

# The Spiritual Habits of Jesus Series

## Jesus' Habit of Communicating God's Perspective

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By  
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### At A Glance:

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*These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.*

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# Jesus' Habit of Communicating God's Perspective

## I. Introduction

### A. Illustration: Hours of Conversation

1. I have a few special friends with whom we naturally and consistently get into long conversations about spiritual topics. Just this past week, I probably spent at least six hours of time having conversations with various people about the things of God. Not surprisingly, these conversations occurred with my closest friends. And these types of conversations are the normal pattern for these relationships. While we do talk about regular topics, our most frequently subject of conversation is God.
2. By this, I mean, not ministry meetings or formal gatherings, but conversations that grow out of the activities of everyday life. These conversations just happened organically. They weren't forced. They occurred because I was around my friends. I have a lot of good conversations on spiritual topics after formal times of ministry.
3. The spiritual topics of the conversations ranged from a specific type of prayer, spiritual lessons being currently learned, viewing immediate circumstances through the lens of the Bible, and brainstorming possible effective ministry strategies for our church, to identifying spiritual needs. There was a significant variety of spiritual topics discussed, even in the same conversation.

B. Regularly talking about God in a natural and organic way is part of living a Christian life. While this doesn't come naturally to us and it can be uncomfortable at first, this is a habit that disciples are able to grow into. Over time, mature disciples learn how to do this by nature and it requires very little thought or effort on their part.

C. As we examine the life of Jesus, regularly communicating the message of God through everyday situations and experiences plays a major role. In fact, in Luke 4:43, Jesus says this is one of the purposes of His life.

## II. Command to Communicate God's Perspective

A. As the life of Jesus is carefully observed, an important feature jumps out at us: Jesus was constantly talking to others about spiritual matters. Not only was Jesus intentionally bringing up certain topics, but He also seems to have a specific objective in mind. He communicates in such a way that the people He is interacting with will walk away with a better understanding of God and His perspective, at least in the situations and with the people where this is possible. Jesus moved people toward a deeper and more accurate understanding of spiritual realities. This habit of communicating God's message pervades the life of Jesus.

B. This tendency doesn't stop with Jesus. He passes it on to His disciples. As Jesus was expanding His ministry impact through delegation by sending His twelve apostles out into the cities of Israel, He gave them ministry instruction. After Jesus had trained His disciples, He is now giving them ministry opportunity. He commanded them:

<sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered* in *your* ear, proclaim upon the housetops. (Mt. 10:27)

- C. Jesus expects His disciples to carry out the task He has given them. He communicates the same expectation in two different ways. Each of these statements are a command: “speak in the light” and “proclaim upon the housetops”. Jesus requires His disciples to take the initiative and “speak”. Disciples are to communicate the perspective that they have learned directly from Jesus. Spiritual conversations, following Jesus’ example, are to be had. These conversations, rather than being done privately as “in the darkness,” should be experienced openly and publicly as if “in the light”. Disciples must open their mouths and say something. We can’t hide in the shadows of silence. So bold and thoroughgoing are these conversations to be that the disciples will appear to “proclaim” Jesus’ message from “the housetops”. In other words, the disciples communicate Jesus’ perspective so extensively that it is communicated as broadly and to as many people as possible. “Proclaim” carries the idea of communicating something “loudly”.<sup>1</sup> Shouting something from a rooftop would have no other effect other than getting the largest audience’s attention—it is intended to be a public activity done in the open and presence of others. Disciples should talk about the message of Jesus as they do about what they love most. When we think something is important or exciting, we talk about it with others.<sup>2</sup> The message of Jesus should be treated this way.
- D. To understand this command, we must also acknowledge the main objective of this spiritual habit: Jesus wants disciples to move others to a place of understanding, just as He did. Jesus doesn’t just want people to memorize facts, He wants them to have a working knowledge of God. As Jesus communicated God’s message to others in a variety of ways, He said, “Hear and understand” (Mt. 15:10. Mk. 4:13). He asked the same question repeatedly, “Do you not understand?” (Mt. 13:51, 15:17, 16:9, 16:11, Mk. 4:13, 7:18, 8:17, 8:21, Jn. 3:10, 8:43). Jesus wants the disciples to understand God’s perspective and message and for them to help others do the same (Lk. 24:45, Jn. 10:6-7, 10:38, 13:7). Jesus wants to produce a functional knowledge that transforms people’s lives. The theme of understanding is very important to Jesus.
- E. This objective is achieved by Jesus through various methods such as teaching, preaching, asking questions, explaining, using illustrations and images, telling stories, having conversations, using physical objects and the immediate environment, comparing familiar cultural practices and examples, etc. Each of these methods were used to achieve the same goal: helping other people come to a place of understanding spiritual realities. Assisting others in their understanding of God and His message is a major and central component of the life of Jesus.
- F. Jesus said that spiritual harm comes to those who do not understand His message, and great spiritual impact comes from those who do:
- <sup>18</sup> Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. <sup>20</sup> The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only*

