

I Said This You Heard That  
*You Talkin' to Me?*  
April 24, 2022

Good morning everyone!

As you know, last Sunday was Easter Sunday and I just have to say that I was so pleased with how it went.

- The music was great
- The videos were awesome
- And the message was pretty decent.

But I was also pleased because I saw more than a few of you who normally sit here (left) sit over here (right) so that our first-time or our first-time-in-a-long-time guests would not have trouble finding a seat.

So, if you did that ... I just want to say “way to go! And thank you!”

In addition, I was so pleased to hear about and meet people who came for the first time or the first time in a long time who said, “This was such a great experience that I think I’m going to come back.”

And if you’re one of those folks (whether you’re here in the room or watching online), I just want to say to you, “welcome back!”

I’m so glad you’re with us today ...

- ... because what we’re going to talk about over the next 30 minutes or so ...
- ... as well as what we’ll be talking about the next five Sundays ...
- ... has the power to dramatically change

your life – and not just *your* life but all of our lives – for the better.

And I know that sounds like a sales pitch from a late-night infomercial, but it really is true.

And here's why.

**The quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships. <repeat>**

Show me a person who has crappy relationships with family, co-workers, neighbors, and friends – although they probably don't have very many of *those* ...

Show me a person who has poor relationships with the people in their life and I'll show you a person who very likely ...

- Feels lonely, misunderstood, and unappreciated.

- Is often angry and maybe even bitter.
- And tends to be negative about almost everything in life including themselves.

Show me a person who has bad relationships with the people in their life and I'll show you a person who doesn't have a very good life.

Of course, the quality of our relationships is dependent on many, many things and, as much as I would love to address all of them in this series, we don't have time for that.

So, we're going to limit our focus to a single principle which can have an incredible amount of positive leverage in our relationships (and therefore our lives) if we put it to use.

Leverage, as you know, measures the amount of "result" you get in relation to the effort you expend.

## For example ...

- “Low leverage” or “no leverage” is when the result you get is pretty much *equal* to the effort you expend.
- “High leverage” is when you get a *huge* result from a small amount of effort.

And that’s what this series – high leverage.

If you consistently put into practice what we talk about over the next six weeks, you will see an outsized positive result in your life in comparison to the effort you put in.

I say that from personal experience because, as some of you know, I am not by nature a “relational person.” I am not naturally skilled when it comes to people and relationships like some of you are.

Instead, I’m predominantly *task-oriented* which

means that in my “natural state” ... in my default mindset ... where my thoughts go if I don’t stop to think about what I’m thinking ...

- A lot of times *people are just in the way*.
- And *dealing with people* – their problems, their emotions, and their ideas – *slows me down from what I need to do*.

Actually, to be honest, a lot of times it’s what I *want* to do.

Anybody else in this room or watching online think like that or act like that?

According to researchers who study these kinds of things, a lot of you do. About 40% of the population profiles as being predominantly task-oriented ... like me.

Now, here’s the thing.

If that's your natural bent when it comes to people and dealing with people, guess what?

Your relationships with the people you live with, work with – even with people you dearly love – are going to be a constant challenge.

And that's been my experience.

But my relationships are better – *much* better, *dramatically* better, in fact – because of what we're going to talk about in this series.

And if it can work for somebody like *me*, I know it can work for *you, too* ... which is why I'm excited about this series.

Oh, and by the way, for those of you who are *not* predominantly task-oriented – those who are by nature more people-oriented ...

You need what we're going to talk about, too,

because as a “people-person” ...

- You often struggle with being honest.
- You often struggle with saying what needs to be said.

And that causes *you* a lot of problems in *your* relationships.

And that’s not good because, again, the quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships.

So, this series is going to help you, too.

## **The Principle**

Now, with all of that said, here’s the high-leverage principle we’re going to unpack over the next six weeks.



**Better relationships happen through better communication. And better communication happens through better understanding.**

So, we're going to spend a lot of time in this series talking about how to better understand the people in our lives ...

- So that we can better “hear” what they are saying to us ...
- But, more importantly, so that *we* can speak to *them* in ways that *they* are able to “hear.”

Because the truth is ... sometimes, when we say *this*, they hear *that* – and vice versa.

For example, as we saw in the video at the beginning of this service, we might say “who’s on first” as a statement naming the person playing first base, but they could easily hear it as a question.

And then the confusion and frustration begin.

