

Introduction

Normally, when we teach or talk about something, we like to have some expertise in the matter. I am speaking about something today that I work very hard at, but cannot tell you that I am a master at it. I used to be a professional golfer, and when I said something about golf or offered some golf instruction, they were hearing from an expert. I was one of the best players in the world, and competed on the PGA Tour. Today, I am speaking about communication, and I cannot say that I am an expert. I hope that this does not hinder you from hearing what I have to say. Let me ask you a few questions before I get started to see if you and I have some things in common. Let me see a show of hands for each of the following questions.

1. How many of you have ever said something that later on you regretted that you said it?
2. How many of you have said something incorrectly, or worded something poorly?
3. How many of you have ever said something, that may have been correct, but it was spoken at the wrong time or at the wrong place?
4. How many of you have ever repeated something, only to hear the other person say that this is not what they said? It reminds you of the group game where you say something to the first person, and by the time it comes all the way around back to you, it is something quite different.
5. How many of you have ever been told by your spouse or someone else that you don't listen very well. I was reminded of this recently when my wife and I were sitting down together. She started talking to me, and I was preoccupied playing a word game on my smart phone with one of my daughters. My wife looked at me and said, you can't listen to me and play on that game at the same time. Ohhhhhh. I quickly put it down. But, it was a reminder to me that we have to give our undivided attention to be good listeners.
6. Or how many of you have been told that you raised your voice during a conversation? A few weeks ago I was in a meeting and afterwards my wife said that I had raised my voice in it. I had unintentionally reacted to something and raised my voice instead of responding with a gentle voice?

In James 3, we find that you and I do have something in common. He says that “we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” All of us have said something that later on we regretted that we said it. All of us have stumbled in our communication. All of us are trying to improve and hone our communication skills.

(James 3:2) “For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.”

Guys, you and I are not alone. The prophet Isaiah had a vision in which he saw the Lord. In the year of King Uzziah's death, he saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. The seraphim are there calling out, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.’”

(Isaiah 6:1) "In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple."

Then Isaiah says, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." It was in the presence of a holy God that he realized how unclean his lips were. All of us can grow in this area.

(Isaiah 6:5) "Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.""

I work at Murchison Drilling Schools. We have one of the most respected drilling schools in the world. On the first day of class, we say that "good communication is the key to a successful drilling operation." We start out with a lecture on communication. We cover lots of different areas of communication. A large part of that lecture on communication that is taught all over the world was put together by me.

I am also an accredited facilitator, which means that I understand different learning styles, modes of communication, can lead group discussions, and know how to ask good questions. I come to you this morning with some credentials, but I do not come to you as an expert in communication. I too have stumbled in what I have said. We are all in the same boat, wanting to learn how to navigate the difficult waters of communication.

A long time ago, I was led to do a study of communication in the book of Proverbs. I began to put circles and squares around the verses that pertained to communication. If the verse was about something we say, I put a circle around the verse number. If it was about something that we hear, I put a box around the verse number. If it was about both listening and speaking, I put a circle and a box around the verse number. Here were my findings.

There are 915 verses in Proverbs. There are 146 verses on our mouth or our words that we speak. That is 15.9% of the book. There are 106 verses on listening or 11.6%. In all, there are 241 on communication or 26.3%. Since some of the verses pertain to both listening and speaking, I do not count them twice, so we have 26.3% instead of 27.5%. For those of you who are detailed people, I wanted to communicate accurately. The main point here is that God is very concerned with our communication, and He wants us to grow wiser in it.

As I considered what to speak about this morning, there were lots of different avenues to go. But as I sought the Lord, He led me to speak on a passage that we typically do not consider as a passage on communication. It is a passage on love, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. I have entitled it, "how to have loving communication." Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:5 that the goal of his instruction was love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith." The goal of my instruction this morning is demonstrate God's love in all of our communications.

(1 Tim 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

Let's read our passage together. It is a short passage, but it there is a lot of meat in it.

(1 Cor 13:4-7) “Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

I have entitled this message, Learning to communicate with Love. There are three main points that I want to address in the passage. First, loving communication is not offended. Second, loving communication is kind and humble. Third, loving communication is about things that are worthy of praise.

Learning To Communicate With Love

1. Loving Communication is not offended.
2. Loving Communication is kind and humble.
3. Loving Communication is about things that are worthy of praise.

