

# Digging Deeper

The Old Testament gives about sixty different prophesies and three hundred references regarding the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. God communicated many details about His Son's birth, life, and death hundreds of years beforehand. A few are listed below for your consideration this Christmas season.

**Genesis 3:15**  
Matthew 1:18; Galatians 4:4

**Hosea 11:1**  
Matthew 2:14, 15

**Isaiah 7:14**  
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38

**Jeremiah 31:15**  
Matthew 2:16-18

**Isaiah 9:1, 2, 6, 7**  
Matthew 4:13-16  
Luke 1:31-33, 79; 2:11

**Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1**  
Matthew 3:1-3; 11:10, 11; Mark 1:2-13  
Luke 1:17; 3:2-6; 7:27; John 1:19-23

**Micah 5:2**  
Matthew 2:1, 6; Luke 2:4-7; John 7:42

**Isaiah 61:1, 2**  
Luke 4:16-21



**“Now thanks be to God for His Gift, [precious] beyond telling,  
[His indescribable, inexpressible, free Gift]!”**  
*2 Corinthians 9:15, The Amplified Bible*

## O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Isaac Watts, 1719

...1998	O God, our help in ages past,	A thousand ages in thy sight	<b>2011</b>
1999	Our hope for years to come,	Are like an evening gone;	2012
2000	Our shelter from the stormy blast,	Short as the watch that ends the night,	2013
2001	And our eternal home!	Before the rising sun.	2014
2002			2015
2003	Under the shadow of thy throne	Time, like an ever-rolling stream,	2016
2004	Thy saints have dwelt secure,	Bears all its years away,	2017
2005	Sufficient is thine arm alone,	They fly, forgotten, as a dream	2018
2006	And our defense is sure.	Dies at the opening day.	2019
2007			2020
2008	Before the hills in order stood,	O God, our help in ages past,	2021
2009	Or earth received her frame,	Our help for years to come,	2022
<b>2010</b>	From everlasting thou art God,	Be thou our guide while life shall last,	2023...
	To endless years the same.	And our eternal home!	

*The Women's LINK is a ministry of Summit Baptist Bible Church.*



## Communication

Communication. An exchange of information by means of...spoken and written words, silence, colors, whistles, sirens, buzzers, church bells, music, pictures, art, scents, laughter, tears, tone of voice, diction, volume, sign language, hand gestures, applause, Braille, eye-contact or no eye-contact, raised eyebrows, a raised nose or shoulder, crossed arms, a nod of the head, a vote, a handshake, a scowl, a wink, a sideways look, a smile, a pout, narrow eyes, wide eyes, rolled eyes, cold eyes, a set jaw, a stifled yawn, sitting up, slouching down, a smirk, a glare, a stomping foot, a slap or punch, a hug, a kiss, and even an extended tongue!

We chat, we call, we text, we tweet, we email, we facebook, we write. We initiate, and we retreat. Many of our interactions are thoughtful. But sometimes a quick retort or comment shows a lack of understanding or even misplaced emotions. We miscommunicate.

True communication is a two-way transaction. When our daughters have brought friends home, the walls nearly burst with chatter and laughter. I often wondered if anyone was listening!

In this issue of *The Women's LINK*, we explore the topic of communication and how it relates to our relationships. A journey through these pages offers some thought-provoking twists and turns. I trust the practical wisdom and timely tips will help us as we navigate meaningful connections with our families, our friends, and others God brings our way. We've also included a Christmas article I think you'll find valuable. May we take the time during these busy weeks to truly listen to the God who chose to communicate His love to us through the birth of His Son, Jesus.

*-Sarah L. Phillips*

“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4

### In this issue...

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# “Irreconcilable” Differences?

Irreconcilable differences. In 1984 it was a movie. In 1997 it was the reason for eighty percent of divorces in the United States. And before we presume that this has more to do with a moral decline among an immoral majority, please note that a recent survey conducted by the Barna Group showed the prevalence of divorce among born-again Christians to be the same as that among non-Christians. Why? Because the most significant predictor of marital discord isn't the propensity to disagree or argue. It's *how* couples handle confrontations. Some shelve an issue and consider it resolved because they aren't actively arguing about it. Others call a truce when one partner (usually the same one over and over again) reluctantly concedes and lets the other have his way. Both these methods may take the heat off for the moment, but in the long run they are indicators of underlying relational issues that need addressing.