So, again, we're going to spend a lot of time trying to better understand the people around us so that we can better communicate with them by speaking to them in a way they can actually hear ...

... because better communication leads to better relationships which leads to a better life.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking right now. You're thinking, "OK, Rick, all of this sounds interesting and maybe even helpful.

"But this is church. And you're a pastor. And this is the time when you're supposed to do a sermon."

"So, like, where's the Bible in all of this?"

Great question. Here it is.

## **The Apostle Paul wrote ...**

*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. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

Let me read that again.

*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. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

Now, I'm going to explain what that means and how that applies to this series – why it's actually the *foundation* of this series ...

But, if you've been around for a while – if you've heard me speak over the years – you know that

I really don't like quoting a verse without giving its context ...

... because you can pretty much make anything in the Bible say whatever you want it to say if you're clever enough.

And that's not my goal. I don't want to be clever.

I want to be *helpful* so that we can all become "more of the more we were made for" ... which is our purpose as a church.

So, here's the deal.

This particular verse is part of a letter Paul wrote to a group of Christians who were living in the first-century region of Ephesus.

Many of them had become Christians through Paul's work as he traveled in that area telling people about who Jesus was and what He had done.<sup>i</sup>

**And Paul's goal – actually, Jesus' goal  
because it started with *him* ...**

... was for all of those people to come together and form a community of Christ-followers – a *church* – made up of people who loved and cared for each other so well that other people wanted to be part of it.

That was the goal. It's *always been* the goal from Day One.

As I said in our last series, Christianity – true Christianity – is not just about “Jesus and me.” It's about “Jesus and me and thee and thee and thee.” It's about being a community.

Anyway ... these people – these new Christians – had come from all walks of life.

- Some of them were high up in the caste system of the Greco-Roman culture.

- Some of them were officials in the Roman government.
- Some of them were tradesmen and merchants.
- Some of them were indentured servants of people higher up in the caste system.
- Many of them were women and children.

The problem was that the culture around them made a strong point of dividing people into “their groups” and keeping them there.

Sounds sadly familiar, doesn't it?

Anyway, because that's where they were coming from, Paul spent a great deal of time trying to build unity among them.

And if you read his letter to them closely, it's

obviously one of its main purposes.

In fact, the way he lays it out is genius.

In the first three chapters – the first half of the letter ...

- He goes into great detail explaining the problem we all have as sinners – and why, *regardless* of where we come from, we're all equally in need of a savior.
- And then he describes with great insight how God has solved our problem through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.
- And then he writes this incredibly moving prayer of thanksgiving for how God has shockingly included *them* in what he was doing for the Jewish people even though they weren't Jewish. They were Gentiles!

It is a rich, creative masterpiece of theological wisdom.

But Paul isn't content with that. He doesn't stop there because that's not his purpose ...

... which is why, in the *second half* of the letter, Paul gets really practical about how the *first half* ought to affect their everyday lives.

**And he begins the second half with this statement:**

*As a prisoner for the Lord ...*

Paul was in prison for preaching about Jesus when he wrote this letter.

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then ...*

Because of everything I just told you in the first half of this letter ...



*I urge you to live a life worthy of  
the calling you have received.  
Ephesians 4:1 (NIV)*

In other words, “God has done this amazing thing for you, so don’t waste it. Live like someone who has been called to something great and awesome ... because that’s who you are.”

And then Paul goes on in the rest of the letter to describe what it looks like for someone who believes in Jesus and follows Jesus to live that kind of a life.

Now, if you’re not a Christian – or maybe even if you *are* a Christian – you probably think that what Paul is going to write next is a bunch of moral imperatives; a list of “dos and don’ts.”

That’s what I used to think.

I became a Christian when I was 14 years old

and for the next 20 years or so, I thought that “living a life worthy of what Jesus had done” basically meant ...

**“Don’t drink, smoke, or chew or run with women who do. Oh, don’t forget to tithe.”**

That’s what I had been taught again and again in the churches I’d been a part of.

Or, at least, that’s what I *heard* them teaching. They actually *might have been* saying something else.

But you know how it works: someone says *this*, we hear *that*.

And what I had heard was that the primary goal after you had become a Christian was to be more “moral” and more “spiritual.”

And as a task-oriented person that was kind of easy for me. I could *do things* that made me look

and feel “moral” and I could *do things* that made me look and feel “spiritual.”

