

Communication Skills Our Conversation

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald teaches the importance of effective communication skills in fostering meaningful conversations among Christians.

Duration: 28:14

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 6:4, Ephesians 4:28-31

Topics: "Communication"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of effective communication and conversation skills. He emphasizes the need to speak truthfully and avoid lying, as well as the importance of controlling anger and not giving in to the devil. The speaker also highlights the significance of being positive, thankful, and filled with gratitude in our speech. He encourages listeners to ask meaningful questions, be good listeners, and show genuine interest in others. The sermon references Ephesians 4:25, Ephesians 5:4, and Philippians 2:3 as biblical guidance for building communication skills.

Transcript

Uh, and what I'd like to speak about is, um, our conversation. Or you might call it building communication skills. Some people are excellent conversationalists.

Some of the rest of us aren't. I'm really speaking to myself this afternoon, but you can listen. Um, oftentimes you can tell when a man speaks what the greatest need in his, one of the great needs in his own life might be.

So shall we turn to Ephesians chapter 4? I'd just like to read a few verses and one in particular. Ephesians chapter 4 and beginning with verse 25. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and the margin of my Bible says here, to the use of edifying as the need may be.

Maybe if you have another version of the Bible it says something like that. As the need may be, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, it really should be God in Christ, has forgiven you. Not so much God for Christ's sake, but God in Christ.

When you say God for Christ's sake, it almost sounds as if God is unwilling, but that the Lord Jesus comes and pleads with him and therefore he's willing. But it doesn't mean that. It means even as God in Christ, in the work, through the work and person of the Lord Jesus, has forgiven you.

Now the verse I'm particularly interested in is verse 29. As you might have guessed, let no corrupt communication. Somewhere I read that that word corrupt could be translated worthless.

And that's the thought that I have particularly in mind this afternoon. Let no worthless communication proceed out of your mouth. But that which is good to the use of edifying as the need may be, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Building communication skills. How do we do it? Do we ever think about the conversations that we engage in? Do we ever plan them under the spirit of God? When you meet somebody, where do you go from there? Well, I would like to suggest step number one. Step number one, take the initiative in asking meaningful questions.

Take the initiative in asking meaningful questions by which you try to draw people out. I'm sure you've noticed in the Gospels that the Lord Jesus was always doing this, wasn't he? The questions of the Lord Jesus are a study in themselves. He never asked a question because he didn't know the answer.

He asked so that we, the apostles, and then we ourselves, would get to know the answers as well. For instance, he said, Whom do men say that I am? That was a good question, wasn't it? Whom do men say that I am? He had come to the watershed of his teaching ministry here on earth. The experience in Caesarea Philippi.

He wanted the disciples to know in their heart who he was, because if they knew who he was, then they'd be able to face the cross and the tomb and all that lay ahead, because they'd know they were on the winning side. So he said to them, Whom do men say that I am? On another occasion, he said to the Jews, What think ye of Christ? Meaning, what do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he? The idea is when the Messiah comes to the earth, who will he be? From whom will he be descended? And of course, that was easy. They knew he would be the son of David.

Everybody admitted that, but the Lord Jesus had further questions to ask them. He was not only David's son, he was David's Lord, and he wanted to impress that deeply on their hearts so they would never forget it. On another time, he asked a rhetorical question.

He said, Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? They didn't have to answer that one. That's just a question that hangs there in mid-air for men of all times to contemplate. Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? Well, now, we can take a leaf from the book, a page from the book of the Lord Jesus, and we can use this method in building communication skills.

We can learn to ask intelligent, leading questions that will draw people out. You say, well, give me, for instance. Well, you meet a person and you can say, I don't think I ever heard about your conversion.

I'd be interested to hear about your conversion. Hopefully the person's a Christian. You know, that's a wonderful thing.

No two conversions are alike. There are features in common with all conversions. But it's a thrilling thing to hear of God's dealings in grace in the lives of men and women, isn't it? It's a thrilling thing.

I believe that will be part of heaven. I believe that will be part of what heaven will be, an unfolding of the riches of his grace, his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, and the wonderful weaving of God's plan. Well, you can start down here.

And you can ask a person, I'd be interested to hear how you were saved. I had the joy of meeting a man this morning, probably here saved one month. I'm sorry I didn't have time to hear more about it.

