

Speaking the Truth in Love:

Biblical Principles of Communication

Why Study the Topic?

- More effective communication. Proverbs 15:2
- To avoid unnecessary trouble. Proverbs 21:23
- To guard against disunity within the church. Ephesians 4:31
- To avoid grounds for chastening or judgment. Ephesians 4:30; Matthew 12:36
- To guard against disqualification in ministry. Psalm 15:3; I Timothy 3:8
- To avoid “worthless” “religion.” James 1:26

The Text

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;
but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE** of you **WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

(Ephesians 4:1-7; 14-15; 25; 29-32)

1. Is Our Communication Characterized by True Humility?

- “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another”
- “But to each one of us grace was given”
- “forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

2. Is Our Communication Consistent With The Nature and Character of God?

- His Sovereignty — “I, the Prisoner of the Lord”
 - “God is in Heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your Words be Few”. Ecclesiastes 5:2
 - When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but He who restrains his lips is wise.”Proverbs 10:19
 - “Less is [generally] more.”

- His Creation — Man Created in the Image of God Genesis
1:27; James 3:9
- His Holiness — Isaiah 6:5-7; James 3:11-12

3. Does It Promote the True Unity of the True Church?

“being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”
Ephesians 4:3-6

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

John 17:20-23

- Does your communication promote true unity? Does it reflect Christ's passion for true unity? Truth is of the utmost importance; and the truth of Scripture stresses true unity between the true church!
- Is it promoting or perpetuating a quarrel or a "war of words"? (I Timothy 6:4-5)
- "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of the sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."
Proverbs 12:18
Does your communication promote healing?
Or does it aggravate existing strife??? If so, is there need for repentance?
- "Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."
Colossians 3:14

- Unity and Careful Communication are particularly significant when the Church faces Persecution
- “We have always supported the underground church in nations where Christian congregational worship is deemed illegal by the state.”
— “A Biblical Case for the Church to Remain Open” — The Elders of Grace Community Church, July 23, 2020
- The “Underground Church”

Preparing for the Underground Church

— Richard Wurmbrand

LEARN TO BE SILENT

Another thing which we have to learn in the Underground Church is to be silent. Pastors, by their very profession, are loquacious people, people who speak. Now a pastor is not meant to speak the whole time. Nobody can preach well unless he listens well. When I look back to my dealing with souls, I have won more souls by listening to them than by speaking to them. People have so many burdens on their heart, and there is nobody who has patience to listen to them. Even your own husband has no patience, or your wife, or your children. The latter are young and wish to go away somewhere. There is nobody to listen to you. If somebody finds a man who listens, he is won without much talk. **In the Underground Church, silence is one of the 1st rules. Every superfluous word you speak can put somebody in prison.** A friend of mine, a great Christian composer, went to prison because Christians had the habit of saying, "How beautiful is this song composed by Brother." They praised him, and for this he got fifteen years of prison. Sing the song, but do not mention the name of the one who has written it.

You cannot learn to be silent the very moment the country is taken over. You have to learn to be silent from the moment of your conversion. **A Christian is a man who speaks little and with great weight. He thinks, if he should speak a word, whether it can harm or not.** In the Underground Church every superfluous word can do harm.

We do not take earnestly the word of Jesus Who says that men will be judged not for every bad word, but for every useless one. So it is written in the Bible. Useless talking in some countries means prison and death for your brother. A word of praise about your brother, if it is not necessary, may mean catastrophe. For example, somebody comes to visit you and you say, "Oh! I'm sorry you were not here before - brother W. has just left." The visitor could be an informer of the secret police. Now she will know that brother W. is in town! **Keep your mouth shut. Learn to do this now.**

TREACHEROUS QUARRELLING

Not the slightest quarrel is permitted in the Underground Church. Every quarrel in the Underground Church means arrests, beatings and perhaps death. Our adversaries watch and listen. They have their informers in the Underground Church. Whenever there is a quarrel, there are reciprocal accusations. The one would say to the other, "When you were with Brother Smith, you did this, etc." So the police get Smith.

I know of one town in Romania where there was a terrible quarrel between two congregations. The one was Baptist and the other was Exclusive Brethren. It was such a terrible quarrel that it resulted in the arrest of the leaders of both congregations.

I know that I can only enter into Heaven if I am holy. Then it would be better to start today to be a saint. It will be too late to start to be holy when you go to Heaven! You will not know how to start it. You have to start it now. If, then, in the case of a takeover it would be better not to quarrel - the best thing is not to quarrel now.

Sadly there are quarrels among organizations, which work in dangerous circumstances. As far as possible they should be avoided. Even a family quarrel can mean death. I was in the same prison cell with a man who had a girl friend. As it happens at a young age, he met another girl whom he preferred to the first girl. But to that girl he had told different secrets, and the girl informed the Secret Police. He got life-long prison. He went mad in jail.