When **Drs. Sherrod and Phyllis Miller** examined the non-negotiables of conflict resolution, they developed a system to help navigate couples around common barriers to reaching that end (i.e. fear of speaking up, being misunderstood, being unsure of what to do next). **Couple Communication and Collaborative Marriage**, the culmination of their work, is a marital education course that teaches couples to work jointly to build a mutually fulfilling and satisfying relationship for a lifetime. They identify seven dimensions of marriage this communication process helps instill in its participants. They are:

1. Committing to partnership
2. Caring actively for yourself and your partner
3. Considering life's concerns and opportunities
4. Communicating to connect meaningfully with your partner

5. Cooperating to resolve issues
6. Celebrating your lives together
7. Contributing to the lives of others around you.

**Couple Communication and Collaborative Marriage** helps you talk through or “map an issue” in order to correctly identify the problem with which the two of you are dealing. Is it, for instance, a lack of time spent with your spouse that is creating tension, or is it your lack of a sense of individual identity in the absence of your spouse that's really at hand? Is it your spouse's sudden preoccupation with aerobics and tofu that is stressing you, or is it the attention it has drawn to your own bulging waistline that's the problem? Many would-be conflicts may be squelched in this step once one partner realizes he is not upset with the other but is struggling with a personal issue only he can resolve.

**Couple Communication and Collaborative Marriage** also teaches skills for effective listening that express love and concern for your spouse. You'll find yourself *actively* listening to your partner, inviting him to share more information, especially as it concerns why he feels frustrated and what specific things have led him to draw certain conclusions. You'll be encouraged to summarize what you've heard him express without interjecting your personal thoughts, because you're assured the opportunity to have your turn to vent later. Ultimately, the “presenting partner” has a satisfying sense of having been heard and understood—without interruption and without commentary that might suggest his feelings are illegitimate. Quite a few couples find the satisfaction of having been heard to be so compensatory as to make the actual resolution of the issue inconsequential in comparison.

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# “Remember, the emphasis is not *that* Jesus came, but *why* He came!”

grandparents, or just for a private family celebration. When our children were quite young, we always followed the search with a birthday cake for Jesus. A manger scene or two is another testimonial decoration. Many have used Advent candles—four or five candles, lighting one the fourth Sunday before Christmas, the next on the third Sunday, etc. and the fifth candle on Christmas Eve. As each candle is lit, prophecies about the coming of the Messiah are read. Instructions for this may be found online, but the purpose is to create anticipation for the coming of the Lord. Some even select special symbolic colors for their candles. Remember, the emphasis is not *that* Jesus came, but *why* He came!

“Remember, the emphasis is not *that* Jesus came, but *why* He came!”

My home is filled with Christmas music. I particularly like instrumental CDs. They are quieting and evoke meditation. Music about sleigh bells, snowmen, and roasting chestnuts is fun and has its place, but since my goal is to be more Christ-focused, I don't let them dominate. Caroling with friends and family is an activity to consider. Not only is caroling a fun tradition, it also can be used as an opportunity to encourage others. We have sung for church shut-ins, assisted-living homes, and our neighbors. Perhaps permission could be secured to go to a veterans' hospital, the Ronald McDonald House, or a women's shelter. Caroling can be done with peers, another family or two, or just with a church small group. Children and teens definitely can be part of this outreach.

I prepare my heart by reading special books. *Two from Galilee*, a book by Marjorie Holmes, is a book I have enjoyed in the past. Another of my favorites is *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, a small book of twenty-two readings by various authors (from Martin Luther and George Whitefield to Francis Schaeffer and Joni Eareckson Tada). I read one each day in December. I also read Old Testament prophecies of His coming. You can find cross references in Luke and Matthew as you read the biblical Christmas story. Several times in December for my Bible study time, I select a Christmas carol from the hymnal and read and meditate on it. I find Scripture to support the statements in the hymn. I have found that when I sing those carols during the season, they mean more to me because of the time I have spent thinking on their message.

