

HOW are We Communicating?

(Matthew 5:37) “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

There is no shortage of communication today through every device that most people have in their homes, offices, churches or hands. The question is how are we communicating with what we have and is it good or bad. Communication is a great tool to be used to help people build better relationships in all walks of life. But it can also be very destructive if one’s communication is wrong and used for evil. The Lord desires that our communication be uplifting and encouraging to those that hear it. It’s not that people don’t communicate but HOW are they communicating, it’s just as important in HOW we communicate as much as what we are trying to communicate.

There are many ways to communicate here are the main ways, physical and non-physical or (verbal and non-verbal), written and visual. (Non-verbal actually takes up 90% of total physical human communication= yahoo answers). Even if we don’t realize it we are communicating to others all the time. To “communicate” is;

1. To share in common; to participate in;
2. To impart; to bestow; to convey;
3. To make known; to recount; to give; to impart; as, to *communicate* information to any one – “Webster’s Dictionary”.

As believers we should be concerned that our communication is good and that it honors God and gives glory to Him. Everyone gets into some type of communication habits that are either healthy or unhealthy for those on the receiving end. It will take yielding our communication to the Lord and the Holy Spirit if it is to be used correctly. Everyone would and could improve their communication skills if they wanted but this means giving the time and work to do so.

Communication is not all about talking or writing but listening and receiving also from others as well. Some may need to talk more just as much as there are those that need to stop talking and listen better. In the home as well as the church and all other places our communication is so important to have good and proper relationships. So HOW are we communicating the message of Christ and the good news of salvation to a lost and dying world? It’s more than just passing out a gospel track it’s also living a life that is communicating and backing up what the gospel is saying. (John 13:35) “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Are we communicating affectively to others and if not are we willing to change to be a better and more successful communicator? This will take knowing HOW we are communicating now and working towards making whatever changes necessary to communicate with the love of Christ to others. The best place to start practicing good communications is in the home with those that we love and are around the most. Our communication should be real and genuine and not showy with hypocrisy when we are before certain people. HOW are we communicating is the question?

We have all been around and engaged with someone that wants to have full control of any and all conversations. And then on the other hand we have been with those that would not give any word of input into a conversation.

Communicating or communication comes from the word communicate which “denotes the allowing of others to partake or enjoy in common with ourselves” – (Webster’s). It takes work to practice good communication skills that is a blessing and that honors God. Many times it’s just our laziness or unwillingness to learn and practice communicating in ways that will be a help and encouragement to others.

As pastors and preachers it is very important not only “what” we communicate but “how we communicate to others in and out of the pulpit. Our actions and words away from the preaching platform will carry a great deal of influence to others for the good or bad and if we don’t back up what we say in the pulpit the people will notice. If we preach on having positive relationships with others but fail to build good relationships ourselves with how we communicate then the people will not listen to what we have to say. Pastors and preachers are not exempted from HOW we communicate to others just because we are called to oversee the flock, in fact we should set the example of HOW to communicate. Here are a few things that will help us to be a better and wiser communicator in the ministry.

- 1. Communicate** – that is if God has called you to minister then a big part of ministry is communication with and to others. (Philemon 1:6) “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” Don’t become complacent or lazy in learning how to be a better communicator in and out of the pulpit. I know this takes work for I have been working on it myself for some 35 yrs.
- 2. Read and study the art of communication** – you have probably already done some of this in college or on your own but don’t stop learning how to communicate better. This doesn’t mean that you have to become an expert communicator but learn the skills and the areas that you need to improve on in your communication.
- 3. Take time to practice communicating** – take what you are learning and actually use it in your daily communication with others. This will have to be intentional and on purpose because we are not use to communicating the things that we have just learned. They say that practice makes perfect, but we need to be careful what we practice.
- 4. Let the Holy Spirit communicate** – He is always willing to be used in our communications if we yield to Him and let Him have control. (Matthew 10:20) “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” When we allow the Holy Spirit to use our lives with our communications it will always be for the best and greatest use for others. Our words then will reflect the fruit of the Spirit in all our conversations and communications with others.
- 5. Use scripture in communications** – I don’t mean to be always using the Bible in everything or every conversation but be conscious of how our communications relates to certain verses of scriptures. (1 Peter 3:15) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

We are in a culture that is quickly falling into a non-personal communication society where there are little to no personal interaction to a lot of our one on one communications. And this is not just those outside the church as many would think but has absorbed the whole congregation as well including leadership. Our information highway is very fast but not very personal many times with our devices. The interaction with good communication skills is all but lost and many times there are misunderstandings or questions to how one said something and what they really are trying to say.