1. Loving Communication is not offended.

(1 Cor 13:4-7) “Love is patient...{5} ...is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...{7} bears all things...endures all things.”

The first three verses in 1 Corinthians 13 are about the priority of love. In verses four through seven, love is defined. I call it the character of love. Finally, in verses eight through thirteen, we see the endurance of love. In this section, Paul gives five specific thoughts about not becoming angry, provoked, offended. He tells us that we are to be patient, not to be provoked, not to take into account a wrong suffered, to bear all things, and to endure all things. I have entitled this as loving communication that is not offended.

The first characteristic of love is that it is patient. **If we are going to have loving communication, we must be patient in our communication.** There have been many times in my life that I have been impatient with others. I wanted to say something, and I jumped in at the first opening that I saw. My wife has told me that she was not finished yet. It lets the other person know that you really are not listening to what they have to say, and that you are not that interested in what they have to say. We are telling the other person that what we have to say is more important than what they have to say. The things that we are communicating are not good.

James tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. If we are patient in our communication, we will have no problem being quick to listen and slow to speak. Notice that James also says to be slow to anger. In our passage in 1 Corinthians 13, the Greek word for patient is makrothumeo, which means it takes a long time to breathe hard, get worked up, or become angry.

(James 1:19-20) “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

Makrothumeo, Strong's G3114, Long + Passion (to breathe hard), patient, suffer long, bear long, patiently endure

Sometimes in our communication, we get angered rather quickly about something someone says or

how they said it. We are not slow to anger, but quick to anger in our communication. If we are going to have loving communication, we have to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to get angered about what is being said. We must be patient in our communications with one another.

Another way to say this would be to say that we should not be provoked easily. I was having a conversation with a man named George one time, and I became provoked in our conversation. He was acting and saying things that were not appropriate or called for. We both became provoked that afternoon. The next day the Lord had me go to his house and apologize for not acting in love. Love is not provoked, and since I had become provoked, I was not displaying love. The other man bore the brunt of the responsibility because of his position, and because of his actions. He did not ask for forgiveness. We must do what God tells us to do, irrespective of the actions of others.

When we become provoked or angered, our voices get louder. We speak quicker, and more forcefully. We sometimes say things that we later regret. We can speak harshly when we are provoked. Proverbs 15:1 says that a harsh word stirs up anger. We must be patient and not get provoked in our conversation.

How do we keep patient, and not become provoked? **Loving communication does not take into account wrong actions.** It forgives, bears, and endures all things. That means that no matter what the other person says or does to you, we do not take it into account. We patiently bear it. We patiently endure it. And most importantly, we practice ongoing forgiveness. We keep forgiving them over and over again. I have found that we must do this silently. If we repeatedly tell them we forgive them, we are telling them that they are sinning, and this can escalate a conflict even more.

(1 Cor 13:4-7) “Love is patient...{5} ...is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...{7} bears all things...endures all things.”

In counseling with people, I have had to lay some ground rules for couples. One of the ground rules is that we will not take into account a wrong suffered. Proverbs 17:9 says that he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. Husbands and wives love to bring up old offenses and use them as weapons against their spouses. You cannot do this. Loving communication does not take into account these wrong actions. **Loving communication does not repeat a matter.** We have to put a guard over our mouth and refuse to bring up old wrongs. We have to conceal those transgressions. Solomon says that he who conceals a transgression seeks love.

(Pro 17:9) “He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.”

Those of you who know me very well know that I am not one to sweep things under the carpet. I like to deal with problems, rather than ignore them. I encourage people to deal with the problem, resolve it, and move on. James says that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will cover a multitude of sins. Peter tells us that love covers a multitude of sins. If there is a problem, we need to lovingly confront people about sin. Love does not sweep things under a carpet. Love confronts, but does it in a way that builds up, restores, and does not judge. We have to deal with things as Christians.

(James 5:19-20) “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

{20} let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

(1 Peter 4:8) “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

Once we have dealt with a matter, we must forgive one another, and never bring it up again. We have to be like Christ, who removed our sins as far as the east is from the west. Our problem is that we keep their sins in the closet next to us, and we retrieve them whenever we want.