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<sup>1</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide Matthew 10:27 “proclaim”

<sup>2</sup> For some this could be their family or grandchildren, their favorite sports team, their job, a hobby, something they own, an activity they enjoy, food, a particular area of interest, etc. Everyone enjoys talking about something because we love it.

temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.<sup>22</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.<sup>23</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. (Mt. 13:18-23)

- G. Notice the important role of understanding when it comes to the message of God resulting in either spiritual harm or benefit. Those who do “not understand it” (v. 19) will face the consequence (“the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown” v. 19), which leads to spiritual unproductiveness. Those who fail to understand don’t go anywhere. On the other hand, there are those “who hear(s) the word and understands it” (v. 23) and who “bear(s) fruit” (v. 23). Stagnation and movement are directly impacted by what a person “understands”. Understanding the message of Jesus will either make our lives spiritually empty or it will make us spiritually productive. The depth of our understanding of spiritual matters and the message of Jesus will be evidenced in what our lives produce. There will either be a spiritual harvest or not. The size of the harvest will be directly dependent on our depth of spiritual understanding. The command to communicate God’s message is a command to accurately understand the message of Jesus so it can then be shared with others.
- H. Jesus expects every disciple to carry this responsibly, as He makes clear with a group larger than just the twelve (Mt. 10:32-33, 28:18-20, Mk. 8:34-38, Ac. 1:4-8).<sup>3</sup> Each person who is attached to Jesus has the responsibility to communicate God’s perspective with others as they have opportunity. This means every disciple must first learn about and become familiar enough with the message of Jesus so they can communicate His message with accuracy and teach it to others. Disciples should be sharing the knowledge of God they possess, rather than keeping it to themselves. God wants disciples to be a blessing to those around them. A knowledge of God can positively transform other people’s lives when others come to understand it. Do I believe this?
- I. A major problem that occurs regarding this command is that lots of Christians are unaware of or don’t think they carry this responsibility. This usually leads to a disinterest in hearing, understanding, and learning about the message of God. They approach the message of God as if it is mostly irrelevant and impractical for their lives. We have people who have been listening to sermons for decades who are still unable to have a basic conversation about God’s perspective and message with others. How does this happen? This happens when people don’t realize or feel the weight of their responsibility before God to communicate His message to others. They approach God and the teaching of the church with the wrong mental attitude. They think it is someone else’s job to explain Christianity to others—usually the paid staff of the church. Even parents delegate this task regarding their own kids to a children’s ministry or youth program.

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<sup>3</sup> It is significant to note that a portion of this larger group had not yet received the Holy Spirit because the 11 had already received the Holy Spirit at an earlier time (Jn. 20:22). Therefore, this must be referring to a group larger than the apostles (Ac. 1:12-15).

