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## Why Doesn't Anyone Listen to Me?

**Hebrews 3:13: (NASB) *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.***



We all need to be heard and we all need to be acknowledged. We all need that feeling of validation that comes with being personally recognized as having value. All of this comes through the important tool of communication. The problem is that we have become terrible at both the giving and receiving ends of the communication spectrum. Somehow, we think that posting, texting, tweeting and emoji can replace actual conversation, looking someone in the eye, feeling their emotions or touching their shoulder. Whether it is our lack of attention span, our need for convenience, personal laziness or simply not knowing what we are missing, we have seemingly deserted real true person-to-person communication and replaced it with cold and emotionless technology. So, what do we do? How do we relearn both the giving and receiving ends of this invaluable and necessary tool for a fulfilled life called "communication"?



**Three of seven bad habits, *How to Speak So That People Want to Listen, Julian Treasure, TED Talk***

While we generally understand communication is about connecting with others' emotions or being personally understood, the Bible goes a little deeper. It provides us with a number of examples of communicating through co-laboring and through a common cause.

**The only words translated "communicate" in the Bible are along these lines. Here are some examples:** Galatians 6:6-7: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>*The one who is taught the word is to **share <2844>** (**communicate** in the KJV) all good things with the one who teaches him. <sup>7</sup>*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.**

**Share: Strongs #2841 to share with others (objectively or subjectively)**

We frame communication as speaking to someone's heart, as having something important to say and having it heard and received by somebody else...and it is. But the Bible treats communication as something even bigger. It accomplishes something on a bigger scale.

*The one who is taught the word is to share (communicate)...with the one who teaches him -* The one teaching has a weight of responsibility to the congregation. Our spiritual leaders need encouragement, too, and to be stimulated to love and good works. With great spiritual responsibility comes anxiety of "How am I doing?" We should communicate with them and give them encouragement and constructive support and feedback.

Philippians 4:10-14: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, you have done well to **share <4790>** (**communicate** in the KJV) with me in my affliction.*

**Share: Strongs #4790 from #4862 and #2841; to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in**

The Apostle Paul knew both abundance and want. He did not complain regardless of his circumstances. *You have done well to share (communicate) with me in my affliction -* They may have sent him food or money to support him. Communication here is support, specifically care of a physical nature for someone going through a trial. This is a great admonition for us to be concerned about those around us who have need. We need to communicate to find out if we can do something to help. We doubt the Apostle Paul sent out a letter saying, "Send money now, preferably in 20's and 50's." That was not his attitude. When word got back to the brethren that Paul had a need, they jumped on the opportunity to help him. They were really connected to Paul.



Romans 12:13: (KJV) *Distributing <2841> to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

Communication in Scripture assumes a common purpose and a resulting strong personal connection. While the Bible does not break down the methods of interpersonal connection we normally consider as communication, it does not ignore them either. The Bible gives us many examples of strong, personal communication in action under different circumstances.

Public gospel communication - how should we be connecting with those who don't share our faith? Well, not through the seven bad habits...

 **Four through seven bad habits, *How to Speak so that People Want to Listen*, Julian Treasure, TED**

**Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something: 1) Slow down. 2) Observe - become aware and conscious of what you're thinking and how you are feeling.**

The Apostle Paul was a great communicator, so we are going to look at several examples from his life. **Here the Apostle Paul communicates with those outside of our faith: Acts 17:16-20: (NASB)** Paul was waiting for others to arrive so they could work together on witnessing the message. Paul was alone at this point. *His spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols* - What he saw was terrible, so he was motivated to preach to these people. It was an attempt at worshipping but was completely off base. It troubled him to see such idolatry. *He was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles* - Paul spent his waiting time in two ways. First, he observed the people and their paganism. Second, he spent his time exchanging thoughts about the Gospel with those with whom he already had common ground. He slowed down. While he was waiting for the brethren, he used this time to learn and absorb, figuring out what drove the people.

