Communicating Spiritual Values

Introduction:

1. We are communicating all the time.
   1. Communication: “a process by which meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols” (Webster, page 168).
   2. Either verbally or non-verbally we are exchanging meanings with those around us.
2. But how do we effectively share those things that are really important to us with those that we love?
   1. Relatively unimportant.
      1. “Please pass the bisquits.”
      2. “Do you think it will rain today?”
   2. Important.
      1. “I love you.”
      2. “Always tell the truth.”
      3. “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
3. Notice these principles in 2 Timothy 2.
4. “IF I’VE TOLD YOU ONCE, I’VE TOLD YOU A THOUSAND TIMES” SHOULD BE TRUE ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE.
   1. Effective communication of important values will include saying essentially the same thing in the same way and in different ways over a long period of time.
      1. Paul’s instruction to Timothy: “Keep on reminding men of these things” (2 Timothy 2:14, Williams translation).
      2. Moses instructions to Israel. Deuteronomy 6:6,7
      3. “We have not told them until we have told them five times.” - James O. Baird, 3-23-83
   2. Things that are important, we repeat and rehearse.
      1. Tying shoes.
      2. Multiplication tables.
      3. Hitting a baseball or basketball goal.
      4. Christian values.
   3. One reason that we might not repeat it is because it is not valuable to us.
5. “DON’T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF.”
   1. Decide not to quarrel over some issues in order to discuss things that are more important. 2 Timothy 2:14, 23
   2. Why not debate the minor details?
      1. Lack of time. John 9:4
      2. Lack of possibilities – some things will never be settled.
         1. Did it happen at 12:15 or 12:35?
         2. Did I have on a red or blue shirt?
         3. Was the car that passed a Ford or Mercury?
      3. Lack of purpose - what difference does it make?
         1. What will it matter in two years?
         2. What will it matter in twenty years?
         3. What will it matter in two hundred years?
6. “DON’T DO AS I DO, DO AS I SAY,” WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE.
   1. Notice verse 15.
      1. “Study.” (KJV)
         1. “Be diligent.” (NKJV)
         2. “be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort.” - Arndt & Gingrich, p. 771.
      2. “To present yourself approved to God.”
         1. The “me first” principle of Bible study.
         2. Pharisee and publican. Luke 18:9-14
         3. David. Psalm 139:23, 24
      3. “A worker who does not need to be ashamed.”
         1. If God approves, I do not need to fear men. Hebrews 13:5,6
      4. “Rightly dividing the word of truth.”
         1. “So the man who rightly divides, rightly handles the word of truth:
            1. Drives a straight road through the truth and refuses to be lured down pleasant but irrelevant bypaths.
            2. He ploughs a straight furrow across the field of truth.
            3. He takes each section of truth, and fits it into its correct position, as a mason does a stone, allowing no part to usurp an undue place or an undue emphasis, and so to knock the whole structure of truth out of balance.” - The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, Barclay, p. 199.
         2. “Calvin connected it with a father dividing out the food at a meal, and cutting it up so that each member of the family received the right and necessary portion.”
   2. False teaching must be avoided. 2 Timothy 2:16-18
   3. What I am is more powerful than what I say. 2 Timothy 2:19-22
      1. What I say is important.
      2. What I do is more important.
      3. What I am is most important.
      4. My challenge is to get what I say and what I do together.
   4. Illustrations.
      1. A young mother was shocked to learn her little son had told a lie. Taking the boy on her knee, she vividly explained what happened to little boys who did so.

“A big black demon with fiery red eyes and two sharp horns grabs little boys who tell lies and carries them off into the night. They have to work in a dark canyon for fifty years. Now you won’t tell another lie, will you?”

“No ma’am,” came the prompt reply. “You can tell them much better than I can.”

* + 1. A parent teaches the children to respect authority and obey the law.

However, continual disobedience of the law when it is convenient, using a “Fuzz-buster”, and complaining and criticizing the officer when caught speeding illustrates that person’s true values.

The real value is, “Don’t get caught. Others should obey the law and be punished, but not me.”

* + 1. A Bible school teacher in Alabama had a class that was disruptive. In an attempt to control the class,
       1. She said:
          1. “If you don’t behave, I’ll throw you out the window.”
          2. “If you don’t behave, I’ll cut your ears off.”
       2. The values that might be learned in that class are:
          1. The end justifies the means.
          2. It’s alright to lie to get people to do what you want them to do.
    2. In a VBS, the leader said, “Those who don’t get quiet, won’t get refreshments – home made ice cream.
       1. They didn’t get quiet.
       2. They got ice cream.
    3. A boy was caught stealing pencils at school. The principal called the father. The father said, “Son, why would you dot this? I’ve slipped enough pencils home from work to last us for years.”

Conclusion:

1. Communicating God’s word accurately and effectively is difficult; to do that we will have to
   1. Suffer like a soldier.
   2. Go by the rules like an athlete.
   3. Work hard like a farmer.
2. Jesus nor any of His followers ever suggested otherwise.
   1. Count the cost. Luke 14:25-33
   2. Paul. 2 Timothy 2:3-5
3. But there is a reward. 2 Timothy 2:21
   1. “I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.”
   2. The reward here. 2 Timothy 2:21
      1. A vessel for honor.
      2. Sanctified and useful for the Master.
      3. Prepared for every good work.
   3. It is not a rose garden, but a crown hereafter.
      1. Paul, an example of the kind of person he was describing to Timothy, reflected on his life. 2 Timothy 4:6
         1. “I have fought the good fight.”
         2. “I have finished the race.”
         3. “I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7, NKJV).
      2. The reward. 2 Timothy 4:8