A couple years ago, Karen and I were doing some marriage counseling with a couple. They both said they loved each other, but that they could not stand living with one another. Since they both said they loved the other person, I turned to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and went through the list with them. I commented that they were not being patient with one another. They interrupted one another constantly. They were both provoked. They both brought up wrongs that the other person had committed, and each of them had a long list of things the other person had done. They used these things against one another. As we went through the list, it became very evident that they had physical attractions for one another, and had enjoyed some good times, but neither of them loved the other. They were not acting in love, according to 1 Corinthians 13. We had to set up ground rules for them. Once they had dealt with a matter, they were not allowed to bring it up again.

One friend of mine that does marriage counseling asks couples to write the offenses on a piece of paper. Then, after they had forgiven the other person, they were to throw out the piece of paper. Anytime a thought to bring up that offense came to them, they were to recall the fact that they had already forgiven the person for that, and thrown away the offense.

2. Loving Communication is kind and humble.

(1 Cor 13:4-5) “...love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own...”

The second way to have loving communications is to show kindness and humility in what we say. Paul says that love is kind. He adds, “love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own.”

In Philippians 2, Paul tries to convey the same thought. He says, “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” We must be humble and think of the good of the other person. We cannot be selfish. Rather, we must be unselfish and regard the other person as more important. This is particularly true in our communication. Let's look at these aspects of loving communication, beginning with kindness.

(Phil 2:3-4) “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; {4} do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

In Proverbs 3:3-4, we are told to not let kindness and truth leave us. We are to bind kindness and

truth around our neck, and to write them on our heart. Jesus taught in Matthew 15 that the words of our mouth came out of the abundance of our heart. Therefore, if we write kindness and truth on our hearts, we will be more apt to speak kindness and truth. Notice what the result of speaking words of kindness and truth. Solomon tells us that we will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. When we speak kindly with other people, we will gain favor with them.

(Pro 3:3-4) “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. {4} So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man.”

(Matt 15:18) “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.”

The Hebrew word for kindness is *chesed*, which means goodness or kindness. It is translated as lovingkindness 176 times and kindness 40 times. When we speak kindly to others, we are showing loving communication.

An example of this is found when Rehoboam became king after Solomon. His fathers' counselors told him to be kind to the people, and to speak good words to them, and they would be his servants forever. But Rehoboam forsook the wise counsel of the elders and took foolish counsel from the young men that he grew up with. He spoke harshly to the people and they rejected his leadership. Speaking kindly to others brings favor with them. Men, we need to learn to speak with kindness.

(2 Chron 10:6-8) “Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?" {7} They spoke to him, saying, "If you will be kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." {8} But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.”

In Proverbs 31, we find that an excellent wife has the teaching of kindness on her tongue. Personally, I believe that this proverb is not just for women. I believe that the wise woman it is speaking about is the church. For us to be the bride of Christ that is spotless and without wrinkle, we must have the teaching of kindness on our tongue.

(Pro 31:26) “She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

In the New Testament, we have a similar principle found in Paul's letter to Colossians. He tells us to make the most of opportunities, and for our speech always to be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that we will know how to respond to each person. The Hebrew word *chesed* that we saw in Proverbs has the same idea as grace here. The dictionary defines gracious as pleasantly kind, benevolent, and courteous. It defines favor as something done or granted out of goodwill, rather than from justice or for remuneration; a kind act, friendly or well-disposed regard; goodwill; excessive kindness or unfair partiality. A person who speaks graciously is going to have lots of goodwill in his words. He is going to speak kindly and friendly. He will show well-disposed regard for others and unfortunate situations.

Gracious and kind words open up doors of communication. When we use gracious words, we

gain favor with people, and they open up to us. When they open up to us, they talk and share things with us. When we listen to them, we then learn how to respond to them. When we have open doors of communication with them, we can make the most of the opportunities that we have.

(Col 4:5-6) “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. {6} Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Paul wants us our speech to flavor our conversations with the lost. We are not to dominate conversations. That would be all salt and no food. We are not to be so zealous in our conversations that every word is about their faith. Too much salt will ruin the natural flavor of the food. We are to season our conversations with unbelievers so that they will want to learn more about Christ. We are to give them the right amount of flavoring for where they are at in their search for Christ.

In the early 80's the Lord gave me a very vivid dream of a bridge game. I don't know how many of you have ever played bridge, but it is a good card game, and there is a lot of communication that takes place. There are a lot of rules that players use to help them communicate with one another.