... which is why, whenever someone would confront me or challenge me about something *relational* ...

Whenever my wife or my kids or my co-workers or people I was trying to help as a pastor would express unhappiness about ...

- How I was treating them
- How I was interacting with them
- How I was speaking to them

To be honest, most of the time, I would just blow it off.

In fact, my response their criticism was a lot like this guy.

Check it out.

## **Video clip – “Popeye: I Yam What I Yam”**

That was my response.

“When it comes to people and relationships, I yam what I am and that’s all what I yam. *So, deal with it.*”

After all, living a life worthy of the calling is about being moral and being spiritual, right?

“And I’m doing pretty good at those things. In fact, I’m doing better than most of you people complaining to me.”

I didn’t actually *say* that. But I thought it.

Now, I tell you all of that because ...

- If you’re a task-oriented Christian like me.

- Or you grew up in a church that emphasized moral purity and serving God with your time, talent, and treasure – all of which are extremely important.
- Or you grew up in a church that emphasized spiritual disciplines like memorizing scripture and spending time alone with God reading the Bible and praying ...

... all of which are extremely helpful tools in growing as a Christian.

If that's where you're coming from, then I have to tell you that very first thing Paul writes about what it means to "live a life worthy of the calling with which you have been called" is going to be a shocker ...

... because it includes *none* of those things.

Zip, zero, nada.

**Check it out.**

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then ...*

... because of everything I just explained to you

...

*I urge you to live a life worthy of  
the calling you have received.*

*Ephesians 4:1 (NIV)*

“Ok, great Paul. That’s exactly what I want to do.  
Just tell me how.”

“And start with the most important thing. I got  
my notepad ready, Paul.”

Ok, you asked for it.

**Here ya go.**

*Be completely humble and  
gentle ...*

Don't think you're better than everyone else.  
Treat people gently because most people are  
fragile.

**And ...**

*Be patient ...*

Not "patient" as in "wait for your miracle. Just  
trust that God will move that mountain!"

But "patient" meaning ...

*... bearing with one another ...*

Putting up with the weaknesses and failures of  
one another ...

*... in love.*

And that's just for starters.

"In fact," Paul continues ...

**“I want you to ...**

*Make every effort ...*

I want you to do everything you can think of ...

*... to keep the unity of the Spirit  
through the bond of peace.  
Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV)*

... because remember, Christianity isn't just about “Jesus and me.”

It's about “Jesus and me and thee and thee and thee.”

It's about becoming a community that loves and cares for each other so well that other people want to be part of it.

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Incredible, isn't it?



After all of that deep, meaty, spiritually profound, theological truth in the first half of his letter, Paul's number one application is *relational* ... not moral and not spiritual.

Now, please don't hear what I'm not saying.

I'm not trying to minimize the importance of those two elements of living a God-honoring life because, if you read the rest of this letter, Paul *does* mention them.

But they get ...

- Nowhere near the emphasis that most of us would expect.
- Nowhere near the emphasis that most churches put on them.
- And nowhere near the emphasis that

would allow a serious Christian – a pastor, even – to feel justified in saying ...

“When it comes to relationships, I yam what I yam and that’s ALL what I yam. I’m not going to be anything else. Deal with it.”

## **Towards Understanding**

Now, if we had the time, we could go into great detail on all the relational efforts Paul suggests in the second part of his letter that will help to “keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

**And there are so many.<sup>ii</sup>**

- Put off falsehood and speak truthfully – which is, again, relational.
- Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry – again, relational.

- Earn a living so that you have something to share with others – relational.
- Walk in the way of love (just as Jesus loved us and gave himself up for us) – relational.
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ – relational.
- Children obey your parents – relational.
- Fathers do not exasperate your children – relational.
- Employees act as if you were working for Jesus, not your boss – relational.
- Bosses don't be threatening or demanding – relational.

It's just overwhelmingly obvious.

But, as I said at the beginning, we're going to limit ourselves and focus on a single principle which can have an incredible amount of positive relational leverage ...

... a principle which is actually based on the verse I read earlier.

So, I'm going to read that verse again – now that we know the context – and then we'll break it down a bit.

In fact, let's all read it aloud together, OK?

**Here we go:**

*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. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

Now, when you read the word “unwholesome” you might think what Paul is saying is “don’t say bad stuff. Don’t cuss. Don’t tell off-color jokes.”

