

God's Design for Communication

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Preacher: Roger Cryan

[0 : 00] Well, we started last week on that topic of enjoying God's design for communication.! And we finished that topic today. So it's a quick trip through this whole topic of communication,! a topic that you could spend much, much more time on. And there's a lot of good biblical literature books available out there today that covers this topic in a variety of forms. I encourage you to look some of those up. But it's a gift that God has given to us that we've all been using this week. And I trust you've been experiencing some of the good, the benefits of that gift, that tool God has given us. It came to my mind a couple of times this past week, even through the illustration I used last week as I took my screwdriver and tried to use it to pry something up. And it worked for that, but it wasn't designed for that. And as God's gift to us is a good gift and has a design for us to follow. He is the triune God. We took a look at the origin of communication. He exists as Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit. And they communicate with each other in a personal relationship. And that's the importance of the Trinity, God three in one. And so just because they existed as the triune God, there was that communication between them. And then out of his wisdom, his power, his goodness, and grace to us, he made us unique as people, humans made in his image and after his likeness.

And therefore, we are able to enjoy in a unique way, the pleasures of communication that we have with God, that we have with each other, and really enables us to carry on our purpose in life in a more effective way. So we thank God for that. But we also know from God's word, as we took a look last week at a number of examples in the scriptures. And we also know from our experience that people have distorted God's original design for communication. And even this past week, as I was working on this lesson, I had to think, and you know, with Adam and Eve, how strange it must have seemed for them to be first enjoying the wonders of this gift from God and communicating with each other and him.

And then to experience the opposite of that after sin entered their lives and affected the way they communicated with God and each other. What a devastating thing for them to experience and then to live in.

But it wouldn't just be Adam and Eve, we took a look at this as well, that would experience such negative and hurtful and destructive results from sinful communication. But it would be all people that would come after them. Because we then were made after their likeness as they sinned and acquired that sinful nature than we have as well. And as a result, we too distort that wondrous gift of communication as human beings. But what about all those who have been made new creatures in Christ through faith in Jesus Christ? Why do we still communicate sinfully? And this is the portion of the lesson I didn't get to last week. So we've got a little ways to go this morning. And I know when I taught the class on Growing Together in Godliness, I let you know if you do want the notes to review or for some additional help and research, just let me know or let Carol know and she can email them to you.

[4 : 12] But why do we still communicate sinfully? In various places in the scriptures, God shows us the spiritual warfare that we do face even as Christians, or especially as Christians. And the conflict that we do have certainly is with Satan. Unseen to us, but he still roams about, as Peter was telling his listeners in 1 Peter, how he roams about seeking those that he could devour to overcome.

Even those Christians whose purpose is to glorify God. He does not desire that. He doesn't want that. So he roams about in the world and using his ministering spirits to try and overcome them or to bring influences into their lives that would appeal to them and get them to turn away from God and communicate sinfully. And so Satan is one that exists. And there's a world system.

Don't think of the world system as some unseen force out there. But think of it as being made up of people who are not part of the kingdom of God, but rather who are still living out of their sinful nature.

And unknowingly, many times, promoting the ideas of Satan, the one who rules within this world system in opposition to God. So he's not wanting to let go of the kingdom that he still has. Although the gates of hell cannot prevail against God, God is reaching into that kingdom, drawing people out, but he still desires to oppose God and those who are part of his kingdom, part of his family.

So Satan and the world system, but also still existing within us as God's people, our deceitful desires or the flesh, different terms that we see in the scriptures that God uses to describe and help us understand what's going on within us still, even as God's children. And through Paul, Peter and James, God alerts us to the existence of those inner deceitful desires and how they're in conflict with God and what is righteous and what they produce if we get into them. So these are some of those passages that we can thank God for alerting us. Thank you in your goodness to us that you're helping me understand what's going on within me. We have to understand what's going on if we are going to respond biblically and accomplish our purpose in life. So the struggle within some of these verses, Galatians 5, 16 through 17, and I just list these verses and read these verses to give you an overall view of what God is saying and how he's alerting us to what's going on within us.