- J. Imagine how different people’s attitudes and approaches to Biblical instruction and their relationship to God would be if they understood their personal duty to communicate God’s perspective to those they interact with. What would happen if every disciple made it their goal to communicate God’s message to their neighbors, coworkers, and family members? When was the last time you tried to help someone else understand the perspective of God? If you genuinely thought God expected you to help one of your coworkers develop a more accurate understanding of God’s perspective, what would this change?

### III. Jesus’ Habit of Communicating God’s Perspective

- A. We can gain a clear picture of what this responsibility looks like by paying attention to the life and example of Jesus. While most disciples will never teach a class at their church, and even fewer will ever preach a sermon, there are other ways to communicate God’s message to others that are relevant to the average disciple. Jesus regularly used personal conversations and relationships as opportunities to help others develop a more accurate understanding of God and His perspective on life. Instead of talking about the weather, Jesus used people’s knowledge of the weather to point to spiritual topics (Mt. 16:2-4).
- B. Jesus directly stated that He personally carries the responsibility, given to Him by the Father. It is one of the main purposes for His life, for Him to be communicating the message of God to others,
- <sup>43</sup> But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.” (Lk. 4:43)
- C. The details of Jesus’ language are very important, as He says, “I must preach”. For Jesus, this isn’t optional; it is a divine requirement placed on Him and His life. While, in this case, the method of communication is preaching, that isn’t always the case. Don’t make the mistake of thinking you are off the hook because you don’t feel as if it is your responsibility to be a preacher. As previously mentioned, every disciple does carry the task and personal responsibility of communicating the message of God to others.
- D. He also gives the reason and justification for this statement, “for I was sent for this purpose”. One of the main purposes of Jesus’ life is to communicate the message of God throughout Israel. Even though there is a tremendous opportunity in front of Him to stay in Capernaum and Jesus appears to be having a successful ministry there, He leaves Galilee to preach in the synagogues of Judea (Lk. 4:44). He disappointed the people of Capernaum when He did this. Jesus was intentional about His actions. He purposefully communicated God’s message.
- E. How did Jesus communicate God’s message? We are going to be examining instances of Jesus communicating God’s message in non-formal settings, as many disciples will never share God’s message in those contexts. We won’t be looking at Jesus’ preaching or teaching ministries. Instead, we are going to look at the examples of how Jesus communicated the message of God in informal settings, such as private conversations, short-term encounters, while traveling, when eating meals, as He spent time recreationally, and during normal routine activities. Jesus

helped others develop their understanding of God during the normal and regular situations of everyday life.<sup>4</sup>

- F. One such example comes when Jesus is traveling and uses that opportunity to explain what it means and what is required to follow Him. In short, Jesus is explaining the nature of the Christian life to people who are in the Expose stage of spiritual development. They are showing some interest in Jesus, but they have not yet made a firm commitment to follow His teachings and way of life:

<sup>25</sup> Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. <sup>34</sup> Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”  
(Lk. 14:25-35)

- G. Jesus isn’t preaching to a crowd; He isn’t teaching in a synagogue or the temple here. He isn’t giving formal instruction of any kind. Jesus is simply participating in the everyday activity of travel by walking from one location to another. Here is how the situation is described: “Now large crowds were going along with Him” (v. 25). This group of people is showing some interest in Jesus, so they are traveling with Jesus to the place where He is going.
- H. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to communicate God’s perspective to others, even though He is not in a formal setting (“He turned and said to them” v. 25). He begins by saying, “If anyone comes to Me” (v. 26). Jesus is speaking directly to the immediate circumstance of those who are listening to Him. As people come to Him with interest, Jesus communicates what their interest will lead to if they continue in it. Jesus tells these people what they need to know according to where they are at spiritually. These large crowds did come to Jesus, so He tells them exactly what they need to do in their present situation.
- I. Jesus continues by explaining that there is a cost to following Him, and the cost is that Jesus must become the highest priority in their lives. If not, despite their interest, these people “cannot be My disciple” (v. 26). Jesus provides a list of sacrifices that are necessary for a person to spiritually benefit from Him.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a fulfillment of God’s intended strategy for making disciples (Dt. 6:4-9).

