

Let's Talk!

By Shari Miller

Leader's Notes and Bible Passages Available Online

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited. These sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

Discuss this quote: "You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life" (motivational speaker Zig Ziglar). Share with a partner or your small group a time in your life when this proved true.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. You might need to set the example. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group throughout the study.

Communication involves speaking, listening, how something is said, and even our body language as we say it. Communication has the power to effect change in our lives. Communication can wound and heal, as well as build up or tear down. This Bible study will focus on God's communication to us, our communication with God, and our communication about God with others.

Opening Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You, O Lord! We confess that our sins have separated us from You. We thank You that You saw our need for salvation and sent Your own Son — the Word made flesh — to be our Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Because He rose from the dead and lives eternally, we know that we, too, can look forward to eternal life in the glories of heaven. We thank You for giving us Your written Word that by the power of the Holy Spirit causes our faith to flourish. We are privileged to come as Your children in prayer, talking with You and knowing that You listen and answer. Please bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

God's Communication to Us

Read **Psalm 119:103–107**.

¹⁰³How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ¹⁰⁶I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. ¹⁰⁷I am severely afflicted; give me life, O LORD, according to your word! How does the Psalmist describe the *words of the Lord*? "sweeter than honey"; give understanding; "a lamp to my feet"; "light to my path"; "righteous rules"; life-giving

What does **Jeremiah** call the words of God in **15:16a**? "a joy and the delight of my heart"

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart ...

The prophet Isaiah gives us even more insight into the words of our God. See **Isaiah 40:8** and **55:10-11**.

Isaiah 40:8 the Word will stand forever

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Isaiah 55:10–11 God's Word will accomplish what God intends – it shall not return empty.

¹⁰"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Read **Genesis 1:3**.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Except for man and woman, how did God create the world and all that is in it? **With the words: "Let there be ..."**

In light of these passages, what adjectives would you use to describe the words **eternal, righteous, life-giving, joy-giving, delightful, etc.**

What was God's word of command in **Genesis 2:15–17**?

To not eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

How did Adam and Eve respond to this command

[**Genesis 3:6**]? **They ate the fruit and disobeyed God.** As a result of sin, what was God's communication in **Exodus 20:1–17** and **Deuteronomy 6:1a, 5–7**?

Exodus 20:1–17 God's Law – the Ten Commandments

¹And God spoke all these words, saying, ²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³"You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth

generation of those who hate me,⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

Deuteronomy 6:1a, 5–7 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart...soul...and might.” These words shall be on your heart and you shall teach them and talk of them.

¹⁴ “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you ... ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

What does God’s lawful Word show us? **It shows us our sin.**

Read **Genesis 3:15**. What promise does God give in this passage? **The promise of a Savior**. How does God fulfill that promise in **John 1:1, 14**? **Jesus is born – God with us, in the flesh**. What does God’s promising (or Gospel) Word show us? **It shows us our Savior!**

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵[The Lord God said:] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

John 1:1, 14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

If time permits: Look at the following passages. What were some of God’s Old Testament words of promise to His people? **Exodus 19:3b–6; Joshua 23:14; Psalm 18:30; Psalm 33:4**

Exodus 19:3b-6 “You shall be my treasured possession; a kingdom of priests; a holy nation.”

^{3b}The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴You

yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

Joshua 23:14 All of the good things that God promised have come to pass – God’s promises do not fail.

¹⁴ “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.

Psalm 18:30 God’s Word is true – He is a shield.”

³⁰ This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

Psalm 33:4 God’s Word is upright and all His work is faithfulness.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.

In **Matthew 4:4**, Jesus resisted temptation from Satan to turn rocks into bread by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 when He answered: “... ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*’”

2 Timothy 3:14–17 and **Hebrews 4:12** tell us about the Word of God. List some of the characteristics mentioned in these verses. **sacred writings that make us wise to salvation, inspired by God, good for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, complete; living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword, discerns thoughts and intentions of the heart** What is the purpose of God’s written Word according to **John 20:30–31**? “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”

2 Timothy 3:14–17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

John 20:30–31

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

When we hear the inspired Word of God, the Holy Spirit engenders faith in us – the Word of God is our Lord “talking” to us! (See **Ephesians 1:13–14**.) Identify the

“tools” that the Holy Spirit uses from the following passages: **the Word and Sacraments**

Ephesians 1:13–14

¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Romans 10:17 The preaching and teaching of the Word of God

¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Romans 6:4 Baptism

⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Matthew 26:26–28 the Lord's Supper

²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

If time permits: What are some of God's New Testament promises to His people in the following passages? **Mark 13:30–31; John 3:34–36; John 5:24; John 6:68–69**

Mark 13:30–31 God's Word will not pass away – it is eternal.

³⁰Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

John 3:34–36 Jesus, our Savior God, gives us eternal life and His Spirit.

³⁴For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 5:24 Jesus gives us eternal life!