Great ideas can come from blogs, author websites, Bible teachers you enjoy on the radio and, of course, from friends. Prayerfully ask the Lord to show you what to eliminate and what to add to make this year glorify Him and to prepare yourself for the celebration of His first coming.

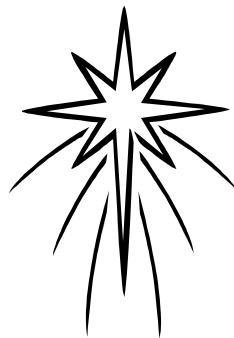
**Margie Kauffman** and her husband, **Larry**, have been married forty years and have three adult children and two young grandsons. Margie teaches a weekly women's Bible study and mentors young married women and college students. She enjoys reading (and sharing books with friends) and is a private reading tutor and area substitute teacher.

# Communicating Christmas

Although Christmas decorations begin to appear in stores following back-to-school sales, for many, the day after Thanksgiving marks “the beginning of Christmas.” Some clever women smugly report that most of their Christmas shopping has been completed, while others are just beginning their hectic race to find sales and bargains for items on their family’s wish lists. As we stand in line at the grocery store, magazine covers challenge us to decorate more creatively this year and bake new recipes. With or without snow, Christmas is coming. A certain self-imposed pressure begins to consume our thoughts and calendars, causing us to get into a special high gear not felt the other eleven months of the year. Why?

Year after year we tell ourselves that *this* is *not* the way we want to approach the celebration of our Savior’s birth. We want to “keep Christ in Christmas.” We wear the pin on our coat lapel saying “Jesus is the Reason for the Season,” we buy religious postage stamps rather than the Santa ones, and we say “Merry Christmas” rather than “Happy Holidays,” but what else can we do?

Several years ago I decided not to put out any of my cute Santa decorations but decorate, rather, with as many explicitly Christ-centered symbols as possible. Darlene Smith and I spent two wonderful Saturday mornings making and decorating clothespin people who were part of the first Christmas. We used our



glue guns, fabric scraps, trims, and novelties to create shepherds, wise men, Mary, Joseph, angels, Anna, and Simeon. We use these ornaments on a special tree in our homes which we call the Jesus Christmas tree. On it are other ornaments we have made or bought that represent the names of the Lord, miracles He performed, or other things about Him. We made our Jesus trees especially with our grandchildren in mind, but even the years my grandsons cannot come to Pennsylvania, it is a joy for me to put it up for others to see and to remind me of “the reason for the season.”

I am in the empty-nest stage now, but have such happy memories of celebrating Jesus’ birth with our young children. For many years we celebrated His birthday on Christmas Eve. The children dressed in their bathrobes, wore a simple headpiece (towel tied with a scarf), and carried a shepherd’s staff (an umbrella with a curved handle). Larry would hide the baby Jesus figure from our manger scene somewhere in the living room. I would act the part of the angels announcing His birth (quoting Luke 2:10-14), then our three little shepherds would “make haste” to find the babe. Whoever found the figure got to hold it in the traditional shepherds’ photo. Every Christmas I now hang up a collage of pictures of our children in costume taken over a period of eight years. This activity had to stop sometime, but it was fun while we celebrated this way. Many families put on Christmas-story plays for friends,

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# Communicating Christmas

Likewise, you are provided with tools you’ll need to clearly express what you are thinking and feeling, and how this relates to what you have done and intend to do regarding your issue. You’re shown how to intentionally separate thoughts from emotions so that both partners understand what specific thoughts trigger certain emotions in the presenting partner.

