

Read the Room: Communication in Proverbs

- Last week we discussed the importance of watching your heart, listening, being quiet and giving thought before speaking. Let's continue our discussion of healthy communication.

When and when not to correct

- Proverbs 9:7-9 Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.
- Proverbs 26:4-5 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.
 - Read the room! Or better yet . . . read the person. Be aware. Pay attention. Do your best.
- Proverbs 23:9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.
- Proverbs 27:5-6 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Be fair

- Proverbs 12:17 Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit.
- Proverbs 18:17 The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.

Keep Cool

- Proverbs 14:29 Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
 - Ecclesiastes 7:9 Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.
 - James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;
- Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
 - Judges 8:1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they accused him fiercely. And he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? God has given into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger against him subsided when he said this.
- Proverbs 15:4 A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
 - See 1 Sam. 25:10-13; 1 Kgs. 12:13-16 (Nabal answers David & Rehoboam's response to Israel).

- Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.
- Proverbs 25:15 With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

Let it go

- Proverbs 12:16 The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.
 - 2. LN 88.171–88.191 anger, fury, i.e., have a strong feeling of displeasure and annoyance based on a wrong, real or perceived (Dt 32:19; Ps 85:5[EB 4]; Pr 12:16; 21:19; Ecc 7:9+)
- Proverbs 19:11 Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Know when to walk

- Proverbs 14:7 Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.
 - Know when to walk away (but don't call each other fool)!
- Proverbs 29:9 If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet.
- Proverbs 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

Heal

- Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.
- Proverbs 12:18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
 - Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.
- Proverbs 22:11 He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
- Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.
 - Know your audience. Understand your words have weight. Don't seek to burden of the anxious - seek to lift it. Not all anxiety is due to sin. We all need someone to lighten our load at times. This requires our attention.
- Proverbs 15:23 To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!
- Proverbs 16:24 Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
- Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
- Ephesians 5:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
 - Let's not forget that our words can build up or break down.