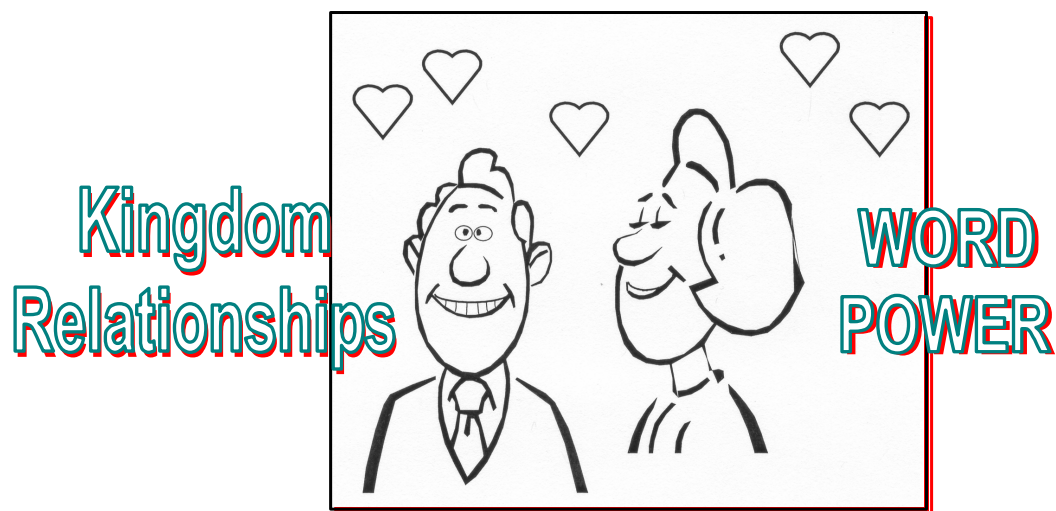


Speaking the Truth in Love: The Language of Biblical Relationships

(Ephesians 4:11-16 NKJV) “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; {14} that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, {15} but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; {16} from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”



The key ingredient to understanding one another is to communicate truthfully, with concern for whom we speak to. Learning to “Speak the Truth in Love” more willingly, easily, and more often... will make a difference in your relationships.

**People grow together in the Lord as they
“Speak the Truth in Love.”**



**Do your words consistently carry the love of God?
What adjustments should you make so the character of
your words reflects the character of Christ?**

What is “Speaking the Truth in love?”

What kinds of attitudes or situations stop us from speaking the truth with love? (Some examples are, fear of rejection, shyness, shame, unforgiveness, anger, and fear of offending someone.) “Speaking the Truth in Love” is not always an easy thing to do. Often, we do so out of love for someone who is heading down the wrong path. It can be uncomfortable and even painful for us, but is a restorative act of love that has the potential to bring someone closer to Christ.

(Proverbs 3:11-12 NLT) “My child, don't ignore it when the LORD disciplines you, and don't be discouraged when he corrects you. {12} For the LORD corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.” (See also: Hebrews 12:5-6)

- ☑ **“Speaking the Truth in Love”** is speaking unselfish, charitable, affectionate and benevolent love.
- ☑ **“Speaking the Truth in Love”** is never hiding anything evil or self-serving when you speak to others.
- ☑ **“Speaking the Truth in Love”** is communicating with intentional, unconcealed truthfulness and grace. Your words allow God's grace to reach the person to whom you speak.

Communicating God's grace is only possible when the words you speak please God, and are the kinds of words He would speak. These can be called, “God words.”

- ☑ **“God words” are words that do not corrupt.**
They bless the hearer. There is no evil in them, but they edify, and encourage. God words are tender, forgiving words.
- ☑ **“God words” agree with God's Spirit.**
When you speak to each other with “God words,” you bring grace and love. You both journey a little bit more “Godwards.”



What stops you from “Speaking the Truth in Love?”

Your thoughts and attitudes are under constant assault from the influence of the world around. If the assault succeeds, it will harden your heart, so you become less and less Christ-like with your thought, attitudes, and consequently, your words. You will become conformed to the world, no longer sensitive to the leading of God.

(Romans 12:1-2 NKJV) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."



What practical steps can you take to communicate more truthfully and lovingly?

Your choices of you allow into your heart, and then out, will determine the voice you have into others' hearts. Make good choices. Let the Holy Spirit into your decision-making processes. Ask Him to help you with your attitudes. The Apostle Paul touched on the keys to this in his letter to the Ephesian church.

(Ephesians 4:1-3 NKJV) "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, {2} with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, {3} endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

*****lowliness - gentleness - patience (longsuffering) - love*****

You can bring the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace into your speech and therefore into your relationships. [Here is how...](#)

Avoid lies. Avoid half-truths. Resist the temptation to speak in ways that create smoke screens or veil the truth!

(Ephesians 4:25 NIV) "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

A half-truth is a lie! It reveals the hardened condition of the heart. Avoid even the smallest kind of falsehood! It gives a place for the devil to work a wedge between you and others who you ought to be in Godly relationships with.

Do not let your anger go unresolved.

