**Four Rules of Communication**

Ephesians 4:22-32

***Proverbs 4:23 - “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”***

*When a trial comes my way, I assume that God has sent it and that he wants me to learn something from it before moving on to the next assignment. This kind of thinking helps me trudge forward in the hope that the trial will end shortly if I play the role of attentive student. But this kind of thinking does not serve me well when God takes me into the school of waiting.* Quote from the book-Seasons of Waiting: Walking by Faith When Dreams Are Delayed by Betsy Childs Howard

**I. Rule One:  Speak the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in love!** Ephesians 4:15, 25

***Ephesians 4:15-*** *“****Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”***

***Ephesians 4:25- “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.”***

A. Thoughts of the mind are only known to oneself.

[***1 Corinthians 2:11***](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%202.11)***- For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.***
B. Non-verbal communication must match verbal communication.

Facts can only be known through honest communication.

C. Honesty is more than not lying.

We need to carefully listen and speak thoughtful words.

James 1:19, [Proverbs 18:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Prov.%2018.13), [1 Corinthians 14:8](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%2014.8)-[9](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/I%20Cor%2014.9)

**II. Rule Two:  Keep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!**  Ephesians 4:26-27

***Eph. 4:26-27 - “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27and give no opportunity to the devil.”***

A.There are times to hold the tongue.

[***1 Peter 4:8***](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet.%204.8)***-“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”***

B.There are times when it is wrong to hold the tongue.

[***James 1:19***](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James.%201.19)***– “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,”***

Six questions to ask yourself in regard to staying current with communication, adapted from Ps Viars:

1. Do I have the facts right ([Proverbs 18:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Prov.%2018.13))?

2. Should love overlook the sin ([1 Peter 4:8](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet.%204.8))?
3. Is the timing right to share the sin ([Proverbs 15:23b](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Prov.%2015.23b))?
4. Is my attitude right toward the sin ([Ephesians 4:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%204.15))?
5. Are my words loving ([Ephesians 4:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%204.15))?
6. Have I prayed for God's help ([Proverbs 3:5b](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Prov.%203.5b))?

**III. Rule Three:  Attack the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!** Ephesians 4:29

***Ephesians 4:29 - Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.***

A. Words can harm.
According to [James 3:5-8](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James.%203.5-8), what is wrong with this statement:  "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me"?

B. People are not to be attacked.
1. According to Matthew 5:22, what did Christ say about "cutting people down”, calling them "racca," or worthless, or fool?

2. When we attack someone as a person, who are we really criticizing?  Who created him?

3. What are some words, voice inflections, tones, and non-verbal actions that say to others, "You are not valued as a person"?

Instead, choose words that will help to solve problems: words that are solution oriented. [Ephesians 4:29](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%204.29) describes these words and non-verbal actions as those that "edify” and "give” grace to those who hear.

**IV. Rule Four: Act: Don't\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!** Ephesians 4:31-32

***Ephesians 4:31-32-*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

1. Don't react.
Our tendency from our Genesis Three nature is to be defensive about dealing with our own sins and to not deal with our own needs. We tend to defend, react rather than respond, blame shift, and run. (See [Gen. 3:12](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Gen.%203.12).)

When someone loves us enough to approach us about a need in our life, we can always find fault with him; but we will never solve problems or grow by being a Genesis Three kind of person.

1. Instead, we are to act.  [Ephesians 4:32](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%204.32)

Through Christ's Spirit, we must LEARN to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving.

Changing habits is not easy, but it is much easier than the "way of the transgressor."  Changing habits may not seem simple, but we have great promises in the following passages.  What are they? [1 Corinthians 10:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%2010.13) and [Philippians 4:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Phil.%204.13)

**Conclusion:**
1. Listening and lovingly desiring to communicate to solve problems goes with each rule.
2. A desire to have a right relationship with God is essential to applying His principles.