idea in a different way if your audience didn't receive it the first time.*

Wasted emotions? Conversations that drag on longer than needed?

Misunderstandings? This sounds like marriage sometimes! Men and women are SO different in how they show appreciation, listen and communicate.



Here is a classic example about how not being direct causes misunderstandings. Just yesterday my husband and I were driving, and I saw the ice cream store and said, "Hey! The ice cream store is open." He said, "Oh, yes, it is," and kept driving. An hour later I was like, "So, why didn't you stop for ice cream when I asked?" He was confused and said, "But I didn't hear you ask to stop for ice cream!" The answer is, you ALWAYS stop for ice cream unless it's when I'm on a diet, and then you NEVER stop for ice cream! You should know what to do or not do by now.



The point is to be more direct.

As we unfold the topic of communication, we will introduce several "Effectiveness Traits." There are many, but we are not saying we must master all these traits in order to be able to communicate. Communication comes across in a lot of different ways, and there are a lot of things of which we need to be aware.

Now the "why." Why is it so important for Christians to be good communicators?



The first "why": We are responsible for the furthering of the gospel and therefore need to do it as well as we can:

**Colossians 4:5-6:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.* <sup>6</sup>*Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be willing to be vulnerable.**

**Be willing to step out for a higher purpose.**

**After all, we are called "ambassadors for Christ" for a reason.**

I had to call the phone company the other day with some problems. I was put on hold a long time and accidentally hung up on. But I prayed to stay calm and not be annoyed as my issues were resolved after an hour. I said to the person helping me, "I'm sorry to have so many questions. I bet you regret being the one to pick up my call!" And he said, no - he was VERY grateful because people are yelling at him all day long. He said he gets very upset and stressed every day, and it meant so much that I was being kind. I am so glad I did not yell in frustration which was my first inclination. *Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.*



The second "why": We have a responsibility to be a motivating influence for the brotherhood to the best of our ability:

**Hebrews 10:24-25:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>*and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,* <sup>25</sup>*not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be thoughtful.**

**Communicate in a considered and wise way and not as an emotional reaction.**

It is important to *decide* to communicate, rather than feel like we must. There is a big difference between those two.

When things are uncomfortable, we might avoid direct communication, which can be destructive. We may find it easier to talk to someone else about that brother or sister and get them "on our side," to see things our way. Under the guise of getting advice, we end up evil speaking and passing on unnecessary negative information.



It can be easier to “chirp” to someone else rather than deal with the issue. Going back to the source is difficult and requires a lot of courage. We will develop some of the traits that will help us in these situations.



**The third “why”:** We have a responsibility to honor our physical family relationship in a God-honoring way:

Colossians 3:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* <sup>19</sup>*Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.* <sup>20</sup>*Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.* <sup>21</sup>*Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.*

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be fully engaged.**

The closer our relationship, the more fully engaged our communication should be.

I learned that the hard way recently. I had to make a promise to my husband that when he is talking to me, I literally have to put my phone down and not touch it. It was getting way out of hand where I was constantly texting or emailing and trying to listen to him at the same time. Now I physically readjust to give him my full attention.



**The fourth “why”:** This is our most sacred communication. We have a responsibility to pray in a way that is honest, respectful and sacred:

John 14:13: (NASB) *Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the son.*

**Now the other side of the coin:**

James 4:3: (NASB) *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*



I hate to admit this, but a few times lately, because I’ve been so tired due to our recent move, a few bites into my meal I realize I forgot to pray. I then thank God and ask His forgiveness for disrespecting Him. He is the Father of every good and perfect gift. I not only need to be fully engaged in all my communications but especially with my heavenly Father.

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be humble.**

All of our communication should be based on honoring God and NOT ourselves.

### Developing Christian Communication:



Effectively reaching out and communicating stems from a sincere desire to positively touch the lives of others.

This kind of communication does not happen by accident; rather, it happens as a result of thoughtful effort.

Good communication is a result of thinking it through - not winging it or doing the bare minimum. The why of communication is obvious as well as motivating. Good communication equals a good quality of life.





## As Christians, our best example of communicating with others is Jesus. What can we learn from him?

Because Jesus was perfect, his ability to communicate was far beyond us, but that does not mean we cannot follow his example. Jesus knew how the human mind worked and how human emotions drive us. He used that knowledge to show those around him truth and help them see beyond their limits.

