

BLUEPRINTS: Wiring for Sound: Principles for Effective Communication¹ **James 1:19-20**

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. Before we jump into this morning's message, I want to welcome those of you that are guests with us today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday. It is our prayer that our church already feels like home to you.

And we would love to connect with you. You can text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. You'll be sent a link back and you can follow the instructions from there.

Or you can stop by Guest Connect located in the lobby. Even if you text in, I want to invite you to stop by Guest Connect. We have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being here today. Again, we welcome you.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in the middle of a teaching series we've called Blueprints: Building Families by God's design. The Bible is our blueprint as it lays out God's design plan for building godly families. It is vitally important that we build according to God's design because as goes our homes, so goes society.

So far, we've looked at the foundation of God's design. Gathering the power tools of prayer, building walls of a healthy marriage, developing discipline in our homes, and raising families that counter the culture. Today, we are Wiring for Sound, discovering the principles for effective communication.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Hospital Visit Reporting to Myra.

When I graduated from Seminary, Cathy and I moved to Littlefield, Texas. For those of you that don't know where Littlefield is, it is 35 miles Northwest of Lubbock. It is in the part of Texas that they name towns according to the way they look. There's Levelland, Brownfield, Plainview, Sudan, just to name a few. I was the Student Minister there in Littlefield.

As a member of the ministerial staff team, I was assigned to hospital visitation. Most of our people would go to Lubbock for medical needs. So, I was in Lubbock checking on our folks, and there was a lady that had been in the

hospital for quite some time. She was up in years and had been recovering from a pretty significant surgery.

After visiting people, I would use my drive home to call the church office and talk with our receptionist, Myra, to give her an update on the hospital list. So, when I was giving the update about Mrs. Johnson, I said, "Mrs. Johnson went home." To which Myra responded, "She was such a sweet lady." Now, I meant that Mrs. Johnson got to go home from the hospital. But Myra heard, she went home to be with Jesus.

I could tell by her response that she was about to call the funeral home and start making arrangements. So, I said, "Mrs. Johnson went home to her house." And Myra said, "I bet her mansion is amazing." Confused, I said, "I didn't know Mrs. Johnson lived in a mansion." And Myra said, "She was such a great servant." Again, Myra was thinking her mansion in glory. I'm trying to communicate she is back at her house in Littlefield.

So, trying to figure out where I went wrong in this whole ordeal, I said, "Myra, Mrs. Johnson is doing well. She's at home." And Myra said, "Oh, she is doing well with her completely healed body."

So, borrowing from Chris Tucker in the movie Rush Hour, "Myra, do you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth? Mrs. Johnson is at her house in Littlefield. She got better and went home from the hospital." Which is what I probably should have said to begin with.

Have you noticed that we can say things that seem so clear, but they can be received so differently. And even when you are using the same words as someone else, it doesn't mean you are saying the same thing. For example, if I were to say, "You can't have too many sweets." One person hears that as needing to watch how many sweets they eat. The other person is thinking of loading up on sweets. Add to that the fact that we live in a hurried, noisy, opinionated world, and we often wonder how we can communicate effectively.

So, this morning, we are going to be looking at what The Bible has to say about communication. We are going to wire our homes for sound. And here's the deal, this message will be one that applies both in your family dynamic, but also in every relationship you have. We are going to look at two main ideas today: the purpose of communication and practical ways to communicate effectively.

So, I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles with me to the New Testament book of James. We are primarily going to be in chapter 1, verses 19 and 20. Let's begin, though, by looking at...

1) The Biblical Purpose of Communicationⁱⁱ

We all know and understand the importance of communicating. We have language for a reason. But I think the greater question is what is the purpose of communication? I want to mention 2 Biblical purposes for communicating. And my prayer is that these purposes will drive our desire to work on effective communication, especially in our homes.

The first Biblical purpose of communication is to...

A) Connect with God.

Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And we express that love for God in both word and deeds. God reveals Himself through the written Word of God, The Bible. But the main purpose of communicating with God is not just the transfer of information. "God, I want to pray for..." "God, teach me Your ways..." Instead, communication is for the purpose of connecting with God. It is the vehicle by which we give all of ourselves to The Lord.

The greatest example of communication's purpose being connecting with God is Jesus. The Gospel of John, chapter 1, tells us that Jesus, God the Son, took on flesh. But the way John puts it is that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, of course, being the physical manifestation of the Word.

