Red Hill Baptist Church

Bible Study

Pitfalls in Communications

Ephesians 4:29
**Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers**.



1. **Introduction**: Our words can tear down and break down, or build up and free up an individual. How we use our words can and will affect others, even ourselves. We have to be careful what we say and think about others and ourselves. Words can and will bring about disagreements and mistrust if carelessly spoken. Think about it before you say it. Once the words leave your lips, there is no backspacing to erasing them. Or wishing the person never heard what was said. When trying to win back someone's trust after a hurtful comment has been made, can be nearly an impossible task as they build up walls of defense to avoid being hurt again. How much better to think about our words in advance before they leave our lips. Then we do not have to live with regrets and making apologies to make to make things right with the person? **Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise**.

“***Consider the various pitfalls covered in this lesson on communication****: not listening, profanity, foul language, shading the truth, gossip, being offensive, yelling or becoming offended*”. Think about which one of these pitfalls listed above you have a problem with and need God’s help to control and hopefully eliminate. Please use the scriptures we will use in this lesson to be a guide and affirmation to remind you that negative language to others or yourself does not honor the hearer or God. "**Think on these things"** is a phrase from Philippians 4:8**, which lists positive affirmations: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, moral, honorable and praiseworthy**”.

James 3:5-8 tells us that the tongue is a powerful member of our bodies. James refers to the tongue as a little fire, iniquity, untamable, defiled, used to by hell, unruly, and deadly poison. These are characteristics we do not want anyone to say we speak in with such vile tones, words, or actions. Proverbs 18:21 “**Death and life are in the power of the tongue: And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof**”. (NKJV) Or the Message Bible Version puts it this way: “**Words kill, words give life; they’re either poison or fruit—you choose**”.

1. Pitfalls: Bullying, Gossip and Techniology
2. Let’s look at a few categories that break down different pitfalls of communication in everyday occurrences.

Have you ever been the target of untrue gossip, or bullying, in person or on social media? If you have, think about how it made you feel. Question 2: Have you ever been the one participating in gossiping or bullying? Either one is not a good position to be in. It does not edify you or the other person nor does it magnify the Lord.

We have free speech in this country, but the problem is in today's time, we don’t have a line that should not be crossed. When we use and leave the measuring stick on what we should or should not say, based on our own feelings, we find ourselves in the world we have today. Anything goes. If you think it, you think you can say it. Not so. In Proverbs 21: **2Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts. 3To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. 4A high look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin**. God has to be our measuring stick as to what is right and what is wrong. When we use, “I think or I feel”, we are starting off wrong. James tells us to be quick to hear and slow to speak. (James 1:19). In other words measure what your response is by the word of God.

1. There are bullies in the Bible. Saul was a bully to David. Haman was a bully to Mordecai. But Goliath was to David, a big bully. Not only because of Goliath’s size but his taunting of the men of Israel and making fun of David’s size when he came out to fight Goliath. In this lesson, David showed us how to deal with a bully—**Directly, immediately, and effectively.**
* Scenario #1: Bullying

As the bus driver drove to do her daily pick-up of the students to be transported to school. Each child got on the bus and made some kind of gesture to speak to some or all the other students. On the bus, were mostly loud and rumbustious children and there were about one or two quiet and easy-going children that rode the bus as well. Well, this one quiet child got on the bus spoke, and sat down. Then, this other child left her seat, sat behind this quiet child, and began to “pick on her”. Pulling her hair mostly until she brought the quiet child to tears. No one made the bully stop. Instead, the other kids laughed and encouraged the bully to keep picking at the quiet child. Give me what you see that defines a bully's actions. Discussion

* Scenario #2: Gossip

Going to celebrate a new couple’s having their first baby. About 20 women were invited to the Baby Shower. On the way to the Baby Shower about three ladies were on their way in the car, and they began to conversate. You know I am just going to see this house that they live in. You know he doesn’t work, and she’s paying all the bills. You know she came and got food out of the Church pantry so I can only imagine what kind of food they gonna serve us. While the ladies at the house setting up everything talking as the mother-to-be is upstairs getting herself ready. These ladies are conversating about what they had to bring because this poor girl doesn’t have any help. One lady said, I had to bring the cake, one said. I made the chicken and sandwiches the other said yeah, I had to bring the drinks—paid out my own pocket. Why is she having this when they can’t afford to do things the right way? Look no decorations—it doesn’t even look like a Baby Shower. Wow!! With friends like these who need enemies. What is wrong with this “good deed” these ladies are doing for this mother-to-be? Discussion