Jesus had a way of effectively communicating with people with honesty, integrity, godliness, wisdom, strength and power. We want to learn from him. There are four basic ways Jesus communicated.

### Jesus communicated with the POWER of God working through him

#### Peter walking on the water:

Matthew 14:26-27: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, *It is a ghost! And they cried out in fear.* <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, *take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.*

The fact that Jesus was walking on water was communicating with a higher power, because it is not physically possible. It was a miracle. And then he tells them, *it is I; do not be afraid.* He was working with God's spirit.

#### The raising of Lazarus:

John 11:41-43: (NASB) <sup>41</sup>So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes, and said, *Father, I thank You that You have heard me.* <sup>42</sup>*I knew that You always hear me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent me.* <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.*

#### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be dynamic based on God's power working in our life.**

We cannot physically do what Jesus did; we cannot work those miracles, but we can emulate how Jesus drew on God's spirit for direction, strength and courage.



The problem of objective, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx

- See, problems arise when communication and conversations become more about the person wanting to be heard than actually delivering information. Here is an example: Let's say you're angry at someone. Instead of directly telling them that you're angry, instead of directly telling them why you're angry and potentially sitting down and coming to a peaceful resolution, you may give them the cold shoulder. You might leave their texts unread (I can't stand that, by the way.) You might huff and puff when you're around them and slam doors. Not that any of you here have ever done that. But we do all these things hoping that this message will get across that they'll understand that I'm mad at them. Instead of directly telling them that I'm mad at them.



Feeling like that person should KNOW what they did and should apologize without us having to explain it to them is an immature reaction, and we need to try to do better.



We do, and that is where communicating with the power of God's spirit can help us overcome the power of our own ego.

## Jesus communicated with FOCUS

**Peter walking on the water:**

Matthew 14:30-31: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me! <sup>31</sup>Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him, and said to him, You of little faith, why did you doubt?

The key communication of Jesus was action, not words! *Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him.* His focus was to take care of Peter.

**Jesus also displayed his focus when preparing the apostles for his death:**

John 13:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from supper, and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, he girded himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be clearly driven.**

Communicate with purpose and passion that is fueled by being a disciple of Christ.

Jesus focused on those he was going to leave behind. His first impulse was to show them how to serve humbly by washing their feet.

Here is an important question - are we "fueled by being a disciple of Christ" when we are spouting off on social media? Or, in the types of photos we post or comments we make or lifestyles we support? Does ALL our communication - verbal, digital, body language - properly and sacredly reflect Jesus and our heavenly Father? If all Christians did this, the internet would be a much nicer place.



If we are spouting off, then that is emotional steam, not godliness. Godly communication is giving a clearly-driven, focused instruction, suggestion or direction.

## Jesus communicated with STORIES

**After the Pharisees challenged the authority of Jesus:**

Matthew 21:33: (NASB) Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.

**To followers of John the Baptist:**

Matthew 9:16: (NASB) But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.

**Jesus told stories (parables) to the public, but he also told stories to his own followers:**

Matthew 7:3-4: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye?



Check out our CQ Kids videos:  
**WHY DID JESUS SPEAK IN PARABLES?**  
[christianquestions.com/youtube](http://christianquestions.com/youtube)

He was telling stories (parables) to everyone to draw their attention and to get them engaged and thinking.



### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:

**Be engaging.**

Draw those with whom you communicate in with thoughtful challenges.

The stories were a way to teach the Pharisees without their defenses immediately going up. They might not have liked what Jesus said, but at least they stopped long enough to listen, consider and THEN fume about it.

If you think about it, assumptions are the archenemy of clear communication. It is important to understand that when we assume, we might spout off. We are not engaging in real, true, valuable communication.



Defining terms and your goal, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx

- Defining your terms is huge and this is why: you can end up using the same word as someone else and having different definitions as to what that word means. And one of the best ways to clear this up is by asking the following question. What does that mean to you? What does that word mean to you? What does that phrase mean to you? What does that sentence mean to you? Because that will clear up confusion. Now before you start, you need to know what your end goal is. What do I want my audience to receive? What's the information or message that I want them to receive?

This is helpful when discussing doctrinal issues. We disagree, but how are you defining the 1,000-year reign of Christ? What do you mean by a "soul?" What exactly is the "holy spirit?" We seem to disagree but might actually be saying the same thing in a different way.