Another question you can ask, and I find it very helpful. If you're talking to a Christian, have you had any thrilling answer to prayer lately? That's perhaps a little better than saying, when is the last time you had an answer to prayer? I mean, that puts them on the spot a little. But maybe you just word it with velvet gloves.

You say, have you had any thrilling answers to prayer lately? Well, actually, they are going on all the time. And I do feel that we make a mistake in our prayer meetings that we don't allow time, some way or other, for Christians to share the way God has been answering prayers in their life. You know, here's a man, and he's in business, and he's lost his briefcase during the week.

And they search high and low for the briefcase, and it has important papers in it, and they can't find it anywhere. And he goes to prayer, and he gets his friends to pray with him, his Christian friends, and in a marvelous way, God leads him to the briefcase. And he says, well, I'd like to hear about that on Wednesday night, wouldn't you? To know that God is still in the business of answering prayer.

And we live in a world of miracles. I believe in miracles. I really do.

They're going on all the time. And when I say that, I mean that things that wouldn't happen according to the laws of chance or probability, and they do happen. And I tell you, I don't want to get away from that in my life.

I don't want to just succumb to the chill of my environment and fail to rise above flesh and blood. I want to see my life crackle with the supernatural. I want to see it radioactive with the Holy Spirit.

And I love to hear the testimony from Christian people of what God is doing in their lives as well. Have you had any thrilling answers to prayer lately? Tell me about it after the meeting. Another good question, I think, when you meet your Christian friends, you can ask them this.

You can say, have you read any good edifying books lately? Some of the great blessings that have come into my life have come through the reading of books, and usually books that somebody has mentioned to me. Years ago, I got down on my knees and I asked the Lord to be lord of my bookshelf, lord of my library. I said it like this, Lord, you know that in my lifetime I'm only going to be able to read a certain number of books.

And I don't want to read froth. I don't want to read trivia. I want to read books that will be meaningful, that will change the direction of my life.

Well, you know, God hears prayers like that. He really does. If we're really simple in our faith with him and mean business with him, he hears.

And somebody comes along and says, hey, brother, I was reading this book lately and it really has been a blessing to me. God, I read it and it's a blessing to me, too. Have you read the book Knowing God by J.I. Packer? Well, it's splendid.

I'll tell you, if you can write a doctrine book, a book on Christian doctrine so that it stirs up the hearts of God's people to go out and worship to him, I think that's great. Knowing God by J.I. Packer. Have you read Born Again by Colson? It's a splendid book, really.

Splendid book. Wonderful story of the conversion of that man. Well, you can do this.

You ask people these questions. You say, yeah, but supposing you're talking to an unsaved person, what do you say? I have to chuckle every time I think of dear brother Paul Little. He used to say to people when he'd meet them and didn't know whether they were Christians, and I'd say, would you say you're a Christian or on your way to becoming one? Well, I don't know, but the ice is broken, you know, and you can go on from there.

It was my privilege in earlier days to fellowship quite a bit with dear Dr. Ironside, H.A. Ironside. I was working in a bookstore out in Oakland, and he was president of it, living in Chicago. And he used to come west sometimes of time.

It was my privilege to drive him around and be with him. And he was like that. He was always asking me questions as if I knew anything about the Bible.

That was the beautiful part about it, you know. And I remember one day we were driving over the Bay Bridge, and I was driving and he was sitting there, and he said to me, Bill, he said, did you ever think about that verse in 1 Corinthians? What do you think that verse means anyway in 1 Corinthians chapter 6? And he quoted it from memory. He said, verse 4 it is, if you'd like to see it in the King James.

Don't look in another version because it gives the answer away. It says in verse 4, 1 Corinthians 6, if then ye have judgment of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. Set them to judge.

This is about Christians going to law one against another. Now he said, isn't that a funny thing? He said, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. He said, is that what you do? Well, of course he let me sit there for a while in complete and utter ignorance.

I never knew there was a problem there. And then he said to me, do you think it might mean this? Do you think it might be a question? When you have these problems coming up among Christians, do you set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church? And that is the men of the world, the ungodly judges of this world. Is that the people you take your problems to? People who are of no standing in the church at all? Well, I think if you have the New American Standard Bible or some of the other Bibles, it makes it a question.

