

Can You Hear Me Now?

“You Drive Me Crazy!” Series - Part 1

Connect: Play the “Whispering Game”. Get all the group members into a circle, write down a 10-12 word sentence, and then whisper it in someone’s ear and asked them to repeat the exact same message to the next person until it has been told to everyone. The last person will reveal out loud the sentence. How did the message change? Why?

Hook:

One day an old man was casually walking along a country lane with his dog and his mule. Suddenly a speeding pick-up truck careened around the corner, knocking the man, his mule, and his dog into the ditch.

The old man decided to sue the driver of the truck, seeking to recoup the cost of the damages. While the old man was on the stand, the counsel for the defense cross-examined the man by asking a simple question: "I want you to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following question: Did you or did you not say at the time of the accident that you were 'perfectly fine'"?

And the man said, "Well, me and my dog and my mule were walking along the road ... " And the counsel for defense said, "Stop, stop, I asked you, tell me 'yes' or 'no', did you say you were 'perfectly fine' at the time of the accident?"

"Well, me and my dog and my mule were walking along the road and ... " The defense attorney appealed to the judge. "Your honor," he said, "the man is not answering the question. Would you please insist that he answer the question?" The judge said, "Well, he obviously wants to tell us something. Let him speak."

So the man said, "Well, me and my dog and my mule were walking along the road and this truck came around the corner far too fast, knocked us into the ditch. The driver stopped, got out of his truck, saw my dog was badly injured, went back to his truck, got his rifle, and he shot it. Then he saw that my mule had broken his leg so he shot it. Then he said, 'How are you?' And I said, 'I'm perfectly fine.'"

Why did the lawyer only want a “yes or no answer” from the old man?

Why did the old man want to tell his story?

Why did the truck driver ask the old man how he was doing?

What can we learn about communication from the above story?

Book:

8. Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it. 10. For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. 11. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. 12. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns His face against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:8-12

Look:

Peter is writing to a group of Christians who are living in a very hostile and dangerous world. While living here, they are to give a living testimony to how Christ makes life different. In the above few verses, Peter gives a recipe for healthy communication and living a godly life among difficult people.

Discuss the following ingredients by defining the action word and how it can be observed and practiced in our conversations:

- Sympathize
- Love
- Tenderhearted
- Humble

Peter tells us to “don’t retaliate” in our communications. Why is retaliation a poor communication skill?

What has been your best method for avoiding retaliation or “payback”?

The recipe for good communication (and enjoying life!) continues in verses 10 -12 and can be broken down to three more practices:

-Use the right words. In any given situation, how can we know we are speaking the right words?

-Do the right thing. Agree/disagree: Selfishness is the root of most communication problems?

-Work for peace. How do you search for peace in the midst of an argument?

Some might be thinking, *“Now wait a minute. We’ve been talking about denying myself, laying down my rights, not retaliating, blessing those who insult me, being harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble. But it’s a dog-eat-dog world! If you knew my spouse or boss or neighbor or co-worker; you’d know that if I really did that, I’d get trampled! Who’s going to look out for my rights?”*

How does Peter address the above thoughts in verse 12?

Finally, Is there a place in Christian communication for “a good argument”? Why/why not?