## Jesus communicated with QUESTIONS

### Jesus healed on the Sabbath:

Mark 3:3-4: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>He said to the man with the withered hand, Get up and come forward! <sup>4</sup>And he said to them, Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill? But they kept silent.

He knew they did not like him healing on the Sabbath, so he asked them a straightforward question to give them an opportunity to step up and speak their opinion.

### He handled an inappropriate request by James and John:

Mark 10:35-36: (NASB) <sup>35</sup>James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you. <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you?



### He healed Bartimaeus:

Mark 10:50-51: (NASB) <sup>50</sup>Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup>And answering him, Jesus said, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!

Jesus knew the answer, but he asked because it was important for the man to tell him. This is a lesson for us - ask so that others can tell us, so that we can hear and understand it.

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be an obvious, willing and attentive listener.**

Those we communicate with should know their thinking, circumstances and challenges are important to us.

My cousin Art would throw out what I call "Question Bombs" to his co-workers about the Bible, just to get them thinking. Maybe something like, "So, where are all those people right now who lived before Jesus was born on earth?" And they would be like, "Hmmm." And they would come to him later to talk more about it. This can help stimulate thinking along spiritual lines.



### Developing Christian Communication:



Effectively reaching out and communicating is built upon our ability to do as Jesus did. Our clarity of purpose needs to be godly, and our passion, examples and questions need to be focused and understandable.

This is not off the cuff. This is thinking things through and asking questions that draw others in by using the power, focus, stories and questions like Jesus did.

With an example as powerful as Jesus, it is easy to know what to do. Now, we just need to DO what we are taught.

**Communication is hardest in the presence of disagreement.  
How do we overcome that challenge?**

Every conversation about reaching out to communicate really must begin with asking why we are doing it. If we are looking to fan the flames of dissension or emphatically show someone the error of their ways, we may as well just stop. Let's communicate because we want to build others up!

When we are speaking with someone we disagree with, we should examine our motivation. If we are looking to prove how wrong they are, it means we are looking for recognition ourselves. If we are in that camp, we need to get out - this attitude will not help us communicate. This does not mean when we communicate with someone who is wrong, we do not deal with the wrong.





I have had experiences dealing with Christians with extreme moral issues. There are times when they felt they should be able to do something that is scripturally immoral. It is difficult to deal with this firmly, but kindly. One approach is to say, "What you are saying is that you know more than all these other Christians you have respected for your whole life? Please show me where this is in the Scriptures." In one of these circumstances, I slid my Bible across the table and asked the person to show me where in the Scriptures this behavior was okay. It was awkward and there was dead silence, but this opened the door to talk about the situation. It was not like I was going to beat them into submission, but it was to get them to face that if we cannot prove our actions by Scripture, then why are we doing them? It helped me to see their thought process.

We can deal with hard issues and be firm, but still be *communicating* - not browbeating or preaching during the process.

As dedicated Christians, we can reach out and connect with those on the other side of many issues by using the power of reasoning, graciously applied. The following example of the Apostle Paul has to do with directly witnessing to God's truth. The principles applied here are relevant to all our dealings with those of the world.

**This is the example of Apostle Paul in Athens (a very pagan place) waiting for the other apostles to arrive:**

Acts 17:16-20: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

He did not like what he saw.

**Paul was a passionate man, and his feelings were easily provoked. Paul being provoked triggered positive action instead of negative emotion:**

<sup>17</sup>So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present...

**Paul established himself as a well-thought-out influence and a steady presence. He was reasoning (not yelling) with them:**

<sup>19</sup>And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? <sup>20</sup>For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean...

He had planted seeds with integrity, kindness and patience. Paul's logic roused curiosity and response and opened a *significant* door of further communication.



**Be patient.**

Effective communication can be a slow process of seed planting and cultivating. Drowning a seedling will not make it grow faster.

We plant those seeds and want to carefully cultivate them, but we need to read the signs, and cultivate them in a patient and timely manner - do not think that overwatering will make the seeds grow faster. Being overattentive can drown those tender shoots.