Now, Jesus came not to just to communicate information about God. He did do that. In Jesus we come to know the nature and the love of God. That is clearly communicated in the life of Jesus. But Jesus' purpose was much more than that. God didn't just give information. In the person and work of Jesus Christ, He gave all of Himself to communicate His love for us.

But He went further. In giving His one and only Son, Jesus, in His death, burial, and resurrection, we are forgiven our sin, by faith, and experience a relationship with God. In and through Jesus, sinful humanity can connect with a perfect God. And that opens the lines of communication with God.

Hebrews talks about Jesus being our Great High Priest. It is through Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross, paying once and for all the penalty of our sin, that we can boldly approach the throne of Grace, the throne of God. We do not need a mediator between us and God. For those of us in Christ, we have been invited, through the blood of Jesus, to take advantage of a direct line to God The Father. We can commune with God.

The first purpose of communication from a Biblical perspective is the connect with God. But secondly, to...

B) Connect with Others.

Living in community with others is so important to God. The Godhead exists in Triune form demonstrating the communal nature of God. And the one thing that God noted was not good about His creation was that man was alone. God has wired us to live in community with others. Community requires communication.

For some of you, the extraverts in the room, you're all about community with others. I love being around people. In fact, being around others is how I recharge my batteries. I can't stand to be alone. But for you introverts in the room, you recharge your batteries by being alone. But you also must see that God desires you to live in community.

Just like communication is the vehicle by which we give all of ourselves to The Lord, it is also the vehicle by which we give ourselves to others. Now, when it comes to our family, we are to give all of ourselves. But in relation to others, we may not give all of ourselves, but we do give ourselves for the benefit of others. And for our benefit. That's God's design. We are made to live in community.

Now, we are to develop a deep connection with our family because that leads to true intimacy, knowing and being known. You and I will not experience the deep and meaningful family dynamics that God desires us to know if we do not give attention to communicating effectively.

A while back ago, I taught on the topic of communication and showed us a table that illustrates the differing levels of communication.ⁱⁱⁱ Here's that graphic again. **Show Graphic**. Level 1 communication is cliché conversations. It's really not sharing anything and has no transparency. These are conversation you have with everyone. How are you today? I'm fine.

Level 2 communication is reporting the facts. This is where we transfer information. It requires very little transparency, and this is a level we engage with many people. The weather is going to be amazing today. This is what I have going on today.

Level 3 communication is a little deeper. It is where we share ideas and opinions. There's a little more risk because you are sharing what you think about things, and you might be viewed differently by the other person. What are your thoughts about the message in church today? There's some level of transparency and you usually share this with a small group of people.

Level 4 is where we begin to share our feelings and emotions. Because we lay more of ourselves on the line, we typically share this level with very few people. This level is reserved for our "trust tree." I feel hurt. I'm struggling. I was offended when...

And the deepest level of communication is level 5. This is where we experience open communication. We share who we really are, and it requires absolute transparency. This level is where we are totally honest and vulnerable.

The purpose of communication is that we connect with God and others. How are you doing on that front? I think it is important for us to grade ourselves on which level of communication we experience with varying areas of our lives. What level of communication are you experiencing in your family? With your friends? With your co-workers? With God? Where do you need to improve? What will it take to improve in that arena.

So, from a Biblical perspective, the purpose of communication is to connect with God and others. So, now, let's look at...

2) Ways to Communicate Effectively.^{iv}

The book of James gives us practical Biblical principles for communicating effectively. Let's read our text for this morning and then look into each principle. Verse 19. ***19Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*** We see 3 ways to communicate effectively. First, ...

A) Listen Intently.

James first says to be quick to listen. The word translated as "quick" means immediately, without delay.^v And the word translated "hear" means to comprehend.^{vi} So, the idea of listening intently means that our first priority should be to understand the person that is talking.

In the days before The Bible was complete, much of the teaching contained in the Bible was passed down through oral traditions. It's astounding the accuracy of the Scriptures given an oral tradition when compared to the earliest manuscripts. The teachings of the Bible were passed down with extreme accuracy.

But my point being, that in an oral culture, listening was of utmost importance. You didn't want to miss something or misunderstand something. So, being quick to listen was absolutely vital. And because teaching was spoken, the one who listened the most, knew the most.^{vii}

Now, let's be honest here. This kind of listening, listening intently to understand the person speaking, is not our natural tendency. The temptation is to listen so that we can respond. Truth be told, we're not really interested in what the other person is saying. And if that is the case, then we are not communicating. But the times that we can be quick to listen, the door is open to effective communication.