Now, Paul actually *does* say that a little bit later in the letter<sup>iii</sup> but that’s not what he is saying here.

And you can tell because the next part of the sentence tells us that ...

- Communication should result in “building others up.”
- It should help them become more of the more they were made for.

So, “unwholesome talk” is communication that does the opposite of those things.

- Instead of building them up, it tears them down.

- Instead of helping them become more, it makes them become less.
- Instead of creating “wholeness” in a person, it destroys it.

**That’s what Paul is talking about.**

NOTE: Same slide but this time with color.

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to ...*

Whose needs?

*... their needs, that it may benefit ...*

Who?

*... those who <have to hear you speaking>. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

Now, here's the point.

Here's the very practical application of what Paul is saying – and what we're going to be talking about for the rest of this series.

And if you're not a Christian, you don't have to do this. You'd be *wise* to do it because better communication leads to better relationships which leads to a better life.

But, if you are a Christian, this is for you. This is part of what it means to live a life worthy of all the great things God has done for you in Jesus.

Are you ready? Here it is.

**If you say “this” and they hear “that,” then you should learn how to speak “that.”**

You have to understand them. You have to discover how they think and what matters to them.

And then you have to speak that language.

Now, if you're not by nature a relational person (and even if you are!), that sounds overwhelming.

Fortunately, however, there is a great tool that will help us. It's called "the four temperaments."

And lots and lots of research has been done on this and it's been packaged in many, many ways over the years ...

Beginning with what Hippocrates (way back in the fifth century!) called "the four humors" – which was the idea that the composition of a person's bodily fluids determined their preferences in life.

He used the words Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic and Phlegmatic to describe those sets of preferences.



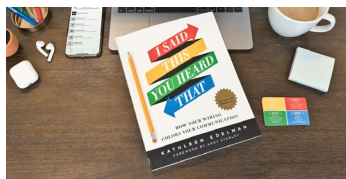
Of course, eventually people realized that a person's preferences aren't related to bile, but the basic observation was still valid.

... which is why, in more recent history, the theory has been packaged as the DISC profile which many of you have heard of.

We've used it extensively here at North Heartland over the years and it has been a huge help in understanding how people think and act ... which has had the effect of improving communication and thereby relationships.

Even more recently, a Christian psychologist by the name of Kathleen Edelman ...

**... wrote a book called *I Said This You Heard That* ...**



- ... which is actually based on the verse from Paul’s letter to the first-century Christians at Ephesus ...
- ... and explains the four temperaments (in terms of colors)
- ... and how understanding them actually helps us do what Paul is talking about in our relationships: how to speak according to *their* needs not ours; how to speak “that” instead of “this.”

It’s a brilliant book and a brilliant concept, and I encourage you to get it and read it along with this series. You can find it on Amazon or another bookseller in paperback or digital form as well as a set of videos with lots of real-life

application.

There's also a version for parents called *A Grown-Up's Guide To Kids' Wiring* which will help you apply the principle to your kids.

Now, in order for the rest of this series to make sense, I need to give you a basic overview of this concept.

And I thought about doing it myself, but instead I thought it might be better to let you watch part of an interview that was done in a church service at North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, GA by one of the pastors there, Clay Scroggins.

It's a little longer than most clips we typically show but it's worth it.

So, let's watch and then I'll come back, and we'll close things out.

## Video Clip – Scroggins Edelman Interview

### Conclusion

So, over the next few weeks, we're going to look at each of the temperaments and their basic needs and how to better communicate with people who are of that type.

Because remember, that's the goal.

**Better understanding leads to better communication and better communication leads to better relationships and better relationships lead to a better life.**

In preparation for that, it would be very helpful for you do something that will greatly increase your understanding and get as many people in your life as possible to do it with you.

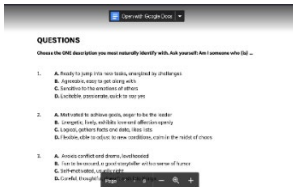
Sometime this week, go to the North Heartland website – [www.northheartland.org](http://www.northheartland.org) – and click on the “I Said This You Heard That” link ...

... which will take you to this page ...



Then scroll down and click the arrow which takes you to a survey that will help you determine your temperament type.

It looks like this.



Ok, let's pray together.

Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> See Acts 18:18-21; 19:1-41

<sup>ii</sup> These are selected from chapters 4 through 6.

<sup>iii</sup> Eph 5:3