What, how and the importance of trust, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx

- You may have heard it said, "It's not what you say, but it's how you say it." Well, guess what? It IS what you say. You have to know what you're talking about. One of the worst things is being a part of a conversation and listening to someone talk about something you know they know nothing about. And secondly, it is how you say it. Tonality matters - you know, if you're speaking to someone with a harsh or abrasive tone, if you're angry or condescending towards them, or any number of negative tones that will hinder your audience from receiving your message. And I want to add a third layer to this, because it's not just what is said or how it's said, but the third layer is this: is what's being said coming from a trustworthy source? See, trust is a big part of communication. If your audience doesn't trust you, then your words will fall on deaf ears.



The Apostle Paul is a great example. Ideally, we want to communicate face-to-face whenever possible, but here, none of us have ever met him; he's never texted us. In fact, we are not even sure what he looks like. And yet, we feel we know him. We trust him. We love the Apostle Paul! We have enough of a complete picture of his dedication to Christ that we can work with a common goal. Because we trust his motives, words and behavior, we can follow him as he followed Christ.



This provokes a few "mirror questions": *Am I trustworthy, like the Apostle Paul? Can others follow me as I follow Christ? Do I represent, in a godly manner, what I am communicating?*

As a result of wise communication and patience in planting seeds, Paul has the undivided attention of many:

Acts 17:22-23: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup>For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD...

He is relating to them what he saw. He says he sees that they are striving to find something higher. He did not rail at their rank paganism; he looked for the positive, some common ground in order to open communication.

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



#### Be interested.

Effective communication is best demonstrated by having genuine respect for the stance of those we communicate with, even if they are misguided.

Of all people, Paul knew the value of giving passion a turn in the right direction to make all the difference. Instead of attacking them, he builds on their devotion. They can listen because they are not defensive. Without defense barriers, it opens incredible doors as it opens their ears to hear his message.



With this attention and respect in place, he now unfolds the core message of his communication:

Acts 17:23-31: (NASB) *...Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.*

**I have the answer that you need; this God need not be unknown! Paul then describes the power and love of their “unknown” God - the one true God:**

*<sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup>nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; <sup>26</sup>and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, <sup>27</sup>that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;*

He does not tear down their idols; he builds up the real God. The true God is bigger than such things. If he shows them the true God, individually they will tear down their own idols! This is the beauty of this kind of communication - it provokes positive godly action.

**His explanation is captivating and inviting. He then expands God’s role in their lives:**

*<sup>28</sup>for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, For we also are His children. <sup>29</sup>Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.*

He quotes one of their own poets, showing his interest in their background and thoughts. Then he explains what the true God is and what He is not. It is not possible to express the true God through stone and image. It does not work; He is greater than that.

He educated them in this marvelous method of communication. Paul concludes with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.



This shocking truth is only revealed after building a powerful case to support it. He tells the truth but in such a way that he keeps them captivated all along the way. He builds them up and asks them to consider another way.

*<sup>30</sup>Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup>because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead.*

The power of Jesus and who he was is revealed in this verse. Even if they thought Paul was crazy, his approach intrigued them and got them to want to hear more. It enabled them to think, see and take a step one way or another. Just because everyone did not agree, did not mean he was not successful. He got his point across, and got everyone to listen. They heard Paul and his argument even if they did not agree.



**Be willing to speak truth with wisdom.**

Effective communication expresses the most profound truths in a wise and measured approach. The point is NOT to speak, but to be heard.

**Developing Christian Communication:**



Effectively reaching out and communicating God's Plan to those outside of our faith is challenging, but not impossible. **Being patient and legitimately interested in their perspective can open the door for wise words.**

With wisdom, we need to talk to the hearts of those with whom we are communicating.

To be patient and legitimately interested in the perspective of someone else is easy to say, but difficult to do. It is hard, but this is the way to open a conversation. Effective communication is an art. If we apply thought, sincerity, wisdom and patience, it can work.

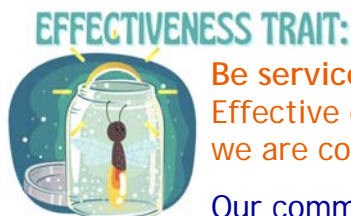
**What are the differences when communicating with those who share common ground with us?**

The principles of effective communication are always the same, but there are different ways to apply them, depending on who we are engaged with. Sharing common ground does not necessarily make communication easier, as we tend to take far too much for granted when we have issues with those close to us. We cannot take them for granted. Instead, put that clear-cut attention in place. Effective communication works both ways - in what we say, as well as what we are willing to hear.