Ephesians 4:29: **Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

1. **Dealing with bullies and gossipers**:
* 2 Timothy 1:7: For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but of power, love, and self-discipline.
* Deuteronomy 31:6: So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord, your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.
1. **How God looks at gossipers and bullies**:
* 1 John 2:9: Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.
* 1 John 3:15: Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.
* Proverbs 6:19 [God hates] A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.
* These six *things* the Lord hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to [[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%206&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-16557h)]Him:
**17**A[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%206&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-16558i)] proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, **18**A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, **19**A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren”.
1. **Pitfalls: Dirty Talk**: Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”

For some “*profanity is used as part of everyday speaking to embellish stories, make a joke, comic routines, to refer to someone, to express shock, to put someone or something down, as well as to express anger, frustration, or pain. With profane and abrasive language is being used so often in our society, it is easy to accept it as part of our everyday conversation. Even if we don't use profane language ourselves, we may have come to accept it because we hear it all too often. The use of profanity is no longer shocking* to our society.

We as Christians should never get used to hearing and using profanity. Profane language is not just ‘**cuss**’ words, we can also **curse** a person with the hope of a negative outcome. For example, ‘I hope you never get a job, get married, have children, or wish death on someone's life. Telling someone you hate them or you wish to never see them again. All considered profane and/or abusive language.

B. Anger can bring out some of those expressions. The Bible tells us “To be anger but sin not”. (Ephs. 4:26) "*Anger itself is not a sin, but it is guarded by two ‘buts’ 1) Christian ought to be angry about some things, but uncontrolled anger quickly leads to doing wrong. 2) Being angry is not an excuse to sin. Jesus showed controlled anger in turning over the tables of the tax collectors* because the people were using the synagogue to do unjust sale of animals for sacrificial offerings.

Scenario 3: There was a young girl who had been taught to not allow boys to touch her body in inappropriate ways. So, this boy would go around felling the girls on their butts. So, one day the boy felt this young girl on the butt. The girl ran the boy down grab a hold of him. Then drugged him across the apartment parking lot back to the spot where he touched her inappropriately. Now where did her anger turn to sin?

1. **Be careful** while hanging out, not to have fun at the expense of someone else’s feelings. “**Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks**.” (Ephs 5:4). We have gatherings with family, co-workers, schoolmates, church functions, etc. and these are great environments to be relaxed and comfortable and get “loose lips”. If there is a subject that makes anyone around uncomfortable, don’t joke about it. With mixed company, some subjects are not appropriate. If someone has suffered a trauma, there is never a good time to make a joke of it or use it to retaliate. **So be careful** in your conversations. Anger sometimes comes out of someone being shamed over an event that happened to them and they rather it not be a public conversation. **So be careful**. “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying”. Eph 4:29*
2. Cyber-Gossip and Bullying [cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org/).

Technology is not the problem by itself. People are the problem. Social media is just a tool controlled by people. These machines only put out what people have put in them. As usual, the law is behind in regulating and attaching laws when these tools are used to cause harm. Online etiquette should not be a problem if people online would use common decency as if they were face-to-face. Some states are putting laws in place to hold users accountable for their negative actions binging harm to others. For Example, this headlined the News back in 2019-2020. Where a girlfriend convinced her boyfriend suffering with depression to kill himself. All online

***Michelle Carter, Who Encouraged Her Boyfriend To Kill Himself, Was Released From Prison Early (******tasneem.nashrulla@buzzfeed.com******.)*** *The 23-year-old served 11 months of her 15-month prison sentence after she was convicted of involuntary manslaughter for Conrad Roy’s death*. Posted on January 23, 2020 at 9:32 am

B. God gives us guidance—…**the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then**

**peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy**" (James 3:17). God encourages us to be positive with each other. Sometimes we do seek out what we call ‘some juicy gossip” Think about it, if the gossip was about you, you would want it taken down, erased, and or canceled. So, next time you are reading about someone’s troubles, ask yourself, if this was mine, I would not like it.

Example: Kate Middleton, had been out of the public view for months. Social media started spinning theories, speculations, and false accusations about why she was absent after surgery. It turns out she got a cancer diagnosis and was dealing with all the ramifications of the news. The media, public, and strangers demanded they know her business. Forced her to come out before she was ready. Cyberbullying.

1. **God is the answer and has the answer**: We need to understand that God has the answer to every situation of good behavior and bad behavior. God does not make suggestions, guesses, or maybes. When He makes a statement it answers, directs, and guides us as to what we need to do to rectify the situation. He points out the pros and cons, consequences, and benefits, if we do what He is telling us to do it will be the right and most beneficial outcome for everyone involved. But it is up to us to receive it, believe it, and then live it, God’s answer. Following what God has said will bring about change in our behavior.

James 3:-10-12 **“…. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or does a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can’t draw fresh water from a salty spring**”. NLT James 3

**D. Changed Hearts**: Remember the goal of “living out your soul’s salvation” is to transform from your old life to your new life as a child of God. You can’t be saved and still continue to live your old life way of living. Philippians 2:12—"**Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”**.

