

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

MESSAGE NEXT STEPS

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

APRIL 24

Relationships get complicated! Communication is the backbone of any lasting marriage, friendship, or close relationship. Intimacy is all about knowing and being known, but that requires healthy communication.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being terrible, 10 being perfect) how well do you listen? Using the same scale, how well do you communicate with those in your life? Why do you choose that number?

1. What stood out to you from the message?

3. Read **Psalm 116:1-7**.

a.) Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):

- Who is talking? What is the circumstance?
- Any repeated phrases?
- What surprised you?
- What stood out to you?

b.) Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)

- What questions do you have?
- Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences - what are the main points?
- What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
- What do you learn about yourself or the world around you?

c.) Now make some applications (what's my response)

- How do you respond to what you are reading?
- How could this apply to your life today?
- What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
- Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?

4. Do you believe that God is a God who listens to you? Why or why not?

5. Read **James 1:19-20**. God teaches us to live in ways that run contrary to what the world teaches us. Do you feel like you know how to listen well? If so, what has contributed to that? If not, why do you think listening is hard for you?

6. Read **Hebrews 12:9-10**. How are you "honoring others above yourself" like these verses talk about?

7. Read **James 3:1-10**. In what ways do you wrestle with your tongue/speech? How have you let God and others into that area of struggle? If not, what do you sense is needed for you to grow and change?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Psalms 116:1 love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Lord, save me!" The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

James 1:19-20 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

Hebrews 12:9-10 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

James 3:1-10 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

DIGGING DEEPER

- 1 Do a communication inventory this week. Commit to being more aware of how often you listen and how often you talk in situations in your day-to-day life. Throughout the day keep a list or stop at the end of each day and jot down what you notice in these areas:
 - a. When do you struggle to listen?
 - b. When are you quick to speak?
 - c. When are you quick to get angry?
 - d. Where do you shy away from speaking when you should speak up?
 - e. What patterns do you notice?
- 2 Invite God and others into what you discover.
 - a. Ask God to help you grow in the area of weakness you discover.
 - i. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be more aware throughout your day.
 - ii. Ask for help from the Holy Spirit to take one step to change.
 - b. Ask a trusted friend for feedback on how they experience you.
 - i. Ask for their advice on how you can grow
 - ii. Ask for their help/ accountability to take a next step to grow
- 3 Apologize if you notice that you have been quick to speak and get angry and haven't listened well. Go to the person or write them a letter and tell them what you have discovered and ask them to forgive you.