

"Learning to Communicate"

Ephesians 4:25-32

[New Small Group Leader interest form](#)

LEARN

[Tracing God's Story: God's Eternity Pt. 1](#) (25:58) We are now ready to explore the final scene of our study of the Bible as one grand story of God's saving work in the world—a work that culminated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His Son. We can call this scene "God's Eternity." As we dig into this part of the story, we will take some time to remember that we are to see ourselves as a significant part of this story. This is the key to applying all that you are learning about God to your life. Supplemental books/workbooks can be purchased [here](#).

1. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. What stood out to you from the passage and the sermon?
2. Read Matthew 12:34 and Ephesians 4:20-24. Pastor Scott noted that "communication problems aren't speech problems—they're heart problems." Why is it impossible to fix communication through behavior modification alone?
 - a. The Overflow of the Heart: Our words expose what the heart truly wants or values; the battle for the mouth must be fought in the heart.
 - b. Gospel Transformation: Real change is not about learning better "techniques" but about a transformation of the heart by the Spirit, which then produces new speech.
3. In Ephesians 4, Paul moves from orthodoxy (right belief) to orthopraxy (right practice). How should "learning Christ" specifically reach our speech?
 - a. Big Idea: The transformation of our hearts must reach to our speech.
 - b. Having laid aside the "old self" and put on the "new self" created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (v. 24), our speech must display our new identity in Jesus.

PRACTICE

1. Discuss the metaphor of "rotten fruit" (*sapros*) in verse 29. How have you seen sinful speech "infect" the atmosphere of a home?

- a. Saprois means rotten, putrid, foul, or rank. Like a single rotten apple left in a basket releasing ethylene gas and spoiling the others, corrupting words spread a contagious atmosphere of decay.
 - b. Categories of Rotten Words:
 - i. Bitter / Angry Words: Intentional attacks, name-calling, fault-finding, passive-aggressive statements, public humiliation (Ps 64:3).
 - ii. Rash / Reckless Words: Careless piercing, complaining, unloading (Prov 12:18).
 - iii. Deceitful / Lying Words: Words smooth as butter while war is in the heart (Ps 55:21); traps, ambushes; using extreme absolutes like "always" or "never".
 - iv. Boastful / Arrogant Words: Demeaning statements, threats, or silent treatment intended to crush others and exalt self.
 - c. Words are never neutral—they spread either the fragrance of death or life (Prov 18:21).
2. Paul pictures every conversation as part of a great "construction project." What are practical ways to ensure our words function as a "construction worker" rather than a "demolition crew"?
 - a. Speak "good" words (noble, blessing, honest) that build, strengthen, establish, and mature.
 - b. Edification includes correction/rebuke, but its aim is to build up—careful, private, loving, and sandwiched with evidences of grace.
3. What does it look like to choose words that fit the occasion and "learn to discern" the needs of the moment?
 - a. Level 1 (Seek to Understand):
 - i. Recognize men often seek to fix/solve, while women often seek understanding. Replace assumptions with questions using Observe, Interpret, Clarify. Learn to listen well; try not to offend, but also try not to be easily offended. (Note: Removed outdated phrase "communicative constipation").
 - b. Level 2 (Grow in Consideration — Powlison's 3 Circles):
 - i. Physically Embodied: Are they physically exhausted, lacking sleep, or dealing with medical issues? (Adjust conversations accordingly—a 3 AM fight often looks much smaller after a good night's sleep).

- ii. Socially Embedded: What past family baggage, work stress, or cultural expectations are affecting them right now?
 - iii. Spiritually Embattled: Is their communion dry, hope low, or are they under spiritual attack? Wisdom knows what kind of words to share (Prov 12:18).
4. Rules of Engagement: When you "lock horns" in a disagreement, which of these Gospel-centered rules do you need to apply most this week?
- a. Speak not in emotion.
 - b. The angrier one prays first.
 - c. Commit to believing the best.
 - d. Stay away from motives of the heart.
 - e. Fight as one (the battle isn't against each other).
 - f. Stay close (grace touches, eye contact).
 - g. Listen fully before answering.
 - h. Start with self (first to admit and confess).
 - i. Accept apologies.
 - j. Forgive.

CHANGE

1. Husbands:
- a. Am I using my words as "weapons" (swords/arrows) or as "means of grace"?
 - b. Do I lead by repentance and confession when "rot" spills out of my mouth?
 - c. Does my wife regularly experience God's kindness through my words and prayers?
2. Wives:
- a. Have disappointments or unmet expectations turned into "rotten" bitterness, rash words, or passive-aggressive silence?
 - b. Am I functioning as a "construction worker" or a "demolition crew" in my home right now?
 - c. How can I practice gracious, loving correction this week rather than stewing on the inside?