For instance, one spouse might say, “I think I’m being pressured to solve our financial problems” (a thought statement); therefore, “I feel frightened and annoyed” (a statement of emotion). “I’ve already cut our grocery bill in half (what you have done), and I’m thinking of making meals ahead to save even more” (what you intent to do). This would be in stark contrast to: “You annoy me with your constant pressuring to cut the grocery bill down to fifty dollars a week. Aldi’s is as cheap as I can go. Beyond that, we can starve, dumpster-dive, or shoplift—you pick.” The former would evoke an entirely different response from your spouse than the latter and would make it much easier to maintain an atmosphere conducive to problem-solving.

There is also a special emphasis on thinking and talking about your dreams for yourself and your spouse as well as for the two of you together that takes this practice of communication to a higher level.

**Couple Communication** works! The process takes you back to your wedding vows—getting you both in touch with why you love each other, what dreams you have for one another, and why your marriage matters. This connects the two of you in a way that nothing else does. It helps to renew your bond even when your hearts have drifted apart by time, distance, busyness, conflict, or hurts. Additionally, this

system creates a physically and emotionally safe place governed by mutually agreed upon rules and boundaries of communication where you can talk freely about whatever you need to.

In short **Couple Communication and Collaborative Marriage** helps you to:

1. Find better ways to care for your marriage partner and yourself.
2. Identify and change breakdowns in communication that frustrate the two of you.
3. Deal with personal and relational concerns more effectively.
4. Transform marital conflict into something that is mutually satisfying and even fun!



**Ted and Sherry Boykin** teach a course in marriage and family dynamics and enjoy serving in premarital counseling ministries. They have been married ten years and are the proud parents of five-year-old Kaki. Ted is a faculty member at Baptist Bible College where he and Sherry are dorm parents to fifty guys a year.

Although *Couple Communication* is primarily for couples, the principles presented in this resource are applicable for *any* relationship. Try it with your teens. Ted and Sherry presented this material in an EPIC Workshop at Summit, yet the book is understandable and reader-friendly on its own.



## Avoiding Communication Miscues With Email

Communication with business associates, family, and friends used to always be face to face or over the phone. Over the last dozen years or so, much of that has shifted to email. I have about ten business contacts I seldom, if ever, talk to over the phone since they are in the Far East. In hundreds of email exchanges with them, miscommunication (sometimes comical, sometimes not) all too frequently occurs.

Take that experience into our personal lives where our email exchanges might include sensitive personal issues. Misunderstandings are almost sure to occur.



Here are some tips I have learned to avoid miscommunication in my email:

**Remember that an email only uses one communication tool.** Words. Body language, tone of voice, intensity, and facial expression are impossible to send by email, even using emoticons. You may be thinking one thing, but your reader may "hear" something entirely different. So...

**Avoid sending messages that are negative.** If you have to confront, share bad news, or need to unburden, do it in person or at the very minimum, over the phone. Really. I have almost never had an email confrontation work out well. The extra time, expense, delay, and discomfort to go in person is a much smaller investment than the enormous mess that is created when you dump and dash by email. Also...

**Avoid "reading into" the messages you receive.** Even if you know the person very well, try to take the message at face value. Assume good intentions unless something in the email leads you to assume otherwise.

**If a message you receive causes concern, don't ignore it or hit reply and send back a message that might add fuel to a fire you suspect may be starting.** Call. You can express your concern and attempt to resolve the question or the problem much more quickly and effectively.

**Avoid sending messages that are long.** Long messages tend to be more difficult to understand and exponentially expand the

opportunities for miscommunication. And, frankly, it takes longer to write a well-understood message than to simply pick up the phone and call.

**Remember, email is one-way communication.** Conversation (be it over the phone or in person) invites dialogue and the ability to adjust your words so your hearer understands your message. Picture this: You need to pick up a few things at the store. So, you get in your car, start heading in the correct direction, close your eyes and keep a firm, unswerving grip on the wheel, expecting to reach your destination. After all, it's just a straight two-minute shot, right?

Are you crazy!? No! Whenever you get behind the wheel, even if the road is perfectly straight, you keep your eyes wide open, ready to adjust to the many variations of weather, pedestrians, and other traffic and variables on the road.

