

Leadership Class 14 – Becoming More Effective Communicators Addendum

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Communication is an essential key to meaningful relationships and effective leadership.

Lack of communication, in a marriage for example, will lead to problems in the relationship. To be a leader you have to be able to communicate effectively. You also have to communicate with right motive and in the proper way.

Satan leads through lying, murder. Genesis 3:4-5; Isaiah 14:4-6, 16-27, 20. Pharisees and other Jewish leaders were tuned into Satan's influence, thus were unwilling to hear Jesus (John 8:37-47).

God is a communicator also. One of the keys to effective leadership is the power to persuade through the spoken word. The power of speech is given great emphasis in God's word. In the very first chapter we find that "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). One of the primary titles of Jesus Christ is the "Word" (John 1:1). "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Psalm 33:6). Jesus Christ is "upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3).

Our speech does not have that kind of power, but we can learn to develop the power of effective communication to influence the lives of others for good. Christ was an outstanding communicator. Wherever he went during his public ministry multitudes were attracted to hear him speak as well as to witness his miracles (Mark 2:13; 4:1).

Two influential leaders of recent times who were known as powerful public speakers were Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill. "...surprisingly enough public speaking did not come naturally to either of them. While both undoubtedly showed talent eventually, they had to work very hard to develop it" (*Hitler and Churchill: Secrets of Leadership*, Andrew Roberts, p. 27).

Adolf Hitler knew instinctively the power of the spoken word to move people to action. He wrote, "The power which has always started the greatest religious and political avalanches in history has been, from time immemorial, none but the magic power of the word" (cited by Roberts, p. 26). Although he worked hard to master the techniques of persuasive speech, the actual content of his speeches was base and vulgar. Through a constant barrage of lies and accusations, he encouraged the German public to develop a passionate hatred for other groups who could be blamed for their woes, especially the Jews. "...hatred of the Jews... constituted the backbone of Hitler's power" (*ibid.*, p. 31). Hitler used demagoguery and propaganda techniques to stir a passionate sense of entitlement and hatred in the Germans that would lead them and the world into disastrous war.

Both Hitler and Churchill wrote their own speeches, trusting the job to no one else. In other respects, Churchill's style was completely unlike Hitler's. Churchill wrote, "Rhetorical power is neither wholly bestowed, nor wholly acquired, but cultivated" (*ibid.*, p. 38). The richness of Churchill's oratory during the war years was produced not only by the gravity of the subject matter, but by many years of rich experience and extensive study of history and literature. In addition, Churchill spent many hours, sometimes days, preparing important speeches.

In the darkest days of World War II Churchill believed he had to tell the British nation the truth about the peril they faced. At the same time, he placed the dilemma they were in into a historical context, characterized the struggle as one between good and evil, and strengthened the British people's resolve to endure despite the odds against them. Churchill did not rely on elaborate propaganda theatrics like Hitler often did. His speeches were usually to small groups or the House of Commons, and carried to a wider audience by radio. He relied on the power of his words and the persuasiveness of a better argument. He did not use words for words sake, but used them to convey an unshakable resolve.

While Satan communicates powerfully deceiving billions and stirring the world to hate, violence and lawlessness through his minions, our communication must be also effective, but of a different nature and motive.

The first key to godly communication is repentance, which requires you to humble yourself before God and submit to his word. Self-will, being deceived or having a propensity to lie, and self-righteousness are barriers which will prevent you from being able to communicate in a godly fashion (Isaiah 66:2, 4; Proverbs 12:15, 23).

Speak sparingly. Often we talk when we should be listening (Proverbs 17:27-28; James 1:19; Ecclesiastes 5:1-3; 3:1, 7). In private communication in particular, always be ready to listen, don't try to do all the talking.

When we do speak, we must speak the truth. No exaggeration, no shading of the truth, no subtle twisting of the truth into a lie. Truth must be spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 4:6). No liar will be in God's kingdom (Revelation 21:8). Often people assume something is true because they want to believe it, or because it seems logical to them, or they "feel" that it's true, or they suspect it might be so. Feeling, wishing, suspecting something is true does not make it true. The only way to know if something is true is to study the matter thoroughly to find out for sure, or as reasonably sure as you can be, that something is true before you state it as fact (Proverbs 15: 28; Titus 2:7-8).