**Biblical Communication**

­­­­I. The Bible speaks often about how we talk to one another and the positive effects of \_**righteous, edifying**\_ speech or the tearing down from an \_**untamed, destructive**\_ tongue.

 Ephesians 4: 15-16 – Goal of our communication.

 Luke 6: 43-45 – Our heart is the well from which our communication is drawn (Proverbs 4:23).

 James 3:2-12 - Effective and edifying communication requires discipline and self-control.

 Matthew 12: 35-37 – Our words matter and we stand accountable.

 Proverbs 25:11-12 – Effective communication builds up and accomplishes much.

 Ephesians 4:25-32 – Rules of Communication.

II. Ephesians 4: 25-32 – Rules of Communication

 A. Don’t lie; don’t deceive in words or expressions; don’t tell “half-truths”; don’t spin the subject to manipulate a response; don’t avoid saying something important or relevant to control a response (when someone is expecting to hear something specific or related)(v. 25).

 B. Be angry, and yet don’t sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Maintain self-control. Attack the problem, not the person (vs. 26-28).

 C. Discipline our speech, words, tone and our intention. If our speech is unwholesome it is intended to tear down, or inconsiderate, rather than to build up the other. Grace and consideration of the other is to be paramount (v. 29).IV. Why is forgiveness important?

 D. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit – does what we say and how and why we say it, or communicate it nonverbally, please or grieve the Holy Spirit (v. 30)?

 E. We must purpose to put away all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander, along with all malice. We must be intentional and discipline ourselves to put destructive speech off (v. 31).

 F. Instead, we must be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven us. Speaking the truth in love, building up, edifying (32).

III. Many keys to successful and fruitful, God-honoring relationships.

 Love, trust, faithfulness, loyalty, humility, consideration of each other, and serving each other.

 \_**Open, honest, and approachable**\_ communication is among the most critical of all elements of God-glorifying, others-centered relationships.

 Proverbs 15:1-2

 Proverbs 18:2,4,6-8,13,15,17,20-23

 Proverbs 25:11-13

 Ephesians 4:15-16

IV. \_**Verbal**\_ and \_**non-verbal**\_ communication are critical components of a healthy God-honoring, others-centered relationship.

 We must understand how each of us as individuals, men and women, and husbands and wives are \_**uniquely**\_ \_**made**\_ by God to fulfill God’s plan for our lives, individually and as we live out our lives together.

 We have unique styles and personalities that must be tailored to ensure effective and considerate communication

V. God made us to \_**help**\_ and \_**complement**\_ each other, He made us differently, to serve different, and \_**complementary**\_ \_**purposes**\_.

 Comprehensive and complimentary qualities determine how we will approach issues, problems and ideas – to include our dreams, vision, and goals. As we understand this about each other we can better understand how the other might communicate and react.

 We each communicate differently and we sometimes have difficulty understanding each other. This goes back to how we are wired and how God made us.

 We may be waffles or knotted ropes.

 We may be spider webs and spaghetti.

VI. Communication is \_**effective**\_ \_**transmitting**\_ and \_**receiving**\_.

 Includes verbal, physical, and attitudinal communication features. Sometimes it’s important to get the other’s attention if not currently talking or paying direct attention to each other. The art is in \_**good**\_ \_**listening**\_ and \_**feedback**\_.

 Good listening is paying attention and staying in contact, staying engaged, not drifting off. Good listening is not being quiet, waiting to talk.

VII. \_**Feedback**\_ is active listening; acknowledge one another’s communication by communicating that we heard and understood what the other was saying (James 1:19-20).

 We need to understand each other and the need for us to consider this make-up when we are talking to each other, especially for long, complex, sensitive, and potentially adverse conversations.

 Philippians 2:3-4 - Good communication takes love, respect, effort and practice. Takes \_**humility**\_ as we are instructed to consider others before ourselves.

 Always have in mind that what the other person has to say is important and to approach our conversations in that way.

