

Heirs Together of the Grace of Life Series

Lesson 21: Summary of Skills

I. Biblical Basis

- a. Most sincere, mature believers know that sanctification is the goal to be achieved by each of us. However, few are aware that the events leading to sanctification often **start** with the call to exercise self control over the tongue. *James 3:6-10 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. KJV*
- b. The control of the tongue is not merely an **occasional** problem. This is a continual challenge for every believer and we need communications skills in order to communicate in a godly manner. *Col 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. KJV*
- c. It is only when the believer consciously **practices** godly communication with others that Christ is glorified in us. *1 Peter 3:7-9 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. KJV*

II. The Two Roles of the Communications Process

- a. **Showing Understanding Skill** creates a habit of seeing things from the other's perspective and heart.
 1. Listen in a way that shows strong **interest**.
 2. Get outside of yourself and **become** your partner.
 3. **Name** thoughts, feelings, concerns, and desires.
 4. Accept and make corrections **graciously**.
- b. **Expression Skill** creates a habit of watching what you say and anchoring what you say in the positive.
 1. **Think** before you speak.
 2. **Start** by remembering what's good.
 3. Speak from your own **point of view**, rather than what is "right" or "good" or "normal".
 4. Talk about your feelings and **all** that is important to you.
 5. **Ask** for what you want.
 6. **Avoid** trigger words.
 7. Be **specific**.

III. Two Phases of a Skilled Discussion

- a. **Phase 1: Discussion Skill** creates the habit of getting below the surface when you discuss—including thoughts, feelings, concerns, and desires.
 1. Agree with your partner on a **time** and place.
 2. One partner begins to **Express** thoughts, feelings, concerns and desires.
 3. The other partner Shows **Understanding**.
 4. From time to time, **trade places** to move the discussion along.
 5. If you are expressing, trade places when you **feel** understood, want to hear from your partner or your partner looks upset.
 6. If you are showing Understanding, ask for a turn by using a nonverbal **signal**, after Showing Understanding, when your own feelings are getting too strong, you have an idea or question you want your partner to hear, or you want to Express.
 7. When **both** are ready (but not before) move on to Phase 2.
- b. **Phase 2: Problem Solving Skill**, combined with Discussion, creates the habit of solving problems to meet everyone's core concerns.
 1. **Use** Expression and Showing Understanding.
 2. Find a solution that is good for both of you by determining the **core** concerns of each of you. Aim for an 80%/80% solution rather than a 50%/50% solution.
 3. Work out the details and plan for **obstacles**.
 4. **Follow through**.

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IV. If The Solution Requires a Habit Change

- a. **Self Change Skill** creates the habit of following through.
 1. See change as a **gradual** learning process and allow yourself to practice.
 2. Create a clear picture in your mind of **how** you want to change. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Set up a **plan** for what you will do to change.
 4. Use skills to get others to help you and accept their help **graciously**.
 5. If you have too much trouble making the change, go back to step 1 and **try again**.
- b. **Helping Others Change Skill** creates the habit of using Shaping (reinforcing), rather than Nagging to foster change.
 1. Work from an **agreement**.
 2. **Reinforce** effort and accomplishment.
 3. Work through **frustration** and disappointment.
 4. Keep showing **appreciation** every once in a while even after your partner regularly practices new behavior.

V. If Things Go Wrong

- a. **Coaching Skill** creates the habit of watching yourself and others and setting a limit around destructive communication.
 1. Agree on a Coaching signal or **stop sign**.
 2. Use your stop signal as a reminder for both of you to stay in skills. If your partner gives signal, **STOP**, try to correct yourself and or let your partner help.
 3. **Never** allow yourself to be disrespectful of the other person, nor, should you allow the other person to be disrespectful of you without your calling attention to it.
- b. **Conflict Management Skill** creates the habit of making conflict a matter of differences of perspective, rather than war.
 1. **T** = Take a time out.
 2. **R** = Respect at all times.
 3. **U** = Understanding (especially when your partner is upset).
 4. **S** = Stay in Skills.
 5. **T** = Talk together.

VI. Application

- a. **Generalization Skill** creates the habit of watching your communication 24/7/365 and thereby exercises you unto godliness. 1 Tim 4:7
 1. Look at transactions in your relationships as God's gift to you as opportunities to express Christ.
 2. Practice each new skill often and in many places.
 3. Watch to see the difference using skills can make.
 4. Build the habit of using skills in all your conversations.
 5. Use planning and imagination to help you use skills.