[7:19] Galatians 5, 16 and 17, but I say walk by the spirit and you'll not gratify the desires of the flesh. So even in that short phrase, you can see that that conflict that's taking in there by you know, if you walk in the spirit, you won't gratify. There's a drawing of these desires and we won't gratify the desires of the flesh for the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing things you want to do. And we're all very aware of that struggle that goes on within us.

And then Peter wrote to his readers these words in 1 Peter 2, 11, Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world, they're new creatures in Christ really, they're still living in the world, but they belong to a different kingdom, but they're still living here.

I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul. So this is not some little thing going on within us.

Because these desires, these fleshly lusts are campaigning, strategizing to gain control over us.

James 4, 1 and 2, what causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? Again, using these military terms to help us understand the extent of this warfare that's going on within us.

[9:00] And then James 1, 13 through 15 shows how sinful communication progresses, where it starts and where it leads to from desires to the outward expression, and then what results from that outward expression.

When tempted, no one should say, God is tempting me, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when by his own evil desire, he's dragged away and enticed.

Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin and sin. When it's full grown, it gives birth to death. Those outer expressions, that which is characteristic of the destructive nature of Satan and his kingdom.

And in some cases, literally, to death. So when I communicate sinfully, either in my speaking or listening, I need to recognize that while there are other enemies that I have, Satan and the world system are all part of that conflict and influencing and providing those influences that would draw me and draw, but more importantly, draw what is within my heart in that direction of those things that are not part of the kingdom of God.

So when I communicate sinfully, I've really lost the battle with sinful desires that's going on within me. You know, it started here a while ago, and it was being nurtured in different ways for different reasons and purposes.

[10:40] And then eventually, as I give into that, it finds expression. There's something I desire so strongly that I'm willing to communicate sinfully to get it.

I take on worldly motives. That's where that world system comes in. We still live in the world, and those worldly ideas, principles are emphasized to us in different manners, different ways, whether we see them on the TV screen, the movie screen, or see them at work from different people, or read about them.

There are all those influences that work their way into our minds, and if we give into them, then eventually they find expression in sinful methods of communication.

I've become convinced that the best way to get it, or get what I want, or to keep what I want, retain it, or to accomplish what I supremely desire, is to communicate sinfully.

I'm just trying to put it different ways. Once I've given over to either the sinful desire or an over-desire, it could be something that I desire that's good, but I have an over-desire for it, I'm then willing to take the action, even sinful action, communication, that I'm most convinced will fulfill that desire.

[12:06] So you see this distortion of sinful communication, where it comes from. Well, there is something that can happen and needs to happen in order for us to truly enjoy God's design for communication.

What are some of your thoughts, even before we go into that? What needs to happen now in order to move a person to enjoying God's design for communication?

We all want to be there. We all want to be there more and more. Some of your thoughts. What has to happen? I think maybe confessing our sin of wrong communication, some of these things, and then asking for God's help.

Yeah, definitely. Yep, that's going to be some of that which is involved. What else? Okay, points of common interest with other people that you're in relationship with, and so that you're not just seeking your own interests.

So there's going to be a change of heart inwardly, and not just looking on my own interests, but the interests of others, certainly.

[13:11] I need to have a desire to communicate with someone, and if I don't have that desire, then I need to check my heart online. Yeah, so there's going to be a need for new desires.

Where does that come from? Where does that start? A new heart. Yeah, a new heart. And that's where we start when we talk about redeeming communication.

There's a change of heart or a change of nature that needs to take place within the individual. Remember that the root of man's trouble is within his own being, his own nature.

We see that in Romans 8, 1 through 8, and I won't read all of these verses here, but as we go down through this passage, you see how Paul, again, alerts people, his readers, to what really is going on in the life, the inner man of the unsafe person.

Verse 3 talks about for what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature. It's an inner weakness that exists within the unsaved individual, the individual who's living apart from God.

