

# Communications Key Passages

Transcript from David Hamilton's Video project for  
the SourceView Reader

June 2023

## ***Note for transcript use:***

*The blue text was used for editing purposes, and should all be gone, but if it is there, compare with video.*

*The use of red text is to draw attention to scriptures used. While checked for use in the video project, it would be best to confirm when used for the written projects coming. The spoken may have altered a word or added a comment ...and sometimes only selections were used out of a large passage.*

*The use of green text is to highlight the need to take extra care to find exact spelling or wording, especially quotes used and words in Hebrew. Also any questions on correct wording.*

# Media/Communication Sphere Key Passages

## God and the Sphere of Media/Communication

- |   |                                       |              |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | God's Ways Are Diverse                | 1Ch 28:19    |
| 2 | God's Ways Are Appropriate            | Heb 1:1-2    |
| 3 | God's Content Is True                 | 1Th 5:19-21  |
| 4 | God's Content Is Trustworthy          | Luk 1:1-4    |
| 5 | God's Communication Is Transformative | Col 1:6      |
| 6 | God's Communication Gives Life        | Joh 20:30-31 |

## The Purpose of Communication

- |    |   |            |
|----|---|------------|
| 7  | Creates Unity Around God's Purposes       | Zep 3:9    |
| 8  | Creates Life-Enhancing Situations         | Pro 10:11  |
| 9  | Creates Community and Cultural Uniqueness | Est 8:9    |
| 10 | Provides Trustworthy Information          | 2Ti 2:2    |
| 11 | Provides Transformative Information       | Isa 61:1-2 |

## Communication to Imitate

- |    |                                     |              |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 12 | Inspired by the Spirit              | Mat 22:43a   |
| 13 | Speak like Jesus                    | Mat 7:28-29  |
| 14 | Align Your Communication with God's | Rev 22:17a   |
| 15 | Speak the Truth in Love             | Eph 4:15     |
| 16 | Speak Seasoned with Grace           | Col 4:6      |
| 17 | Speak in Order to Build Up          | 1Co 14:26    |
| 18 | Speak in Order to Encourage         | Act 9:27     |
| 19 | Speak with Self-control             | Jam 3:2-12   |
| 20 | Listen to Godly Advice              | Pro 25:11    |
| 21 | Communicate in the Fear of the Lord | Ecc 12:9-13  |
| 22 | Be True to Your Words               | Gen 31:44-54 |

## Communication to Avoid

- |    |  |             |
|----|--|-------------|
| 23 | Do Not Distort God's Character           | Num 15:30   |
| 24 | Do Not Distort Your Neighbor's Character | Deu 5:20    |
| 25 | Do Not Listen to Ungodly Advice          | Psa 1:1-2   |
| 26 | Do Not Participate in Gossip             | Pro 17:4    |
| 27 | Do Not Participate in Arguments          | 2Ti 2:23-25 |
| 28 | Do Not Participate in Complaining        | Jud 1:16    |
| 29 | Do Not Participate in Slander/Mockery    | Neh 4:1-4   |
| 30 | Do Not Participate in Prideful Boasting  | Psa 75:4-5  |

## Pursue Vertical Communication with God

- |    |                                 |              |
|----|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 31 | God Speaks ... We Should Listen | Heb 2:1-4    |
| 32 | God Speaks ... We Should Speak  | Joh 1:1-9    |
| 33 | God Reveals ... We Can Know     | Amo 3:7      |
| 34 | God Listens ... We Can Speak    | Luk 18:35-43 |
| 35 | God Responds ... We Can Trust   | Jdg 6:36-40  |
| 36 | God Guides ... We Can Follow    | Exo 13:21-22 |

## Pursue Horizontal Communication with Your Neighbor

- |    |                                      |              |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 37 | One on One                           | Rom 12:14    |
| 38 | One to Many                          | Isa 52:7     |
| 39 | Many to Many                         | Psa 68:11    |
| 40 | Be a Voice for the Voiceless         | Pro 31:8-9   |
| 41 | High Tech or High Touch?             | 2Jn 1:12     |
| 42 | In Times of Crises and Danger        | Eze 3:16-21  |
| 43 | In Times of Joy and Good News        | Act 19:17-20 |
| 44 | In Ways Appropriate for Your Hearers | 1Co 9:19-23  |
| 45 | Know When to Be Silent               | Ecc 3:7b     |

**Crossover Passages**

- |                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 47 Crossover with FAMILY      | Gen 49:28 |
| 48 Crossover with ECONOMICS   | Mat 28:15 |
| 49 Crossover with GOVERNMENT  | Pro 15:22 |
| 50 Crossover with RELIGION    | Ecc 5:1-7 |
| 51 Crossover with EDUCATION   | Pro 2:1-2 |
| 52 Crossover with CELEBRATION | Est 8:17  |

Communications/Media Sphere Introduction	5
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
Number One: God's Ways Are Diverse.	5
Number 2: God's Ways Are Appropriate.	6
Number 3: God's Content Is True.	6
Number 4: God's Content Is Trustworthy.	8
Number 5: God's Communication Is Transformative.	8
Number 6: God's Communication Gives Life.	8
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
Number 7: Creates Unity Around God's Purpose.	9
Number 8: Creates Life-Enhancing Situations.	10
Number 9: Creates Community and Cultural Uniqueness.	11
Number 10 : Provides Trustworthy Information.	11
Number 11: Provides Transformative Information.	12
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>12</b>
Number 12: Inspired By The Spirit.	12
Number 13: Speak Like Jesus.	13
Number 14: Align Your Communication With God's.	13
Number 15: Speak the Truth in Love.	14
Number 16: Speak Seasoned with Grace.	14
Number 17: Speak in Order to Build Up.	15
Number 18: Speak in Order to Encourage.	15
Number 19: Speak with Self Control.	16
Number 20: Listen to Godly Advice.	17
Number 21: Communicate in the Fear of the Lord.	18
Number 22: Be True to Your Words.	18
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>20</b>

Number 23: Do Not Distort God's Character.	20
Number 24: Do Not Distort Your Neighbor's Character.	21
Number 25: Do Not Listen to Ungodly Advice.	21
Number 26: Do Not Participate in Gossip.	21
Number 27: Do Not Participate in Arguments.	22
Number 28: Do Not Participate in Complaining.	22
Number 29: Do Not Participate in Slander or Mockery.	22
Number 30: Do Not Participate in Prideful Boasting.	23
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	23
Number 31: God Speaks...We should listen.	23
Number 32: God Speaks... We should speak.	24
Number 33: God Reveals...We Can Know.	24
Number 34: God Listens... We can speak.	24
Number 35: God Responds... We Can Trust.	25
Number 36: God Guides... We Can Follow.	26
<b>SECTION INTRODUCTION</b>	26
Number 37: One on One.	26
Number 38: One To Many.	27
Number 39: Many to the Many.	27
Number 40: A Voice for the Voiceless.	27
Number 41: High Tech or High Touch.	28
Number 42: In Times of Crisis and Danger.	28
Number 43: In times of joy and good news.	29
Number 44: Communicating In Ways Appropriate for Your Hearers.	29
Number 45: Know When To Be Silent.	30
Number 46: The Right Time and Place to Speak.	31
<b>CROSSOVER PASSAGES</b>	31

Number 47: Media/Communication and Family	31
Number 48: Media/Communication and Economics.	31
Number 49: Media/Communication and the sphere of Government.	32
Number 50: Media/Communication and the sphere of Religion.	32
51: Media/Communication and the Sphere of Education.	33
Number 52: Media/Communication and Celebration.	33

# Communications/Media Sphere Introduction

We now have the opportunity to look together at the sphere of **media communication**. Through media, God desires the transfer wisdom and the promotion of healthy relationships. Proverbs is full of pithy sayings, which emphasize the power of communication to do good or to do ill. There's great power, not only what is said, but in how it is said. Today with new media technologies emerging all the time, we have more capacity to communicate than ever before. But what are we communicating? How are we communicating? Is it bringing life or death? We should engage in media as followers of Jesus to advance the ways of the kingdom of God. Communicating always truth and love.

## SECTION INTRODUCTION

This first section has to do with God and the Sphere of Media Communication. These six passages will highlight God as the most incredible Communicator in the universe. He is incomparable, and the way he communicates is a model for us and how we should communicate, whether that's in our personal relationships or in the societal sphere of media and communication.

### **Number One: God's Ways Are Diverse.**

The passage we're looking at comes from [1 Chronicles 28:19](#) says this: **Every part of this plan, David told Solomon, was given to me in writing from the hand of the Lord.**

God is a great communicator. And his methods of communication are many. Three times in the Original Testament we are told that God wrote. This was when he wrote the 10 commandments. It was his own hand which inscribed those words on the stones. We're told in [Exodus 34:28](#) and, and Moses repeats it at least three times in the book of Deuteronomy. He didn't chisel those words into the stone. God's finger, God's hand wrote those himself. We also had this passage from David that God wrote the temple blueprint. It was God's words and he gave it to him in writing. Wow, that's amazing communication. He didn't just hear it from God, and then, and then record what he had heard. God communicated in written form.

We also can remember when Daniel was in front of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon and, he had been using the artifacts of the temple to worship idols, and God was not pleased with that. And God's hand appears in, in human form, starts writing on the wall and everyone was amazed and shocked and Belshazzar called Daniel in to come and explain that. So we have at least three instances in the Original Testament where God writes. And of course in [John 8:6](#), when the woman caught an adultery is brought before Jesus, he too, stoops down and writes in the sand. What exactly we don't know, but we know that he does what his father has always done.

Now, God is a great communicator. [Hebrews 1:1](#) says that God spoke many times. And in many ways. And writing is just one of the ways that God's has communicated. If we go through the scriptures, the methodologies employed by God seem endless. He speaks through angels. That's pretty awesome. He speaks through a donkey. That's pretty astounding. He speaks through dreams and visions and prophets and signs. He uses a pillar of cloud in the day and a column of fire at night to communicate his intentions. He speaks through creation. We read about this in [Romans 1:20](#), that through what God has made, we can know about his attributes, his eternal power and his divine nature. And in [Psalm 19](#) talks about how the heavens are telling of the glory of God. And he communicates through the things that he's made his, like the creation is his fingerprint. We can look at it and understand truths about who God is. And he speaks through a still, small voice. There's so many different ways that God has spoken. He's the communicator **par excellance**.