VIII. Effective communication takes discipline, self-control, and consideration. Ask yourself these questions for specific concerns:

 A. Am I being appropriately and sufficiently open and honest?

 B. Do I have the proper motive for saying what I’m about to say?

 C. Will what I’m about to speak be beneficial?

 D. Am I ready to say it in the best possible manner?

 E. When is the best time? Is this the best time?

 F. Is what I’m about to say adapted to the needs of the other person?

 G. Where should I say it? Is this the best place?

IX. In Order To Communicate Successfully Make A Decision In Your Heart:

 A. To Listen Carefully Before You Speak (Pr. 18:2, 13, 17)

 B. To Answer Softly (Pr. 15:1; 16:21)

 C. Never To Spread Gossip (Pr. 16:27-28; 26:20-21)

 D. Not To Be Too Wordy (Pr. 17:27)

 E. Know When To Be Silent (Pr. 17:28)

 F. Purpose To Always Tell The Truth (Pr. 26:18-19)

In Order To Communicate Successfully Make A Decision In Your Heart (cont.):

 G. To Know When To Stop Teasing (Pr. 26:18-19)

 H. Never To Play The Part Of The Scoffer (Pr. 22:10)

 I. To Put Away Pride And Arrogance (Pr. 28:25; 13:10)

X. Seven disciplines to improve communication skills:

 A. Learn to pray – teach me how to communicate properly and allow God to convict and change me

 B. Learn to say nothing when appropriate – keeps anger from building and sin from occurring

 C. Learn to wait – Are there better times of the day/week for discussing particular topics. Waiting until God’s timing prevents discussions from escalating into arguments.

 D. Learn to make a list – makes sure that nothing is left out and each item can be discussed in an orderly (less overwhelming) fashion

 E.. Learn to make an appointment – make a date to communicate about important matters. This sets a time and allows both parties an opportunity to gather thoughts on a subject.

 F. Learn to write it out – write out exactly what I want to say, allow time to calm self, return to read it once calm and edit as necessary. This allows me to get it out, think about, and ensure that I don’t say anything rash.

 G. Learn to take the blame – “I don’t understand, can you help me…” is better than “that won’t work!”

XI. Rules for Successful Communication

 - Make “I” statements instead of “you” statements.

 - Don’t blame

 - Say, “I feel like \_\_, when \_\_ happens”

 - Wait for the appropriate time to approach the topic

 - Practice reflective listening.

 - Be a good listener

Rules for Successful Communication (cont.):

 - Listen with your whole body – eyes, movements, face, etc

 - Listen for the message that is underlying the words

 - Avoid listening for “trigger words” to use against the other out of context

 - Avoid declarative statements based on opinion.

 - Apologize when necessary.

 - No interrupting

 - Still deal with a problem, but be willing to admit when you are wrong and sincerely apologize.

 - Even when we are not wrong, we can be very wrong in the way we communicate something, it is just as important to sincerely apologize for this and to clear any confusion.

 - Pray that we will be openly convicted about where we are wrong.

 - Pray that he will be openly convicted about where he is wrong as well.

 - Communicate through touch.

 - Hugs calm and soothe

 - Touch communicates that we will get through it.

XII. Eight-point Communication Covenant

 1. We will express irritations and annoyances we have with one another in a loving, specific and positive way rather than holding them in or being negative in general. (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 4:8; Romans 14:13)

 2. We will not exaggerate or attack the other person during the course of a disagreement. (Ephesians 4:32; 5:1-2; 1 Peter 3:8-11)

 3. We will attempt to control the emotional level and intensity of arguments. I.e. No yelling, uncontrollable anger, or hurtful remarks. (James 1:19-20; Proverbs 14:29; 15:1; 25:15; 29:11)

 4. We will “never let the sun go down on our anger” or never run away from each other during an argument. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Eight-point Communication Covenant (cont.):

 5. We will both try hard not to interrupt the other person when he/she is talking. As a result of this commitment, there will be no need to keep reminding the other person of his/her responsibility, especially during an argument. (1 Corinthians 13:4)

 6. We will carefully listen when the other person is talking, rather than spending that time thinking up a defense. (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13)

 7. We will not toss in past failures of the other person in the course of an argument. (Mark 11:25; Colossians 3:13)

 8. When something is important enough for one person to discuss, it is also important for the other person. (Phil. 2:3-5)