He started out in a friendly environment where he did not have to think about paganism and idolatry, but there were outsiders listening in. He encountered two different reactions - some called him an *idle babbler*. Some people wanted to hear more. Though everybody did not perceive his speech as valuable, the way he was communicating with those with whom he had familiarity was clear enough so those who were not familiar with Jewishness or Christianity heard and wanted to hear more. This is a subtle example of the powerful communication of the Apostle Paul.

**Apostle Paul Communication Lesson: If we first observe and respect our environment and then engage in the exchange of thought, our communication will have a strong basis for success.**

**Practical application: Personal family communication - spouses, children:**

Colossians 3:18-21: The ability to "read" our family environment is a massively important principle, and most of the time we need to slow down, observe, think and THEN communicate.

Mutual communication with those we stand with can sometimes be the hardest kind, because our expectations are so much higher than with those who stand against us. We expect unity and agreement but often get splintered opinions and divided thinking instead.

**Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something: 3) Breathe and pause.**

**When Paul would have stood before them, I imagine he would have begun in a very calm and deliberate fashion: Acts 17:22-23:** When he used the word *ignorance*, was Paul putting them down? He was saying they were doing something without full knowledge. "I will show you the rest of the story and how to get to another level." This was not an insult; it was an identification of an area for growth. He wanted to change their ignorance to enlightenment.

Paul's communication was based on identifying with and acknowledging their piety. He met and respected them where they stood.

**Apostle Paul Communication Lesson: Communication is best served when we stand deliberately, address our listeners respectfully and speak our message passionately.**

Personal fellowship communication with the body of Christ, the household of faith: **Because we are so different from one another, we need to adopt the "breathe and pause" approach as we attempt mutual communication: 1 Corinthians 12:12-18:** There is a unique equality within this body of Christ, and yet we are very different. We differ in personality, cultures, upbringing, education and weakness. These different parts each play a role. God called each



part - we do not decide who else will be in the body - will we argue with God over who He chose or the role we are to play? But sometimes we look at a situation and may not like the part we are playing. “Rank” is not important; rather, functionality as a unit is the most important thing! It does not matter what part you play, but play it well. Be the toe! Be the pinky! Do what needs to be done.

This body of Christ picture is one of depth and beauty, because it captures both the individuality of each member as well as the interconnectedness of all the members. This gives us simple and profound messages: 1. You are all under Christ, 2. You are one of many, 3. You are small, and 4. You are important! Our mutual communication should reflect this profound four-corner foundation. We all have value or else the Lord would not have called us to follow in Jesus’ footsteps.

**One more “breathe and pause” text to help us be centered in our mutual communication:** Hebrews 10:24-25: Slow down, observe, breathe, pause and figure out how we can help each other to love and good works. How can we contribute in a positive way to the spiritual lives of others? It is great to talk about your day at work or the car you just bought, but it is better to communicate to contribute to each other’s spirituality.

Sounds like respect! Great communication is respecting those whom you want to communicate with enough to consider them *first*. This allows you to see what they need, not just what you want to give. Our communication amongst ourselves should be thoughtful and positive. Breathe! Think!

Our preparation to become powerful communicators cannot be underestimated, for half of the communication battle is won as we prepare. Now as we begin to unfold our message we need to keep ourselves entirely in line with the spirit and content of that message.

**Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something: 4) Notice you have a choice point, a fork in the road of which direction you want to go - reaction versus response. This is your “Point of Power to Choose.”**

React vs. respond, and we have the power to make a choice. The “point of power to choose” is looking at what is our reaction and what should our appropriate response be.

**Paul builds on - communicates with - their natural desire to worship and gives them something to consider within that thinking they had never before imagined - here is his “point of power:”** Acts 17:24-28: He presents them with a God bigger, more benevolent and reachable than any other they imagined. It is possible to find God if you look for Him. He was not the “unknown god” they were worshipping. His communication was taking their ignorance and turning it into a respectful opportunity. In his time of waiting, he took the time to learn about and observe these people. This truly is focusing on a point of power - to lift incomplete thinking to a higher spiritual level.