That's why I say it solves the problem. But I didn't have it then. But I'll always thank God for Dr. Einstein.

He was always doing that with me. He was always asking me questions about the word graciously, you know. And after I'd think about it for a while, and of course I didn't know the answer, he knew I didn't know the answer, but he wanted me to know it.

And then he would tell me. And it's interesting. I think I could take you to the place on the bridge where that went on.

You know what I mean? It's so vivid in my mind today. What was it? Oh, I think it was a spirit-guided conversation, don't you? The man knew something about building communication skills. And he was there to help a young believer in his onward journey.

Well, the day just before, we're down there singing it, maybe at morn, and he leaned across to me and he said, What place did music have in New Testament evangelism? Well, I never thought of it before, but I will. And that's the very thing. And he gave an object lesson of exactly what I was going to talk about in just a few minutes.

Now, I don't think this will come to you and me overnight. I think it's something we have to develop, don't you? But what better way among Christian people than when we come together to talk, to talk about the things of the Lord, to talk about the word of God, to share blessings that we receive, and to ask questions that might bring up these things in the minds of others. That's the first step, then.

Take the initiative in asking meaningful questions. Number two, be a good listener, showing a sincere interest in what the other person is saying. That's good.

Be a good listener, showing a sincere interest in what the other person is saying. It's so easy for us, in a conversation, to listen with one ear, waiting for the person to come up for air, and then dive in with both feet. You know? But Paul says in Philippians chapter two, verse three, And so it's a good thing to be a good listener.

There's a brother in Chicago, I won't mention his name, very dear brother, and when he meets you, and you start talking, he hangs on your words, and you get the definite impression that that's the greatest thing that's happened to him all day, meeting you. And you know, everybody loves him. Everybody loves him.

It's a nice thing, a nice virtue, that he's sincerely interested in people. He's interested in what you have to say. He's really a people man, and as I say, everybody loves him.

A good listener is not only popular, but after a while he gets to learn something too. Everything you and I know today, we've learned. We don't have anything we didn't receive.

Isn't that right? I often say, I don't think I've ever had an original thought in my life. I thought I did once. And then I read Ironside on Ephesians one, and he had it there years ago.

He really did. I probably got it from there too, and didn't realize it. A good listener looks at the person who's speaking, instead of letting his gaze wander all around the room while the person is speaking.

A good listener doesn't interrupt with every random thought that comes into his mind. He doesn't sigh or yawn as if he needed some nightfall. And he responds with smiles and nods of agreement whenever they're in order.

It's good to be a good listener, isn't it? It's good to be a good listener. This is part of developing good communications skills. Then the third thing I would like to suggest this afternoon is always seek to edify.

You notice that in the verse that we read. Always seek to edify. It says, Let no worthless communication proceed out of your mouth, but rather that which is good to the use of edifying, as the need may be that it may minister grace unto the earth.

When I talk with you, when you talk with me, we should have a mutual desire to build one another up in the most holy faith. And incidentally, in that connection, we should try to be a thermostat instead of a thermometer. A thermometer reflects the temperature around.

A thermostat determines the temperature. And when you talk, you can determine the temperature of the conversation, can't you? Very, very important. In speaking to people, it's good to find out their interests and seek to build on that basis.

Try to make spiritual applications. Some people have a real gift in this. A subject comes up and immediately they see a spiritual application.

I think Dr. Barnhouse was a master at that. I don't think there was anything in creation that he couldn't see some spiritual application for. That's a great thing.

I may have told some of you that one time I was standing with dear Fred Elliott out in LaGrange, Illinois. He was visiting back there. And we were standing outside the chapel.

It was right near the Burlington tracks. And we were standing there talking about the things of the Lord after the meeting. And as we were talking, our conversation was drowned out by the Burlington Zephyr going by.

You know, these two huge diesel engines just went vroom right through the village there, you know. And after the noise was down, Brother Fred tapped me on the shoulder and he said, Power, brother, but nothing like the power that raised him from the dead. You see, I saw the Burlington Zephyr.