Now God speaks, or he commands or he promises, or he tells, there's a variety of synonyms, of verbs that communicate God's communication. And of all the things that God does that are recorded in the Bible, the thing that he most frequently does is he communicates. This is the top number one, verb action of God. And is the most repeated thing. Now, this is interesting because when people talk about, well, I heard God speak, or God spoke to me. People go like, oh, that's something really unusual. That's odd. Are you sure it was God, aren't you a little bit crazy? But actually in the Bible, when God isn't speaking, that's when it's odd. We read in [1 Samuel 3:1](#) the author writes with astonishment ...now in those days, messages from the Lord were very rare and visions were quite uncommon. That was not normative. Normative is that God, this wonderful communicator, is always reaching out to us. It's not a problem about God speaking. The issue is, are we listening?

## **Number 2: God's Ways Are Appropriate.**

[Hebrew 1:1-2](#). Long ago God spoke many times in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son, he created the universe.

God's communication is always time appropriate. We read in [Isaiah 28:10](#), how his instructions, his teaching is line up online. it says he tells us everything over and over. Like, don't you love it? Because he, he doesn't tire of communicating with us. I often don't get it the first time I hear from God or the first time I read the scriptures, I need to be taught over and over again, but he says one line at a time, one line at a time, a little here and a little there. He gives to us, he communicates with us as we are able to receive it, as it's time appropriate, and we can handle and we can apply and understand.

His appropriateness is not just doing the right 'what' the right content or the right time. But even the right, 'how', his means of communicating. We need to pay attention to the, how he speaks, not just the 'what' he speaks. This is the same message of God's love and God's redemption. God's desire to forgive and reconcile human beings to himself was the same message all through the Original Testament and the New Testament. It's what the prophets spoke of. It's what the law was purposed for. It's what the scripture's all about. But even though that message was there and constantly present, it didn't fully land, we didn't really get it, until God himself came in the person of Jesus, became incarnate and lived amongst us. And how he communicated, the fact that he became one of us, that 'how' that sacrifice, that incredible effort to make his message understood, not just that words about his love, but a demonstrable practical lived out love in our midst -that 'how' changes us because Jesus came.

In these final days. He has spoken to us through his son. This 'how' is the means of our salvation.

## **Number 3: God's Content Is True.**

[1 Thessalonians 5:19-21](#), Paul writes Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold onto what is good.

The fact that God communicates truth is so very important. God's truth is constant and it's normal. We live in an age where skepticism is rampant, where everyone doubts the existence of objective truth. And everyone seeks their own truth. Well, whatever you feel or I feel or you think, or I think doesn't make - our feelings and our thoughts don't make that thing true or not

true. It's true apart from our existence, it's true because it matches reality. And God's truth, God's communication is always true.

Let me just reflect some passages with you. **Proverbs 30:5: Every word of God proves true...** His commandments are right. They, when we live according to them, they prove true. Life is better that way. His promises are true when we trust him and he, he fulfills them. We can see he's trustworthy. His every word proves true.

**Isaiah 45:19** God is speaking. And he says: **... I, the Lord speak only what is true and declare only what is right.** Are you looking for what is true and right in your life? Look to God. He's the only one who can guarantee that always its true, always its right. And when we think about this sphere, we need to model our actions after this action of God.

Jesus, when he was before Pilate on the, at the time of just before his crucifixion said this in **John 18:37, ...actually, I was born and came into this world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognized that what I say is true.**

When I was in university, I was in a dorm that was, you had applied to get into was kind of the, the college nerds, from the different fields they got together. Our dorm was different. This was secular university. Other dorms on weekends would have keggers and parties with beer and stuff. And in our dorm we would have wine and cheese parties. We were kind of very elite, very snobbish actually. And there were just a few of us, two or three of us who were followers of Jesus in that dorm. And we had all kind of different events that we ran. And so I thought at one point, I'm gonna do a study of 1 John with my colleagues. And so we set up five, a series of five days so that we can read a chapter and we've just read it and then talk about it. And the way I pitched it was this letter is foundational to Western civilization. So let's read about it.

So I'm having a Bible study, but it's not a Bible study, it's a literature study because you know, 95% of the people there are non-believers. And so I remember one day, because in 1 John it talks a lot about truth, one of the most brilliant guys on campus who was studying philosophy and you know, always on the Dean's list. I asked him and the others gathered there- Now what if all these comments that John is making about truth? What if they are really are objectively true? And this is how he answered. He said, well, I've dedicated my life to the search of truth. So I don't want to know if this is really true or not. Because if I find out that it's true, then my purpose of life is over. I won't have anything to search after.

What? Are you kidding me? The world plays so many games with truth. They speak about truth, but avoid it when it brings any implications or consequences on their life. We, as followers of Jesus need to know there's a constant truth and we have to discover it as we listen to God, as we walk in his ways, we need to be a people who are consequential in applying that truth to our life. We don't try to shape the Bible to match our world. We need to shape our world to match what the Bible says.

Finally, in the these passages you can see and **Acts 14:3**, Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. They say, **...and the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders.** And **1 Thessalonians 1:5** Paul writes: **for when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words, but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true.** God's mighty acts are confirmations. Those things that are absolutely impossible for the paralyzed to walk, for the dead to rise, for the blind to see —these are confirming signs that this is indeed the true message.

So finally, **2 Timothy 3:14-16.** Paul writes to his protege, Timothy: **but you must remember... remain faithful to the things you've been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you.** So we can know truth because it, it matches reality. You know, it's

true because it's supported by the miraculous confirmation of God. We can know it's true because we can see the lives of the people who've passed us on to us. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

## **Number 4: God's Content Is Trustworthy.**

Luke 1:1-4. at the outset of his gospel Luke writes these words, talking about the methodology he employed in order to make sure that what he was writing about we are reading is absolutely reliable. Many people he says, have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness report circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning. I also have decided to write in an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be certain-certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

You can count on it. You can rely on it. You can build your life on it. This content is trustworthy. In our world there are many substantial claims that we hear about all the time. You just have to go online or turn on the television or listen to the radio. And, and you know, if you use this toothpaste you become the most popular person in your class. Those are unsubstantiated claims, but not so with God's word. This is not a marketing device. It's not something that's been invented in the boardroom, where people are trying to pitch their own products. This is God's word. It's reliable. It's trustworthy. You can go to the bank with it. It's absolutely true.

## **Number 5: God's Communication Is Transformative.**

Colossians 1:6 says this, This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

God's truth is applicable. It changes lives. It was designed to reshape us, to take us wherever we are in our life, with whatever degree of brokenness we have and to make us into who we are always intended to be. Sons and daughters of the Living God. Jesus says this in John 8:31-32 ...you are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Allowing God's word to shape your life, to embrace this truth, is a freeing activity. It sets us free from the distortions and confusions and the habits and the addictions and the, and the issues that keep us bound and destroy our relationships. God's word brings transformation.

## **Number 6: God's Communication Gives Life.**

John 20:30-31. The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

This message, this communication, this truth of God is, is what gives us life. When we speak of life here, it's more than mere existence. It's more than your heart beating, and your lungs sucking in oxygen. It's about the fullness of life. The full realization of the potential. In John 10:10, Jesus says my purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life or in some translations, have them experience life more abundantly. We all have some measure of life, but we don't have it to its full. We have not realized the fullest expression imaginable. And Jesus comes to

take our life, which sometimes feels very far away from the dreams we've dreamed, the hopes we've yearned after. And he says, I can come and bring a true change. I can give you life that is complete, full, meaningful. That is sustainable. And it gives you value and dignity and worth.

God's words are designed to do us good. You see, God is a life-Giver, He's a life-Redeemer. He's a life-sustainer. He's a life-Enhancer. God is all about doing good in your life and my life. And if we're to communicate like God communicates, then our communication must also give life, and enhance life, restore life. That's what God's purposes are for this sphere.

## **SECTION INTRODUCTION**

In this next section, we're gonna look at God's purposes of communication. Why this sphere is so very important to our life as individuals and to our societies, to our cultures. There are very clear reasons why God has designed communication. You see, he created the world, made us in his image. He's the great communicator. He's given us the capacity to communicate because he has that. Because communication is the foundation for relationship. Without communication you can't know one another, you can't love one another, you can't trust one another. So communication is foundational to the very essence of who we are as human beings. Beings made in the image of God, beings capable of receiving and giving love, responding to love- both vertically with God and horizontally with one another. Without communication, we can't be human. We can't be who we're intended to be. So understanding this is so essential. When this gets distorted in our society, human existence suffers; when this is done well, then human existence thrives.

### **Number 7: Creates Unity Around God's Purpose.**

That's what communication is designed to do *Zephaniah 3:9. Then I will purify the speech of all people, so that everyone can worship the Lord together.*

Our speech needs purification. Our speech is often not as it should be. It needs to be corrected. It needs to be adjusted. It needs to be transformed. And when it is, it allows us to come together. It allows for unity to happen. It creates communion and fellowship, and friendship. When our speech is off, relationships suffer. When our speech is on track, our relationships are as they should be. Contemporary media often thrives around discord. When there is a crisis or a problem or a conflict. Wow. The ratings go up. Everyone who wants to watch this thing play out and see the fight, fight, fight, fight, come. And, and they look excitedly at that, but that's not the way of God. Communication should not be about highlighting discord, but facilitating unity. This does not mean to cover up issues, but to really look at issues in depth so that we can address what is wrong and, and find the way to come together. The goal is creating a sense of common identity, of common purpose or mission in life. A profound harmony that supersedes cultural divisions.

