

Learning to Speak the Truth in Love

Part 2: The Key to Discipleship and Etc!

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING

Communicating our thoughts and ideas to others is the second most utilized medium for interpersonal communication. Effective speaking occurs when our intended meanings and messages are understood by others as they were intended. As you will see, many listening principles are in reverse as we learn to effectively speak with others.

A Biblical Foundation from Proverbs

"Source of Our Words"

| | | |
|------------|-------|-------|
| 4:20-23 | 15:28 | 16:23 |
| 6:12,14,18 | 16:2 | |

"Think Before You Speak"

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 12:18 | 21:23 | 29:20 |
| 14:29 | 16:32 | |
| 15:28 | 26:4 | |

"Talking Too Much!"

| | | |
|----------|----------|-------|
| 10:19 | 17:27,28 | 21:23 |
| 11:12,13 | 18:2 | |
| 13:3 | 20:19 | |

"Avoid Nagging"

| | |
|------|------------|
| 17:9 | 21:9 (MSG) |
|------|------------|

"Use a Calm Soft Answer"

| | |
|------|-------|
| 15:1 | 16:1 |
| 15:4 | 25:15 |

"Speak The Truth"

| | |
|----------|----------|
| 12:17,22 | 26:18,19 |
| 16:13 | 26:22 |
| 19:5 | 28:23 |

See also Eph 4:15, 25, 29; James 1:19 - 20, 26, 3:2-12, 4:11; Mt 12:36-37

Components of Verbal Communication

Effective speaking is much more than just selecting the right words. In fact, what we say is much more about our tone of voice and body language than the words we choose. Any word or phrase can have multiple meanings depending on how they are expressed. The following statistics detail the percentage that each segment of our messages conveys:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Verbal | 7% |
| Non-Verbal | |
| Tone of Voice | 38% |
| Body Language | 55% (i.e.; gestures, eye contact, spatial distance, posture, touching) |

Timing in Speaking

Just like listening, timing is a crucial element in positive communication and so choosing the right time is just as important as what we say. There are four possibilities:

- ◆ Saying the wrong thing at the wrong time
- ◆ Saying the right thing at the wrong time
- ◆ Saying the wrong thing at the right time
- ◆ Saying the right thing at the right time

We only have a 25% chance of getting it right!

Common Bad Habits in Speaking: "*The Dirty Dozen*"

Our communication style is a result of numerous factors as already noted. It's important that we identify those habits that are dysfunctional and invite the Holy Spirit to help us make the needed shifts. Here is just a sampling of common bad habits:

1. Silence
2. Abusive Language
3. Overly Critical
4. Emotionalism
5. Double Level Messages
6. Speaking for Others (Gossip/Triangulation)
7. Overtalk and Undertalk
8. Topic Avoidance, Shifting and Persistence

9. Defensive Manipulation
10. Sarcasm and Negative Perspective
11. Interrupting Others
12. Unlimited Varieties and Combinations

Communicating Negative Content

The most difficult time to speak to others is when the content of the message is negative and/or volatile. At these times, the speaker must select from various strategies to facilitate positive communication.

Three Different Contexts

1. Difficult information about *others/situation*: Focus on information sharing
2. Difficult information about *you*: Focus on "constructive criticism"
3. Difficult information about *me*: Focus on "I" Statements

Guidelines for Giving "**Constructive Criticism**"

*Important Note: Avoid constructive criticism whenever possible.

- ◆ Use questions (the "EIAG" process) to draw out self-criticism
- ◆ Look at yourself first: To what degree is the problem(s) yours?
- ◆ Use "I" statements as another way to deflect defensiveness
- ◆ Remember that criticism seldom motivates people to change
- ◆ Be mindful that criticism can create negative pygmalion
- ◆ Also be mindful that constructive criticism is sometimes unavoidable

When giving constructive criticism;

1. Be Specific

- ◆ State, without hostility, what you have observed and why it concerns you. Focus on issue/problem, not the person.
- ◆ Explain the rationale as to why the behavior cannot continue in understandable terms (if this is difficult, the behavior may not be a problem).
- ◆ Describe and focus, as much as possible, on the desired behavior.

2. Involve the Person in Finding Solutions

- ◆ Ask for and listen openly to the person's reasons for the behavior. Any solution needs to be based on all available data.
- ◆ Ask person for ideas on ways to solve the problem. The more the individual participates, the more likely a positive change will result.

3. Maintain Focus of Discussion

- ◆ Do not allow the discussion to lead to unrelated topics/issues.

4. Provide Your Support

- ◆ Offer your help in solving the problem. Verbalize any appropriate ideas or suggestions.
- ◆ Give a vote of confidence.
- ◆ Come to an agreement on the steps to be taken by each of you.

Sending "I" Messages

Positively communicating negative content can often be accomplished by utilizing an "I" message.

Definition: An "I" message describes an event or a behavior and how I feel (or felt) in response to it.

Model form: I feel (word describing physiological response)
when you (describe event)
because I'm thinking (state assumptions, self talk)

Examples: "I feel concerned and angry when you come in 45 minutes after you said you'd be here because I begin to think you've been in an accident" "I felt jealous and uncomfortable when you spent so much time talking to Bill at the party because I didn't know anybody there."

Remarks: Feelings are usually described in one word that describes a physiological response (mad, sad, afraid, glad). "I" helps the other person to understand and accept your feelings better.

“YOU” Messages

1. Tell you about you. (“You are inconsiderate selfish, etc.”)
2. Usually are criticisms, put-downs, labels or zingers.
3. Invite defensiveness or retaliation.
4. When I tell you about you, it’s easy (and often appropriate) for you to tell me I’m wrong. And now we have something new to fight about.

“I” Messages

1. Tell you about me (I feel angry, scared, lonely, etc.)
2. Intend to make accurate and objective descriptions regarding something you did or are doing. (“You did not speak to me for 20 minutes after you came home last night.”)
3. Make it easier to hear without defensiveness
4. When I tell you about me, it’s harder for you to disagree because I am the expert on how I feel. (This approach allows me to check out how you respond to my feelings.)

Footnote 1: Anger Vs. Hostility

An "I" message can convey intense anger without hostility.

Anger = energy aimed at trying to make a change.

Hostility = the intent to hurt or harm the other.

Example: "I get so furious when you turn your back on me that I want to scream."

Footnote 2: "Feel" vs. "Feel That"

Beware of "feel that" or "feel like"; they really mean "think."

Feelings can be categorized as:

Mad

irritated
annoyed
enraged
resentful
disgusted

Sad

lonely
ashamed
sorry
disappointed
hurt

Afraid

anxious
worried
concerned
nervous
scared

Glad

loving
caring
happy
joyful
excited