[14:24] He still has this sinful nature that controls him, and we all live out of the nature that we have. And so we're not surprised that he's living out of this sinful nature and what he's doing.

And he's talking about the Christian, in verse 4, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, Christians who do not live according to the sinful nature, showing that contrast, but according to the Spirit.

Next phrase, those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. All right? The mind of, done in verse 6, the mind of sinful man is death.

The sinful mind is hostile to God. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. So, I mean, it doesn't, it helps us understand why an individual communicates sinfully.

Now, let me just ask you this question. I didn't want to spend a whole lot of time in here, but I thought it was a good thought to explore with you.

[15:34] Well, does that mean an unsaved person can never say anything good, never can speak kind things to his wife? Okay, I see some head shaking there.

No. Okay. Does that mean he's doing what pleases the Lord then? Oh, that's a little trickier. That does come down to motive.

When we think about an individual, is an individual created to live apart from God? Well, no, he's not created to live apart to God.

So, even if he's living a moral life, which is becoming less and less well-defined by the scriptures, just because he's living a moral life, is he pleasing God?

No. Hebrews 11, 6 says, without faith, it's impossible to please God. So, even though he's living and saying these nice things over here, he's still living out of a sinful nature.

[16:43] I mean, he's still, I'm glad he's speaking kind things to his wife. I mean, maybe common grace of God that he's even able to do that, even with a nature that is totally depraved.

He's not living the true extent of what that nature could be. But he's still living apart from God. We have to be understanding and not forget the true nature of that person.

And that's, I think, how we get over here and thinking that that person really is not such a bad person. How could God deny them from going to heaven? Because his nature is such that he cannot commune with God.

And that is his desperate condition, even though he looks okay and speaks some nice things out here. I'm glad he's doing that. But let's not lose compassion for their true condition over here.

I mean, Jesus would still look on a crowd of people like that and look on them with compassion because they're still harassed and helpless because they're outside of Christ.

[17:54] So that change in nature still desperately has to happen in the life of the individual that even seems to be an okay person.

He's not okay. He needs Christ. And he's missing out on the joy of communicating even nicely because he's doing it apart from God.

We can enjoy a greater level of joy and pleasure in communication in knowing God and Christ than this person ever could even though he's speaking nice things because he's still doing it apart from Christ.

So there needs to be a change in that person's nature. He needs to become a new creature in Christ. And I can move through this somewhat quickly here.

And that change in nature takes place by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We know that. And he might be in Christ. He's a new creation. Paul spoke of it in Galatians 2.20.

[19:00] Been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So the individual who is upon hearing the gospel is quickened by God as Holy Spirit repents and by faith believes that good news. That person is made a new creature in Christ.

He's a new nature. He's set free from the law of sin and death. That's going back to Romans 8.2 if we had time to go back to those verses. He's not living according to the sinful nature any longer, but according to the Spirit of God that now resides in him.

You see this wonderful change that's taken place in the life of the person that now empowers him and enables him to live a new way, even communicate in a different way with new motives, new purposes, even new methods.

And he has a mind that is set on what the Spirit desires. And the Spirit desires for him to commune with God.

[20:07] And he can do that in prayer. That was already mentioned. Romans 8.15, You did not receive the Spirit which makes you a slave again to fear, but you've received the Spirit of Sonship.

And by him we cry, Abba, Father. Father, we can come to him now as a child of God. This new position, new relationship that we have with him. It opens up that desire for us to come and to speak with him, to commune with him, to communicate with him.

And we can give thanks that he's opened up that avenue for us to express that new desire to speak to him, which is what we're always designed to do in the first place.

It's when we're unsaved that we remove ourselves from that privilege of practicing prayer. And it's by salvation that we're brought back into that avenue, that relationship where we can now again do with confidence and an open door what Adam and Eve were doing before sin entered the world and in their hearts.