- J. After Jesus helps the people gain a better understanding of what it means to live for Him, He confronts them with a decision and gives them some wise advice: “first sit down and calculate the cost” (v. 28). Jesus wants people to consider carefully what it will personally cost them to attach themselves to Jesus—it isn’t easy. Then Jesus points out that there are serious consequences connected to their decision. Jesus encourages these people to be wise and make a good decision.
- K. Jesus uses a normal activity of life that occurs on a regular basis and uses it to communicate God’s perspective to those who are around Him. This is discipleship as God intends it. Jesus brings God, spiritual topics, and the Christian life into everyday situations. Jesus doesn’t just think about God when He is at the synagogue or temple, He brings the presence of God into every circumstance.
- L. Another instance of this occurs when Jesus shares a meal with some religious leaders (Mk. 2:14-17). Jesus frequently used meals strategically to teach others about God and get access to people who He may not have had access to any other way. In this case, Jesus used the connections His new disciple Matthew (previously called Levi) had with other tax collectors and individuals the religious community looked down on:
- <sup>14</sup> As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him. <sup>15</sup> And it happened that He was reclining *at the table* in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, “Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>17</sup> And hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, “*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” (Mk. 2:14-17)
- M. Once again, this is a non-formal, daily living kind of situation (“He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus” v. 15). This setting causes the religious leaders to be concerned about Jesus because Jesus isn’t living according to their preconceived ideas about what a God centered life looks like. For them, holy and righteous people stay away from sinners to not be corrupted by them. The more righteous a person becomes, the less he will spend time with immoral people.
- N. Jesus, however, holds to a different perspective that motivates Him to live differently than religious tradition expects. Jesus then takes this real-life situation as an example to explain to the religious leaders the kind of life God desires His people to live. “It is not those who are healthy who need a physical, but those who are sick” (v. 17). The motivating factor for Jesus is meeting human need. In these words, Jesus reframes the situation so the religious leaders will view it from an alternate angle and interpretation. For Jesus, a godly life does not focus on living a segregated life of holiness, but rather lives so that holiness can help those it encounters. This is a very different priority and mentality regarding the Christian life.
- O. Jesus views immoral people who are not living for God as spiritually sick and in need, not a person to avoid. Jesus wants the religious leaders to start seeing and caring for the spiritual

needs of others which is the very thing Jesus is doing in the actions and lifestyle they do not like (“I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” v. 17). Jesus is using something as common as a meal to care for other people’s spiritual needs. Jesus is connecting the kingdom of God to everyday activities. He is using His typical actions to help explain the true nature of the Christian life to the religious leaders.

- P. The last example comes from Jesus finding Himself in a casual conversation following a “church service.” Jesus had previously presented a more formal teaching to a crowd of people (Mk. 7:14-15). After the “religious service” was over, a casual conversation took place connected to the spiritual instruction Jesus provided. Jesus uses this smaller, informal setting to continue communicating God’s message through a back-and-forth conversation following His preaching:

<sup>17</sup> When he had left the crowd *and* entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. <sup>18</sup> And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (*Thus He* declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, <sup>22</sup> deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.” (Mk. 7:17-23)

- Q. Where is this conversation taking place? We learn that Jesus, “had left the crowds and entered the house” (v. 17). This conversation picked up a topic that had arisen prior to Jesus preaching to the crowd that dealt with what it meant to be “pure” before God and follow His Word (Mk. 7:1-13). Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees and scribes that their spiritual habits moved them away from obedience to the word of God, even though they thought those habits were what God wanted.
- R. We see Jesus using this conversation as a tool to help others gain understanding, which He mentions twice (v. 18). The topic being explained is the nature of what makes people unacceptable to God because they displease Him. Jesus is trying to help both the disciples and the religious leaders understand that the priority should not be placed on religious rituals but on the moral character and behaviors of the individual. How moral or immoral a person is, is the greatest factor in determining whether a person is “unclean” or “impure” from God’s perspective. This moral impurity exists on the inside and flows outward to a person’s behavior. In other words, who a person is can displease God. Sin is not only a matter of what we do, but also a matter of what we prioritize and value. It involves the content of our character. While a common saying, it isn’t affirmed by the Bible and is inaccurate to say, “God loves the sinner but hates the sin.”<sup>5</sup> That distinction is not found in the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Where does Jesus say the source of

