

Why Not Communicate?

Who would you say was the greatest communicator in history?

I would choose Jesus Christ who was the master at conveying images through the spoken word.

Christ spoke often in simple stories, about runaway boys, lost coins, and seeds falling to the ground, things that were familiar to ordinary people.

We all think we know what communication is, after all, we communicate in words, nods and facial expressions all the time.

Some live with preoccupied mates, getting his or her attention is often difficult.

If they are intently watching television or reading the paper all we may receive in reply to our question is “*uh huh*”.

Why is it we don't really communicate more than we do, really make the effort to listen and respond?

Because it is easier not to bother!

At other times it is because we don't want others telling us what we should be doing.

We want things our way.

This is why we don't seek wise counsel or even ask advice about a decision we are about to make.

God says a lot to us in proverbs about seeking wisdom and good advice, and we cannot do this without talking with other people, not just talking but listening to what they are saying.

Proverbs 25:11-12 [Message Bible] *“A right word at the right time is like a custom-made piece of jewellery, and a wise friend's timely reprimand is like a gold ring slipped on the finger.”*

Husbands, do you listen to your wives?

After all, you chose this woman to be your life-long companion, the mother of your children. She knows you well and the circumstances surrounding whatever major decision you might be making. She will also be greatly affected by your decisions.

Ask her advice and listen to it, weigh it carefully before you make a decision that will affect the whole family. Communicate.

God will support your decision much more when it comes through a united family than if it is just your headstrong asking no-one else decision.

If things are going wrong for you and your family, financially, spiritually or otherwise, maybe you should analyse whether you are communicating enough.

At one time a man in front of me left his seat to give the opening prayer at a service. Although he wasn't a polished speaker his words were thoughtful and sincere. When he returned to his seat, his wife, leaning toward him with a big smile, whispered “*you did great*”.

Her actions communicated to me far more than her appreciation for his prayer. I'm sure she appreciated and supports her husband in many other ways.

That was good communication and such a warm give and take relationship is hard to hide.

Here are some guidelines for us to consider the next time we open our mouths to communicate, whether in marriage or with others.

Don't monopolise the conversation. Sincerely desire to hear and learn what others can add to the subject as well.

Don't rudely contradict. Flat contradiction is a conversation stopper. You can say, *"I'm sorry, I don't quite agree with what you said"* but if possible seek to find points of agreement. In that way the subject develops in interest with each person's contribution.

Colossians 4:6 [Message Bible] *"Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out."*

Don't abruptly change the subject. Some people, after painfully waiting for the speaker to catch his or her breath, jump into the conversation with a totally new subject. Always seeking the centre stage in a conversation is pure vanity.

Do show an active interest in what is said by others. This brings out the best in any speaker. Prolong his or her subject, ask more about it, and you will see them unfold to bloom like a rose in the sun.

Be very careful about making dogmatic statements of opinion.

James 3:13-16 [Message Bible] *"Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do. Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk that counts. Mean-spirited ambition is not wisdom. Boasting that you are wise is not wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourself sound wise is not wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom, it's animal cunning, devilish cunning. Whenever you're trying to look better than other or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the other's throats."*

Avoid destructive talk. Cynical comments may sound clever in conversation, but always hurt someone.

Ephesians 4:29 [Message Bible] *"Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, make each word a gift [to be treasured]."*

The tongue can be a blessing and the tongue can be a curse. Stop and think, how am I using mine, is it for better or for worse?

James 3:5-12 [NIV] *"Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water."*