Paul writes in Romans why he wrote that letter, it wasn't primarily just to do an exposition of his theology. He had a pastoral purpose. He wanted to bring about change. You see, in the church, there were believers who were of Jewish background and others who were of Gentile background. And because of numerous circumstances, they were not worshiping together. They were each in their own separate silos. And he writes in order to help them understand they both have the same problem with sin. They both have the same solution to that problem, grace, through the made possible through Jesus sacrificial life and death on the cross of resurrection. And both are to come together. And so he gives the theology he gives the practice, then he sums up at, toward the very end of his letter this is his heart, May God who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other.

That's why he writes. He wants the Jewish background believers, and Gentile background believers to live in complete harmony with each other as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is doing here exactly what Zephaniah had prophesied. He's building his whole theology and practice around helping them come together as one to honor God.

If we're communicating well, if we're communicating as we should, it should be strengthening unity across our societies, across our world. And having people come together, not in splitting them apart. When your communication, when your media is augmenting divisions, you're not using the media as it should. When it is helping people understand where there have been problems so they can address them and come together, then God's purposes are being fulfilled.

## **Number 8: Creates Life-Enhancing Situations.**

**Proverbs 10:11. The words of the godly are a life giving fountain. The words of the wicked conceal violent intentions.**

As I was getting ready to film this set, I went to the barbershop yesterday, cut my hair. And I walked in and I had a, a lady come and take me through the chair to cut my hair. And she was maybe in little late forties, early fifties. And I asked, how are you doing? She kind of grunted said, are you doing okay? And she, oh, it's just the work. I said, having a bad day? Oh, you know, it's just the work. And you could tell she was, she was doing what she was doing, you know, because she had to get the salary and pay the bills and take care of her family and do the things that people do. And so many people do the work that it's because they have to, there's not finding joy fulfillment in it.

So I sat there and she started cutting my hair, and I struck up a conversation with her. I said, I said, you know, you do something really important. I said, you know, when people come in here or they come in because they don't like the way they look. Their, their hair doesn't look good. And, and by the time you finished in the half hour, you show them the mirror at the end and go - Wow, I look good. I'm looking great. And you, you, for what you do, you give them a sense of renew sense, worth of value of, of affirmation. And she looked at me said, wow, you know, I haven't thought of that. And I just held up a mirror to her. She would hold up a mirror for me to see how my hair was cut. I held up a mirror to her so you could see her, her life was touching people.

She'd been doing this for about 30 years. She said asking, do you know how many people you would've touched in those times? The thousands of not thousands. And her eyes grew big. And my communication just enabled her to see that her life mattered. But she was doing more than just getting a paycheck. She was more than just meeting the needs of her family. She was doing good in her community and her society.

God's words enhance life. And we can do this anywhere, everywhere. It doesn't have to be when you just give a religious message, you can just speak truth and affirmation. **Proverbs 18:21 says the tongue can bring death or life.** Words are powerful. Use them wisely. You can use the words to enhance life or to tear it down. Jesus said in **John 6:63, the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.** He comes to enhance our life. Peter, a few verses later responds and affirms that what Jesus said is actually true. He said, **you have the words that give eternal life.** **John 6:68,** Jesus has words that give life eternal life. And if we model ourselves after him, our words can be life givers too.

## **Number 9: Creates Community and Cultural Uniqueness.**

This comes from Esther 8:9. So on June 25, the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Mordecai dictated. It was sent to the Jews and to the highest officers, the governors and the nobles of all the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. The decree was written in the scripts and languages of all the peoples of the empire, including that of the Jews.

This was a massive communication effort, done by the government to all these distant geographies, to ethno-linguistic diversity with all these languages. And this communication led to action. It allowed the Jews to defend themselves against those who had sought to wipe them out through a total genocide. And this was a, this communication changed the history for this one people. This communication was later immortalized in a common festival. Purim is an opportunity to celebrate God's miraculous intervention, to save the Jews who are about to be exterminated.

But how did that salvation happen? it happened through the means of the timely and appropriate communication that spoke to their community and gave them a unique response, a common language and a common communication creates a sense of common identity. We are on the same page with one another. We need a common story. We need in every people group, in every nation, every family, every tribe, what is this God storyline?

We all have brokenness in our storylines, but we can also all have redemption. And God by His Mercy has intervened. And that storyline that we can pass on from one generation to another, as the Jewish people do year after year, when they celebrate Purim and remember how thousands of years ago God saved them from the hands of the Persian oppressors and how He intervened. That story gives identity. It gives a sense of purpose and it passes on values and fosters multi-generational continuity. This is what communication does. Good communication.

## **Number 10 : Provides Trustworthy Information.**

2 Timothy 2:2. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach them these truths to other trustworthy people who be able to pass them on to others.

So Paul taught Timothy was to teach somebody else who then pass on and teach another — that's four generations of passing on communication. One of the beauties of the scriptural record is how very, very honest it is. It's radically honest. It's unlike any other cultural writing because, in most stories, the key players are, tend to be idealized and turned into super heroes. But the key players in the Bible are not fictional characters. They're not these great men and women who always do things right. They've not been made into super heroes. We, we read about them with all their warts and failures and foibles and concerns and fears. We read of Abraham and how he lacked courage. And Jacob's deceitfulness, of Moses's disobedience, of David's moral failure, of Peter's betrayal. And Thomas' doubting, of Paul's murderous past. And yet God worked through these imperfect people.

When you read these stories, you can get the feel, no one's trying to cover up their pasts. These are, these are authentic, real people. They have problems. They have failures like you and I do, perhaps even more so. And so when we read their story to go like, oh, God worked in their lives. This gives us great hope and confidence. He can work in my life, in your life as well.

You know, the greatest story in the Bible is the resurrection. And when the gospel stories first write about it, in Mark it says the women came and told them. And you know, in the Roman and the Greek and the Jewish cultures, women were not allowed as witnesses in court. They were considered unreliable. If you want to prove your case, make it rock solid in that culture, whether you're talking to Greek speaking or Roman citizens or Jewish background people, believers, you don't say, well, we're building this on the testimony of women. It was like in that cultural context, it was like, Uhuh, this is not gonna be any good.

And then this says, the disciples did not believe. And so that after they saw Jesus, they did not believe it was him. Like, if you're trying to be like, Hey, we are so amazing. We're like the great apostles, we saw Jesus. We knew it right from the start. He was gonna rise from the dead. No, they have Jesus face to face and they go, mm, I don't know.

So when they actually are changed and understand through the Holy Spirit, all that God has done. Its like, this is not a put on. This is not fictional. And you don't make these things up. They the, if you are making it up, you do it all wrong. It's not a Hollywood movies where the superheros can jump out of airplanes without a parachute and land and not have a scratch on his face. It's just like, hello. These are not fabricated tales, pitching a false narrative. They are ruthlessly honest account that are, therefore, abundantly trustworthy. The Bible, God's word, is true to fact. It matches reality. We can be confident of it and pass it on the next generation and encourage them to keep doing the same thing, because it is trustworthy information.

## **Number 11: Provides Transformative Information.**

**Isaiah 61:1-2.** These are the first words that Jesus reads in the gospel of Luke when he is in the, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he says: **The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of the Lord's anger against their enemies.**

God's Spirit led communication should always bring comfort, hope, freedom, healing, restoration, rejoicing. These are the things that are described in these words of Isaiah, which Jesus quoted that were the fruit of his ministry, of his communication. As we learned to communicate like he did, they should be the fruit, the transformative impact of our communication as well. See, the story of the gospel is simple. It's this that God is with us. God is for us. And he invites us into relationship with himself and that relational truth re- shapes our life completely if we will allow it. That's God's communication made true, made real, made practical in Jesus, and still alive, still bringing transformation to this very day.

## **SECTION INTRODUCTION**

The next 11 passages all have to do with communication that we should seek to imitate. The Bible gives us so many examples of how to communicate well. So let's look at these together.

## **Number 12: Inspired By The Spirit.**

**Matthew 22:43, Jesus responded, Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call Messiah My Lord...**

Jesus knows that David was not speaking just his own thoughts, but he was inspired by the Spirit. This is something we should all seek to do in our communication. We should seek to align our words with that of the thoughts and the words, the communication of the Spirit of God. And what this requires of us of course, is that we, before we speak, we need to listen. We

need to listen to God. We need to reflect on his character. We need to reflect on his purposes. We need to meditate in his presence and understand what he's trying to say to us. And therefore what he'd like to communicate through us. And it's this place of intimacy of pursuit of God, of seeking to align ourselves with his Spirit that gives strength and power and anointing authority to our communication. So let's seek to the Spirit of God, allow him to inspire us to breathe his life and his words into us. As we seek to follow him.

## **Number 13: Speak Like Jesus.**

**Matthew 7:28-29. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority - quite unlike their teachers in religious law.**

You know, if you go through this sermon on the mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, there's hardly anything new or novel in Jesus's teaching. If you look at the Rabbinic teaching those instructions, those records that are the Jewish faith outside of the Bible. Almost everything that Jesus said had been said by a rabbi previous to Jesus- turn the other cheek, love your enemy. Those were not - Jesus was not the first one to say. That because there are logical, natural conclusions or implications of reflection and meditation on the scriptures of the Original Testament.

So what he said wasn't so extraordinary. It's how he said it. It's not because he had a very nice voice and delivered it well. It was not about his methodology. It's that his life supported his words. His words were an echo of his life. He had lived what he was teaching. And so there was a resonance. There was an authenticity, there was a genuineness about his words that otherwise would not be heard in the words of someone who said the right things, but lived the wrong way.

Jesus lived the right way and said the right things. And so when he spoke, people felt how genuine, real, authentic, powerful, and anointed his words were, because they're backed up by a life well- lived. If we want to be great communicators, we need to learn how to live life well. We need to live life obediently. We need to apply the truths of God to us first, and then when we speak to others, they, our words will carry that much more weight.

