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Text messaging has become a popular way of sharing God's Word with others these days. Encouraging verses of scripture are shared, invitations to fellowship meetings extended, and prayer requests communicated, all with just a few characters and moments of time. These "microcommunications" help us stay in touch and extend our lives to others, yet it's important to recognize that they don't replace our face-to-face communications with others.

Sometimes, in order for a person to truly understand the fullness of God's heart for them from His Word, they need a more complete explanation than can be contained in one message, or even a series of messages. In sharing the greatness of God's Word with others, there is nothing quite like speaking to someone face-to-face.

The Apostle Paul wrote many epistles to the churches in the first century, and those epistles powerfully communicated God's heart; yet Paul clearly understood that even those powerful writings weren't a replacement for his personal presence with people.

*Romans 1:11:*

*For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.*

*I Thessalonians 2:17:*

*But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.*

In the Gospels, we see Jesus Christ taking the time to be personally present with others with a view to imparting a greater understanding of the Word of God. A wonderful example of this is the record of Jesus Christ in his resurrected body joining two men on their journey to Emmaus.

*Luke 24:27,30-32:*

*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] expounded unto them [the two disciples going to Emmaus] in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

*And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*

*And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.*

*And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

What a fellowship along the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and what a time of breaking bread that must have been! Having so much face-to-face time allowed Jesus to personally teach these two disciples everything in the Old Testament pertaining to himself as the Messiah. By the end of their time together, these two disciples had come to a more complete understanding of God's Word regarding Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

Generally, there is a much more thorough and intimate communication when people speak to each other *in person* rather than relying on brief written communications like text messages. When face-to-face with someone, our words combine with our facial expressions, voice intonation, body language, and other nonverbal cues to provide the most accurate message. When I desire to convey God's heart and will to someone, I ask myself this question: Will a text message on the small screen of an inanimate object compare to the personal presence of a love-energized, spirit-filled ambassador for Christ?

*II Corinthians 5:20:*

*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

An ambassador is an authorized representative or messenger. We, as believers with Christ in us, are authorized representatives, messengers for Jesus Christ, and we can learn from and imitate his example of how to best bring God's message of deliverance to others.

Our heavenly Father has equipped us in body, soul, and spirit as His messengers to communicate and fully share His heart with others. Although text messaging can be a

quick, fun, and efficient way to convey brief messages, it is no replacement for the personal presence of an ambassador for Christ in demonstrating God's love and concern for others.

Let's keep in mind that sometimes the most effective way to reach people with the Word is to be personally present with them. Whenever possible, let's find ways to connect face-to-face with others to share God's message of deliverance. And as we do, may our joy be full!

*II John 12:*

*Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.*

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