I came across a quote in my study this week that says, "Billions and billions of words are produced every second, but only a fraction is truly heard."^{viii} Truly hearing is vital to effective communication in God's design for the family.

Your marriage will be better, and you will know each other more intimately, when you are quick to listen to one another. When your kids share something that seems unimportant but is such a big deal to them, and you take the time to really listen, you unlock the door to their heart in a powerful way. And when it comes time for you to speak truth to them, they are more apt to truly listen.

But when our non-verbal cues communicate that what our kids have to say is just not that important, then they will take the same position with you. Same with your marriage. Now, it's given that teenagers have everything figured out and don't need our counsel, but my point is you want to position yourself to be able to speak and be heard. And we do that when we hear others.

ILLUSTRATION: My Mom Laughing

My mom shared with me one time how she figured out how to keep me talking when I was a kid. She realized that if I thought something was funny and she laughed, I would talk more. So, to keep me talking to her, she would laugh out loud, even when what I had to say as a youngster wasn't really all that funny.

What my mom did was communicate that she was truly interested in what I had to say, and that position led to us having a much better connection. What are the things that you have discovered to get your spouse and kids talking? To keep communication going in your family, it requires us to listen intently.

The second way to communicate effectively is to...

B) Speak Carefully.

Verse 19 continues, *"¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, [and] **slow to speak**.* The term translated, "slow," is a word that means unhurried, taking time to deliberate.^{ix} The idea is to speak cautiously and say what is only carefully thought out. Think before you speak. Prior to saying anything, it is always wise to take time to think, "Is what I am about to say helpful to communication or hurtful?"

When thinking about what we say, we all tend to run to Ephesians 4:15, *"speaking the truth in love."* I'm just speaking truth. I hear you, but don't forget the verses following. Verse 29 of Ephesians 4 says, *"²⁹Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is **good for building up**, as **fits the occasion**, that it may **give grace** to those who hear."*

I like that verse. Because in that one verse is the application for speaking carefully. Three components are mentioned: what we say is to be for the other person's good, it's appropriate, and it's grace giving. To do those things requires us to evaluate what we are going to say before we say it. Is what I am about to say beneficial or hurtful? Does it fit the occasion? Is it appropriate? Is it on topic or bringing up the past? Does how I am going to say it give grace or is it harsh? We must learn to communicate the right things in the right way. And when we do that, it honors The Lord and edifies others.

When it comes to your marriage and family, all relationships for that matter, words matter. They mean things. And the way in which we say them matters. We need to be sure to use words in a way that glorifies The Lord.

So, we are to listen intently and speak carefully. The third way to communicate effectively, James says, is to...

C) Proceed Patiently.

Verse 19 continues and into verse 20. *¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, **slow to anger**; ²⁰for the **anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God**.* In order to maintain good communication, we must avoid responding in anger. The word for "anger" here is the word that means to act on impulse, seeking vengeance.^x

The way we typically respond in an angry way is when we think, "I'm upset so you should change." We tend to not see any wrongdoing on our part and think it is just the other person that is being offensive and causing the breakdown in communication. But verse 20 says that kind of anger does not result in the righteousness of God. The word translated righteousness means justice, what is right.^{xi} Even when we are in the right, when we respond in anger, we do not produce what is right.

Think about the character trait of being slow to anger. It describes the way God deals with us! We are always 100% wrong and God is always 100% right. Yet, how does God deal with us?

Flip over to Exodus 34. Leading up to chapter 34, Moses has led the Israelites into the wilderness fleeing slavery in Egypt. And he went up on Mount Sinai to get a word from God. Well, he was gone for what seemed like a long time, so the people thought Moses had died, and they formed a false idol, a golden calf, and began worshiping that. When Moses sees this, what does he do? He responds in anger; he throws the tablets down and they shatter.

But what does God do? He tells Moses that He is going to recreate the tablets that Moses broke in anger. And then God shares with Moses His character. Verse 6 of Exodus 34. *⁶The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in **steadfast love and faithfulness**.* God is patient with us and by so doing, He communicates effectively, His great love for us.

To enjoy effective communication in our families, we need to learn and follow the characteristic of God and His patience in responding. Remember, God is always right, yet He does not respond in anger.

CONCLUSION:

It is my prayer that this morning has been helpful to you. We increase communication in our families and in all relationships when we listen intently, speak carefully, and proceed patiently.