In this particular dream, I had jump-shifted my partner's bid. This did several things. First, it prevented some lower level bidding, which would have helped us find our strongest suit to be in. Second, my jump-shift response indicated more points than I actually had, and it led my partner and I to bid more tricks than we should have. The result of the hand was disastrous, and we did not make our bid.

As I sought the Lord about the dream, He showed me that in my conversations with unbelievers, I sometimes jump-shifted to spiritual things, which cut out some of the needed conversation to build trust and relationship. I needed to be willing to talk about the Cowboys or things that the other person wanted to talk about. A lot of ministry comes out of relationship, and until you have built some trust in that relationship, it will be difficult for them to open up to you about the things in their lives. We must season our conversation with grace, not pour it on too strong.

Many Christians are known to be critical and judgmental. God wants us to be known for having gracious and kind speech. Jesus said that the Father did not send the Son to judge the world, but that the world would be saved by Him. We have a similar mission. We are to seek and to save that which is lost. We are to make the most of the opportunities that we have.

(John 3:17) “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Paul wrote in Romans 2 that we are not to think lightly of the riches of God's kindness and tolerance and patience because **it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance**. We need to be ambassadors of Christ who are speaking the kindness of God to others. When we speak kindly, we will have loving communication.

(Rom 2:4) “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

Loving communication is both kind and humble. We must have humility in our communication. The opposite of humility is arrogance. An arrogant person brags, is pre-occupied with himself, rather than others, and seeks its own. **Loving communication does not brag and is not arrogant; it is humble.** It also does not seek its own. Let's take a look at having humility in our conversations.

(1 Cor 13:4-5) "...love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own..."

I recently read about a young man who came home from a ball game that his team had won. He was telling his mother all the great things that he had done in that game. When his mother responded unenthusiastically, the young man asked his mother what was wrong. She replied, "I am glad that you did well. I just wish I had heard it from someone else."

Proverbs tells us, let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." The young man had been successful in his game, but he had not been successful in loving communication. Loving communication does not brag and is not arrogant.

(Pro 27:2) "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips."

In Genesis 37, we find a story of another young man that had not learned the secret of humility in communication. Young Joseph was a dreamer. In one dream, he saw sheaves in a field, and his sheave rose up and the other sheaves gathered around and bowed down. While this dream was from God, and it was going to come to pass, it was not something that Joseph should have shared with his brothers. The Scriptures said that because he shared this with his brothers, they hated him even more for his dreams and his words. He did not have humility in communication.

(Gen 37:5-8) "Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. {6} He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; {7} for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." {8} Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

Joseph had another dream. This time it was about the sun and the moon and eleven stars, and they were all bowing down to Joseph. Again, Joseph related it to his father and to his brothers. His family rebuked him. His lack of humility in sharing with his family hurt him. There are times that we just have to keep silent about the things that God shares with us, or be very selective about who we share it with. When we say things that exalt us, or that put us above other people, it brings about a wrong message. **Boasting creates anger, jealousy, and hatred.** God wants us to learn to be humble in our conversations.

(Gen 37:9-11) "Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." {10} He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" {11} His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

In addition to boasting, an arrogant person is selfish, and seeks its own. **Loving communication does not seek its own; it takes an interest in others.** We have to consider the other person as more important than ourselves, and what they say as more important than what we have to say. Many times I have found myself thinking about what I am going to say next, rather than what my wife or someone else is saying. If I was unselfish, I would be giving my full attention to what the other person was saying. We get pre-occupied with our own thoughts and it hinders our communication.

(1 Cor 13:5) “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own...”

A few weeks ago, I had several meetings with a couple of families that were interested in our church. There was one woman in particular who constantly interrupted me when I spoke. She would not allow me to say anything; she would interrupt and cut me off. She had no respect for me, and talked to me in a very condescending manner. What I had to say was not the least bit important to her. She was only interested in getting her point across to us. She was rude and arrogant. I can honestly tell you that in my life, I have seen a number of rude and arrogant people, but never anyone as rude as this lady. James teaches us to “be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.” This woman had obviously not meditated on this verse and applied it in her life.

Loving communication does not act unbecomingly or rude. The New International Version translates unbecoming as rude. When a person is selfish and self-seeking, it is easy to be rude, as this person was. She was arrogant, selfish, and rude in her communication.

(1 Cor 13:5) (NIV) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking...”