So it's a great privilege that we have. But he also, we have the opportunity to listen to God and his word and be equipped for life.

[21:26] 2 Timothy 3.15-17. All scriptures, God breathed, God speaking it out to us, God speaking to us.

And that's useful. His counsel is useful for us for teaching, for correcting, for training in righteousness that the man of God might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So remember Adam and Eve back there in the Garden of Eden just drinking in this counsel from God that equipped them for life with each other, life with him, and life in the garden, doing their jobs.

And now, through salvation, now we're there again. Not completely. But we're there again. Well, I shouldn't say not completely.

Probably in a better condition because we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us now to desire the counsel of God, to welcome it, to receive it.

[22:28] And all that counsel that we need for our life of godliness equips us for every good work. I mean, that's great. That's wonderful. Talk about redeemed communication that we have with God.

So that change in nature is essential for us and it brings some great blessings and benefits in how we enjoy communication now, even when we're still waiting for Jesus Christ to come again, where we eventually will enjoy communication unhindered, by the enemies, both without and within.

And that will be beautiful. But some of that beauty we can enjoy now as well. Well, not only a change in nature, but something else is going on as well.

This change of nurture, is how I put it. There's a cultivation of this new life in Christ that we have as Christians. And this nurture is carried on by the Holy Spirit who now resides within that Christian.

We call it that ministry of sanctification. The indwelling spirit is cultivating within that individual new desires that are characteristic of his new nature and his union with Jesus Christ.

- [23:47] He's renewing our thinking through God's word, cultivating within us desires both to will and also to act according to what God desires and what pleases God.

And one of the areas that the Holy Spirit teaches us about in God's word is God's design for communication. Last week, I listed a whole bunch of verses that showed the distortion of communication.

This week, I wanted to provide a list of showing God's design for communication. And again, I've just touched on a few of the verses in the scriptures.

You could go through the scriptures and see all kinds of examples of people who are using communication in a renewed way as God's ambassadors, God's messengers in helping others and receive and hear the message and counsel of God.

Of course, the book of Proverbs is just full of teaching as you see from these verses. Proverbs 13:1, these first few verses relate to how we listen.

- [24:55] A wise son heeds his father's instruction. Proverbs 15. Listen to a life-giving reproof. It talks about heeding correction.

Proverbs 19:20, Listen to advice and accept instruction. Proverbs 22. It talks about paying attention and listening to the wise.

Proverbs 25:12, It says, Listen to a wise man's rebuke, even when it's hard to listen. You know, it's still wise to listen to hard things.

Not just when somebody's offering us nice compliments. Proverbs 18:13, Listen before you speak. Something we need to do.

I've learned that and still learning that. James 1:19, Be quick to hear. Don't jump to conclusions. Listen again before you speak.

- [25:54] Get the facts first. Especially in those situations where you can sense those desires building up within you. Desires that are waging war to control you and to lead you in a different direction of sinful communication.

Be quick to hear in those situations. Slow to speak. Slow to become angry. Again, because the wrath of man does not work or accomplish the righteousness of God.

But remember, in James, it worked those things that were characteristic of death and Satan's kingdom. Destruction. Hebrews 3:12 and 13.

Listen to biblical rebuke so you're not deceived by false teaching. And on again, we could go with other verses and examples in the scriptures on listening.

But what about speaking? Proverbs 12:25, Offer encouragement to a discouraged person. Proverbs 14:25, Be a truthful witness.

- [26:57] Proverbs 15:1, Gentle answer turns away wrath. Don't get drawn into a shouting match. Proverbs 15:4 and 16:24, Speak words that bring healing to a troubled person.

Proverbs 27, It's best to rebuke a friend for his welfare. Proverbs 27. Proverbs 15:23, Determine what's best to say and the best time to say it.

So sometimes people think, Well, let's have to speak the truth, so I just let them have it, you know, and spoke the truth. Well, did you choose the best time to speak the truth?

Did you speak the best way? Did you have the best motive when you spoke the truth? All these things come into play before we communicate and in our communication.