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed explanation see [God Loves the Sinner, But Hates the Sin? | Desiring God, Is “Hate the Sin, Love the Sinner” Biblical? \(str.org\)](#)

<sup>6</sup>Mt. 17:17, Mk. 9:19, Lev. 20:23, Ps. 5:5-6, 7:11, 11:5, Pr. 6:16-19, Hos. 9:15, Zech. 11:8, Mal. 1:10. While God does love some sinners—the ones Jesus died for (Jn. 3:16, Rm. 5:8), it is not true that God loves all sinners who continue in sin.

all sin is? Inside people (“that which proceeds out of the man” v. 20) and from the human heart (“out of the heart of men proceed” v. 21).<sup>7</sup> Sin is not something that happens apart from us; it is in us and from us. We are the source of wrong (immorality), and that is the problem that makes us displeasing to God. Only by having our heart changed by God can we become a person that pleases God. That’s Jesus’ point here.

- S. Jesus is using an everyday conversation to explain basic principles of the message of Christianity (salvation in particular) and the nature of the Christian life (how a person is supposed to live before God in a way that is pleasing to Him). Jesus is helping people understand the basics of the spiritual life through informal conversations.
- T. How often do I intentionally talk about or turn conversations toward spiritual topics? When spiritual topics come up, do I have anything to say and share? Disciples who want to follow Jesus’ example of communicating God’s message will need to shift their mental focus by learning how to think differently. They will need to develop a mindset that constantly focuses their attention on the things above rather than the things on earth (Col. 3:2). They need to lose themselves in Jesus so they will remember to bring God and spiritual topics into their normal, everyday conversations.
- U. In other words, the fulfillment of this habit requires a significant personal transformation. To develop this habit, we can’t just start to “do” something and take small steps to put it into practice. Instead, we must be open and humble enough to change our outlook on life and our priorities. Disciples need to develop an interest in God and spiritual topics. Rather than trying to work hard at forcing God into our conversations, the more we become a person that loves God, the conversations will take care of themselves. It is out of the heart that our mouth speaks (Mt. 12:34). The reason people talk about the subjects they share with others is because that is what is important to them—it is what they value. One of the main reasons people don’t talk about God or the Christian life is because it isn’t important to them.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. Disciples are individuals who pattern their lives after the life of Jesus (Mt. 10:25, Lk. 6:40, 1 Jn. 2:6), including His habit of communicating God’s message. Individuals who follow Jesus’ way of life will help others deepen their understanding of God by the things they say.
- B. According to the Bible, righteous people will spiritually nourish other people by talking about their understanding of God (“The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of understanding” Pr. 10:21).<sup>8</sup>

#### V. Questions for Further Thought

- A. Have you ever experienced an enjoyable conversation about God? If so, when? What made the conversation meaningful to you?
- B. How did Jesus use a situation He and the disciples experienced to deepen the disciples’ understanding of spiritual topics in Jn. 9:1-5? What topics were discussed?
- C. How might a person recognize an opportunity to help another person deepen their understanding of God?

<sup>7</sup> This is also true with angelic beings (Ezek. 28:17). James makes the same point that Jesus does (Jas. 1:13-15).

<sup>8</sup> The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life (Pr. 10:11).

- D. What is likely to increase a disciple's desire or willingness to have spiritual conversations?
- E. How could a disciple remember to bring God into a conversation?