Communication by email, especially lengthy communication, can often be like driving with your eyes shut. The inability to adjust, modify, or correct what you are saying based on the other

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It was the first year of our marriage. One day, Rob announced he was going hunting for "a couple of hours." I had no problem with that until two hours had gone by and Rob hadn't returned. But I graciously allowed for a third hour before I got upset. As the hours passed, my temper increased. By the time he walked in the door, I was totally steamed! We had an interesting talk as I slowly calmed down and Rob learned my definition of "a couple of hours."

We both learned some lessons in communication that day. We learned to be sure we both had the same definitions. We learned to be honest with each other, not to be afraid to say what we really meant. And we learned that miscommunication does not have to end badly. It can instead lead to a deeper relationship when we use it as a tool for better communication.

*-Sylanda Alfred*

Besides both having a loving, God-fearing relationship with the Almighty, the number one important thing in a marriage is communication. Back in the Bible days and even more recently, many times two people would wed either by arranged marriages or out of a need for a spouse. Though they usually didn't love or even admire each other at first, the marriage still lasted and usually the love and admiration came over years of time spent together. But one thing the arranged couple did need in order to function in life together was communication. If the husband and the wife did not communicate well, and I'm not referring to just simply talking to one another, then confusion and chaos set in.

The couple needs to learn how the other thinks, how the other talks. They need to learn to pay attention and to *listen* to each other. To think about what they themselves are saying and how the other person may be hearing it. Notice the word *listen*! To listen means not only to hear what the other person is saying but to take in every word and think about it with a clear open mind.

I don't know how many times my husband tries to explain something to me and while he is talking, I am thinking about the next thing I am going to say, and then when he asks me if I understood him, I say yes and completely say or ask something that would have answered my question in the first place, thus I wasn't listening! In order to have good communication, both parties must listen to each other with a fully open mind.

*-Amber Pool*



**On Transparency:** "If we are not willing to open up and share our strengths, weaknesses, failures, and successes, then we will never have deep relationships. We will constantly short-circuit God's plan for the church. How many of us have the gift of encouragement or mercy but never get to exercise it because people don't open up and share their hurts?"

*-Pastor Frank Passetti*

**Communication** has been redefined for me since I became a mom to preschoolers. Travis, our oldest, is five years old, and he loves to communicate! In all honesty, he loves to ask questions. I can't count the number of questions he asks me every day. I think he sometimes tops 100 just on the ten minute drive from our house to the grocery store. I believe that, at birth, someone taught Travis: "The only bad question is the one that isn't asked," and he took this to heart!



In all of these many moments of dialogue, I've learned self restraint. I have had to become more patient and develop more of a sense of humor. I've learned that while he is most definitely curious about all things, more than anything, he just loves the interaction. God knows exactly what we need, when we need it. I have learned a lot from Travis as there are many things that I take for granted. Now he asks for an explanation.

I don't think I'll forget, however, the question that topped them all. One errand morning I was struggling to get the kids out of the car at our third stop, and I could tell Gavin was at the end of his rope. In the midst of trying to get everyone into the store safely, Travis was firing one question after another. I finally said, "Travis, I need you to stop asking questions right now." He naturally replied, "Why?!"

**-Laura Smith**

**The Challenges of Communicating as a Mom and a Wife:** Communication depends so much on the context and the subject(s). I find that, throughout my day, I am communicating or attempting to communicate with my four young boys in a way they will understand. I instruct, correct, and discipline them. Sometimes they understand and will obey right away. Other times, they do not, and I have to figure out a different way of saying something! Their way of communicating is so different from an adult's.



I hear cries, screams, and whines from my baby. It's often a guessing game

as to what he wants. The toddlers talk in sentences that don't always make sense. Plus, they certainly have an interesting way of answering my questions! The easiest child to communicate with is my preschooler. He can understand "whys" and give me reasons back that I can understand. I am constantly going back and forth between all of the kids, trying to use language they can all comprehend. It is quite a challenge. Then add to the mix, trying to communicate with a husband in normal, adult terms after being around small children all day! I have to be careful not to be condescending to him and to treat him with respect after I've been in "mom-mode" all day!