But I want to go back, in closing, to the first purpose of communication. God has given us language for the purpose of communicating with Him. But the result of sin in our life, our fellowship with God has been broken. Our sin separates us from God and destines us to eternal death. That's what we earn. But God has shown, communicated, His great love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

See, on the cross at Calvary, Jesus took on our sin and shame. It was nailed with Jesus on the cross. Our sin caused Jesus' death. And He was buried and laid in a tomb. But on the third day, demonstration power over our sin and shame, Jesus rose from the dead. And by faith and trust in Jesus a powerful exchange happens. Jesus takes our sinfulness and in exchange, He gives us His righteousness. So that when the Holy God looks upon us, He does not see our sin and shame but the blood of His Son. But that only comes by way of faith and surrender to Jesus as Lord.

The Bible says that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. And the only way to move from death to life is by trusting Jesus as Lord. And to trust Jesus as Lord means that we yield our ways to His ways. We follow Him and His desire and plan for our lives. The Bible calls that being born again.

Have you been born again unto a relationship with Jesus? If not, we would love for today to be the day of salvation for you. Following this service, our elders will be here at the front and would love to visit with you about what it means to place your faith and trust in Jesus as Lord.

Maybe you are here today, and you have already trusted Jesus. Maybe you have a prayer concern. Our elders, we would love to pray with you and over you this morning. We will be here for you.

I'm going to pray. We will stand and sing and listen to God's prompting on our hearts. And then we will respond to Him. Let's pray. [PRAY]

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: James*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 1998; Jerry Pipes, *Building a Successful Family: Basic Building Blocks For A Healthy Home*, Jerry F. Pipes: USA, 2002; Katrina Cassel, *Effective Family Communication*, published by Focus on the Family, accessed online: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective-communication/>; Braden Ebersole, *What Is the Meaning of James 1:19-20? Swift to Hear? Slow to Speak?*, blog published by Life Hope & Truth, June 12, 2023, accessed online: <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/life/blog/what-is-the-meaning-of-james-1-19-20-slow-to-speak-slow-to-wrath/>; Erwin W. Lutzer, *Miles Apart in the Same House*, sermon preached at The Moody Church, October 4, 1992, accessed online: <https://www.moodymedia.org/sermons/pulling-together-world-tearing-apart/miles-apart-same-house2/>; Rob Green, *Say What? Effective Communication*, sermon preached at Faith Church Lafayette, April 12, 2015, accessed online: <https://www.faithlafayette.org/resources/sermons/say-what-effective-communication>; The Ross Center, *Building Stronger Relationship: Effective Family Communication Techniques*, article published by The Ross Center, April 13, 2024, accessed online: <https://www.rosscenter.com/news/effective-family-communication-techniques/>; Wayne Goodall, *Family Communications*, article published by Family-Relationships.com, 2013, accessed online: <https://family-relationships.com/adjust-to-marriage/family-communication>; Parenting Now, *Building Effective Family Communication*, article published by ParentingNow, February 2021, accessed online: <https://parentingnow.org/building-effective-family-communication/>; Nate Heitzig, *Communication Breakdown*, sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, September 30, 2018, accessed online: <https://connectwithskip.com/teachings/#/series/30/sermon/267>; Sermon Research Assistant, *Family Talk: Hearts and Bridges*, sermon published by Sermon Central, February 1, 2024, accessed online: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/family-talk-hearts-and-bridges-pro-sermon-on-communication-30002814>; Nicholas Ellen, *Session 5 – Developing Effective Communication in Marriage*, message published by Christ Community Church, March 31, 2019, accessed online: <https://www.c3houston.org/media/marriage-conference-session-five/>.

ⁱⁱ Two Principles adapted from Ellen.

ⁱⁱⁱ John Powell, *Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. Examples of communication at each level taken from Chip Ingram.

^{iv} Outline borrowed from Travis Ogle, *How to Give Priority to God's Word*, sermon preached at Hope Church Las Vegas, February 7, 2021, accessed online: <https://hopechurchlv.com/messages/how-to-give-priority-to-gods-word/>.

^v HELPS Word-Studies, 5036, tachus.

^{vi} Strong's Concordance, 191, akouó.

^{vii} Ogle.

^{viii} R. Kent Hughes as quoted by Travis Ogle.

^{ix} HELPS Word-Studies, 1021, bradus.

^x Strong's Concordance, 3709, orgé.

^{xi} Strong's Concordance, 1343, dikaiosuné.