It will turn into bitterness, which will eventually rule and ruin your heart. These feelings will cause division and strife. They will drive you, or someone who receives your words, from community to isolation.

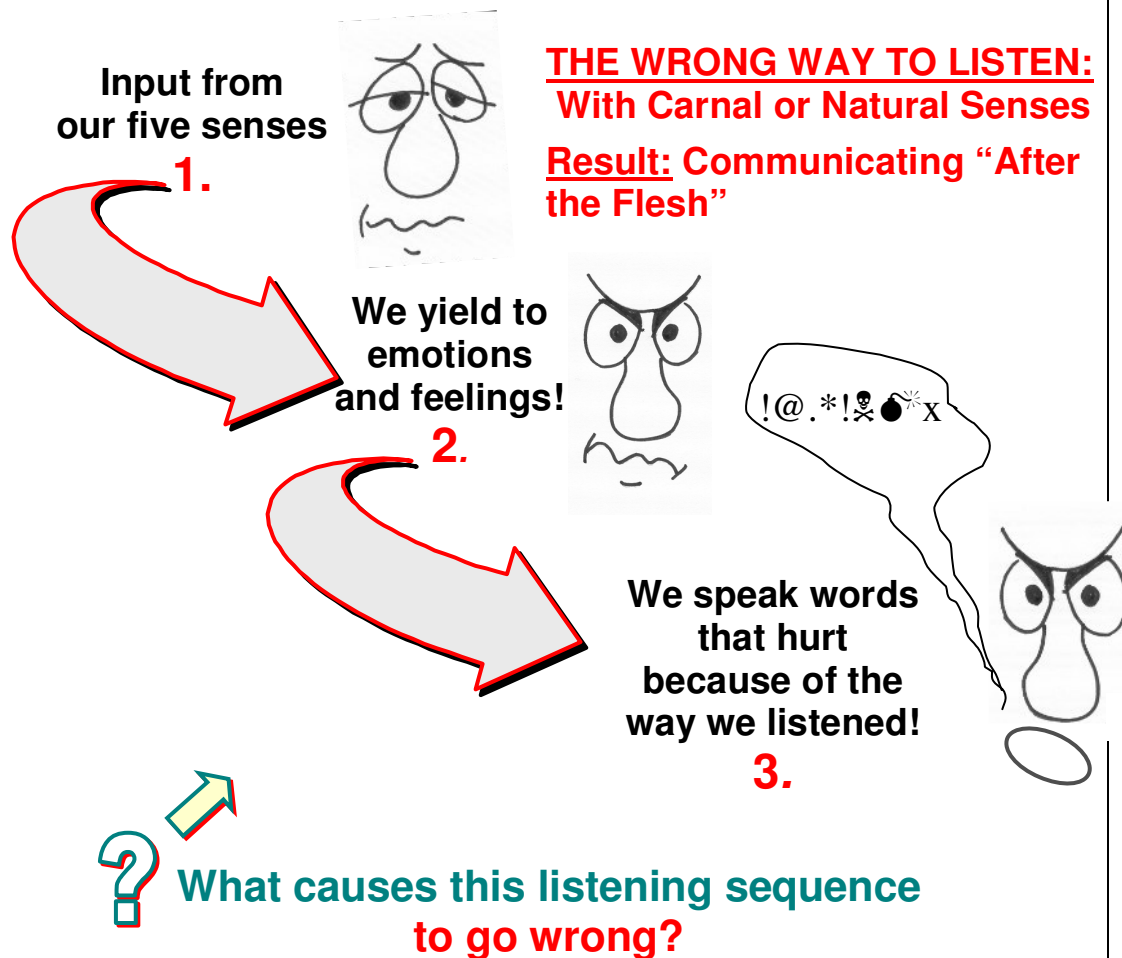
(Ephesians 4:26 NLT) "And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,"

☑ **Learn to listen spiritually.**

We instinctively listen with our natural senses. It takes determination and effort to hear the voice of God (or ungodly voices) in or around what others may be saying. Make the choice to learn and develop your spiritual senses as you listen. Include God in the moment.

(Romans 8:5, 6 NIV) "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. {6} The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;"

Communication always involves a combination of words, facial gestures and body language. These all contribute to the messages we send to and receive from each other. However, listening really involves much more than just the input we gain from our five senses. What happens when we only listen with our carnal senses?

