

## The Purpose of Communication

What is the definition of communication? Dictionary Definition: the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.

Before we arrived at the church building for worship this morning, thousands of communications passed before us.

- The sound of the alarm clock communicating the need to awake.
- The picture on the box of cereal communicating the need to consume some.
- The sunshine coming through the window communicating warmth.
- The flavor of the toothpaste communicating minty freshness.
- The sign for the Camp Hill exit on 581 communicating it was time to turn in the car.

There are countless verbal and non-verbal communications that pass through our senses and into our minds, most of which we are not even aware of.

What is the primary purpose of human communication? It is to create a new or better awareness of a situation, event, idea, perception or feeling.

- Fast-food restaurants show you the latest burgers to make a new or better awareness that you are hungry for what they have.
- In preparation of a date, a young man and woman will groom and dress a certain way, attempting to create a new or better awareness of each other and for each other.
- The car salesman has the potential customer take a test drive to create a new or better awareness of how much nicer it would be to have a new mode of transportation.
- The widow woman at her husband's funeral wears black provide a new or better awareness of her loss and sadness.
- The young child reaches out his arms to provide a new or better awareness of wanting to be held.

Human communication has the goal to invite another human being to feel something new or better, understand something or someone new or better, take a new or better position, develop new and better relationships, make new or better decisions for the future.

What is the primary purpose of the communication of a Christian? It is to create a new or better awareness of any situation, event, idea, perception or feeling concerning God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, His kingdom, His purpose, His people or His creation.

To best summarize: The communication of a Christian is to draw others, both Christians and the lost, closer to God and all that He stands for. A good Christian communicator is one who causes others through God's eyes.

## The Purpose of Communication

### Luke 10:30–37 *The Good Samaritan*

- There was a lawyer that tempted Jesus with a question about entering eternal life. Jesus said to love the Lord and love your neighbor. Jesus was pretty simple, but the lawyer did not get it. He questioned "Who is my neighbor?" This account is classic Jesus attempting to communicate to not only the lawyer, but to all in the crowd.

30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

- Robbery on the road to Jericho was fairly common in those days. He had the attention of the crowd.

31 "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

- He brought up two of the religious role models of the day, a priest and a Levite. They were considered the representatives of God's mercy to the people. They did not help the robbed traveler, but stepped aside. Jesus was in essence communicating what many of the people in that day had already noticed, the lack of mercy from the religious leaders.

33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

- Samaritans were the half-breed frowned-upon cousins to the Jews. Jesus paints this Samaritan as the good guy, caring for the traveler, showing mercy and compassion for him.

36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

- The lawyer came to a conclusion who his neighbor was and what it meant to be love that neighbor. Jesus caused the lawyer and all the crowd to see the command to *love your neighbor* through the eyes of God.

### Acts 17:22–34 *Sermon on Mars Hill*

- He was reaching out to the educational elites of the Areopagus and started with where they were at, being very religions (22).

## The Purpose of Communication

- He addressed the fact that they had an altar "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD", something that they used to cover any other god they have yet to discover (23).
- He focused on Jehovah, the creator of the universe. Creation was something they might not attribute to Jehovah, but they recognized the creative fact (24) Paul reasoned if Jehovah God created it, then to make an idol, place it in a temple and worship it would be rather vain (25). This would have been something that they might not like to hear, but would be intrigued enough to continue to listen.
- He addressed the fact that this Jehovah God made within all man from the beginning the need to reach out and find Him, but that He would never be out of reach (26-27). Interestingly he quotes one of their famous poets, "For we also are his children" (28). We have to remember that Paul is trying to take them closer to the throne of God, for this is the goal of Christian communications. He was attempting to create a new and better awareness of the one true God.
- He connected the plan of God to Jesus Christ, the Day of Judgment, repentance and the Resurrection from the dead (29-31). He set out to take them to the throne of God and there were three different outcomes.
  - Some mocked, communicating back to Paul they believed it to be stupid.
  - Others wanted to hear more, communicating to Paul they needed more information to make a new decision.
  - Yet some said yes, communicating that they accepted the new information and wanted to make a life-changing decision.

### Acts 25:13-26:32 *Paul before Agrippa*

- Paul had already made his appeal to be tried before Caesar (25:11) and would soon be headed to Rome under armed guard.
- King Agrippa and his wife Bernice had come up from Jerusalem to visit the new governor, Festus, wanting to start off with an amicable relationship (25:13). While visiting together, Festus mentioned to Agrippa about the prisoner Paul, likely because it was well-known in Jerusalem. Since Paul was about to be shipped out, Agrippa wanted to have an investigative meeting with him. It was during this meeting that we can understand the purpose of communication.
- Paul began his defense (26:1) by complimenting Agrippa as being an "expert" in the Jewish customs (26:3). He was priming Agrippa to listen intently to his position, "I beg you to listen to me patiently."
- He reminded Agrippa of some of the past that he would have been familiar with. Paul was a well-known and well-respected Jew, a Pharisee (4-5), a believer in the resurrection from the dead (6-8). He went into great detail about his former life as a persecutor of the church (9-11), something that all the Jewish leadership knew well. We must always start with where they are at and go from there, for that is good communication.

## The Purpose of Communication

- Paul communicated what transpired in his life that led him from being a killer of the church to a leader of the same (12-18). Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and preached the gospel directly to him.
  - We must always remember that our conversation with the non-believer must always be seasoned with the gospel of Christ. Without having that communication first and foremost, there can never be a truly life-changing decision in the end.
- Paul communicated that he responded to the offer from Jesus and as a result felt obligated to communicate this same message of hope to others (19-20). This was why he was arrested and is on trial, not for some crime against humanity, but a service to humanity (21-23). This was the missing part of the puzzle for Agrippa.
- Governor Festus was listening to the same and accused Paul of madness (24), but he was not willing to allow for distraction. Verses 25 *"I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth."*
- Here is how you know that Paul was communicating well. He floated a tie-down question to Agrippa (27) "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do." Paul was attempting to communicate the need for a decision. (28) Agrippa *replied* to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."
- Agrippa was trying to simply investigate the case and bring the Jewish leaders up to speed. By the time Paul finished communicating, Agrippa was in a position to of facing a decision. Though he never did convert, Paul was able to move Agrippa to the "Almost Persuaded" position.

Those were just three examples of Christian communication and the purpose thereof. What can we glean from them concerning carrying out this purpose?

- 1) We must always start out where they are and go from there.
- 2) We must always be genuinely concerned for their souls.
- 3) We must always bring them as close to the throne of God that we can.

Closing Story:

Years ago there was a forgotten old single man that lived in a big city. He was strange and a bit off in personality, being a loner. His name was Michael and he often looked disheveled, unclean and unapproachable. That was until a new guy moved into the apartment next door. He was a Christian name James and he had a gift of communications. Through many weeks James was finally able to can a sentence or two from Michael. A few more weeks later he was bringing him some food and clothing. When Michael asked why this was being offered, James simply said that God loved his soul and therefore I will. In just about 6 months James and Mike were having a functional relationship. They went out to eat together and went to sporting events. It was not long before this outcast of a man was attending Bible studies and even worship services at the

## The Purpose of Communication

building. A few more months of this, Mike wanted to become a Christian by being baptized into Christ. He was no longer quite, but bold about God, His Son and his knew church family. He was thought to be unreachable, but one man loved his soul in the beginning. By the time of his death many years ago, Mike was really helping out in the church family and even shared Christ with other strange souls like himself. Many of them converted. When they buried him he had 6 pallbearers and 6 honorary. The marker on his grave said something like "He loved the souls of many". The man who had not God, not Christ nor a church family left this earth with all three.