## **Number 14: Align Your Communication With God's.**

**Revelation 22:17 says this the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come," ...**

This is a wonderful passage. It's almost a very last verse, getting close to the end of the Bible. And here we see the people of God, their words match the words of God. They, the Spirit says come. The bride says come. Everyone who listens should say come. This is absolutely marvelous. This is what we should do. And it's only possible as we listen and imitate what we hear. Well, that's, I want to do something new and novel and different you. Yes, but you don't wanna do anything new and novel that's different from God. A child listens to the father and mother is learning to speak it. Everything that the father and mother say, the child repeats as closely as the child can. And that's how you learn to communicate well. It's through the imitation of the parent, the one who gives you life. And God is the one who gives life to us all. So we must listen to him.

The Latin word from which we get the word 'confess' in English literally means to say the same thing as. When we confess, we are agreeing with or saying the same thing as another person. Usually we think of confessing as associated with our sin, that when we have done something wrong, we acknowledge that we've done something wrong. When we confess. What we're

actually doing is we're saying when God brings conviction, we're acknowledging our guilt. And we are lining our perspective with God's perspective.

You know, oftentimes if I might be having a, a devotional time with the Lord and God reminds me of a conversation I had the other day, and he says, David didn't know that conversation with this friend. Yes. He said, you lied. And I think back and oh, no, God, I didn't lie. I wasn't totally accurate, God. No, David, you lied. Well, I, I, I twisted the truth maybe a little bit. I exaggerated God, no, David, you, you lied. And see, as long as my words don't match his words, confession hasn't happened. But when I say, yes God, you're right. I acknowledge that I have lied. And my words matches and I've confessed. And that usually then leads to repentance and change of life in that example.

But we can confess other things when God says David you're loved and I'm feeling kind of down and discouraged. I go, oh nah, I'm just, I'm no good. David, you're loved and you're precious. And whatever God is saying to you, to me, we need to align our communication with his because he speaks truth. We often do not. And the more we align our communication, we confess, we listen carefully to what he's saying to us and make our words like his. Then we learn to communicate in a way that gives life to us and others who will hear us.

## **Number 15: Speak the Truth in Love.**

**Ephesians 4:15. Instead we will speak the truth in love growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.**

This is a wonderful passage. It's very easy to read and it sure is challenging to live out. Literally this passage doesn't have the word speak, the communication is understood. But in the Greek if we translated it literally it would be, we will, we will truth in love or truthing in love that we need to communicate in such a way. That truth and love are wed together in an inseparable way.

You know, truth without love is not genuine, true, authentic truth. And love without truth is not genuine, true, authentic love. Truth and love need one another. Truth and love both exists in the person of God. They're both attributes of God. God is a truth teller. God is a lover and he doesn't sacrifice one to do the other. And if you think sometimes, well I just, you get irritated with a person and you're upset you say, I just need to tell him the truth, to tell it like it is. And you, you just abandon any thought of love or kindness or graciousness. And you just do that ... Boy, that tends to mess up the relationship, doesn't it? I know that probably we can all remember times where we've said things that we shouldn't have said. But it's we need to keep these two blended together. They are inseparable in God and they need to become inseparable in us. Indivisible. Totally linked, totally hooked together. See truth is not true if it's not spoken in the Spirit of truth. And the Spirit of truth is always kind and loving and gracious. Even when correction is needed. Even when exhortation is required. It's always, always done in a loving way. When it's done, according to the Spirit of the truth.

## **Number 16: Speak Seasoned with Grace.**

**Colossians 4:6. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have a right response for everyone.**

Seasoned. So when you take your food, the main staple and you sprinkle salt or coriander or cumin, or peppers or chilis or, oregano, something on it- and you take what is ordinary food and you spice it up. It becomes beautiful. It becomes memorable. It becomes wonderful. It seasoned just a little bit, but it makes all the difference to the flavors of the food and the experience of your meal time. And that's what grace does in our communication. You don't

have to pile it on, but it is just enough to flavor everything that you say, everything you communicate. You see grace is what gives hope to the hopeless. It gives a way out to people who are feeling trapped, it brings confidence to those who are distraught. It clarifies the confused and encourages the discouraged. It forgives those who have failed and extends friendship to those who feel unlovable and who are feeling unloved. Grace changes all of that. And if we communicate well, if we communicate as God intends us to communicate, our words, seasoned with grace, bring transforming life-giving change to our hearers.

## **Number 17: Speak in Order to Build Up.**

**1 Corinthians 14:26.** Well, my brothers and sisters, lets summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

Everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

Good communication fosters growth and development, pointing people in the right direction, championing and affirming their potential, helping them find their way forward. Good communication does not tear people down. It is not snide, it is never a cynical. It does not leave the listener stuck in their current life. It helps them see -there's a solution. There's a hope, there's a way out. It helps them grow. It helps them develop. It's always serving them. This is what you need to think of - is my communication serving somebody else? Paul says everything that is done must strengthen all of you. Are you strengthening people? Are you helping them? Are you assisting them? Are you empowering them? That's what good communication does.

## **Number 18: Speak in Order to Encourage.**

**Acts 9:27.** Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told him how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told him that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus.

We were first introduced to Barnabas in Acts 4:36. And we find out that his name isn't actually Barnabas. It's Joseph. Barnabas is his nickname, that literally means 'son of encouragement'. Because Barnabas lived as a door opener. He put his own life on the line and he took the risk to communicate on behalf of others who were not trusted or respected by the majority of his peers. The first time we see this happen is with Peter's case. You can imagine the startup of the church numbers are growing. He's a fisherman. He's never handled this logistics of a operation this size. He's a new leader in unfamiliar circumstances and there are lots of needs, lots of needs and lots of reasons why he should be discouraged and, and pushed to the side.

And Barnabas has like all the credentials that Peter doesn't have. Peter doesn't have a religious background. Barnabas is Levite, he's been trained. He's comes from a very wealthy family. He's he is got the social and the economic and religious credentials. And he doesn't say, Peter, move over - I can do this job better than you. He goes and sells his own property and puts all the money to support Peter. This action is one of the best communication exercises in the Bible. Actions often speak louder than words and because he, he came and supported the leadership instead of challenging them saying, Hey, you guys don't understand how to do this. Stand aside, I'll take over. He cast his lot in with them. He supported them. That was huge.

What if Barnabas had not done that at that moment? But Peter had just come out of jail and had just, it was a lot of questioning of what was going on in Jerusalem. He was probably very insecure at that point. And Barnabas helped him become the leader that he came to be.

We see later that Barnabas goes and finds Saul, when everyone had been afraid of Saul because he'd been a persecutor of the church and, and he brings him to Damascus and uh, and he, he brings him to the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. And he speaks to them about how this man is trustworthy. You can imagine they would've been afraid - Do we trust this guy? Is he just feigning conversion so he can get into our inner circle and then take us all captive and kill us like he has killed others in the previous life? And Barnabas risks his reputation and puts his life on the line to champion Paul, like he had done with Peter.

And now just think about this. These are become the two most prominent leaders of the New Testament church, Peter and Paul, and both of them in a moment when the church might have considered, "I don't know about them." Barnabas comes in and does actions that really encouraged them in very concrete ways, not just nice words, but costly things - put his life on the line. If he had been wrong about Paul he would've ended up in prison or in at tomb himself. So he was there at decisive moments in the leadership development.

So then think about this. Peter is either directly or indirectly responsible for three books in the New Testament. The two letters that he writes plus Mark, which is really Mark's account of Peter's testimony. It is the gospel of Peter, as retold by Mark, is how it's often understood.

And Paul is responsible for 15 books directly indirectly. So the 13 letters he writes plus Luke and Acts, which his disciple, Luke, authors. And he wouldn't been in that position to write those, if it had not been for his association with Paul. So between Peter's three and Peter and Mark's three and Paul and Luke's 15 - that is 18 of 27 books, two-thirds of the New Testament are written by these two individuals and their immediate disciples who might not have thrived into their role, grown into their role of leadership, had Barnabas not come and been a champion, a door opener and encourager at a key moment in their lives. There's so much power in encouragement, so much power in coming alongside someone else and, and saying, I believe in you, God's hand is on you. You can do this. I am with you and willing to give up your land, perhaps give up your life in order to back up your words with real profound actions. Good communication really encourages and shapes history.

## **Number 19: Speak with Self Control.**

I'm gonna read from **James 3:2-12**. This is a longer passage, but boy, do we need to read it - Do I need to read this again, and again and again. Let's listen to the word of God. **Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and we could also control ourselves in every other way.**

We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

But a tiny spark is set a great forest on fire. And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brother and sisters, this is not right! Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from the salty spring.

Like I said, it's good to meditate on this passage. Read it again and again, with great regularity. Because if you can control your tongue, it is the ultimate good. All of us, I'm sure you can- I know I can- remember numerous times when we said something that just after we said it, we wish we could have taken those words and put them back in our mouth and just eaten them, just bitten our tongue just a second longer, because relationships have been broken. Pain has been compounded and all kinds of complications have arisen, because of things that you've said, because of things I've said. Tongue control is of paramount importance. This area of all the areas of self control, what he's saying it's not that the tongue is more, the physical part of the body is more evil than other parts of the body, but it's just so easy to let evil be expressed with our tongue.

Just saying an unkind word, a word that denigrates or demeans or yeah, just the cynical or robs someone of hope or of courage. All of us can do this.

So tongue control is of paramount importance, not just in our personal relationships, but in the public media. Let's consider how is our media? Is everything that being said, stuff that's on the internet, online, in the news media, in print, on radio - Is it giving life? We should not print, broadcast, tweet, post, everything that comes to mind. Just like you should not say everything to your friend that comes to mind. Exercise self control, tongue control, communication control. Run your communication through a grid. We have just looked at a variety of things we need to imitate. We looked at it is our communication truthful? Is it loving? Is it graceful? Does it build up? Does it encourage? If the communication doesn't do these things, don't do it. Don't tweet it. Don't post it. Don't go through with it. Bite your tongue. Sometimes I feel like I got teeth marks on my tongue from just holding things back. But if it doesn't pass the test of loving, truthful, gracious, building up encouraging, keep it to yourself.

Authenticity is not a license for lack of self control. Discernment is a true mark of maturity. And knowing when to just be quiet is a mark of trusting God who can do things greater than your wrong communication will ever do.

