

June 5, 2011

Rethink Relationships: Truth in Love, Bill Warrick

Ephesians 4

1. One ministry leader says of new things in life, “New creates momentum.” What new things in your life recently have added some excitement or momentum?  
**Open Answer. New weather, spring cleaning, kids being home from college, etc.**
2. Dick Woodward’s definition of communication is, “Communications is the giving and receiving of information and the person communicating takes responsibility for both how it is said and how it is heard.” How is that definition different from how the world tends to define communication? **The world tends to blame the hearer for any misunderstandings related to what we may have said.** How is communication different from talking to someone? **Communication requires understanding.**
3. By way of review, what is God’s plan for relationships according to Genesis 1 and 2? **Oneness. That we would all be in community with others as well as in communion with God.** How do I know if I am experiencing oneness in a relationship according to God’s plan? **Am I vulnerable (appropriately naked) and without shame) I am able to be transparent and authentic with others.**
4. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What is the purpose of giving people individual differences like gender, abilities, and gifts? **To build one another up as a Body of Christ. Also to create helpful conflict to press us up against Christ.** What is the primary image Paul uses in verses 13-16? What point is he trying to make regarding relationships? **We need to mature and grow up in our relationships and our communication with each other, like our physical bodies mature and grow.**
5. What role does spoken communication play in growing and maturing our relationships? **Words have the power to build up and support our relationships. Words have creative power (see Genesis 1 where God SPOKE the worlds into existence.)** Read Colossians 4:6. How do you season your words with grace? **Open Answer.**
6. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. What other communication commands are given by God for us? **Speak truthfully. When angry, don’t sin. No unwholesome words, only what is helpful in building up.** What negative things are we told to put off, put away, get rid of and then what positive things are we told to put on or add? **Falsehood, bitterness, rage...see v. 4:31.**

7. What is the problem with total honesty in our relationships? **Honesty can tear others down, whereas the goal is to build others up with our words.**
8. The book, *Love and Respect*, suggests that “Women report on their lives to build rapport with others.” Whereas, “men only have so many words to use a day and when they are used up, the clam up.” How can we overcome our gender differences in our marriages or marketplace when men and women use words so differently? **Know the problem and learn to decode the other gender’s style.**
9. Read 1 John 3:18. What is the balance to this truth that communication can create a loving culture? **If we walk our talk our love will be real and experienced more fully.**
10. **Bonus Application Question:** Human nature is to avoid confrontations and conflicts in our relationships. Rather than speak the truth in love, we revert to playing games. People who have truth and love, but have a hard time speaking those things tend to be passive. Those who speak truth, but fail to do it in love tend to come across aggressive. Whereas, those who speak in love, but fail to tell the truth about their feelings, are passive aggressive.  
Which term is the hardest for you to exercise when you need to confront someone: Speak, the Truth, in Love? **Open Answer.**