

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-1 What is Effective Communication?

The ministry of Jesus contains many amazing stories. Can you imagine listening as he taught the disciples or as he preached to the crowds? Picture yourself seeing him heal the sick. As he did all these things he effectively communicated truth about God. He showed the Father's love and concern for all people.

Jesus used oral stories to effectively reveal truth. Such stories enabled his disciples then and now, to learn about the character of God. In this way everyone could hear truth, not just the educated religious leaders. Since everyone could repeat a story, they all could also teach truth to others. Stories present truth in a way that all can reflect and act upon their truth.

Our approach to learning at the Oral Learners Bible Institute uses the stories from the Bible. The stories from scripture become the core of each truth we want to teach. Each story is explained with added insights about the places and culture of that day. We end with two insights, why the story is important to believers today, and the eternal truth the student should remember. We end with a few questions to remind the student of the content of the story. Finally we give an assignment that is based on the main truth of the lesson.

In this course on effective communication, we will discuss the many ways we can share our faith with both believers and non-believers. We want to encourage all believers that they are able to communicate God's truth to others. Because we are God's children, he will help us share our faith in an effective way. In the first two lessons we will discuss what it is that makes communication effective.

This first lesson will look at the longest teaching Jesus gave. It is called the "Sermon on the Mount." Jesus began with the good news that God wants to bless his people. We should also begin with good news to be effective. The word "blessed" means to experience the good things God wants to give his people. The blessed people are those who have the following qualities. They are not proud or self-sufficient. They are humble and do not seek power for themselves. They hunger and thirst for righteousness from God. They are merciful because they have found God's mercy. They are pure in heart, seeking to please God. They are peacemakers. Even when persecuted for doing what pleases God, they rejoice (Matt 5:3-10). Each of these qualities comes from knowing God. He wants his people to exhibit these attributes in their lives. Those who do will experience blessings in this world and eternal life with God.

Jesus also talked about the contrast between following man-made traditions and following the will of God. He wanted people to know the difference between false and true faith. Man-made rules can control only outward and visible behavior. Jesus said that our righteousness must go deeper, because God sees the heart of each person and knows the reason for their actions. Christ discussed motives like anger, lust, and revenge. These are what he wanted to be removed from the hearts of his disciples.

He also taught about the “works” of religion, such as giving to the poor, saying prayers, and ritual fasting. These outward acts do not earn God’s favor. Instead, praying from the heart, fasting, and giving should be disciplines that help us hear his voice. Jesus taught that we should trust our loving heavenly Father and follow his leading.

Christ ended his sermon with a parable. A parable is a story from everyday life that presents spiritual truth in a simple way. The story is so everyone can understand the truth. This one teaches us what the result of effective communication will be. It is called the “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders.” It concerns hearing and acting on what you hear. Jesus said,

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matt 7:24-29).

This parable teaches that just hearing the words of Jesus will not bring blessing. To be blessed, people must both hear his words and put them into practice. The doing of God’s will is what counts in the end. The religious leaders of that day were guilty of this very thing. They listened to the words of God, but did not follow them.

What does this teach about effective communication? We are sharing effectively when people not only hear our words, but also understand God’s will and then do it. The decision to follow God’s will is left to each person. In the end God’s favor rests on those who act on his truth.

Jesus demonstrated how to communicate effectively with others. He required his listeners to put his words into practice. His words and actions always sent out the same message—the message he had received from his Father. The promises of God’s blessings are for those who have a changed heart *and* changed behavior. We too must be sure that our actions and our words are sending the same message, if we want to communicate effectively.

This lesson is **important** because it shows that effective communication for Jesus meant speaking words and modeling actions that changed both people’s hearts and their behavior.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the blessings of God are for those who have a changed heart *and* changed behavior.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. From whom do all real blessings come? [Pause]
A. If you said, “God is the source of all real blessings,” you answered correctly.
2. What truth did Jesus teach in the parable of the wise and foolish builders? [Pause]
A. If you answered that Jesus taught that everyone who hears his words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock, you are correct.

3. What does this lesson teach about the effective communication that Jesus practiced?

[Pause]

A. If you answered that the words and actions of Jesus always sent out the same message, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the parable of the “Wise and Foolish Builders.” After telling this story to someone else, ask these questions, “Are you a wise or foolish builder when it comes to your life? Are you acting on the truth of the words of Jesus or just hearing them and then following someone or something else?”