## **Number 20: Listen to Godly Advice.**

**Proverbs 25:11** says this: **Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.**

Listen, communication is a two-way street. It's not just about what you say, but how you listen. It always begins by listening. It goes beyond hearing. You can hear something and not really be paying attention to it. You know, listening means you hear and you are focused. You're thoughtful, you're intentional, you're purposeful. And it doesn't go in one ear and out the other, it stays in there. That's listening. The Hebrew is **Shema** and the word for **Shama** both to listen and to obey. It's really the old English word to "heed" - to pay attention in order to apply. And so we need to listen to godly advice. That's where communication always begins.

You know, I often think God has a sense of humor. Just look at someone else's face. Look at mine. I've two ears and only one mouth. I think it's like kind of like a hint -Listen twice, speak once. And it's we need to give a lot more attention to listening. Well today we have so much power at our fingertips. We can communicate with the whole world. We can press a few buttons and millions of people can listen to us or watch us. And yet, if we have not listened well, our, our words could be destructive. **James 1:19** says you **must all be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.** Quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to get angry.

## **Number 21: Communicate in the Fear of the Lord.**

Ecclesiastes 12:9-13. Keep this in mind: The Teacher was considered wise and he taught the people everything he knew. He listened carefully to many proverbs, studying and classifying them. The Teacher sought to find just the right words to express truths clearly.

The words of the wise are like cattle prods —painful, but helpful. Their collected sayings are like a nail-studded stick with which a shepherd drives the sheep.

But, my child, let me give you some further advice: Be careful, for writing books is endless, and much study wears you out...

We'd love to quote that when we're studying at school and we're having to face the exact final exams. No much study wears you out. Mom, do I have to do all my assignments? Yes, I did do. So we go back to the scriptures.

That's the whole story. And here and now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.

So much insight here. You can take these passages and just unpack every phrase. So much truth. And when he talked about the books, the writing of books that is endless and much study wears you out, there's a lot of communication that doesn't actually strengthen you. It exhausts you. But God's communication is what builds you up. And our communication should always be marked by the fear of God. The fear of God does not mean that you are scared of him , it means the reverence of God, where you so treasure who he is and the things that he values - that to do things that are contrary to his will, that would bring grief to his heart seems totally unacceptable to you.

In Proverbs 8:13, it describes the fear of the Lord. It defines it as the hatred of evil. It's not because evil is wrong and it hurts us. It is wrong and it does hurt us, but ultimately evil grieves God, because he designed us for good. He designed us to do good, to be blessed by good, to receive good from others, and anything that is not good - that destroys life -is evil. And, and if you fear the Lord, we hate those things. So our communication needs to be shaped by the fear of the Lord. And then, then we'll communicate as we should.

## **Number 22: Be True to Your Words.**

This passage is from [Genesis 31:44-54](#). I'm going to skip some of the passages, but it's an encounter between Jacob and his father-in-law and Laban were there're because both of of them had been cheated one another in the past, there was a breakdown of trust in their relationship. And so they have this encounter where they're trying to set things right for the future.

So they begin saying, So come, let's make a covenant, you and I, and it'll be a witness to our commitment. So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a monument. Then he told his family members gather some stones. So they gathered stones and piled them in a heap. Then Jacob and Laban sat down beside the pile of stones to eat a covenant meal... Then Laban declared, this pile of stone will stand as a witness to remind us of the covenant we have made today. This explains why it was called Galeed -the witness pile. But it was also called Mizpah (which means watchtower) for Laban said, may the Lord keep watch between us to make sure that we keep this covenant when we are out of each other's sight. If you mistreat my daughters or if you marry other wives, God will see it even if no one else does. He is witness to this covenant between us.

God will see it. Even if no one else does. That's really important.

See this pile of stones Laban confirmed and see this monument I have set between us. They stand between us as witnesses of our vows. I will never pass those pile of stones to harm you, and you must never pass these stones or this monument to harm me. I call on the God of our ancestors, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of my grandfather Nahor to serve as the judge between us.

So Jacob took an oath before the fearsome God of his father, Isaac, to respect the boundary line. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice to God there on the mountain and invited everyone to a covenant feast. After they had eaten, they spent the night on the mountain.

So this is a serious moment in their relationship. They're trying to repair their brokenness and they, the resort to a custom that will seem foreign to most of us because it's not part of our culture, but they made these covenants that involve the sacrificing animals, making vows of meals together, setting up physical monuments, like a pile of stones and all of these activities. But it's just a various different way to say, you can trust me on this. This I will not violate this. I've maybe violated things in the past, but I'm going to keep the word here. See they had to go to great lengths because trust had been broken. And trust is the currency that allows relationships to happen. Without trust there's no possibility of loving relationships. It is foundational to any lasting relationship. And trust is built and people know that you will keep your word.

Sometimes when there's brokenness, people go have to go to great length, to try to repair that brokenness, to try to restore trust. Jesus in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:37 makes it very simple. He says, let your yes be yes, and your no be no. If you always keep your word, if you just, you, you're not like, well, I just said yes, but I didn't really promise or I didn't make a vow. And then you go like, well, when can I trust your word? So just let your every word be consequential. Live up to whatever you you say, whether you make it official, do a big event or ceremony like Laban and Jacob did, or just in the normal course of life, let your yes be yes. May your every piece of communication be reliable.

Psalm 15 is a beautiful it's only five verses long. And it starts off with a couple questions **Who may worship in your sanctuary Lord? Who may enter your presence on holy hill?** And then in the next four verses it lists 11 different characteristics of those who can be in God's presence. I'll read through them and listen carefully because of these 11, five have to do with your tongue, with your communication. Almost half of them. Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right. Speaking the truth from sincere heart. That's the first one. Those who refuse to gossip, that's the second one. Or harm their neighbor or, third, speak evil of their friends. Those who despise flagrant sinners and honor the faithful followers of the Lord - and fourth, keep their promises even when it hurts. Those who lend money without charging interest and five who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent such people will stand firm. forever.

So let's rehearse those things. Speaking the truth from sincere hearts, who refuse to gossip, who refused to speak evil of their friends, who keep their promises even when it hurts and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Eleven qualities, five of them related to the tongue.

And I think in my own life, this fourth one, keep the promises even when it hurts, is perhaps one of the most consequential. Sometimes you make your commitment, I'll see you tomorrow, I'll do this, I'll do that. And then circumstances change. And then it's no longer convenient to do what you plan to do.

Will you follow up with your word, even when it's harder and it takes longer and it's more costly than you'd planned it to be? Even when keeping your promise hurts? Maybe you got an

invitation to speak at a, a location and, and you said yes. And then shortly after **you get property**, speak at another location, that's bigger and grander and more prestigious. Do you forget the small one to take the big one? You keep your word. Do you keep your words to your family members, to your friends, to your boss? Do you keep your word? Is your communication reliable? Is it trustworthy? Is your yes, yes? Or can you only be trusted when you go to great lengths and have a big **covenant beyond, create** monuments like Jacob and Laban had to do? May we all be people who live in such a way that we may enter to God's holy hill because we've spoken as we ought to speak.

## SECTION INTRODUCTION

We have just finished looking at several passages that talk about communication that we should imitate. Now we're gonna look at eight passages of communication to avoid. The Bible is so practical. It gives us such concrete instructions as how to communicate well and how to avoid oral communication.

### **Number 23: Do Not Distort God's Character.**

This comes from **Numbers 15:30, But those who brazenly violate the Lord's will, whether native born Israelites or foreigners have blasphemed, the Lord, and they must be cut off from the community.**

This passage is very interesting, because it helps us understand what blasphemy is about. Blasphemy is so much more than just using God's name as a curse word. The word of the Hebrew word for blasphemy is **xxxxxx**. And it means to spurn, to hold in contempt, to despise, and abhor. It is disrespect towards God, which leads one to brazenly violate, as it said here in this passage in Numbers, his will. To go against his will without any consideration of who he is. Blasphemy creates a culture of willful disobedience. When you feel free to disrespect God, you feel free to disobey him. Ezekiel 39:10 has a similar passage. It says blasphemy is defined as betraying God or acting treacherously against God or being unfaithful to God. To blaspheme is to reduce something grand and glorious to something mediocre and insignificant. When we do that, disastrous consequences occur for our society.

I'd like to read for you a passage from The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. This is a beloved book by CS Lewis that is a parable of the Christ and uh, how he redeems humanity. And in this story, the Christ figure is a lion, a glorious, powerful majestic lion named Aslan. And at this point in the story, he's going to relinquish his life to redeem the sins of one who had been disloyal. And so he's giving himself a freely of his own volition, uh, just like Jesus did when he went to the cross.

So as he comes to be killed on the stone table in that book, the witch who is the enemy says,

**let him first be shaved. Another war of me laughter went up from her followers as an ogre with an pair of shes came forward and squatted down by ASO's head. Snip, snip, snip went the shearers and masses of curling gold began to fall to the ground. Then the ogre stood back in the children, watching from their hiding place could see the face of Aslan, looking all small and different without its mean. The enemies also saw the diff difference. Who are these only a great cat after all Craig one is that what we were afraid of said another. And they surged around as UR, same thing like earth or. And how many mice have you caught today? Cat. And would you like a sauce? Milk puss.**

**Oh, how can they send Lucy? This is one of as its followers who was hiding at a distance tears, streaming downward cheeks, the roots, the boots for now that the first shot was**

over the short face of as looked to her braver and more beautiful and more patient than ever muzzle him said the witch. And even now as they were working about his face, put in on the puzzle, one bite from his jaw would've cuts cost two or three of them, their hands, but he never moved. And this seemed to ENR all that Rav. Everyone was at him. Now, those who had been afraid to come near him, even after he was bound, began to find their courage for a few minutes, the two girls could not even see him. So thickly was dis surrounded by the whole co of creatures, kicking him, hitting him, spitting him and ging at him.