**-Caren Michael**



My mom is very hard of hearing. That makes it difficult to communicate. The approach most of us use is to shout the same word(s) over and over until communication takes place or both parties give up. This method leads to frustration, misunderstanding, hurt feelings, withdrawal, and loneliness. In time my mom became quite adept at giving general responses that made one think she heard when she didn't. Then one day, a simple solution emerged.

At age ninety-one, my mom's mind is still sharp. She has always loved to read, although large print is easier on her eyes these days. Did I say *read*? Well, of course! Why not *write down* what we want to say and avoid all that frustration?

Now my mom always has a white board and marker next to her chair. It comes to my house when she visits me. If she doesn't bring it along, there's always pen and paper. Now I can easily find out what she wants for lunch, if there is anything she needs, or I can just sit down and chat with her. She likes that best! It takes a little more time, but is well worth the effort.

Do you know someone who has trouble hearing? Take time to communicate!

**-Dawn Baumeister**

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person's response or understanding can often get you to a destination you didn't want or can even completely land you in the ditch. Email eliminates your ability to adjust as you go.

I try to use email primarily to:

1. Share important details that need to be acted upon or remembered.
2. Communicate at odd hours when I have no other time available or when the party I need to speak with is unavailable.
3. Encourage or affirm others or share upbeat, positive information.

Two-way communication almost always results in better understanding for all parties involved in the exchange. And, frankly, it is much more enriching to our lives and the lives of those with whom we are communicating! Face to face or over the phone is almost always faster than email if the message is more than a few sentences. Unless you get a long talker, that is!

In email always try to remember Paul's encouragement: "Let your

speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:6).

**Tim Ritchie** and his wife, Jan, live in Dalton with their children John, Joseph, and Kate, and with Tim's mom, Mona. Tim, Jan, and Kate serve in the SBBC Kids' Worship ministry, and Tim and Jan are part of the Sojourners Adult Bible Fellowship. The Ritchies own National Running Center in Clarks Summit.





**Communication**  
**A Powerful Method of Ministry**  
Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a; John 13:35



**I. SPEAK WITH CONSIDERATION: Be Considerate**

The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.  
Proverbs 15:28

The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth.  
Ecclesiastes 12:10

**II. WARNINGS REGARDING COMMUNICATION: Be Cautious**

A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. Proverbs 18:6  
A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back. Proverbs 29:11

**III. THE MANNER FOR GODLY COMMUNICATION: Be controlled**

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. Colossians 4:6

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ. Ephesians 4:15  
A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1  
A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back. Proverbs 29:11

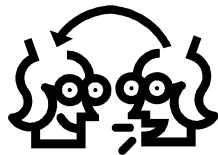
**IV. THE TIMING OF SPEAKING GODLY: Be Calculating**

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak. Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7

A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!  
Proverbs 15:23

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and it is to his glory to overlook a transgression. Proverbs 19:11

A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back. Proverbs 29:11



**V. CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION: Be Constructive**

**A. Confessing**

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. James 5:16

**B. Not Contentious**

As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.  
Proverbs 26:21

A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Proverbs 27:15



**C. Not Critical, but Evaluative**

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. Romans 14:13

**D. Not Condemning, but Blessing**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. Therefore, if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.  
Romans 12:14, 17, 20.

**VI. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SPEAKING GODLY: Be Consequential**

Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles. Proverbs 21:23

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprove to an obedient ear. Proverbs 25:11, 12

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Ephesians 4:29

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. Proverbs 16:24  
There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.  
Proverbs 12:18

**VII. A PRAYER FOR GODLY SPEAKING: Be Consecrated**

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Psalm 141:3

"Lord God, please give me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. Please wake me morning by morning, and awake my ear to hear as the learned." Based on Isaiah 50:4

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**VERBAL ABUSE:** Any form of communication that is intended to intimidate, belittle, or create fear. This includes condemnation, insults, name-calling, ridicule, a harsh or sarcastic tone and, often, superlatives (always, never). It is the opposite of the grace-filled kind of speech referred to in Ephesians 4:29, where Paul calls us to "let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." One imparts grace, the other imparts fear.