Let's see, I don't know where I left off. Speak what promotes growth in others and is beneficial for their well-being. Ephesians 4.29, Ephesians 6.4, Fathers, and also parents, teach children about Christ and his ways.

- [28 : 05] Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 1 Peter 3.7, Husbands are to speak with consideration and respect toward their wives. 1 Peter 3.1-2, Wives' speech toward husbands should reveal a spirit of willing submissiveness and respect.

In all these things, I'm not saying you don't deal with problems. If there's a problem, you deal with it, but you deal with it out of motives that show that your main concern is love for God and his glory and love and well-being for the other person.

So you're seeking to communicate both in motive and in methods in ways that would honor God and solve the problem and be for the welfare of the person.

1 Thessalonians 4.18, Use doctrine to offer encouragement in times of grief. 2 Corinthians 1.3-4, Comfort those in distress.

Ephesians 6.18, Speak to God on behalf of others. That means pray for one another. 1 Thessalonians 5.17, Speak to God continuously. That's a whole matter of prayer.

- [29 : 13] So we see again in the scriptures, the point is that God has provided us with extensive counsel about communication that makes me think I need this counsel.

You know, he's giving it, he just doesn't give us worthless information. He gives me information I desperately need, even as a Christian that I desperately need, to accomplish this wonderful purpose of enjoying living for God's glory and helping others do the same.

So this counsel reaches again into every area of my life and that's good. Even if other people don't respond to it well, it's still good because my purpose is not to get other people to do what I want them to do and make my life nicer and easier.

My purpose in communication is to glorify God, to honor him, to reflect that which is true of him. So I'm going to do that and make it my ambition to find out what pleases the Lord and then move in that direction.

So that's part of that nurturing process. Well, how do we do that? Again, we see it in scriptures. We do it by submitting to the Holy Spirit and following his leading.

- [30 : 30] How do these characteristics of communication become part of my life? Well, the Spirit of God is there working within me and all that work of the Spirit makes possible even my response to him that God calls me to.

Galatians 5, 16 and 25. So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Since we live by the Spirit, let's keep in step with the Spirit.

So what does that look like? Well, certainly, as Tim mentioned earlier, it involves prayer where we humble ourselves before God asking him for help in our conflict with evil.

Help me to yield myself to you, to what now I know to be true and to actually become a doer of the Word and not a hearer only.

So we're submitting to God in prayer. In regard to our inner man, we cultivate new desires, a mindset that the Spirit is nurturing within us.

- [31 : 37] And that's going to mean identifying sinful motives, desires, ambitions that we have and redirecting our affections to God, replacing them with affections that really are directed toward God and his truth, my loves, honoring Christ and exalting Christ in my desires.

I can tell when there are desires within me that could become either over desires or they're sinful desires. That's what I pray many times.

God, help me when I get up here to speak, not to do it as somebody trying to gain attention for myself, but help me to speak humbly! as a servant, as one representing you.

You know, so we understand that those desires exist within us. to be honest, do I always recognize them and put them off? Well, no, I don't.

How do I know that? Well, it usually results in something I say or do outwardly because whatever's inside at some point is going to be manifested outwardly. I don't want it to get to that place.

- [32 : 44] So I examine those motives and Paul gives this example in Philippians 3.10. He said as priority, knowing Christ, the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of participating in his sufferings.

He encouraged the people in Corinth to make it their ambition to please God in 2 Corinthians 5.9.10, but then also 1 Corinthians 10.31, whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God and we pursue loving God with our whole being.

So that inner man, there's something we are alert to in regard to our inner being. What's going on inside of me? I'm giving attention to that because again, we realize that who I am outwardly and the way I communicate outwardly is flowing out of who I am inwardly.

So what is it that I'm really loving, I'm really desiring, I need to be careful with what is really ruling in my heart, but also in regard to our outer man in how we communicate, listen and speak.