**Apostle Paul Communication Lesson: Communicating the paradigm shifting message of the gospel is best accomplished by positively listing incomplete thinking and conclusions to a truly grander and higher spiritual level.**

Practical Application: Ministering to the church communication - body of Christ, the household of faith. **This is different than fellowship as this communication goes beyond being able to understand one another and deals with the importance of keeping spiritual order in the church environment:** 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12: Paul communicates his track record to show them his pure intention - a point of power! It was not about the Apostle Paul, it was about those he was ministering to. Paul communicated his track record to show them his pure intention. He was selfless, giving all he could to them.

The best communication is when I can leave how I feel out of it. What if you have an issue with your spouse? “I feel we should do it this way; you feel we should do it that way.” Of course you have to discuss your feelings and that is important. But if you can create that discussion on a level that says, “I really want what is best for you first and for us,” it will change how you feel and how it is presented. If you feel strongly about something, be honest about it, but not in a way that crushes somebody. That is not communication; that is bullying which is not scriptural.



**The Corinthian church had issues of pride and poor leadership - Paul addressed them:**

**1 Corinthians 4:18-21:** Communication is not just spewing out words; it is the transferring of an idea, a concept that carries with it the power of change. That is what Paul was focused on. Paul's point of power is simple - the most trustworthy communication comes through action, not words. Too often words communicate pride and not principle.

To communicate what we believe might be difficult truth, we need to first make sure we have listened to the circumstances, the thinking and beliefs that surround our audience. Listening

**Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something: 5) Breathe and pause. 6) Choose a different response that is in alignment with your core values - such as experiencing greater peace, loving connection and joy.**

Paul's previous reference to their own poets was another natural break (breathe and pause) in his communication, as he reminded them of his respect for their culture and understanding of what they considered important. **Paul now builds his main (and difficult) message of hope which is twofold: Acts 17:29-34:** He corrected them in such a kind, gentle and fascinating manner that they were listening. First point: They had been worshipping in error and ignorance having made God into an image created by their own hands. Worshipping - right idea - idols - wrong execution! Second point: All of their errors and ignorance would come to righteous judgment by the living God that Paul had proclaimed, and the raising of Jesus was proof of his proclamation. We need to give our piety and reference to *this* God, because He is THE God of all things. Paul communicated! He got a difficult message out.

The results were mixed, but we do not think that Paul was disappointed. Convincing a massive audience that everything they had been doing to this point was wrong would have been unlikely. They had no basis of Judaism to stand on, so they did not understand the concept of one God. They were miles away from the truth Paul had given them. The fact that some believed was a success. The fact that some sneered was a success - because it means they heard him. The communication worked, and that is what he was there to do. All we can do is express the point, the value, the importance, getting out of our own way. What someone does with our message is not our job. We just have to deliver the goods intact.

**Apostle Paul Communication Lesson: Even when our communication has all the right ingredients and intentions fully activated, it will not miraculously change anyone's perspective. The objective is for the message to be received fully intact so we can now listen and then respond further.**



**Hail, *How to Speak So That People Want to Listen*, Julian Treasure, TED Talk**

(Source: Eight Secrets of Great Communicators, July 19, 2016, Forbes.com, Travis Bradberry) Active listening is a simple technique that ensures people feel heard, an essential component of good communication. To practice:

- Spend more time listening than you do talking.
- Do not answer questions with questions.
- Avoid finishing other people's sentences.
- Focus more on the other person than you do on yourself.
- Focus on what people are saying right now, not on what their interests are.
- Reframe what the other person has said to make sure you understand him or her correctly. ("So, you're telling me that this budget needs further consideration, right?")
- Think about what you're going to say after someone has finished speaking, not while he or she is speaking.
- Ask plenty of questions.
- Never interrupt.

Be clear and concise. Listen. Pause. Prepare appropriately so your communication can be of great value. We hope our discussion on communication can change the way you live.

***So, why doesn't anyone listen to me?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***