If we want to improve our ability to communicate with others, we must learn to think of others as more important. We must think about showing them kindness. We must treat what they have to say as more important than what we have to say. We must be quick to listen, and slow to speak. We should learn to ask questions, and open up the doors of communication.

There are different types or categories of questions. There are closed questions. These require yes and no answers. “Did you take Chad to piano today?” “Did you call the insurance lady today?” There is a place for closed questions, but they do not invite conversation.

A better type of question for communication is an open-ended question. **Open-ended questions show interest in the other person, and open doors of communication.** They invite the other person to share things. “How is Chad doing with his piano lessons?” “What did you like about the message today, or what did you learn in the message today?” “What are some things that you would like to see happen this coming year?” “What are the most difficult things that you are facing right now?” “What are some things that I can do to support or assist you with to lighten the load you are under?”

It is hard to answer these questions with a yes or no answer. I have found that it is good to think about some open-ended questions before our date nights. Some well-thought out questions show that we are interested in the other person, their thoughts, their concerns, and what is going on in their life. It shows an interest in them, and invites them to open up and share.

3. Loving Communication is about things that are worthy of praise.

We have seen that to display love in our communication, we must be patient with one another and not get provoked. We have to forgive one another, and not take offense at things that people do or say to us. If we do not do this, we will stumble in the things we say. We have also seen that we must have kindness and humility in our communication. Words of kindness bring favor with people. Words of kindness open up doors of communication. Humility allows us to think about the other person, and not to be selfish. Learning to value what others have to say, and to be eager to listen to what they have to say is important. Humility keeps us from bragging, boasting, or speaking in a condescending way to others.

The third area of loving communication is concentrating on things that are worthy of praise. Paul continues on by saying that love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” These are all very positive things. These are things that are worthy of praise.

(1 Cor 13:6-7) “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

One of my favorite passages is Philippians 4:6-8. God tells us how to have the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension. How do we do that? We are to refuse to be anxious. We are to pray about everything with thanksgiving. And, we are to think and dwell upon things that are true, right, honorable, pure, lovely, things of good repute, things that are excellent, and things that are worthy of praise. Notice that things that are right and things that are true are in both lists. These are all positive things to dwell on. Our communication must center on things that are worthy of praise.

(Phil 4:6-8) “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. {7} And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. {8} Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

Loving communication does not focus on things that are unrighteous. **Loving communication focuses on things that are right and pure.** There should not be vulgar things coming from our mouths. There should not be any unrighteousness in our speech. There should not be coarse jesting. There should be no lies or untruths. There should not be any slander. If we are going to be men of God, we need to learn to think and talk about things that are righteous.

Last year, I spoke on learning to fear the Lord. One of the ways that we learn to fear the Lord is to “keep our tongue from evil, and our lips from speaking deceit.” I gave you four different guard gates that our words should go through before we allow them to proceed from our mouth. The first gate is we are not to allow any unwholesome or rotten words come out of our mouths. If something is not edifying, needed, or will give grace to others, we are not to let those words through the gate. Our communication must be about things that are true, righteous, pure, lovely, excellent, and worthy of praise.

(Psa 34:11-13) “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. {12} Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? {13} Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.”

(Eph 4:29) “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.”

I mentioned earlier that Karen and I were counseling a couple a few years ago, and in our conversations, it was difficult to determine what was true and what was not true. Their accounts of the same situations were completely opposite. There are many factors that contribute to this. First, women and men see things from different perspectives. Women often are more emotional, not always, but many times. Men are more objective. When we ask our wives where they got the steak, they ask, “what’s wrong with it?” We did not say anything was wrong with it. We just asked an objective, fact-finding question to find out where they bought the steak. We see and hear things differently. This couple were at very opposite ends emotionally. The man was very out of touch with his emotions, and the woman was extremely emotional. That caused them to see things differently.

We all have different personalities. These personality differences cause us to see things differently. Then, there are differences in giftings. I am a teacher, and Karen is an exhorter. We see things differently. I look at a situation and see that there is a need for teaching and understanding so that we do not make the same mistake again. Karen looks at the same situation, and sees what needs to be done right now to correct the situation. Another person, with the gift of mercy, looks at the situation, and wants to know if everyone is doing okay. They want to comfort those involved. We all see things differently because of our giftings.

