

Learning to Talk:
“How You Ought to Answer”

Romans 12:10-18

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- “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

“How You Ought to Answer”

- Words leave a lasting impression, not only in their effect, but also what they reveal about the speaker
 - “The less people know, the more they yell.” (Seth Godin)
 - “Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” (Mother Theresa)

“How You Ought to Answer”

- Communication is learned, it is hard work, and it must benefit both the speaker and the hearer
 - “Communication works for those who work at it.” (John Powell)
 - “Two monologues do not make a dialogue.” (Jeff Daly)

Start By Listening -- Really Listening

- The act of listening accomplishes so much:
 - It helps them to articulate and put into perspective the problems they are facing.
 - It helps them to realize that their feelings, fears, sorrows, outrage, etc. are real. It validates them as a person
 - It helps them to believe that they are a person worthy of love when someone takes the time to hear them through
- Sometimes the best answer is not answering at all; it is listening

Start By Listening -- Really Listening

- James 1:19-20 - “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- In a conversation, only one person can speak at a time
 - Ecc. 3:7 - “A time to keep silence, And a time to speak”
- Allowing the other person to speak shows respect for him
 - Rom. 12:10 - “...in honor giving preference to one another”

Start By Listening -- Really Listening

- So few people really listen. Most only hear what they want to hear.
 - Mark 9:31-32 - “For He taught His disciples and said to them, The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day. 32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.”

Start By Listening -- Really Listening

- Some only listen as long as they like what is being said
 - Acts 22:21-22 - “Then He said to me, Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles. 22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”
- Some do not listen at all, but are only thinking of what they want to say and looking for a gap in the conversation to interject.

Start By Listening -- Really Listening

- Some do not listen to hear what the other is truly saying, but instead hears only those things that allow a connection; fulfills a self-oriented need. “I am not listening because I care; I am listening so I can feel like we have a connection.”

Cultivate The Correct Spirit

- Be cheerful
 - Who enjoys talking to someone whose outlook on life is gloomy, negative, or paranoid?
 - Prov. 17:22 - “A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones.”

Cultivate The Correct Spirit

- Be encouraging
 - Prov. 12:25 - “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.”
 - Heb. 10:24 - “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”
 - Eph. 4:32 - “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

Cultivate The Correct Spirit

- Be interested
 - Rom. 12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”
 - Phil. 2:3-4 - “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”
 - Gal. 6:2 - “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Consider Your Words

- Don't say everything that comes to mind
 - Prov. 18:7 - "A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul."
 - Prov. 17:27-28 - "He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.
28 Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive."

Consider Your Words

- Be selective with your words
 - Col. 4:6 - “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”
 - Ecc. 10:12 - “The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up”
 - Eph. 4:29 - “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Consider Your Words

- Be selective with your words
 - Prov. 16:21-24 - “The wise in heart will be called prudent, And sweetness of the lips increases learning. 22 Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools is folly. 23 The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips. 24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”

Consider Your Words

- Say things that help others
 - Prov. 10:21 - “The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of wisdom.”
 - Prov. 15:7 - “The lips of the wise disperse
knowledge, But the heart of the fool does not do so”

Consider Your Words

- Be careful with other people's personal dignity
 - Prov. 17:9 - “He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.”
 - Prov. 25:9 - “Debate your case with your neighbor, And do not disclose the secret to another”

“How You Ought to Answer”

- Learning to speak isn't easy
 - James 3:2 - “For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.”
- But it is worth it
 - Prov. 15:1 - “A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”
 - Prov. 25:11 - “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.”