There are so many tools, gadgets and methods with which we all can and do communicate with today it is difficult to keep up with them all. And most everything is at our fingertips or hand and is instantaneously in ours or someone else's information box, phone, ipad or whatever we may be using at the time. I'm not saying that these tools are bad or not to be used in any of our communications, but that we should have control with a balance in the way that we use them. Just like anything if we are not in charge of them, then they have charge of us and then they become unhealthy tools that are used in a wrong and negative way. Here are some pointers for using any device for communication.

1. Control It. (1 Cor. 6:12) "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Nothing should have control of us except the Lord through the Holy Spirit and if it has then it becomes sin. How do we know it has control over us? Here are a few things to consider if it does.

- One is constantly listening or checking it for a message. (Overly sensitive minute by minute)
- One is most always in the hand or close by. (They get upset or anxious if it missing)
- One can't carry on a conversation without it distracting them. (Reading a message instead of listening to the person in front of them – we didn't always have these distraction in hand)
- One is spending an exorbitant amount of time on it. (Not minutes – but hours a day)
- One is not spending time with family members but on it. (Family should be more important)
- One is spending too much time playing nonproductive games. (This takes away valuable time that could be used for more important things, like work)
- One gets upset if they are told they are addicted to it. (They can't see their being controlled)
- One has to have the newest and latest device with the most power and time. (Too much)

The list good go on but I hope you get the idea that tools are to be used by us to help minister to others and to glorify God in all that we do. (1 Cor. 10:31) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Sometimes it's good to take a step back and ask is this controlling me or am I in control it (meaning any device). How can we know if we are in control?

- One sets the limits on its use – just like money it's to be used not to use us!
- One is sensitive to personal conversations with others – they are not distracted.
- One can and desires a break from it more than using it – they are glad to get off of it.
- One enjoys and prefers personal communication over and rather than a device – up close.
- One doesn't really need it and can communicate just as well without it – less may be better.

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II. Consider Others. (Hebrews 10:24) “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:” When we truly love someone we should be considerate of how we treat them in our actions and attitudes. Are we really provoking others to love and good works with the use of our communication devices? There have been many that have been provoked but not in love and certainly not in doing well. How do we know if we are considerate when using any one of our devices?

- When we are in conversation with someone we don't stop with them to answer the other.
- When writing, texting or talking we are careful what and how our words are said.
- When on the receiving end of a communication we don't jump to wrong conclusions.
- When using a device in public we don't talk or discuss personal information.
- When communicating with a device we intentionally don't control the conversation.

III. Consecrate It. The word “consecrate” means to sanctify, set apart or to make holy and this would also include the use of our communication devices. (Exodus 30:30) “And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister unto me in the priest's office.” (Exodus 32:29a) “For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD” (1 Chro. 29:5b) “And who *then* is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?”

How can we make and use our devices in consecrating ways?

1. Dedicate them unto the Lord's use – whatever the device or place we use them.
2. Discern the right use of them for the Lord – this would include our time on them.
3. Determine that they will be used for the Lord's righteousness – giving Him glory.
4. Delight in the Lord's word where possible – use scriptures and good words.
5. Discern what is expectable unto the Lord – avoid bad conversations from others.

(Phil. 1:27a) “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:”

(Colo. 3:17) “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

For many the way we speak and communicate to others is just a habit of life that can either be helping or hindering the ones we are communicating with. It is important to the Lord and it should be to all of us as well that we learn to communicate in a way that brings honor and glory to God and is a blessing to others. Have a great Lord's Day and communicate well this week.

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