**Effective communication - especially with those close to us - is best expressed through actions that support our words:**

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

We have a choice - *serve one another through love, or bite and devour one another* which is a lose/lose situation. Which would we rather do? It is much more effective to *serve one another through love!*



**Be service-oriented.**

Effective communication only works when we have the best interest of those we are communicating with at the forefront of our exchanges.

Our communication should be for purpose of effecting the best interest of that person to build them up and encourage them. Even when we disagree with them, we should still be service-oriented to save them from the error and not condemn them for the error.





This is *koinonia* - actually contributing with our communication. It is important to acknowledge that feelings are still an important part of this. When unexpressed feelings - especially volatile ones like hurt, suspicion or anger - lie just below the surface of a discussion, real communication and understanding does not happen. Feelings should be honestly and appropriately expressed. Be respectful not to minimize the other person's feelings or tell them not to feel that way.

If we are aware and keep each other's best interests in mind, respectful of each other's feelings, we will be open to effective communication. This can only happen with humility.

 *Humility, The Art of Effective Communication, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx*

- *Humility. Humility is key when it comes to effective communication, and there are really two keys to humility. Number one is that you can always be wrong. When you understand that you can always be wrong you can still present confidently. But when you understand that you can be wrong, you are then willing and able to listen to opposing viewpoints. Listening to other people's opinions, listening to other people's arguments and their facts. The second key to humility is this: it is not about you. It's about your audience. See, when you understand it's not about you, and it's about your audience, you will then present information the best way that your audience will receive it, not necessarily the way you think it best sounds.*



Rick, can you talk a little about creating topics and outlines for Christian Questions? We have diverse listeners - different ages, genders, countries, levels of biblical knowledge - it seems a little overwhelming to try to be all things to all people. How does humility fit into the mission of Christian Questions?



It is overwhelming! One of the keys is to listen. We take input from listener questions and suggestions from the CQ volunteers and try to figure out how the Lord is speaking through these questions and suggestions. We look at Scriptures to see what direction they are telling us to go for a future episode. This is a constant struggle, but also causes constant growth. Some weeks it flows easier than other weeks. When my own voice gets too loud, I have to settle it down so I can hear the guidance of the Scriptures and questions that need answering. By God's grace it comes together. At Christian Questions, we do not want people to hear our voices; we want them to hear God's truth. That is why we do this.

Effective communication, especially with those close to us, positions us to break down divisive barriers. It all begins with acknowledging the core truth of our relationships.

As an example, let's look at how the Apostle Paul directly dealt with some of the difficulties in the early church between the Gentile Christians and the Jewish Christians.



## They were on different sides of many issues:

Ephesians 2:13: (NASB) *But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

He introduces the subject by saying that the Gentile Christians - *you who were formerly far off* - are *brought near by the blood of Christ*. Not because of their character, not because of Paul's witnessing to them, *but because of the blood of Jesus*. This was the foundation, their solid common ground.

## Next, effective communication, especially with those close to us, builds on our solid common ground, the blood of Jesus:

Ephesians 2:14-18: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, <sup>15</sup>by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup>and he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; <sup>18</sup>for through him we both have our access in one spirit to the Father.*

Jesus *broke down...the dividing wall*. He is the one, the lynchpin. None other could have done it! He is not on your side or my side, he is on *our* side. Let us use his actions of telling the Jews the Law was not appropriate for them now; it blocks a Gentile Christian from coming in, and it hinders a Jewish Christian from moving forward in their Christian walk.

Taking this hindrance away means we can work together in the Father's service. *We both have access in one spirit to the Father*. Jesus preached to *you who were far away*, and he preached to *you who were near* all together because we are supposed to be one body. For us, we need to stop dragging unchristian baggage into our relationships and focus on our solid common ground - the blood of Jesus is for all of us!



## EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



**Be willing to take the first step - and the second step - and the third...**  
Effective communication is driven to connect and is therefore willing to *slowly* cultivate fragile beginnings.

We want to contribute to the process rather than shutting down the process in all our relationships. Sometimes that means making more of an effort than we thought we needed to or even wanted to. Stepping outside of ourselves is necessary; show where the commonality is - we are both part of the body of Christ - and then take steps until those on the other side can respond. This is what the Apostle Paul showed the early Christians in Ephesus.

