

## (Failure to) Communicate

Introductory Illustration: Donna will have been married 35 years this July. We dated almost every week (except two) for two years prior to marriage. We've known each other since starting school. At times, we communicate so well as to not even need words, let alone complete sentences. I would say we are both not only literate, but articulate on average to above average levels. And yet sometimes, and despite all of the above, we completely fail to comprehend what each other has said or is saying! So occasionally, as the saying goes, "What we have here is a failure to communicate!"

At its core, communication is *the transfer of knowledge from one to another*. Effective communication is key to the accomplishment of any endeavor- just ask the people of Babel (Gen.11:1-9). We typically admire and even seek out (especially preachers/teachers) that are "good/effective communicators" because just having the knowledge is only one aspect of "communication"- one must also be able to *transfer* that knowledge effectively. God highlighted both the potential and problems of "communicating" when He commissioned Ezekiel, cf. Ezk.3:4-11.

**We "communicate" with God through prayer.** Even when our "*hearts' desire and prayer*" (Rom.10:1) fails to find the adequate words to express those desires to God, the Spirit helps us by *interceding* with "*groanings too deep for words,*" Rom.8:26-27.

**But God "communicates" with us primarily through His Word(s).** He created us, and provided us with the ability to "communicate" with words, Gen.1:27-31; 2:19-20,23. In the Bible, then, He very carefully and purposefully "communicates" with and through specific and carefully chosen *words* that convey *thoughts* from *His mind* to *ours*, 1Cor.2:9-13. Through these *words* He "communicates" to us:

- From where we originated;
- Why we are here, or what we must do to *please Him*; and,
- Where we are going- eternity either *with* or *without* Him.

Those who say, "The Bible isn't understandable; no one can understand it" indict both the omniscience and omnipotence of God. Why would He give us a "roadmap to eternity" that we (His creation) cannot understand? Such is completely against the *purpose* of the Bible! The *Word(s)* of God, and necessarily our ability to properly/effectively understand them, are of paramount importance! Therefore, we must:

1. *Hear/listen/heed* God's word, (*ignorance* is no excuse, Lev.5:17; Acts 17:30), Acts 17:11;
2. *Know, understand, and abide/practice truth*, John 8:31-32;
3. Be unwilling to *add to* or *take from* or *distort/change* God's Word, Deut.4:2; 12:32; Prov.30:5-6; Gal.1:6-8;
4. *Speak the same thing*, 1Cor.1:10; Col.3:17; 1Pet.4:11; and,
5. Be unwilling to *go beyond* or *not abide in* God's Word, 1Cor.4:6; 2John 9

What might **prevent** us from properly understanding, and therefore benefitting from, God's communiqué to us?

- A. **Preconceived notions or ideas and pride/arrogance, John 8:33ff.** It is well known that we don't really like change. Therefore, we cling to "the way I've always been taught" or "the way I've always believed" even in the face of contrary evidence from God's word.
- B. **Being *carnally-minded*, 1Cor.2:14-16.** Such can render us as either *uninterested* in pursuing and knowing God's will, or make us so *self-centered* as to prevent us from properly understanding it. God's word is about salvation from sin and eternal damnation through loving grace of God through His Son, Jesus Christ- not about how to make our lives more like we want them. I fear we've shunned a *social gospel* espoused by denominations only to adopt a *self-centered* one about improving *my* life and relationships. (Our emphasis on "Parents & Children" this year focuses on getting our children to *submit to God's will* and preparing them to stand before their Creator in judgment, not about *submitting to our will* and cleaning their rooms!)
- C. **Evaluating and elevating *man's wisdom over God's revealed wisdom*, 1Cor.1:18ff.** The more we relegate the Bible to the status of being *outdated* and *irrelevant* (as it pertains to man's origins, child-rearing, gender identity, sexual relations {pre-marital, extra-marital, or homosexual}), and conversely estimate and elevate man's wisdom over it, the more we move toward the "*no remedy*" status of Judah in 2Chron.36:16.

#### Conclusions:

- **The Bible came from God; He is responsible for its contents; it is God's Word for man, 2Tim.3:16a;**
- **It is to *teach* (educate regarding what is *right*), *reprove* (manifest what is *wrong*), *correct* (tell how to get *right*), and *train* (how to stay *right*), 2Tim.3:16b; that,**
- **We may be not only *of God* (belonging to Him), but *adequate* (properly prepared to function as planned/designed) and *equipped* (finished; accomplished; fully qualified), 2Tim.3:17.**

**That, my friends, is why *the gospel* (from beginning to end) is *God's power to save*, Rom.1:16!**