

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-15 Method: Using Proverbs

Every language has familiar “pieces of wisdom” or moral sayings. Some such sayings act like a parable and compare two things that are different, yet similar in some way. Proverbs are shorter than parables, but are a time-honored way to convey truth. Some sayings may at first seem to go against common sense. They sometimes deal with human nature that desires to live without God. The Bible contains an entire book of the wisdom sayings, or Proverbs, of King Solomon. Jesus used similar sayings to communicate spiritual truth. When correctly understood, they can also be used in ministry today. This lesson will illustrate the communication method of using proverbs, by explaining the meaning of a few of the proverbs that Jesus used.

Number One: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matt 6:24). Here Jesus taught that no person can be obedient to two different bosses. True love and obedience can’t be divided. People may say they have a spiritual desire to serve God, but fail because they submit to their human desires. They perhaps make money their real god. A common misunderstanding of the Jews was that material wealth was evidence of God’s approval. Jesus required the disciples to decide that he alone would be their Lord and Master. A person cannot serve two masters.

Number Two: Jesus said, “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Matt 19:24). Jesus addressed the subject of money again, because he had just invited a rich young ruler to follow him. Christ asked that he sell his possessions to become a disciple. Instead, the man refused to give up his wealth and walked away. Then Jesus made this statement about a camel and a needle. The twelve were astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus responded, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” The things that seem impossible to us, God can accomplish. When anyone turns to Jesus in faith—rich man or poor man—that event signifies a miracle.

Number Three: Jesus knew that men and women tend to worry about the future. Such concern leads to an unhealthy worry about food, clothing, and shelter. Jesus indicated that worry is really a lack of faith. Only unbelievers should have these concerns. Those with faith should seek God, and his rule in their lives. Jesus concluded with these words, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt 6:34). Yes, this life has troubles, but we are not to let an unknown future control our present life. Do not let worry rule your heart. Instead, seek God’s kingdom rule for your life and trust that he will supply all your needs.

Number Four: One day a crowd of religious men brought an adulteress to Jesus. They wanted her stoned to death for her sin. Actually, they wanted to condemn Jesus for breaking the Law of Moses, so they could stone him too. They hoped to use this woman as their bait. They acted like righteous judges wanting to rid the world of evil. When the leaders kept on questioning Jesus, he said to them, “Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone” (John

8:7). Jesus meant that the one who judged another must be righteous and without sin. Only God qualifies to make such judgments. Only Jesus, of all those present that day, was without sin. One by one the leaders left. He then instructed the woman to leave her life of sin. Instead of judging her, he showed her mercy.

Number Five: He also told them this proverb: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit?” (Luke 6:39). Here Jesus addressed the issue of false teachers. The answers to Jesus’ two questions seem obvious. Blind people can’t lead other blind people. He went on to explain that people blinded by planks can’t remove specks of dust from other people’s eyes. The Pharisees taught many of false doctrines. They often tried to correct Jesus for what they considered breaking small points of Jewish law—like healing on the Sabbath. The meaning of the proverb was obvious to everyone. People who follow false teachers may end up in a pit, trapped together with them. This led him to the truth that disciples become like their teacher. Jesus, with a great sense of humor, left a lesson on the dangers of false teachers.

Number Six: Jesus encouraged us to trust God for the things we need. He said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matt 7:7). He wanted the disciples to see God as a loving earthly father. He encouraged them to keep asking, seeking, and knocking, knowing God would act. Just as God would respond in love, so disciples were to respond when others have needs. Jesus concluded, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 7:12). This is often called the “Golden Rule.” It is a positive command to help believers show practical love. Many false religions say, “Refrain from doing evil, it is the most you can do.” Jesus teaches the opposite; always try to treat others well! Look for ways to act positively with love.

Because proverbs are short, they are easy to remember. If teachers remember the context of the proverb, they are able to deliver the central truth to others. The one listening to the proverb can be encouraged to consider how it applies to their own life.

This lesson is **important** because it demonstrates the variety of truths Jesus dealt with using two or three thought-provoking statements.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that using proverbs communicates spiritual truth easily to both believers and unbelievers.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What two masters did Jesus say are impossible to serve at the same time? [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered that one cannot serve both God and money, you are correct.
2. What did Jesus mean when he said, “Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone?” [Pause.]
 - A. If you said, “Jesus taught that the one who would judge another must be righteous and without sin,” you are right.
3. Why did Jesus use proverbs in his communication with his hearers? [Pause.]

A. If you said that Jesus used proverbs that were easy to remember in order to communicate spiritual truth, you are correct.

Your **assignment** consists of learning the story about the two masters and telling it to someone who has not heard it before. Then ask them this question, “What other things might people consider serving besides money? Is there a possibility of serving anything *along with* God?” The answer is no. God requires all our love and obedience. Not only did he create us, but he sent his Son to pay the price for our salvation.