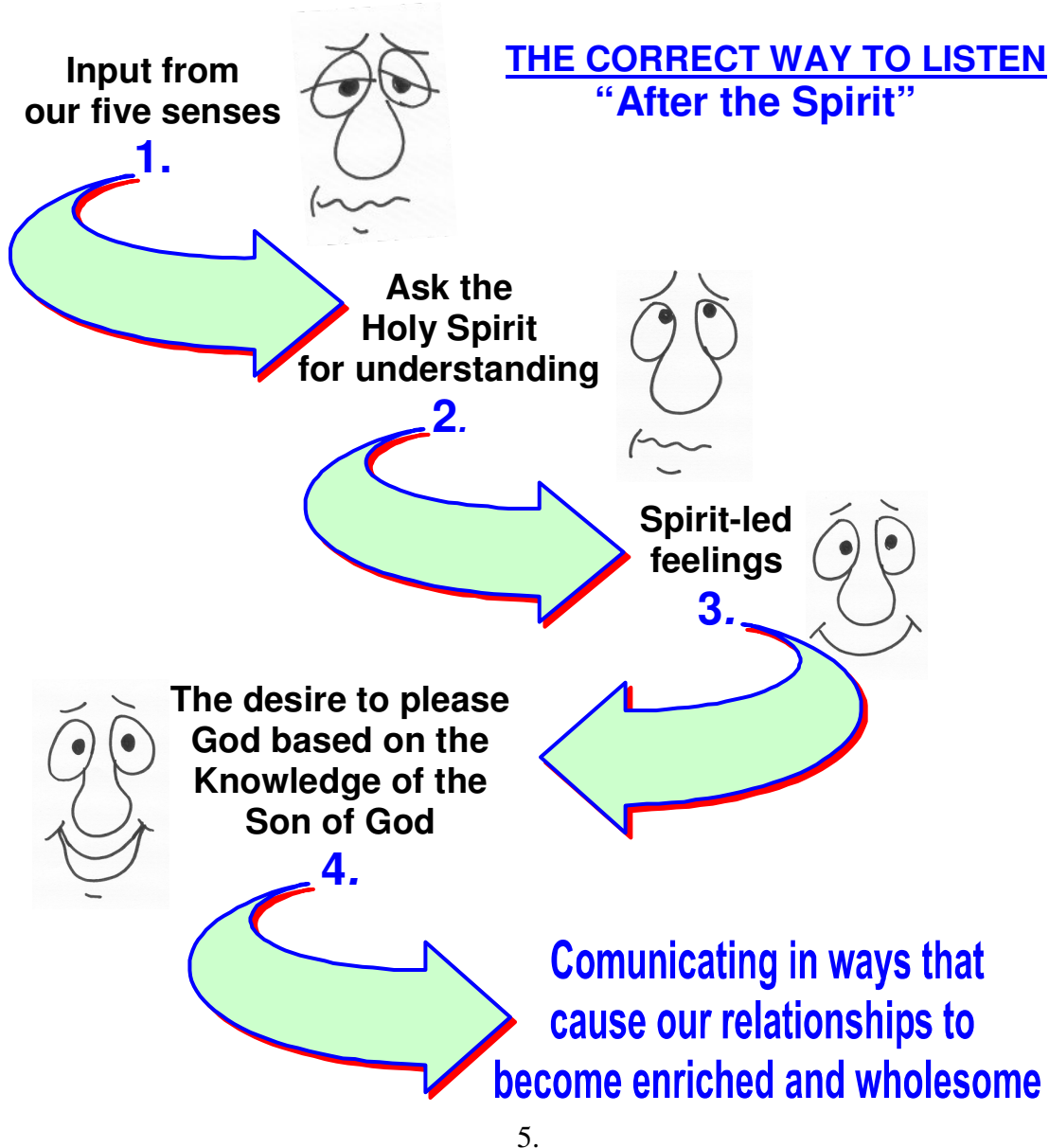


1. It does **not** allow time to think things out, but relies strictly on natural or emotional reactions (“self”).

It gives the devil a place to operate - the place where emotions seize control of you (and your words).

2. It leaves **no room** for God.

There is nowhere in this sequence to stop and seek the Holy Spirit. We often end up **misunderstanding** what is said, reacting accordingly, and causing division and strife. Our feelings then drive our actions, and we add fuel to the fire. Our emotions take over and things begin to spiral out of control. Since we no longer exercise control over our feelings, we have no control over our actions. **Peace is replaced by enmity** and the basis for our relationships is eroded. If enough miscommunication occurs, our relationships are destroyed.



Communicating with Grace is “Speaking the Truth in Love” and “Listening after the Spirit”

Take the initiative. Speak only life, comfort and restoration by communicating God’s love and grace. Allow the Spirit of God to be involved in your communications, both verbal and non-verbal.

(1 Peter 3:11 The Living Bible paraphrase) “Turn away from evil and do good. Try to live in peace even if you must run after it to catch and hold it.”

This has been the last of three lessons in which we have studied **WORD POWER**. As we “Speak the Truth in love” and “Listen after the Spirit,” we will all grow (and grow together) in the Lord. Our words will be filled with power, and we will accomplish much for the Kingdom of God. Let the following definitions of GRACE and REAL LOVE speak to your heart.

GRACE

GRACE is the unlimited, all-sufficient goodness of God, stored up in heaven, waiting for your willingness to allow it to flow through your words and your life into someone else’s life. GRACE is the infallible, flawless expression of Christ’s mercy and love. It is the only authentic way to show “REAL LOVE!”

REAL LOVE

“REAL LOVE” is demonstrated by your deliberate effort to bring someone else as much of God’s grace as possible, at whatever the cost to you! “REAL LOVE” was the motivation behind Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf. Let it be the motivation behind your sacrifice for others.

You may find the cost high, but knowing the results are always higher is a great motivator - and you have the mind of Christ!

(1 Corinthians 2:16 NKJV) “For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

May the Lord richly bless you.

Dr. Bob Abramson