



LIFE GROUP STUDY MATERIAL

Every Home a *Discipleship Centre*

Session #2

Open Communication:
Discipleship Requires
Honest Conversation

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OPEN COMMUNICATION - DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES HONEST CONVERSATION

LESSON AIM

To cultivate gospel-shaped conversations by learning to listen with grace and creating a safe environment where discipleship can flourish.

VIDEO LESSON

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/CHtoEO6WxMQ?si=UJ2prKm3BMZsrc1M>

SCRIPTURE READING

James 1:19-20

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James 1:19-20 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

Although we live in a world that is constantly connected through phones, messaging and social media, genuine heart-to-heart communication has become increasingly rare. Many families communicate only on a surface level, while the deeper thoughts, fears and struggles of the heart remain hidden.

Open communication is more than simply exchanging information or giving advice. It requires creating an environment where honest conversations can take place. When people feel safe to share openly without fear of judgement or shame, hearts are opened and lives can be transformed. Healthy discipleship begins by creating safe spaces where people can speak honestly, be heard, and grow together.

The Revelation of the Heart

Jesus taught in Luke 6:45 that "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." Our words reveal what is happening deep within us, but communication is about more than words alone. Our tone of voice, facial expressions and body language can either encourage openness or cause someone to withdraw. Often, people stop talking not because they have nothing to say, but because they no longer feel safe enough to

say it. Healthy discipleship starts by creating an environment where people can share honestly without fear of judgement, shame or being silenced, allowing us to listen not only to their words but also to their hearts.

The Resistance to Listen

James 1:19–20 teaches us to be "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." Listening is often difficult because it requires us to surrender control. When someone shares something we disagree with or do not expect to hear, our natural tendency is to interrupt, correct or lecture rather than seek to understand. Yet reacting in anger or rushing to correct someone often closes the conversation instead of opening it further. Discipleship requires the humility to listen first, ask thoughtful questions and patiently understand what is happening in another person's heart before speaking the truth in love.

The Redemptive Model of God

The gospel provides the perfect model for how we should relate to others. Romans 5:8 reminds us that "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us," demonstrating that God drew near to us with grace before calling us to change. Throughout Scripture, God patiently listens to the cries, prayers and struggles of His people, responding with compassion rather than condemnation. As His disciples, we are called to reflect this same grace in our relationships by listening before correcting, seeking to understand before being understood, and creating an environment where honest conversations can lead to growth, healing and transformation.

The Five A's of Gospel Listening

Listening well is a skill that requires intentionality and practice. Rather than reacting quickly or rushing to give advice, we are called to create an environment where people feel heard, valued and understood. The following Five A's provide a practical framework for cultivating gospel-shaped conversations in our homes and relationships.

- Availability – Be present before being productive. Love is often spelled T-I-M-E. Create intentional opportunities to spend meaningful time together and be available when others need you.
- Attention – Give your undivided focus. Put away distractions, make eye contact and communicate that the person in front of you is more important than anything else competing for your attention.
- Attitude – Choose love before correction. Listen without judgement, criticism or negative reactions. A gracious attitude helps others feel safe to share honestly.

- Asking Questions – Draw out the heart. Ask thoughtful, open-ended questions that help people process what they are thinking and feeling rather than assuming you already know the answer.
- All Topics Allowed – Create a safe environment where nothing is off-limits. Honest conversations about difficult topics bring struggles into the light, where God's grace can bring healing, hope and transformation.

Remember: Listening is the language of love. And love opens hearts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Instructions for group facilitators: Every group is different. You may modify the discussion questions to suit your group and you do not need to use all the questions in the group discussion.

Question 1: If you could instantly become a great listener or a great speaker, which would you choose and why?

Question 2: What is one conversation you've had recently that really encouraged you, and what made it memorable?

Question 3: 1. Why do you think it is often harder to truly listen to the people closest to us than to strangers?

Question 4: How does Luke 6:45 change the way we should respond when someone says something difficult or unexpected?

Question 5: The lesson reminds us that people often stop talking because they no longer feel safe enough to share. What words, attitudes or behaviours help create a safe environment where people feel heard? Conversely, what actions can unintentionally shut people down?

Question 6: Which of the Five A's of Gospel Listening do you find most challenging? Why?

Question 7: Romans 5:8 reminds us that Christ drew near to us while we were still sinners. How does God's grace towards us shape the way we should listen and respond to others, especially when they share struggles, doubts or failures?

Question 8: What is one practical step you can take to create a safe space for an honest conversation with them?

NEXT STEPS

Take some time this week to reflect on how well you listen to the people God has placed in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, creating a safe environment where honest conversations can flourish. Look for opportunities to be fully present, ask thoughtful questions and listen with grace before offering advice or correction. Remember, listening is an act of love that opens hearts and creates opportunities for discipleship.

Who can you intentionally listen to this week?