



PART TWO INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 of the series, we looked at the value and importance of love in the family. This week, we consider how love can be expressed in communication, and how the latter vital to the bonds shared within the home. Numerous studies have shown that the lack of communication, or poor communication are the leading causes of marital rifts, and that many are too distracted or immersed in other matters to spend time connecting with their loved ones meaningfully.

In his epistle, James urged the people to be ‘quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry’ (1:17). The apostle was clearly aware of how listening more can make a difference to our relationships at home, and that words have both the power to demolish, but also build up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider an incident when you had an unpleasant exchange with someone close to you. What caused your response, and why did you feel it was justified?
2. (i) How are you doing on being “quick to listen” and “slow to speak”? What would help you accomplish that?

Or

- (ii) What struggles do you face in your speech? Do you gossip, shout, or speak unkindly in anger?
3. In your opinion, what is the difference between ‘sugar-coating’ and ‘building-up’ another person with our words?
4. Read Ephesians 4:25-32
 - ii. Read the passage aloud
 - iii. Ask some context questions of the passage:
 - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative etc?)
 - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?

- What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?
- iv. Some observation questions of the passage:
- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?
 - What is the main point or points?
 - What surprises are there?
 - What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
- v. Some meaning questions of the text:
- How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
 - How does the passage relate to Jesus?
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
- vi. Some application questions of the passage:
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
 - Is there some attitude I need to change?

What does your speech reflect about the condition of your heart and the desires of your heart?

- How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

What needs to change to deepen your desire to give grace to those who hear you speak?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Building up others with our words is a life-giving practice, and this is necessary for families to grow and flourish. Although communication occurs on the surface, it is an outcome of what resides in our hearts. Conflict often emerges through hasty judgement, thus we need to constantly examine our hearts by looking to the cross, in order that we may build up the home that reflects the likeness of Christ.

In summary, healthy communication requires us to listen actively and to build people up with life-giving words.

CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

“So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life...” (James 3:5-6 NASB)