## Next, effective communication applies that common ground to all who are being engaged:

Ephesians 2:19-20: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone,*



He reiterates that every one of them, no matter their background, was built on the same foundation. They are all the same; that is the clear point. Paul tells them they need to get on board with that. Paul effectively communicates between the opposing sides, exhorting them to work together as God expects.

Effective communication *makes room* for the conclusion of that common ground to flourish:

Ephesians 2:21-22: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>*in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,* <sup>22</sup>*in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the spirit.*

...you also are being built together - *koinonia* is the partnership, the working together, even if they came from disparate backgrounds and did not have everything perfectly in common. They were still together in a Christian community and needed to act from the standpoint of what they had in common.

### EFFECTIVENESS TRAIT:



Be willing to change or compromise...but only when appropriate.

Sometimes to effectively communicate we need to adjust and adapt our thinking and approach. This should always be done within the confines of not compromising godliness.



When do we refuse to compromise? This can get tricky with painful communication where perhaps someone we know is morally living outside the lines of biblical principles. Do we compromise or draw a line in the sand? When are we *wasting* time instead of *investing* time?

With such issues we need to reach out and communicate with the person. Start with identifying common ground, listen carefully to find out where they are, then show them Scripture and appropriate steps to take. If they refuse to accept that morally they are in a wrong place, we might have to show them scripturally that they are walking away from, instead of towards, Jesus Christ.



Your actions reveal you, *The Art of Effective Communication*, Marcus Alexander Velazquez, TEDx

- *Your actions will either promote or nullify your words. See, direct communication and effective communication is a two-way street. What do I mean by that? That means that if you are not the one speaking and communicating, you should be actively listening. You shouldn't focus on more than one thing at a time, and you should give your focus, your attention and your respect to the speaker, the same way you would want it if you were the one speaking.*

When we are thoroughly focused on what they are saying, we make great progress:

Hebrews 3:12-14: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.* <sup>13</sup>*But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* <sup>14</sup>*For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,*



### Be Christlike.

For we, as Christians, to become effective communicators, requires our best efforts at being Christlike. Only when we focus all aspects of our communication through the lens of walking in the footsteps of Jesus can we hope to connect with others on the highest level.



### Developing Christian Communication:

Developing the ability to effectively reach out and communicate is a profoundly valuable investment of our time.

As those who represent Christ, we must strive to represent Jesus and the gospel and NOT ourselves, in all our communications.

It is important for us to realize that what we represent is EVERYTHING. Are we willing to represent something that is higher and stronger than we are? It is *Christ in you the hope of glory*, not you in you! It is not our opinions; it is God's holy spirit guiding us.

Our communication must be focused on glorifying God through Jesus. We do that by reaching out, being understanding and compassionate. We must focus, really listen and respond to people. We must be always lifting and building up using Scripture, giving principles and living what we are communicating. It is great to give someone the truth of the Bible, but do we live it?

There is so much to this, but it is possible to effectively communicate if we take it one small step at a time. We start with learning the art of listening, of compassion, of the wisdom of truth. Put these together and communicate with those around you - you can change their lives and change yours as well!

*So, how can I effectively reach out and connect with others?  
For Jonathan, Rick and Julie and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on August 30, 2021  
Ep. 1193: Am I Failing as a Christian?

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.





## Bonus Material and Study Questions

***There is a difference between listening and waiting for your turn to speak.***  
 — Simon Sinek

**Why was the Apostle Paul such a great communicator?**



**First, he made himself a slave of the will of God and the word of God through Jesus:**

1 Corinthians 9:18-23: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. <sup>19</sup>For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.*



**Second, he sought to identify with those he communicated with. He looked through their eyes at the issues:**

<sup>20</sup>*To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; <sup>21</sup>to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.*



**Third, he had no hidden agendas - it was always about the gospel, period:**

<sup>23</sup>*I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.*

**Effectiveness Traits:**

- ❖ **Be willing to be vulnerable:** Be willing to step out for a higher purpose.
- ❖ **Be thoughtful:** Communicate in a considered and wise way and not as an emotional reaction.
- ❖ **Be fully engaged:** The closer our relationships, the more fully engaged our communication should be.
- ❖ **Be humble:** All of our communication should be based on honoring God and NOT ourselves.
- ❖ **Be dynamic, based on God's power working in your life:** While we cannot physically do what Jesus did, we can draw on God's spirit for direction, strength and courage.
- ❖ **Be clearly driven:** Communicate with purpose and passion that is fueled by being a disciple of Christ.
- ❖ **Be engaging:** Draw those you communicate with, in thoughtful challenges.
- ❖ **Be an obvious, willing and attentive listener:** Those we communicate with should know their thinking, circumstances and challenges are important to us.
- ❖ **Be patient:** Effective communication can be a slow process of seed planting and cultivating. Drowning a seedling will not make it grow faster!