We also see things differently because of our cultural experiences and our life experiences. I grew up in Iran, and when I went to high school in New Jersey, I was in cultural shock. It was a very difficult period for me. I did not see eye to eye with most of the boys. Some of it was because of the cultural differences. Some of it was because of my personality. My point is that the way we see things is only from our perspective. We think it is the truth, but it is only our perspective. The truth may be somewhere in between what I see and what you see. We have to acknowledge that we see things dimly.

Loving communication rejoices in truth. We must learn to hear the other side of the story. We must learn to give weight to what other people say. We cannot discard or minimize what others say. There is some truth in it. When people bring charges against me, I try to listen to what they say. There is probably an element of truth in what they are saying, and I can learn and receive from them. We need to listen to the other perspective.

When we are counseling, we must hear both sides of the story. Solomon said that “the first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.” We must learn to rejoice with the truth, and the truth is usually found in looking at both sides of a matter.

(Pro 18:17) “The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.”

Loving communication also gives hope and build faith in others. Love believes all things and hopes all things. Our words need to encourage and give hope to people. Our words need to give hope to our spouses that they can succeed and overcome. Our words need to give our children hope that they can achieve the dreams and goals that they have. Our words need to give hope to our fellow workers that God can and will work things out for their good. Our words need to give other hope and confidence that God will provide for their needs in their circumstances. We need to be those who inspire faith and hope.

(1 Cor 13:6-7) “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

One of my favorite words is the word enthusiastic. It comes from two Greek words, en and theo. En means to possess, and theo means God. A person who was possessed by God was so full of life, hope, and joy, that he was known as entheo or enthusiastic. Men, you and I are to have enthusiastic and positive communication. If we are going to have communication that displays the love of God, it must be about things that are true, righteous, and worthy of praise.

Conclusion

I mentioned in the opening that Isaiah said, “woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips.” I also mentioned that all of us stumble in the things that we say. None of us are innocent in this area. Rather than having men come to the altar and have someone pray for them, I believe God wants us to pray as a group. We all need prayer about our communication. We all need our mouths to be touched by the burning coal, and to have our iniquity taken away, and our sin forgiven. Let me ask You to join with me in prayer now.

(Isa 6:6-7) “Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. {7} He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”

Father God, we acknowledge that all of us have sinned with our tongues. All of us have sinned in our communication with others. Father God, touch our mouths with burning coals today. Father God, take away the sins of our mouths. Make us a group of men with holy mouths and holy hands.

Father God, I ask You to give us the tongue of a disciple that knows how to sustain the weary one with a word. Teach us to be men that encourage one another. Teach us to use our tongues wisely. I ask You Father, to give us ears to listen to You every morning. I ask You to give us ears to hear what other people are saying. I ask You Father to help us to be excellent communicators. I ask You Father, to help us to communicate love in all of our communication. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Isa 50:4) “The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”

Introduction (James 3:2, Isa 6:1-5, 1 Tim 1:5, 1 Cor 13:4-7)

(1 Cor 13:4-7) “Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1. Loving Communication is not offended.

- If we are going to have loving communication, we must be _____ in our communication. (James 1:19-20)
- Loving communication does not take into _____ wrong actions.
- Loving communication does not _____ a matter. (Pro 17:9)

2. Loving Communication is kind and humble. (Phil 2:3-4, Pro 3:3-4, Matt 15:18, 2 Chron 10:6-8, Pro 31:26, John 3:17)

- Gracious and kind words open up _____ of communication. (Col 4:5-6)
- It is the _____ of God that leads us to repentance. (Rom 2:4)
- Loving communication does not _____, and is not arrogant; it is _____. (Pro 27:2)
- Boasting creates _____, jealousy, and hatred. (Gen 37:5-11)
- Loving communication does not seek its _____; it takes an interest in others.
- Loving communication does not act unbecomingly or _____.
- Open-ended _____ show interest in the other person, and open doors of communication.

3. Loving Communication is about things that are worthy of praise.

- Loving communication focuses on things that are _____ and _____. (Phil 4:6-8, Psa 34:11-13, Eph 4:29)
- Loving communication rejoices in _____. We must learn to hear the other side of the story. (Pro 18:17)
- Loving communication gives _____ and builds _____ in others.

Conclusion (Isa 6:6-7, 1 Tim 2:8, Isa 50:4)