That picture is such a vivid description of what it means to blaspheme. It's to ridicule, to demean, to a place where you feel like you can do anything, uh, to reduce a great lion to a house cat, to reduce the God of the universe to someone that you could despise and disobey. We should never allow any communication that would diminish the grandeur of our God.

## **Number 24: Do Not Distort Your Neighbor's Character.**

Deuteronomy 5:20 says **You must not testify falsely against your neighbor**

Lies destroy a person's reputation. They do damage to the relationships they have with others. When you lie against your neighbor, you diminish him or her in the eyes of their acquaintances. You create distrust and disrespect and rupture of relationship. Slander destroys the fabric of society. See, we were made by a loving God for love. We were made for relationships. We're given the qualities that are necessary, made in his image so that we can respond to love with love. We were made for relationships. Relationships thrive when truth is spoken. They suffer when falsehood becomes normative. If our private communication and our public media are filled with lies, if slander is normative, then relationships are damaged and society crumbles.

## **Number 25: Do Not Listen to Ungodly Advice.**

Psalm 1:1-2. Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.

In the key passage number 20, which you might have looked at already, which is about Proverbs 25:11 we are urged to listen to godly advice. Here we are warned against listening to ungodly advice, snarky scoffing, and mean hearted mockery is communication we should avoid. Avoid practicing it and avoid those who do practice it. Don't say it. Don't listen to it. Stay far away from it as you can.

## **Number 26: Do Not Participate in Gossip.**

Proverbs 17:4. **Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander.**

If you have a problem with someone, if there's a something that needs to get sorted out in your relationship, go and talk directly to that person. Or if they're not available, talk to someone who can talk to that person who can make things right. Use your communication to repair the damage that has been done, to solve the problem, to restore relationship. Any other kind of communication, any talking behind the back, commenting to third parties who have no possibility of helping solve a problem only creates more relational trauma. It destroys relational harmon when you gossip. Gossip is saying anything about someone that you would not comfortably say face to face with them. Don't say it. And don't listen to it. Shut it down. If someone else starts talking to you evil about someone else, and they're not in the room, walk

away. Distance yourself from communication which speaks ill of another when they are not present.

## **Number 27: Do Not Participate in Arguments.**

2 Timothy 2:23-25 says this: Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth.

And similarly, Titus 3:2 says that God's people should avoid quarreling. And 1 Timothy 3:3 says that godly leaders must be gentle and not quarrelsome. The spirit of quarreling **foments** division. In contrast Proverbs 15:1 says a **gentle answer, deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.**

Both private and public communication should be done in such a way as to not throw fuel on the fires of arguments. Our words should facilitate harmony or they, they will incite division, anger, violence. What are you seeing on the media? What are you seeing in your own conversations? Are we doing communication in accordance to God's word?

## **Number 28: Do Not Participate in Complaining.**

Jude 1:16. These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.

Grumbling and complaining should not be a part of our lives or our communication. Ungratefulness always breeds relational discord. Gratefulness nurtures relational, harmony. Faith, hope and love, the three great virtues of 1 Corinthians 13 cannot grow in the soil of ungratefulness. When grumbling and complaining abound, those virtues die out. Grumblers are focused on themselves and what they don't have. They're the glass not only half empty but all empty; no matter what you give to them is never enough. It's a miserly way to live. Grumbling is the language of the selfishly entitled. A grumbler can never be satisfied no matter how generous you seek to be with him or her

## **Number 29: Do Not Participate in Slander or Mockery.**

Nehemiah 4:1-4. Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into rage and mocked the Jews, saying in front of his friends and the Samarian army officers, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they're doing? Do they think they can build a wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap — and charred ones at that?"

Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall will collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!"

Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land!"

Mockery seeks to diminish another in the eyes of society. It is demeaning, belittling, and casting aside, ignoring any good in their accomplishments. "That wall? A fox will tear it down." This manner of communication and the heart that breeds it is never very useful in building a healthy society. These are things we should avoid.

## **Number 30: Do Not Participate in Prideful Boasting.**

Psalm 75:4-5. I warned the proud, Stop your boasting! I told the wicked, Don't raise your fists! Don't raise your fist in defiance at the heavens or speak with such arrogance.

The proud person elevates himself or herself over their neighbors. This is the other side of mockery and slander. Mockery and slander puts other people down. Pride elevates yourself. It is inherently rebellious. You're not satisfied with this status quo. You're unhappy. You're trying to make the situation different by force of will and imposing yourself upon other people, dissatisfied with the status quo until you get to the top spot. We need to have a change of heart and a change of communication. Humility speaks graciously. Pride speaks boastfully.

## **SECTION INTRODUCTION**

When we understand that we were created for relationships and that communication is the foundation for relationships, without communication, there is no relationship. Then it is important that we have a good communication vertically with God and horizontally with neighbor. In this next section, we're gonna look at six passages that talk about how we should pursue vertical communication with God. And this is gonna be a two-way street. That's letting him speak to us and us speaking to him and him responding to us and us responding to him. This is absolutely amazing. If we have to get this in our personal lives, we also have to get it in our public life. We need to understand that in the public sphere of communication, God wants to guide us. God wants to speak. God wants to lead. And he wants to give us the wisdom that we need. So let's really press in to see what God wants to teach us in these next six passages.

## **Number 31: God Speaks...We should listen.**

Hebrews 2:1-4. So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who hear him speak? And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose.

The wonderful thing about this passage is the clear affirmation that God is not silent. He's a communicating God. He reaches out to us. We don't have to go chasing him. Sometimes we say, oh, we found God! Like God never got lost. We got lost and he found us. He comes after us and he pursues us and he communicates with us and he communicates even before we're willing to listen. He's saying things and that if we pause and listen, it would make such a difference. This is such a great joy. Hallelujah! Let's become skillful listeners.

You say, well, I've not heard God. Well, think of a radio. Maybe you've had a radio and then you haven't and it's just sitting there and you're not hearing anything, you need to ask yourself. Maybe I need to turn on? So you turn the volume and you still don't hear anything. You go, oh, maybe I don't have the batteries in. So you put the batteries in and you turn it on again and still not hearing. Well, maybe the dial is not at the right place. And so you have to start moving things. You, we have to dial in. But just because you can't hear the sound coming from the radio doesn't mean that there are not radio waves. Just because you've not been hearing God does not mean that he's not been trying to reach out to you and communicate. This passage says he's been doing this for generations in many, in various ways because he loves you. He cares for you. So let's listen to God speaking. Let's listen carefully. Let's listen very carefully, as we're exhorted to here.

## **Number 32: God Speaks... We should speak.**

We're gonna read from John 1:1-9. In the beginning, the word already existed. The Word was with God. And the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in darkness, in the darkness can never extinguish it.

God sent a him, John the Baptist, was to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

What a wonderful passage. Right from the very beginning, God is such a communicator. He created the world through his speech, that we could speak of the pre-incarnate Christ as the Word, the very essence of reaching out relationally to touch us. And when he became a human being and came into our world, he continues to speak and his speech, his communication causes darkness to flee away. This is wonderful stuff, but it's not just enough for God to be speaking. He invites us to join him in that communication. And he, John the Baptist first understood this and he began communicating: This is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And when we can listen to God and hear what he's saying, and then align our speech to match his, then that's very powerful. We must be bearing witness of what God is doing in our midst. When we do that, we're communicating as we should.

## **Number 33: God Reveals...We Can Know.**

Amos 3:7. Indeed, the Sovereign Lord never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.

You know, many times those who are holders of information, withhold that from others because there's power in that information. There's they can use information to control or to manipulate, because they're holding it to themselves. But the beautiful thing about God is that he shares all the information that he has with us. That is helpful for us. He's not withholding anything needful for us because God is not power hungry. He's servant hearted. And he reveals -that means he clarifies, he brings understanding. God's word is not confusing. It's it's not a difficult. If we take time to read it in its context and we listen carefully, we can know.

There's several wonderful things about this passage. First of all, is this wonderful disposition of God to share his vast knowledge with us in a way that serves us and is beneficial and helps us. God is power sharing. He is, he's been generous through his abundant proclamation, through his abundant revelation. As finite beings, we can't possibly know everything that an infinite God knows, but in his goodness, he gives us everything that we need to know. And 2 Peter 1:3 says that he has given us everything we need for living a godly life. There's nothing. There's nothing. Of what God has communicated that is lacking, to lead a godly life. If you wanna lead a different kind of life, um, maybe you'll find some lack, but who wants to do that? See, as finite beings, we can have confidence that even though we don't know everything, what we know we can know truly. We're sure. His revelation is truth, is constant and is knowable. It's generously given, is not held back, and is sufficient for us to live a life confidently - knowing what is good and what is right. Our communication in private and in public should do the same.

## **Number 34: God Listens... We can speak.**

Luke 18:35-43. As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. They told him

that Jesus the Nazarene was going by. So he began shouting “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” Be quiet! The people in front, yelled at him.

But he only shouted louder, Son David, have mercy on me!

When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man we brought him. As the man came near, Jesus asked him, what you want me to do for you?

Lord, he said, I want to see! Jesus said, All right, receive your sight! Your faith has healed you. Instantly, the man could see, and he followed Jesus praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.

So many beautiful aspects of this story. Our God displays this incredible humility that he pays attention to us. He hears us. He listens. You can imagine Jesus walking down that, that road. So many hundreds or thousands of people milling around, this huge multitude, a lot of noise, lots of chatter, but he's, he's listening. He's listening for the one who's crying out in need. And he hears this blind beggar. His voice stands out in his, in Jesus's ears, it's over the din of the crowd. And he, everyone else is saying, shut up. Don't talk! like you're not important to God. And Jesus. He is important to Jesus and Jesus stops. So this passage just up to that point is already amazing, it displays God's willingness to listen to us. To us. Of course we should listen to him, He's the great one, but that he would listen to us. That's remarkable.