* + Salvation is God's work through Jesus Christ, but it requires diligent effort on our part to do the work to change. (Titus 2:11-14)
	+ We must possess salvation before we can work it out. The Holy Spirit that we receive at Salvation empowers us to make and keep the change. (Gal 5:16)
	+ Working out salvation involves changing our personal conduct, becoming full of faith, living obediently, and active commitment and. (Philp 2:12)
	+ Working out our salvation has practical interpersonal consequences. If we put in the work, our reward will be growing levels of glorification. (2 Cor 3:18)
		- Scenario 4: If you were someone who cussed using every other word in a sentence. You want to change this foul communication. So, you pray and ask God to help you to change. So, in each conversation, you have a cuss word rising up. The power of the Holy Spirit will rise up also. So, you are now consciously aware you are about the cuss. So, you then decide in a split second to cuss or not to cuss. Working out your soul salvation. Say you do cuss anyway. Then you repent—ask for forgiveness. “Lord help me” and move on and do better the next time. Now you are working toward changing **in** your new life. Being aware and deciding to change.
1. Did Jesus use controversial language? 

Yes. But for clarification and illumination, reinforcement. Sometimes when we as mature Christians don’t seem to get the point or disagrees with a subject and will not be honest with their real concerns and feelings; you may need to be more direct, and to-the-point with your response. This what Jesus did in John 21:20-23.

* Example 1. Jesus was talking to His disciples after His Resurrection In John 21: **20**Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” **21**Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?” **22**Jesus said to him, “If I [[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26921h)]will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.” **23**Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remains till I come, what *is that* to you?”

We would say in our day “What’s it to you or Mind your own business” Some may say

Jesus didn’t have to say it like that. Sometimes when you don’t have time to dance

around issues and when you are trying to stay on task, you don’t have time to baby

talk. Peter knew better, He knew Jesus and should of been mature enough to know

 better and not be confrontational. He was concerned with things outside of his

assignment. In the previous verses, Jesus just gave Peter his assignment “to feed the

sheep and lambs”. Why was Peter worried about what John’s assignment was? Jesus

 gave Peter a lot to think about in verse 18, including his getting old and how he

 would die, and told Peter to “Follow Him”.

That should have been enough to send Peter to a quiet place and contemplate what Jesus meant by all he would go through in his life. Then Peter proceeded to misrepresent what Jesus said, “**This disciple would not die**”. In communication with each other, please don’t add to or take away from what the person actually said. Then Peter repeated this to the other brothers. Spreading an untruth—gossiping. Why do you think Peter was being so petty?

Jesus wanted to clarify and reinforce to Peter what he should be focused on—his assignment. Jesus knew what He was doing and didn’t need Peter questioning Him. Jesus also magnified that Peter had enough to do to keep him busy through his old age and that he did not have time to worry about what John would be doing. Questions or Comments

1. Example 2: Matthew 15: **21**Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22**And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” **23**But He answered her, not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.” **24**But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” **25**Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” **26**But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.” **27**And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” **28**Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus showed or illuminated this woman ‘s faith. Jesus insulted this Gentile woman first by ignoring her in verse 23; secondly, He said He was not there for her in verse 24; and thirdly by comparing her to a dog. Today Jesus would be considered ‘disrespecting the woman. In today’s time, those are fighting words and people are getting shot these days for “disrespecting” words. Jesus put this woman’s faith on display because it did not matter to this mother. She was seeking help for her sick daughter and whatever disgraceful situation she had to go through, it didn’t matter. Even if I can’t get a slice of bread at least I’ll take the left-overs. The crumbs are made up of what in the slice of bread. Question. Would you turn from the Church if you thought a follower of Christ “disrespected you”? Sometimes we get into our feelings too quickly and make an immediate judgment and decision that could affect our life and/or the life of someone else, just because our feelings got hurt. Jesus used tough love with harsh words to teach us to fight for what we need. To be faithful to the end.

 In Proverbs 18:19 “**19**A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle”. When people get hurt, they build a fortress around them like they did in the old biblical days with their cities. The cities needed the walls to protect themselves from the enemy but they had several entrances for those to enter in who were welcomed or for business. When we build our walls, no one comes in and we can’t get out. Be careful about becoming offended.



1. Conclusion: These are just a few pitfalls to communication. We have to build good communication with each other. Communication: **the imparting or exchanging of information or news; the successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings.** The most important word in these two definitions is “successful”. Was the listener understanding the information or the message you wanted them to get? Communication is always two-way—the speaker and the listener. Both need to be satisfied when leaving the conversation with a common understanding and agreement as to what was said and what if anything is acceptable. We hope that at the conclusion of this discussion of Pitfalls to Communication, you will be aware of some of the traps that can lead to pitfalls in your relationships.

