

LISTENING

The Key to Discipleship and Etc!

INTRODUCTION

Why It Is So Important....Biblically

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. (1 Cor 13:4-6)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace... ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God forgave you. (Eph 4:1-3, 32)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Col 3:12-14)

Now look at 1 Cor 13:1-3.....what does it mean?

Why It Is So Important....Practically

Eighty (80%) percent of our waking hours are spent communicating. Of that time;

45% is listening

30% is speaking

16% is reading

9% is writing

Based on these statistics, sixty (60%) percent of our waking hours are verbally communicating (speaking and listening). Unfortunately, our educational system does not reflect this reality.

A Biblical Foundation From Proverbs

"The Power of Words"

11:9	18:8	26:22
12:18	18:21	
15:4	25:11	

"Learn to Listen"

15:31	18:15	21:28
18:13	19:20	

"Timing"

15:23	25:11	
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"Source of Our Words"

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

"Think Before You Speak"

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

"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	
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"Use a Calm Soft Answer"

15:1	16:1	Eph 4:15
15:4	25:15	4:25

"Speak The Truth"

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

Definitions of Communication

Traditional

Webster's: *"the sharing of messages, ideas or attitudes resulting in an understanding between a sender and receiver"*

My Focus -- Positive Communication

"Positive communication" is defined as a process of sharing both verbally and non-verbally in such a way that your message can be accepted and understood by another individual. More simply, the message sent is the message received or the message heard is the message intended. The term positive does not refer to the nature of the content communicated, but the degree of success in the transmission. Positive communication should be the goal of the speaker and listener whether the content is good or bad.

A Common Misunderstanding

There is **no** such thing as a failure to communicate. Our verbal and non-verbal behavior (even silence!) communicates volumes to those around us. What we mean by "a failure to communicate" is negative communication; the message sent was not received, the message heard was not intended.

Components of Communication

Learning to communicate requires that we focus on non-verbal issues more than the words. Any word or phrase can have multiple meanings depending on how they are expressed. In reality, our non-verbal behavior communicates more than our words. The following statistics tell the story.

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

Sources and Influences on Our Communication Style

Our individual style is primarily a reflection of parental influence. For some, this reality is better than others. Our imperfect parents raised imperfect children. Each person must take responsibility for identifying his/her own bad habits and work towards positive changes.

1. Parental styles: Primary Determiners of Styles
2. Self Image
3. Personality: ie. Extrovert or Introvert

4. Sibling Position

5. Environmental Issues

- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Work Environment
- ◆ Effect of Stress
- ◆ Hunger

ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening is the most important communication skill as a result of the amount of time we spend doing it as well as its influence on others. At the same time, it is the most difficult communication medium because it requires intense focus and concentration. Truth be told, it's not so much a skill as it is an attitude. The following have proven to be helpful strategies to listen with excellence.

Keys Principles of Active Listening

- Manage time well
- Uncover the perceptions behind words
- Check expectations: problem or predicament?
- Observe non-verbal cues
- Clarify—as needed—with feedback
- Empower with questions

Manage Time Well

The first key to effective listening is timing. When others pick the wrong time or the emotions are running hot, buy time with phrases such as:

I need some time to sort this out.

I am too angry to deal with this now.

I can't handle this now.

I don't know how to handle this.

I need some time to think about it before responding.

This must be memorized in order to use them under pressure. This technique, however, is not a strategy for avoidance. If they are used, establish a next time to talk within 48 hours. If we know that our issue is going to be dealt with, we can wait.

Uncover the Perceptions behind Words

- 1) They are the key to attitudes and motivation....a powerful reality (i. e. worldview)
- 2) They are the result of "considered experiences"
-effective listening helps to unlock learning and so shapes perception
- 3) They are cumulative
- 4) They are unique
- 5) They rarely change apart from a supportive environment

Check Expectations: Problem or Predicament?

...the first goal of the listener; be sure you know what the speaker expects of you

...are you listening to a problem or a predicament?

...avoid the temptation to fix feelings

What's the difference?

- ◆ problems imply there is a solution (the speaker wants your input)
- ◆ predicaments imply no easy solutions (the speaker just wants you to listen)

Improper Responses to Predicaments (Avoiding the Temptation to Fix Feelings)

1. Giving Advice

- problem of people taking our wrong advice
- people seldom want or follow advice

2. Reassurance: "Its going to be okay"

- things are not always okay
- we like to say this to avoid feeling the pain

3. Judgement: "Boy that was stupid"

- My problem is worse than yours

Correct Responses to Predicaments

1. Try to empathize

2. Support

3. Keep the focus...Give Feedback...Actively Listen

Observe Non-Verbal Cues

Since ninety-three (93%) percent of our communication is transmitted via non-verbal behavior, listening means opening our eyes to behavior and our ears to tone.

The pattern in a person's life often tells us a great deal. John Powell's book Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am is excellent reading on the games we play and how they express our most inward thoughts and emotions.

Clarify with Feedback

Definition: "mirroring or paraphrasing back to the speaker a clear, concise statement summarizing the central idea communicated."

Why: Complexity of Communication

- ambiguity of words
- resolve unclear messages
- clarification is often necessary

Benefits: Establishes the Intended Message

- Demonstrates Trust
- Helps Speaker to Clarify Thoughts

Three Ways: Paraphrase *Content*: feeding back spoken information

Paraphrase *Feeling*: feeding back non-verbal messages

Paraphrase *Meaning*: feeding back emotion and words

Caution: Don't Parrot the Obvious

Don't Use Excessively

Empower with Questions

Effective listening empowers by asking questions -- the "EIAG" process

Experience (listening to others often revolves around their experiences)

Identify (first ask "what" happened)

Analyze (next ask "why" it happened)

Generalize (ask the speaker "how" this knowledge will affect future decisions)

By asking "what, why and how", you are helping the speaker learn and learning is one of the root words for *discipleship* in Greek.