The preparation for underground work is basic to the preparation for a normal Christian worker, only it is much deeper and it has to become much more real -- a part of life. I know countries where many congregations are destroyed by **a quarrel between two pastors or two elders of the church. It happens everywhere, but in an oppressive country it means imprisonment and perhaps death.**

4. Does It Show Honor Within the Family of God?

“One God and Father of all who is over all and through all”.
Ephesians 4:6

“Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.”
1 Timothy 5:1-2

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

— Kristyn Getty

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I find a place to stand,
And wonder at such mercy
That calls me as I am;
For hands that should discard me
Hold wounds which tell me, "Come."
Beneath the cross of Jesus
My unworthy soul is won.

**Beneath the cross of Jesus
His family is my own
Once strangers chasing selfish dreams,
Now one through grace alone.
How could I now dishonor
The ones that You have loved?
Beneath the cross of Jesus
See the children called by God.**

5. Does Your Communication Reflect Your Calling and Commission?

- The calling and commission given to those with pastoral responsibility. Are you equipping the saints for the work of service and the building up of the body? Ephesians 4:11
- Are the warnings that are given accurate and correct? The responsibility of the “watchman”/ “overseer” Ezekiel 3, 33; Acts 20:27
- The calling and commission given to all believers. Matthew 28:18-20

6. Does our Communication Demonstrate Integrity?

- In contrast to a background of false doctrine, and deceitful human scheming, we are to communicate with integrity! (I Thessalonians 2:3)
- Integrity of Speech — An active realization that all that we say or communicate is in the presence of a Holy, Omnipresent and Omniscient God.
- While able to speak appropriately to different individuals (Hebrews 5:12-14; Colossians 4:3-5), the man of God is not to be double tongued (I Tim. 3:8), or hypocritical.

"I've heard it said that flattery is saying something to a man's face that you'd never say behind his back, and gossip is saying something behind a man's back that you'd never say to his face. Well, both of those clichés would be a violation of the requirement not to be double-tongued. A double-tongued man will learn, sometimes quite quickly, that the congregation doesn't trust him, that his leaders receive his reports and assessments with doubt, and that people will close the loop and find out what he really said behind a person's back."

—Hohn Cho

7. Does Our Communication Demonstrate Wisdom From God?

- In contrast to the “darkened understanding” of the unbelieving “Gentiles”, Ephesians 4:17-18, we are to act with Godly “wisdom”
- Does your Speech [demonstrate](#) a wisdom “from above” or a wisdom that is “earthly, natural and demonic”? James 3:13 -18
- Is your Speech characterized by the wisdom of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes?

8. Is Our Communication True?

- We are called to speak the truth — Ephesians 4:15
- Confirmed As Objective Truth?
 - Just Opinion?
 - Simply perception?
- Does it Demonstrate the Evil One's Disdain for Truth (John 8:44)?

- Is it Lying? — Proverbs 6:16-19; Revelation 22:15
- Is it Slanderous? — Ephesians 4:31 (Prohibited at least Thirteen times in Scripture.)
- Is it Gossip?
- Is it all the Truth Necessary in a particular context? — Deuteronomy 27:19

“Truth is that which corresponds to reality as perceived by God.” “... all truth meets at the top.... God’s truth is holy truth. That is, His truth expresses His own character. Insofar as He is the fountainhead of all truth, all truth points back to Him. Since all truth points to Him, all truth is sacred. The sacredness of truth is what makes the lie so diabolical in that it distorts our perception of the very character of God.”

- **The Holiness of God**
 - R.C. Sproul

9. Is It Spoken in Love?

- We are called to “speak the truth in love” — Ephesians 4:15
 - Love filters and shapes the narrative
 - Love “covers a multitude of sins.” — I Peter 4:8
 - That love must be genuine
 - No “Bless His Heart” putdowns

10. Does It Violate the “ENG” Principle?

- Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
(Ephesians 4:29-30)

- Is it EDIFYING?
- Is it NECESSARY?
- Is it GRACE-GIVING?
- Or will it grieve the Holy Spirit?
- If it is not ENG — DON'T SAY (OR WRITE) IT!

Conclusion

- What Do We Do With All of This?
 - Consider your ways (Haggai 1:7)
 - Does your Speech demonstrate “Worthless Religion”? (James 1:26), or do we need to “Excel Still More”? (I Thessalonians 4:1,10)
 - Where necessary, “take words with you” and repent (Hosea 14:1-2)
 - Where division may have occurred because of inappropriate speech, and not necessarily your own, seek reconciliation
- Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in your sight O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)