But then once he has the blind beggar in front of him, he doesn't say, oh, you're blind. You need to be healed. He doesn't presume upon the blind man's desires. He asks a question, what do you want? Why are you calling out to me? You can say, well, he's God, He would know. It's obvious. People probably murmuring about it -he needs to be healed. But he doesn't jump the gun. He doesn't finish our sentences for us. He listens, he's attentive. He focuses on us. We can speak confidently to him knowing that he pays attention to each and every one of us in our needs. And when we are- tell him what we need, he's there to provide it for us. Miracles happen. Miracles happen when God listens and he invites us to speak.

## **Number 35: God Responds... We Can Trust.**

Judges 6:36-40. Then Gideon said to God, If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised, prove it to me in this way. I will put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know you're going to help me rescue Israel as you promised. And that is just what happened. When Gideon got up earlier the next morning, he squeezed the fleece and run out a whole bowl full of water.

Then Gideon said to God, Please, don't be angry with me, but let me ask one more request. Let me use the fleece for one more test. This time let the fleece remain totally dry while the ground around it is wet with dew. So that night God did is Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.

You know, the amazing thing about this story is like, God doesn't say, Hey, I already told you just believe me, come on. He doesn't rebuke him for wanting to verify and confirm and check and double check- Is this really what God's saying to me? I mean, when God calls you to do something, when you're trying to discover your identity, your purpose, your vocation in life, whether it's in the sphere of media communication or any other sphere in Gideon's case, it was to be in a military governmental role. Whatever that call is, it's like amazing. There's a purpose. Is this really God? Does God really have a plan for me? And he does. And sometimes it seems like me? really? And God's willing to take the effort to communicate again and again. Okay. You said it, now prove it to me. Okay, I'll do it. This, you want this? Okay. I do that. Now do the opposite. Okay, I'll do that.

And he just wants you to know with great confidence that he sees you, he's attentive, and he's designed you for purpose. And when we understand the role of communication, we need to be able to speak with that same attentiveness, communicate with that same heart, to infuse confidence and destiny and hope and direction. God made sure that Gideon was certain of his guidance. The specificity of his response gave him great confidence that God saw in detail and would lead him in every moment. God will do the same for you. And we need to communicate that same kind of thoughtfulness to others.

## **Number 36: God Guides... We Can Follow.**

**Exodus 13:21-22.** The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. And the Lord did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from his place in front of the people.

His guidance was present every moment of every hour of every day, while they were on the journey that he let them on. His guidance was clear both day and night and never left them. And was always appropriate. In the daytime that pillar of cloud probably provided the shade for those who are close enough to it. And it helped them cool off in the hot desert temperatures. But at night it gave them light and a sense of wellbeing because they were out in this unknown place. In utter darkness. God's communications is guidance is appropriate for each circumstance in which we find ourselves. He guides so well. It enables us to follow him easily. If we'll just listen, look, and pay attention, he will lead.

## **SECTION INTRODUCTION**

We just finished a section about pursuing vertical communication with God. Now we're gonna look at 10 passages about pursuing horizontal communication with our neighbors. This is part of living the life that God designed us to live. He made us for relationships and communication is the foundation for relationships, whether vertically with God or horizontally with our neighbors.

## **Number 37: One on One.**

**Roman 12:14** Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.

And this passage, we are encouraged to respond in the opposite spirit. This is what Jesus did when he went to the cross. To those who wanted to kill him, he said, Father, forgive them. He prayed blessings and mercy on their heads. See if we do to others what they do to us, then they are leading the relationship. They punch us in the nose and we punch them back, we're just imitating them, following them. If they punch us in the nose, instead of reacting, which is doing the same action again, re-act, we respond. And that response is in the Spirit of Christ. And then that, that process becomes very transformative. It's costly. It cost Jesus his life. It might cost you, but it changes the whole relational dynamic. So pray that God will bless them.

St. Francis prayed, Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, where there's hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there's despair, hope. Where there's darkness, light. Where there's sadness, joy. This is how we are to respond in the opposite spirit, the Christlike spirit, in order to bring redemption to even those who are enemies.

## **Number 38: One To Many.**

We're gonna be reading from **Isaiah 52:7**. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messengers who bring good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns! We're called to be proclaimers of good news to all, not just to a few. We're to sometimes look at every form of media, every form of public communication that's in our press or on internet or news channels. And we need to use every means possible to proclaim good news. That's what it means to be beautiful feet on mountaintops. The mountaintop, it goes everywhere, can be seen or heard or understood from a long distance.

You know, in our media and the world, there's so much bad news. There's so much distressing, discouraging, upsetting news. Wars and inflations and conflict and riots and starvation and sickness and pandemics. And people need good news. So let's not be afraid. Let's stand up and say we have good news to share, good news that changes not only the course of an individual's life, but news that will change the course of our society, of our culture, of our history. Good news is needed, desired, wanted by all. And God enjoins us. It's our responsibility to share his good news with all.

## **Number 39: Many to the Many.**

**Psalm 68:11 the Lord gives the word and a great army brings the good news.** We're gonna be reading from **Isaiah 52:7**. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messengers who bring good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns! We're called to be proclaimers of good news to all, not just to a few. We're to sometimes look at every form of media, every form of public communication that's in our press or on internet or news channels. And we need to use every means possible to proclaim good news. That's what it means to be beautiful feet on mountaintops. The mountaintop, it goes everywhere, can be seen or heard or understood from a long distance.

You know, in our media and the world, there's so much bad news. There's so much distressing, discouraging, upsetting news. Wars and inflations and conflict and riots and starvation and sickness and pandemics. And people need good news. So let's not be afraid. Let's stand up and say we have good news to share, good news that changes not only the course of an individual's life, but news that will change the course of our society, of our culture, of our history. Good news is needed, desired, wanted by all. And God enjoins us. It's our responsibility to share his good news with all.

Many are involved in proclaiming good news. This is not just a role of pastors or evangelists. This is not just a role of the religious sphere. This is a role in every sphere, but perhaps most importantly, media and communication. We need to be able to speak of the good things that are happening on the earth. People need hope. Yes, we need to be real. We need to address the issues as they are, but when you only give the bad news, you're not being real. You are, you only talk about everything that's going amiss in the world. That's not the full picture. And you have to tell the stories of the victories of the kingdom of God and how God's Kingdom is growing and moving across the face of the earth. And that is so important. We need that hope. We need that strength. We need that confidence.

## **Number 40: A Voice for the Voiceless.**

**Proverbs 31:8-9. Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.**

While we're speaking Good News. We also need to make sure that we are advocating for those who have been oppressed. Those who are suffering, those who are in need. We need to address issues of injustice and aid them in making their needs known, so that change can happen. Consider, who do you know, what situations are you aware of where people cannot defend themselves? They cannot advocate for themselves? Advocacy is always more powerful when you do it for a third party. If you try to advance your own cause, it never is quite rings true; when you advance somebody else's cause, seeking their wellbeing, then that is true charity. That is true goodness. That wins the hearts of people and that brings deep, lasting transformation.

## **Number 41: High Tech or High Touch.**

2 John 1:12. I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper and ink. For I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete.

Wow! Paper and ink. That doesn't sound very high tech. Well it was in his day. It was the latest communication technology available to Paul. And he used it to its fullest extent. As did John and Peter and, and the others who wrote in the New Testament. We live in a time of incredible innovations in communication technology exploding, and we have more power in our phones, in our tablets, in our computers than any generation has ever had on earth before. You can speak to the whole world, But even though we have all this power in our hands, is our communication better? Technology alone does not communicate the message. It is the mode of communicating it, but some things you really need to do face to face. Some things warrant an in person touch. Sometimes technology is insufficient to say all that we want to say. You know, you can chat on zoom, but it's not the same. Try and give a hug or share a cup of coffee with a flat screen. It just doesn't work.

Communication is essentially about relationships. And sometimes we just need to put our technology down. Sometimes I see a room full of people, all sitting side by side, each staring at their phones and have working their thumbs, talking to someone who's not there. Ignoring the people who are to their right, to the left or across the table. This shouldn't be. We should encounter one another in personal face to face dialogue and enjoy the benefits of the technology that we have in these days. But don't forget. It's about being face to face, looking a person in the eye and letting them know that they are valuable, that you love them. And you find joy when you're in their presence.

## **Number 42: In Times of Crisis and Danger.**

Ezekiel 3:16-21 After seven days the Lord gave me a message. He said, Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for Israel. Whenever you receive a message from me, warn people immediately. If I warn the wicked saying, you are under the penalty of death, but you fail to deliver the warning, they will die in their sins and I will hold you responsible for their deaths. If you warn them and they refuse to be repent and keep on sinning, they will die in their sins. But you'll have saved yourselves because you have obeyed me.

If righteous people turn away from their righteous behavior and ignore the obstacles I put in their way, they will die. And if you do not warn them, they will die in their sins. None of their righteous acts will be remembered, and I will hold you responsible for their deaths. But if you warn righteous people not to sin and they listen to you and do not sin, they will live, and you will have saved yourself too

Clear communication is essential in times of crisis. And God raises up his people in the sphere of media and other spheres to proclaim truth in times of need, in times of crisis. We need to have this perspective of a watchman. The watchman sits on a high tower at a vantage point on

the wall of the city. So they have a large panoramic view of all the area around the city, can easily see anyone approaching any danger, anything that might threaten the city. We need to have that broad perspective of the world, station yourself to have the biggest picture possible. We live in a day when social media and, and all of the algorithms get us narrower and narrower, narrower. You like something five times and that's all that ever appears on your devices. Break out of the narrowness of the molds that our digital world tries to force us into and have a broad perspective.

And in the midst of that, be attentive to the voice of God. When he says in this situation speak thus, in that situation, speak this other thing, then that is really important- to hear and obey, says here immediately. Public communication can be a matter of life or death. Embrace the role of communicating responsibly. The common good depends on how clearly and quickly we communicate. It needs to be accurate. It needs to be timely when we're in crisis. Your role as a communicator is so vital. Have a big picture. Listen to God, obey. Communicate

## **Number 43: In times of joy and good news.**

This comes from **Acts 19:17-20**. The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord, Jesus was greatly honored. Many who became believers, confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value that books was several million dollars. So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

Paul was in Ephesus on his missionary journey. And just a few verses earlier, it says that he had done extraordinary miracles, not just miracles, but extraordinary. What it meant is that people were giving to him handkerchiefs and he was touching them. And the handkerchiefs would be passed on to other people. And whoever touched the handkerchief got healed. There are several other stories that lead up to this passage. This was a time of just the goodness of God being displayed as healing and miracles were going on. Communication was so important in the midst of that situation, the story of what God was doing and needed to spread throughout the province of Asia (which today would be Western Turkey for us) so that people would know what God was doing. We need to be good communicators. Not only when there are hard, difficult times, but in times when there's joy and good news.

