

Communication Study Guide

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Series Overview

It is important to keep our communication lines open and our conversations helpful. Not every conversation is of equal importance. Some conversations are higher in risk, the stakes are greater, and the rewards are vital. This study can help people navigate the most important conversations of their lives.

Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection.
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

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1-How to Hear from God

Icebreaker: Listen, Please!

- Divide into groups of two or three. Take one minute to tell the others about your past week. Do this all talking at the same time. Each person should be talking without a pause, for the entire minute, regardless of what the others are saying.
- Discuss how difficult it was to listen to the other person while you were talking.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- What does it mean to have the Spirit of God dwell in you (*Rom 8:9*)?
- Why does it sometimes seem difficult to be led by the Spirit (*Rom 8:14-16, Gal 5:17*)?
- What advice did Eli give Samuel about responding when you think God is calling (*1Sam 3:9-10*)?
- What barriers sometimes cause us to resist hearing from God? How can we overcome these barriers?
- The issue isn't whether He's talking. The issue is whether we are listening. What are some ways to be a better listener to what God is saying (*Rom 12:2, Jas 1:22*)?

Dig a Little Deeper: Is It You, God?

Consider these thoughts about how to tell if it is God speaking to you, or if it is someone else.

- Check every message against His Word (**2Tim 3:16-17**).
- Get to know His voice by regular Bible reading (**Isa 55:9-11**, **John 10:2-5**).
- With a trusted fellow Christian, discuss what you believe God is telling you(**Mat 18:20**).

Application Exercise: Commit to Bible Reading

Begin or renew your commitment to daily Bible reading.

2-Crucial Conversations

Icebreaker: Uncomfortable

Most of us find confrontation uncomfortable, whether we are the one initiating it or receiving it. Make a list of reasons why each side of the confrontation can be uncomfortable.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- Why is Paul concerned with the conflict between members of the Corinthian church? In what ways can conflict interfere with our ability to represent Christ to others?
- The beginning of a conversation is critical. In each verse, notice what Paul said to help the Corinthians feel safe and valued in the conversation:
 - ▶ ***1Cor 1:3***
 - ▶ ***1Cor 1:4***
 - ▶ ***1Cor 1:5***
 - ▶ ***1Cor 1:6***

Discuss how you could say something similar to begin difficult conversations with those in your life.

- After Paul helped them feel safe, he stated the facts of what he heard without guessing their motives (***1Cor 1:11-12***). What can you do to avoid guessing at someone's motives?
- Next, Paul told his interpretation of the facts (***1Cor 1:13-16***). What words could you use to be clear that you are sharing how things appear from your point of view?
- Paul sought to understand how the Corinthians saw the situation, their story (***1Cor 3:3-4***). Discuss techniques for encouraging others to share their views and for listening carefully when they speak.

Dig a Little Deeper: Proverbs on Communication

Think about a few of the many proverbs on communication:

- **Pro 12:22**
- **Pro 15:1**
- **Pro 18:13**
- **Pro 29:20**

Application Exercise: Self-assessment

Consider how well you engage in crucial conversations. For each statement below, indicate how true the statement is for you.

- (1) I begin crucial conversations by helping the other person(s) feel SAFE and valued (**1Cor 1:1-10**).

always	5	4	3	2	1	almost never
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- (2) Next, I state the FACTS without guessing the motives (**1Cor 1:11-12**).

always	5	4	3	2	1	almost never
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- (3) I tentatively tell my STORY to explain my interpretation of what I saw or heard (**1Cor 1:13-16**).

always	5	4	3	2	1	almost never
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- (4) I ask for their STORY and seek to understand (**1Cor 3:3-4**).

always	5	4	3	2	1	almost never
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3-Matthew 18 or Die

Icebreaker: Why Say Something?

When someone does something that bothers you, it is your choice whether or not to say something. What factors do you use to decide if you will say something?

Questions for Study or Discussion

- What are some typical ways that a person can sin against another person (***Mat 18:15***)? Based on the wording of this verse, discuss whether it is always appropriate to confront others with annoying behaviors which are not sins.
- In what way is it helpful to consider how you have contributed to the problem before you confront the other person (***Mat 7:3-5, Heb 12:14-15***)?
- When you believe a person has wronged you, why does God want you to take your concern directly to that person before mentioning the issue to anyone else (***Mat 18:15***)?
- What should your goal be when you take others with you to confront a person (***Mat 18:16***)?
- Discuss what danger there could be in not confronting a fellow Christian who is openly sinning (***Eph 4:25-27***).
- What is the best way to respond when someone confronts you about a wrong they believe you have done to them?

Dig a Little Deeper: Peacemaking

Reflect on these passages related to restoring others and being a peacemaker.

<i>Mat 5:23-24</i>	Attend to unresolved conflict before it hampers your spiritual walk.
<i>Gal 6:1</i>	Gently confront and seek to restore those who sin.
<i>Pro 19:11</i>	Overlook minor offenses.
<i>Php 2:3-4</i>	Care about the interests of others, as well as your own.

Application Exercise: What Will I Do?

Think about the relationships in which you are experiencing frustration or discomfort. For each one, answer the following questions:

- Is the unresolved conflict beginning to hamper my spiritual walk (taking my focus away from God)? How can I prepare myself to have a crucial conversation?
- Have I observed others in open sin? What can I do to confront the sin and express love to them to restore them?
- Is the frustration related to a minor offense? What can I do to graciously overlook the offense and move forward?
- Do I understand the interests of the others? Do they understand my interests? What can I do to help us understand one another better?

4-Sharing Your Faith

Icebreaker: Define Ambassador

Create a definition for the word “ambassador.”

Questions for Study or Discussion

- Why is it impossible to have a relationship with God under your own power (**2Cor 4:7**)? To illustrate this, use the experiences you had before you accepted Christ.
- Tell how you came to know Christ [or how you are considering a relationship with Him now] (**Rom 10:9-10**).
- Tell how accepting Christ as Lord has changed you and given you a relationship with God (**2Cor 5:17-21**).
- Discuss the reality of the struggles and joy of being a Christ-follower (**2Cor 1:3-4**).
- Make a list of the people in your lives that need to know Jesus.

Dig a Little Deeper: Pray

As a group, pray that each believer will be a faithful ambassador for Christ. Pray for the people on your list that need to know Jesus.

Application Exercise: Write Your Faith Story

Part 1: Before You Received Christ (your attitudes, needs, disappointments)	
Part 2: How You Received Christ (how you heard about Christ, reason you accepted Christ)	
Part 3: How Christ Changed You (attitudes, actions, priorities)	
Part 4: What God is Doing Now (what He is teaching you, direction He is sending you)	