- ❖ **Be interested:** Effective communication is best demonstrated by having genuine respect for the stance of those we communicate with, even if they are misguided.
- ❖ **Be willing to speak truth with wisdom:** Effective communication expresses the most profound truths in a wise and measured approach. The point is NOT to speak but to be heard!
- ❖ **Be service-oriented:** Effective communication only works when we have the best interest of those we are communicating with at the forefront of our exchanges.
- ❖ **Be willing to take the first step - and the second step - and the third...:** Effective communication is driven to connect and is therefore willing to slowly cultivate fragile beginnings.
- ❖ **Be willing to change or compromise, but only when appropriate:** Sometimes to effectively communicate we need to adjust and adapt our thinking and approach. This should always be done within the confines of not compromising godliness.
- ❖ **Be Christlike:** For we, as Christians, to become effective communicators, requires our best efforts at being Christlike. Only when we focus all aspects of our communication through the lens of walking in the footsteps of Jesus can we hope to connect on the highest level.
- ❖ **Within our fellowship:** Effective communication is driven by our necessity to be united in Jesus by being like Jesus.

#### Love one another:

John 15:12-13: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.* <sup>13</sup>*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

Romans 13:8: (NASB) *Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.*

#### Understand one another:

Romans 14:1-6: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.* <sup>2</sup>*One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.* <sup>3</sup>*The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.* <sup>4</sup>*Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.* <sup>5</sup>*One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.* <sup>6</sup>*He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.*

#### Do not judge one another:

Romans 14:13: (NASB) *Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.*



### Admonish one another:

Romans 15:14: (NASB) *And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.*

### Be kindly affectioned to one another:

Romans 12:9-13: (NASB) *<sup>9</sup>Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*

### Bear one another's burdens:

Galatians 6:1-5: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. <sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup>But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. <sup>5</sup>For each one will bear his own load.*

### Consider and (positively) provoke one another:

Hebrews 10:23-25: (NASB) *<sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup>and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

Christian Questions Weekly  
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CQ Rewind Show Notes and  
Study Questions

Text  
**CQREWIND**  
to **22828** to get started.



# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1192: How Can I Effectively Reach Out and Connect With Others?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1192-connected/>

See:  CQ Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. What is biblical communication? What does the main Greek word used in the New Testament for communication, *koinonia*, mean beyond just talking to someone? (See Galatians 6:6, Philippians 4:14, 1 Timothy 6:18, Hebrews 13:16)
2. Why is good biblical communication so essential to Christianity? Explain the four “whys” that answer this question. (See John 14:13, Colossians 3:18-21, 4:5-6, Hebrews 10:24-25)
3. How can vulnerability, thoughtfulness, engagement and humility help us improve our communication? (See James 4:3)
4. What are the four basic ways Jesus communicated to others? (See Matthew 7:3-4, 9:16, 14:26-31, 21:33, Mark 3:3-4, 10:35-36, 50-51, John 11:41-43, 13:3-5)
5. What are some traits that we can develop using *his* examples to make our communication more effective?
6. What was the Apostle Paul’s communication strategy in Athens when he saw that the city was full of idols? Was he bothered by the heathenism around him? How did he disarm the Athenians and get them to listen? (See Acts 17:16-31)
7. How can we utilize the patience, interest and wisdom displayed by Paul when we share our beliefs with those who hold differing viewpoints? Is it important to tear down those things we disagree with when talking to those that have differing opinions?
8. How did the Apostle Paul deal with some of the difficulties between Gentile and Jewish Christian that arose in the early church? (See Ephesians 2:13-22)
9. Using Paul’s example, how can we communicate more effectively with those who share similar beliefs? What is our common foundation? (See Galatians 5:13-15, Hebrews 3:12-14)
10. How effective is your biblical communication? What will you do to become a better communicator?