

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday September 13, 2020. "Relationships: Doing Better at Being Together. Communication."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to watch the live stream service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk.

Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We're still gathering in person. A small but dedicated group who follow all the guidelines and were so encouraging with your love and presence gathered with us. If you're still joining us online we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

II Sunday.

Sunday we hit the second topic in our relationships series. This time we talked about the importance, in's and out's, of healthy and meaningful communication. Good honest, clear, communication is THE foundation of making all the relationships in our life better. Most of us understand how to communicate, but we may not be aware of the specifics we can learn to improve our ability to understand, and be understood, by those people in our lives.

So, a few questions about communication in general before we jump into the scripture and deep dive into the art of communication.

How do you define communication?

Where do you think communication is a struggle for you?

What would you like to get better at in how you communicate?

The scripture Sunday was a short and sweet one from The Sermon on the Mount, that gave some basic truths about making communication clearer and more honest. Read the passage, and we'll ask a few questions before we plow through some of the mechanics of healthy communication. Read **Matthew 5:33-37**. And read it in a few different versions, (we used The Message Sunday), to get some different feels.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

How did you interpret the teachings about using spiritual, overly pious, language?

What did you take from it about communication in general?

Kal gave us a list of specifics from this passage and in general important and helpful communication tips. We'll go over those and then ask some questions at the end.

Communication tips for relationships.

Each one of these is an important integral part of being better at all of the relationships in our lives. Spend some time going over each one.

1. Know what your ultimate goal is in a particular conversation.

Jesus said; *“don’t say anything you don’t mean”*. This means if this isn’t going to help you get to where you want to go, to actually improve your relationship with that other person, help you be understood, then DON’T SAY IT!! This may sound tedious, and clunky, but it’s so important because it helps identify your emotions, and expectations when there might be a miscommunication. You can’t get anywhere unless you know where you’re going.

2. Understand how you communicate.

We all have our own quirks, weird things we do, when we communicate with others. And as we learned going through The Enneagram, we often don’t know what it’s like to experience us. So this is important to grow your awareness of what other people experience when you communicate with them. You have to ask; **What is your style of communication, tone, and ultimate purpose?**

3. Understanding how those you are trying to communicate with, communicate.

Ever have the feeling you’re not on the same page with the other person? This element is as important as knowing how you communicate. So many times we can miss each other, because we aren’t aware, don’t take into account how the other person communicates. What is their style and goals as they communicate with you? We have to figure out how the person we’re trying to communicate with - communicates, and make sure we use words and methods that connect with them.

4. Exercise precision and care with your words.

Bottom line...this is ‘plain speak’. The passage from Matthew says; *“just say yes and no”*. Words really matter, have different meanings, different weights to different people. And often intense conversation, and conflict, communication becomes about winning and losing, and we use words to win rather than help move the conversation forward or clear up misunderstanding. So, sometimes in the middle of conversation, you may have to pause, take a more measured thoughtful approach, and make sure the words you are using are what you’re actually wanting to communicate.

5. Take time to listen and think before speaking.

There is tons of scripture that talks about this important truth. Most communication is cloudy, messy, because we don’t listen well. We all know, and are guilty of this; when the other person is talking, we’re not really ‘listening’ listening to them, but actually forming our reply. So, in our communication with others, we have to stop whatever else it is we’re doing, and make sure we hear and take in, what the other person is trying to communicate with us. And this may mean, we have to do that clunky repeat it back to them, clarifying the message, to make certain you and the other person are on the same page.

6. Customize your own rules that aid to more productive communication.

Lastly, come up with your own rules that will help you do this better. There are little things you can incorporate into how you and others communicate that can make regular everyday conversations

richer and more life-giving. Some examples are; don't interrupt, put your phone down, turn the TV off, don't bring up the past, set up less anxiety producing situations like go for a drive, walk together, etc. If anything you add makes communication better then go for it!!

III Challenge.

Okay, we know this was so much information. Most of it were things you already knew, but maybe hadn't seen it spelled out like this. Communication basically boils down to respecting the other person, believing what they have to say is important, learning how each of you communicate, and growing your skill in making sure that in all you do in how you communicate grows and builds healthier relationships.

Just a side note, there were some teachings in the passage that talked about the dangers of the misuse and abuse of overly spiritual language. There was just too much about that topic to include in this study. However, if you want some insight about that specific teaching check out the Thursday staff thoughts with Kal, and the actual message from Sunday. Kal addresses that specific warning from Jesus in those two videos.

Some closing questions.

Is there an area you struggle with in communication?

Are there any of the specific elements above you need some work on?

Where could you grow in how you communicate?

We get to lead the way to both our believer friends and those outside the church, in helping others grow in their communication skills by incorporating strong and healthy communication practices ourselves. In this area, we can be the change the world needs. Learn to do this well and your world will benefit from it!