



Course Name: Communication - 5 Ps (part 3a Pay Attention)

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Course description:

Because effective communication is difficult, we have to work daily to improve this skill. In previous lessons we looked at communication through prayer and the necessity of preparation in our planning to communicate more effectively. One of the most critical steps to effectively communicate involves listening, or paying attention. This lesson focuses on how to pay attention as we improve our ability to communicate.

Course Objectives: By the end of this class students will have:

- A. Considered a minimum of five areas we must pay attention to in communication.
- B. Identified ways Abraham paid attention to Ephron in Genesis 23.
- C. Looked at the dangers and hindrances of texting and email as forms of communication.

Outline of the class:

- A. According to Forbes magazine, “The number one thing great communicators have in common is they possess a heightened sense of situational and contextual awareness.” In other words, they pay attention.
- B. Make sure the class is divided into groups of three and four. Take about 10 minutes to ask each group to make a list of 4-5 areas we must pay attention to in communication.
- C. After each group is finished, ask them to share their lists one at a time until everyone has used their suggestions. A few possibilities to add, if they are not mentioned, are below.
 - 1. Watch the body language of the other person. What does it tell us about the words they speak?
 - 2. Consider the tone of voice with which their words are expressed. Are their words spoken in kindness, concern, anger, humility, shame, etc.?
 - 3. Ask a few questions:
 - a. What is being said and the context in which it is said?
 - b. What has happened in their life to make this a matter of concern?
 - c. Are they rested, fatigued, exhausted, etc.?
 - d. How would you describe their emotional level?

- e. Why are they saying this to me?
 - f. Is there something I need to know?
 - g. How can I help once I know this information?
4. Notice anything that might be a distraction and remove it: TV turned on, laptop opened, phone, etc.
 5. Repeat back what you heard the person say to ensure you did not miss anything and that you accurately understood what they were saying.
- D. Ask the class to think about the text of Genesis 23 and the attention given by Abraham to Ephron the Hittite when trying to buy a piece of land to bury Sarah, who has just died. A few notes to bring out.
1. Consider the emotional state of Abraham having lost his wife.
 2. He approaches the elders at the gate of the city about purchasing a piece of property (field where the cave of Machpelah was located) to bury Sarah.
 3. He asks that they approach Ephron, who owns the field, about paying the full price for this burial plot.
 4. Read the discussion that occurs between Gen. 23:10-16. Pause before reading v. 16 and ask, “Did you hear what Ephron said?” Then read v. 16.
 5. Often times when we communicate, we don’t really pay attention to what was said, the way it was said, or why it was said.
- E. Think for a moment and discuss the dangers of communicating by email or texting. Open up class for discussion to ways they have experienced this.
1. We tend to read into the text or email the tone of voice and attitude of the one writing.
 2. We form opinions about what is said without asking questions to clarify.
 3. We typically fail to learn what is not stated in the text or email.
 4. We cannot understand any emotional context behind what is written. No body language to accompany the message.

Conclusion:

- A. In our lesson today, we talked about what we need to pay attention to for effective communication. We also examined a highly stressful situation with Abraham and how he paid attention to Ephron. We can learn much from that exchange.
- B. We also discussed the dangers and hindrances of texting and email as forms of communication.
- C. In the next lesson, we will continue the discussion about paying attention with an emphasis on listening more effectively.