²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 6:68–69 Jesus is the Holy One of God and gives eternal life!

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

Faith Talk: Share ways that you have used or can use God's Word daily in your life. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

Our Communication with God

We are privileged to approach our saving God in **worship** and **prayer**.

Our **worship** is all about God and what He has done for us by sending the Word made flesh – Jesus – to live a perfect life, suffer and die on the cross, and rise to

everlasting life. Because He lives, we too will live in the glories of heaven. See **Psalm 100** for a sample song of praise and worship, and read it aloud.

Psalm 100

¹Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! ²Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! ³Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. ⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! ⁵For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

God promises to hear every believer's **prayer** and to answer for our good. The A.C.T.S. outline is always a good way to remember the basic elements of prayer. Read each corresponding Bible verse for an example of each.

Adoration **Psalm 92:1–2**

¹It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; ²to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night ...

Confession **1 John 1:8–9**

⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Thanksgiving **Ephesians 5:20**

²⁰... giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

Supplications **1 Timothy 2:1**

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people ...

If time permits: Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 106:1). This is a wonderful example of an opening adoration for prayer. On a separate sheet of paper, write down a prayer based on the A.C.T.S. outline. **If there is not time for this exercise, encourage participants to do this on their own – then they are prepared if needed at some future time.**

Our Communication about God with Others

We have studied how God communicates with us, and how we are privileged to communicate with God. Now let's look at how we communicate about God with others.

Read **Genesis 11:1–9**. What was the cause of God's judgment? **the people's prideful sin** What impact on communication does this account reveal? **God confused their language and dispersed them throughout the earth.**

¹Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.”

And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Read **Acts 2:1–4**. In light of the Tower of Babel account, how does the Pentecost account show God's fervent desire that the Good News about Jesus Christ spread throughout the world? **God, instead of confusing language, performed a miracle, so that the message of salvation in Jesus was heard in many languages.** How does that evangelism happen in our world today? **through the work of missionaries in our nation and abroad; Lutheran Bible Translators; through each one of us – telling the Good News about Jesus in our homes and our communities; through the support of those going to foreign mission fields**

Acts 2:1–4

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In **Acts 17:6b**, the disciples of Jesus were identified as *these men who have turned the world upside down...*

Quickly look up the following passages and their surrounding context from the book of Acts: **Acts 4:31; 6:7; 13:48–49; 16:32; 19:20.**

Acts 4:31

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:7

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 13:48–49

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

Acts 16:32

³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

Acts 19:20

²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

How did communication aid in the growth of the early church? **The only way that the Good News could spread was through the spoken word and in time the written Word of God.** How did the disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit, take advantage of every opportunity to spread the Good News? **The Spirit made them bold to share in whatever circumstances they found themselves (i.e., prison, before magistrates) and they spread the Good News in Jerusalem and even to the Gentiles.**

Faith Talk: Talk about a time when you were privileged to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus. Share with a partner or in your group. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

In addition to evangelism, what practical instructions regarding communication are given to us in the following passages as we live together in the Christian community?

Ephesians 5:4–6 **keep our talk pure, give thanks, watch out for empty and false words**

⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 6:17–20 **stay in the Word of God, pray, keep alert, make supplications for all the saints**

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Philippians 2:14–16 **don't grumble or dispute with one another, hold fast to God's Word**

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Colossians 3:12–17 **forgive each other, bear with one another, let God's peace rule in your hearts, be thankful, let God's Word dwell richly in you, teach and admonish one another, sing and praise God**

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has

forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

James 1:22–25 actions sometimes speak louder than words, so do as the Word of God exhorts us to in the name and to the glory of Jesus in response to His salvation in our lives

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

If time permits: During this study, or on your own, look up the following accounts where God sought out His servants. How did they respond? **Each did as the Lord commanded.** Perhaps you can think of more.

Genesis 12:1–3: Abram/Abraham

1 Samuel 3:1–10: Samuel

Isaiah 6:8: Isaiah

Acts 26:12–18: Saul/Paul

Faith Walk:

1. Thank God daily for His life-giving Word.
2. Resolve to read His Word daily and rejoice in the Savior's grace.
3. By the power of the Spirit, share with at least one person the Good News of salvation in Jesus.
4. Praise and thank God for the hope of eternal life.
5. Pray daily for His guidance and strength in your life and in the lives of those you love.

Closing Prayer and Litany:

Leader: Almighty God, We thank You for Your Word. *(Each participant offers thanks for God's Word and its life-giving message. After all have offered petitions, close with this litany based on **Revelation 22:6–7, 20.**)*

Leader: And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true.

All: And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

Leader: "And behold, I am coming soon.

All: Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Leader: He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

All: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

Sing together *Thy Word Is a Lamp* (Accompaniment for the Hymns volume of *Lutheran Service Book* #973) or *Blessed Jesus, at Your Word* (LSB #904; LW #202; TLH 316).