We need to follow the Holy Spirit's leading and what he teaches us about communication. Even through that list, I look through that list, wow, how many of those things are characteristic of how I exercise communication in my listening and speaking.

- [34 : 09] Oh, this one here probably needs some work. Well, we thank God that God has alerted us to that need. And so that means I need to reorient my outer life.

Timothy said, you discipline yourself in this direction of godliness. There's a reorientation that's going to take place in my life. I'm not going to put it off. It's been part of my past life long enough.

I probably brought that over with me from my unsaved days or probably because I've exposed myself to this sinful way of communication in too many different ways and haven't done anything about it.

And as a result, it has once again become part of my outward expression. And it shouldn't be there. I can't be content with that continuing because the glory of God is at stake in my life and also my joy in living that out and also the well-being of other people.

There's too much at stake. for me to let that continue. So I have to reorient my outer life so my communication begins to conform more and more to God's design.

- [35 : 23] And I just put down four steps here that we went through more extensively in a class on growing together in godliness. But that means I'm going to need to identify sinful listening and speaking.

Now other people might help you identify that, which will be good. the wounds of a friend are much more valuable than the kisses of an enemy.

Oh, you're okay. Don't worry about it. Everybody does it. Don't give me those kind of kisses. That's not what is good for me and pleasing to God.

Identify sinful listening and speaking. Then make it my ambition to put off sinful listening and speaking. Well, the best way to put it off is to identify godly listening and speaking and then seek to put that on on a daily basis that you're going to replace what you have been doing with that which is in conformity to God's design of communication.

And when we stumble and fall, we're going to give thanks. As someone mentioned earlier, I'm going to confess to God my stumble, my failure, my sin, and we're going to keep on.

- [36 : 33] I'm not going to wallow in self-pity. You know, I'm going to believe what God says, that he's going to forgive me my sin, cleanse me from all unrighteousness, and I'm going to move on. And move on, hopefully, with the encouragement of other people.
- My wife, my children, my fellow church members who I've shared with them, listen, I've been struggling long enough with this. Please pray for me in regard to this, would you?
- Even ask me in the next week or so, how I'm progressing. Would you do that? And we stand shoulder to shoulder with each other and help each other grow in godliness.
- Well, what's the change? What's the result of these kind of changes taking place? Well, we enjoy life in Christ and God's design for communication with him, each other, and more effectively to accomplish the purpose of life, even when we're still in a sinful world like this.
- well, we can give thanks and I've got some verses listed here, John 13, 16, and 17. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
- [37 : 43] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. There is blessing in following God's design for communication. Luke 11, 28, I love this verse here.
- it was a lady Jesus had just given a superb answer to somebody and the lady says, oh man, blessed isn't the lady that bore that son just so blessed in having a son like that.
- That was a proud mother. You know, who wouldn't want to have a son like that? And Jesus says, he replied, blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.
- I mean, that blessing really, it comes to all of us as we learn these things, these truths of God's design for communication and labor in humble, obedient submission to God to put those things into practice.
- The blessing is ours that we can enjoy. Well, there's other verses there too, James 1, 25 and Psalm 19. But thoughts on communication, enjoying God's design for communication.
- [38 : 54] Trust it becomes our prayer this week and not just our prayer but our discipline that we labor with God's help.
- Any additional thoughts, comments, questions? We've got a minute or two here that I can open that up. I know, that's always a general thing to say at the end here.
- And it's difficult in a group this size to bring something out. So I'm just trying to fill time here now while you're listening or you're thinking if there's anything you want to say or ask.
- Okay, well let's close in prayer. Father, again this morning we give thanks for who you are. What a privilege and honor that we have to know you, Father.
- We understand the great sacrifice that was given that you went through as God to make this possible for us.
- [39 : 59] And now we just pray that by your spirit the counsel you've given to us, encouragement that we can offer each other as a body of Christ, we would learn more and more how to put on your design for communication and we will exalt you in that and also enjoy it and give thanks.
- In Jesus' name, Amen.