He saw the resurrection of Christ. It's good to be like that, isn't it? Good to be able to make spiritual applications from these things that come up in life. And in that connection, I think we all feel this, but we need to be reminded of it, that in our speech and in our conversation, we should really make a determined effort to avoid trivia.

It's so easy when we get together and talk to spend the time over things that really aren't that important. In fact, I brought along a little illustration of it this afternoon, and I'd just like to play it to you. Now, don't feel embarrassed because it isn't any of you here, but it might ring bells if this tape recorder will work.

Most tape recorders are demon-possessed. I hope this one isn't. Okay, let's listen carefully, and I hope it will come over with sufficient volume.

It's a shame that you weren't here for Sally's wedding. Let me go back. That was my fault, not the tape recorder's.

Harry, did you have a good vacation? It was such a shame that you weren't here for Sally's wedding. Did you hear about it? It was really something. You would have loved the men's outfits.

They wore that latest style for weddings, purple tuxedos. Isn't that fantastic? And you should have seen the shirts they wore. They were avocado greens with ochre-colored ruffles down the front.

Ochre? Well, you and I might call it muddy orange, but you know Sally. She always does things just right. The ochre was to please the groom's mother because that was the color of her dress.

Oh, and their shoes. Mary, have you ever seen avocado-colored lizard-skin shoes? They rented them for the occasion, you know. Sally's mother told me that, and I guess it's better not say too much about it.

You know how critical people can be. The bridesmaids were outstanding in their orange dresses with lavender polka-dotted ruffles. And the bride was pretty too.

It's the first time I've ever seen a bride carrying hydrangeas. But Sally certainly has a style all of her own. Oh, do you really have to leave, Mary? I wanted to tell you about the reception.

Well, I hope that doesn't make you wish you were at the wedding. But it's an example of trivia, really. And I asked myself, you know, a hundred years from today, what difference will it make that she carried hydrangeas? And incidentally, you could have done that with a man talking too.

Don't want to discriminate against the women. You could have a man talking about the baseball scores, caught up in a world of baseball or anything like that, while above us burns the vision of the Christ upon the cross. So easy.

So easy in our conversation just to be taken up with trivia. Now, you've been asking questions. You've been listening to the person talk.

The time comes when you want to comment too, of course. And I think this is very important. Maybe there's something that you can add to what the person has said.

This is always a joy to us in the work of the Lord. I think when we're up ministering the word of God and at the end of the meeting, some person comes with maybe a splendid illustration of what has been said. Maybe some balance of truth that we haven't seen at all.

I tell you, it's a wonderful thing. People commenting on what has been said and adding to it, maybe making a correction. And this is important too.

This helps us in our conversation and keeps us from becoming people of extremes. What else? Well, I think it's a good idea to praise whenever you can. To praise whenever you can.

You know, a lot of people's lives, very little sunshine comes. It's a nice thing every day to bring at least some sunshine into a person's life. There's a difference between praise and flattery.

We should avoid flattery. And sometimes in our efforts to avoid it, we avoid praise too. What is flattery? Well, flattery is saying something to a person that seems like praise and is utterly insincere.

Utterly insincere. You don't believe it at all. It isn't true at all.

And you go ahead and say it. But praise is when it's genuine. And the Apostle Paul followed this dictum, didn't he? And you've noticed it in his epistles.

Generally speaking, in his epistles, he begins them with something praiseworthy about those to whom he was writing. He doesn't have any in the Epistles to Galatians. And it seems to be fire and thunder there.

Because of the doctrinal era that was creeping in. But even in the Corinthians, he could be thankful to God that they were enriched with all utterance and knowledge. There was really not much credit to them.

It was the gift of God, the grace of God. And yet he finds time at the beginning of his letters to drop a word of praise and encouragement. And this is a great thing to people today.

Then, in our conversation, we should be positive, not negative. You know, didn't Al Gibson speak about the person who was born in the objective case and the kickative mood? Something like that. Well, we don't have to be like that.

We can be positive, not negative. We can be thankful, not complaining. Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 4. Ephesians chapter 5, just quickly.

And verse 4 says, Neither filthiness nor foolishness, talking or jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving us thanks. What a wonderful thing to be filled with thanksgiving day by day. People like to be around a person like that.

Now turn this tape over and the rest of this message is on the other side.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12433.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/communication-skills-our-conversation/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net