## **Number 44: Communicating In Ways Appropriate for Your Hearers.**

**1 Corinthians 9:19-23.** Even though I am a free man with no master, Paul writes, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too, lived under that law, even though I'm not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to, to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too, live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ, but I do not ignore the law of God. I obey the law of Christ. When I'm with those who weak, I share their weakness for I want to bring their, the weak to Christ. Yes. I try to find common ground with everyone doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the good news and share in its blessings.

This is such a wisdom in this passage, he tries to find common ground with everyone. He knows you have to know your audience, if you're gonna be a good communicator. You have to identify with them. And though the message is the same, the way it's presented might vary depending on the crowd or the public that you addressing at that given moment. You tailor your communication to meet their needs.

Paul had one gospel message, but the way he communicated to the people with Jewish background or to Gentile background was appropriately modified for their situations. There was no one, right way. Be attentive of how you can be creative in taking the unchanging message and find the appropriate ways to communicate that in a given context. Always bear in mind the purpose of your communication. Don't get so involved in the communication that you forget the "why". The why is so that they might be able to spread the good news or share its blessing. Stay focused on the goal. Paul was singular in his goal, but varied in his methodology.

When we have a message to share the message is singular, but the methods by which that message can be communicated might be varied. And so Paul understands this and as a great communicator, he modifies the 'how' of the message while being true to the "what" and the "why" of the message. This is what all great communicators do. You're attentive to the context, creative in the methodology, and true to the goal.

## **Number 45: Know When To Be Silent.**

**Ecclesiastes 3:7. There's a time to be quiet and a time to speak.**

There are times when saying nothing is the best policy. Do not be driven by "I have to communicate". Is it really necessary? Is it always beneficial? You know, do you really have to answer every tweet and every email within three minutes? Do you have to stop life? Is it that urgent?

Job's friends show true friendship when they first came to see him in his distress and they sat with him in silence. We read in **Job 2:11-13**, the following: **when three of his friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognize him. Wailing loudly. They tore their robes and threw dust into the air, over their heads to show their grief. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that he was suffering and was too great for words.**

Sometimes there are situations where the, the suffering is too great for words. And as long as they were quiet, they were good friends. When they started speaking, everything started going south. It was no longer beneficial. Their identification with the sorrow was the best communication. Their silence had been the best communication.

A number of years back, we were living in another continent. We had some dear friends who, the husband suffered, a major medical problem and had to be rushed in the hospital under intense surgery. Over the next week or two, my wife and I stayed with the wife, visited the hospital, helped with the children and did everything we could to help their family. During that time, many people sent cards and made phone calls. And at first they were like, we're so sorry. We're praying for you. But as time went on, they started saying, why do you think he got sick like this? Did he disobey God? Are you disobeying God? Are you, you know, have you let down your shield? And they would come and, and try to figure out why he got sick.

Friends, we don't always know why we get sick or why certain things happen to us. That's the story of Job. And then one day, my dear friend, the wife of, my friend who was in the hospital had just received a call and someone had, was blaming her for her husband's illness. And, trying to be helpful, I think, that person was in their own mind. But she came off the phone and she was crying and she was saying, came to and said, David, I just want to thank you all these people, trying to give them wisdom, trying to explain why my husband is sick, but you, you are been such a good friend. You are a friend with no wisdom."

Because I've not tried to solve the problem. I was just there. My wife was just there and we were present. We weren't trying to explain things and teach things or sort things out. That's not always what we're supposed to do. Being present, being silent, being caring that's enough. So don't always talk. Listen, be still.

## **Number 46: The Right Time and Place to Speak.**

Esther 2:10 Esther had not told anyone of her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had directed for her not to do so.

This is such an important lesson from this book. Because Esther listened to Mordecai and exercised self control over her communication, she didn't say everything she could have said about herself. She kept her ethnic identity a secret. It was unknown. And her appropriate silence enabled for this climatic moment to occur when there was the reveal of who she was in the presence of the king and the presence of the one who was trying to wipe out all of her people. And the silence at one point, and the speaking at the right time at the right place, turned the table on the dreaded enemy and resulted in her people being saved from a certain destruction.

Listen to God, not only about what to say or how to say it, but when to say it, and he will guide you. Proverbs 15:23 says everyone enjoys a fitting reply. It is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time.

## **CROSSOVER PASSAGES**

We are now ready to look at the crossover passages, how the sphere of media communication connects with the other spheres. And some of the examples will be examples of positive interaction between those two spheres. And some will show ways in which they did not work well together. We can learn from all of these situations.

## **Number 47: Media/Communication and Family**

The crossover between Media/Communication and Family. Genesis 49:28. These are the 12 tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said as he told his sons goodbye. He blessed each one with an appropriate message.

That is a word that concludes the previous 27 verses in chapter 49 of Genesis, which Jacob, knowing that he's about to die called all of his sons into the room and goes one by one and blesses each one. He affirms each one with a unique message, their identity, speaks with their destiny and, and gives them a word that will guide them into the future. This is so important. There should be "a blessing spoken here" as the motto of every household. You know, sometimes you go into stores - it says German spoken here, French spoken here. "Blessing spoken here" should be the family motto. Home is where our communication should shape the identity and destiny of the next generation, giving us confidence to face the future and their challenges of life. Parents are crucial in establishing a culture of communication that bless the next generation

## **Number 48: Media/Communication and Economics.**

Matthew 28:15. And this is gonna be an example where it did not go good. So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it to today.

See, the context is this. We read the previous verses, in verses 12 to 14 that a meeting with the elders was called and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. They told the soldiers, you must say, Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping and they stole his body. If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble like serious trouble.

Like serious trouble. The Roman guards, this select group was came from elite, military division. They were in groups of four. The military Roman rule was that if any one of the four was caught having fallen asleep during the night, all four would be killed.

So when they say, we'll make sure you don't get into trouble- Like this is big trouble. They're they're gonna be dead. So if they say we fell asleep, their, their lie would make, put their life in peril. So they say, we're gonna pay you lots of money and we'll intervene so that you won't be executed. They knew they had not fallen asleep. Roman soldiers didn't do this. The body had not been stolen. To confess to do this would've made them guilty of the death penalty. But the religious and political military leaders conspired together to use finances, used the economic sphere, to perpetrate a lie. Not all communication is true. In this situation bribery distorted the truth. Economics was used to fabricate a wrong impression that was communicated publicly for not only at that time, but still many years later, this was the report that people believed.

## **Number 49: Media/Communication and the sphere of Government.**

Proverbs 15:22 plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisors bring success.

Jesus applied this principle when he gave the following example and Luke 14:31-32, he says this, Or what king would go toward as another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him. And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.

Good communication from good advisors is essential for good decision making in government and really in any other sphere as well. Communication plays a very key role.

## **Number 50: Media/Communication and the sphere of Religion.**

We're reading from Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is evil to make mindless offerings to God. Don't make rash promises and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few. Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool. When you make your promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God makes takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. It is better to say nothing than to make a promise or not keep it.

Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved. Talk is cheap, like daydreams and other useless activities. Fear God instead.

Wow, this is a good passage. Speaking about religious vows. We're exhorted to exercise self control over our tongues. Keep your ears open and your mouth shut is the advice that is given. Sometimes less communication is the wisest communication.

## **51: Media/Communication and the Sphere of Education.**

**Proverbs 2:1-2.** My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom and concentrate on understanding.

This attitude, the attitude of an attentive listener is central to the heart of education. The student should approach the experience of education with a heart dedicated to silence and submission. That's a strange phrase for us in our modern times. But this phrase, silence and submission, it was a common language in the ancient middle east, and implied to willingness to heed and obey instruction. It communicated that you are adopting a posture of being teachable. It's very hard to learn if you're not teachable. Your teacher can speak all they want, but if you're not participating with that right attitude has, that's just an essential part of communication that we listen well.

Here's some, some thoughts from a thesis that I wrote before. In Paul's time the Rabbis agreed that silence was an admirable attribute for the highest scholar. The command to learn in silence was not a derogatory comment, such as we regrettably might address to children, shut up and listen to what the teacher says. No, on the contrary as Simon, the son of Gabrielle, explained: all my days, I grew up among the sages and I found nothing better for a person than silence.

This perspective of education was true, not only among the Jewish rabbis, but also among the Greek gentile philosophers. **Plutarch** said, but those who instantly interrupt with contradictions, neither hearing, nor being heard, but talking while others talk, behave in an unseemingly manner. Whereas the man who has the habit of listening with restraint and respect takes in and masters a useful discourse and more readily sees through, and detects a useless or false one, showing himself thus to be a lover of truth and not a lover of argumentation and contention.

We need to listen well as students. And it's not just when you're in grade school and high school or in college. Throughout life, we need to maintain that attitude of a disciple. Listen, listen carefully to others. Anyone can teach you. Anyone, in any moment might have a truth that you need to hear. So if we adopt this attitude, communication and education work together to lead us into more truth.

## **Number 52: Media/Communication and Celebration.**

**Esther 8:17.** in every province and city, wherever the king's decree arrived, the Jews rejoiced and had a great celebration and declared a public festival of holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews themselves, for they feared what the Jews might do to them.

Our communication and celebration are wedded together and a continuum from the pragmatic, all the way to the aesthetic. All communication involves art and all art communicates. The function of the message and the beauty of the form are closely intertwined. It's all most impossible to speak of one, without speaking of the other. These two spheres are always working hand in hand. And if, when they both are doing it well, it result is glorious.