

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The Bible has a lot to say about our relationships, including how we communicate. How we listen to others and what we say and don't say can build or destroy the connections we have with others. God tells us how to avoid many common pitfalls that can damage our relationships.

<http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-answers/communication-pitfalls.htm>

What Does the Bible Say About Communication Pitfalls?

How important does God consider the subject of communication?

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Matthew 12:34-37

"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

James 3:5-8

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

1. Give us an example of when a conversation went right and/or a conversation went wrong. What would/could/wished you had done differently?

Can not listening be a communication pitfall?

Proverbs 18:2, 13

A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart...

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.

We need to focus on the other person and force ourselves to seek understanding of his or her point of view before sharing our own. Do you usually listen completely before you respond, or do you usually interrupt while being spoken to? How can we be better listeners?

What's the sure way of avoiding saying something wrong?

Proverbs 10:19

In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.

Proverbs 21:23, New Living Translation

If you keep your mouth shut, you will stay out of trouble.

2. Do you role play in your head what you are about to speak or do you speak without thinking? Are you concerned about how someone will perceive your words or are you more concerned about getting your point or thoughts across and do not care how they are perceived?

How does the Bible describe gossip?

Leviticus 19:16

You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

Proverbs 16:27-28

An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire.
A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 26:20-22, New Living Translation

Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.
A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.
What dainty morsels rumors are—but they sink deep into one's heart.

3. Why do people find so much "joy" in speaking negatively about others? Do they enjoy the power that it gives knowing that they have knowledge that someone else does not have and feel a need to share it? Do they "enjoy" bringing down others to make themselves feel higher/better? How as Christian men can we prevent that amongst ourselves, but also call attention to it when we see it or are a part of it?

What does the Bible say about sowing discord and causing offense?

Proverbs 6:19

[God hates] A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

Proverbs 18:19

A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Our words can have a devastating effect on others. We can create discord and offend those who trust us. Afterwards, we can't take the words back, and trying to win back someone's trust can be a nearly impossible task as they build up walls of defenses to avoid being hurt again.

4. How much better to think about our words in advance and remove the pointed ones and defuse the explosive ones! Thoughts/practices on how to do this?

How should we deal with others' offensive words or gossip?

Ecclesiastes 7:21-22

Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you.
For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.

When gossip or offensive words are directed at us, we can struggle to avoid hatred, bitterness and a desire for revenge. As much as possible, we should ignore and try to avoid hearing these things. But sometimes we will be hurt and need to deal with the situation.

5. What is the best way to deal with this type of situation?