

MARRIAGE TUNE UP

Communication in Marriage

Lesson #4

One of the most basic skills needed to have a great marriage is knowing how to communicate effectively and in a God honoring way. But good communication techniques usually do not come naturally. They must be learned. They must be sharpened and honed over the duration of a marriage. In this study we will learn some positive principles and applications of communication from the Scriptures.

I. TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

A. Verbal Communication:

1. Words
2. Noises

Webster defines communication as:
The act of transmitting. It is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

B. Non Verbal Communication:

1. Facial expressions
2. Body language

C. Your words – are they poison or medicine?

1. **Eph. 4:29-31** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.
2. **Col. 3:8-10** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.
3. **Col. 4:6** Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.
4. **Jam. 3:2-10** For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

II. **GOD GIVEN WISDOM FOR GODLY COMMUNICATING**

A. **Wounds from "Sticks and Stones" Heal Faster than Words**

1. Prov. 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
2. Application:

B. **Speak Pleasant and Encouraging Words**

1. Prov. 16:24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
2. Application:

C. **Speak at the Right Time - Avoid the "Broken Washer" Syndrome**

1. Prov. 25:11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.
2. Application:

D. **Good Communicators Are Good Listeners**

1. Prov. 10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
2. Application:

E. **Your Spouse Sees Things You Don't, So Listen to Them**

1. Prov. 25:12 Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.
2. Application:

F. **"Better to Be Thought a Fool, than to Open Your Mouth and Remove All Doubt" - Think Before Speaking**

1. Prov. 15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.
2. Application:

G. Be Smart, Listen, and Gain Knowledge and Understanding

1. Prov. 17:27 He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
2. Application:

H. Don't Gossip about Your Spouse

1. Prov. 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.
2. Application:

I. Don't Lecture Your Spouse

1. