

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

God So Loved, Man of Sorrows, What A Beautiful Name

WELCOME

If you close your eyes and avoid speaking for 3 minutes what do you hear around you? Describe in as much detail as possible.

WORD

LUKE 6:45

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

JAMES 1:19-20

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Have you ever wondered or wished that you can know the hearts of your children, your disciples, or your loved ones? What are they thinking? What are they hoping? What are their dreams, fears, and concerns? How will you know the heart of your loved ones especially your children?

Today there are many machines that can look at the heart physically, but they can only see the PHYSICAL HEART. You would still wish you could see or know the hearts of the people God has entrusted to you.

We read in **Luke 6:45** that the mouth is the echo-chamber of the heart. Do you want to know the heart? Listen to what the mouth is saying, and you would know!

The principle of open communication is this: **OPEN COMMUNICATION opens the hearts of your disciples or children.** It is a heart-to-heart communication. It is when each party – parent to children, discipler to disciple, can freely share their thoughts and ideas without fear of being judged, condemned, or reprimanded. They feel safe to share, and voice out their opinions, even if you disagree with their ideas.

A simple reminder for this can be found in **James 1:19-20**, and we see the model open communication: **QUICK TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, AND SLOW TO ANGER.** Many times, we think that our anger will accomplish the purpose of GOD. This verse negates that belief!

What does it mean to be quick to hear? It means you must be intentional. Develop a habit of listening. Many times, we would rather lecture or speak than listen. Being quick to hear shows that you are willing to listen first before trying to make a point. **Proverbs 18:13** warns us about the foolishness of neglecting to listen and reacting haphazardly. We have to get the whole story before jumping to conclusions. Do you remember a time when you spoke too soon, and the result was that your child or disciple

stopped sharing? As this is a common problem, we all need to take the journey to learn how to do things better.

Open communication is about LISTENING. The more you listen, the more you understand; The more you understand, the more you can communicate; The more you can communicate, the better the influence. At the end of the day, it's all about influencing the heart of our children or disciples. How can you influence them if you do not know what's going on in their hearts? Start to practice the **5A's of LISTENING!**

1. Be AVAILABLE.

In our attempt to do better in open communication, we must learn to be available when our children or disciples are speaking or sharing something to us. We must not give them BUSY signals. Given our God-ordained responsibility, we represent God to the flock entrusted to us. When we are available to listen, we show them that GOD is always interested to hear from them. Beware of hurried discussion and quick answers – when we show them that we are available to hear them out, we open the gateway for them to be more open and willing to communicate their hearts.

2. Give Full ATTENTION

We also have to learn to give them our full attention. Eye contact, concentrated focus, and the willingness to remove all possible distractions – all these show that you are interested and will make them more comfortable to open up.

3. Have the Right ATTITUDE: LOVE

You will not be available and intentional if you are not motivated by LOVE. The first duty of love is to listen (Paul Tillich). Listening is really love in action (Leo Buscaglia). If you

WORD (cont'd)

love somebody, you will surely make time. In communicating with those we love, a question we must ask ourselves is **“am I really interested to know their hearts”** Your answer to this will spell out whether or not you will be able to take the extra mile and ask probing, open-ended questions that will allow you to understand what needs to be heard. Make sure that as you listen, you think of **LOVE** as a motivation. Be wholeheartedly concerned about the situation and have that intentionality to really help your child or disciple get on the right track.

4. ASK QUESTIONS

Proverbs 20:5 gives us a picture of “deep waters” that we must be able to draw out from somebody we are trying to understand. To accomplish this, we must ask open-ended questions in our conversations. As you listen, remember that words are just a part of what we need to understand – we also try to read their eyes, their tone, and even their body language. Learn to understand the unspoken words that come from the heart!

5. ALL TOPICS (must be up for discussion)

Our children or disciples would need to feel safe to talk to us about anything. We must learn to set aside our prejudice and avoid careless reactions. The best way is to cling on to God as

you listen so that your responses will be helpful rather than destructive. Utilize the **“Coach Approach”** and walk alongside them as they deal with their issues!

After listening, how do we respond?

IN **Ephesians 4:15**, we are reminded to **“speak the truth in love”**. Many times, we just want to speak the truth, but it hurts in some cases especially when not balanced with love.

The goal is not just to *reprimand* or *correct* – the goal is to be able **to understand better and lead the person to the right response and actions** moving forward. The reminder is to have their **growth in God as the main objective**. This would mean we have to encourage, be gentle, and lead them God’s will for them.

Proverbs 15:1-2 shows us that when we learn to communicate properly, we become more and more effective. A saying goes, **“listen to understand before you speak to be understood.”** We represent the LORD, and we do not want to be an obstacle in their relationship with GOD. What we want is to be a catalyst and instrument for GOD to transform their lives.

Open communication opens the heart because when they know they are understood and loved, God’s Spirit and God’s Word are able to do its work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. Self-Check.** What hinders your family members or disciples from opening up to you?
- 2. Setting It Right.** What will you stop doing and start doing to have open communication with them? Pray for the Lord to help you set things right and truly begin impacting the lives of people God has placed in your care.
- 3. Living It Out.** How will you practice each of the 5As this week? How will doing so help you win others to Christ?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for God to improve open communication between yourself and the people you are reaching out to. Show that you care by LISTENING intentionally and lovingly to what others have to say about their circumstances, their needs, etc. when you ask the what you can pray for them and pray accordingly. Share about Jesus and how He wants to establish a relationship with open communication with them because He loves them.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends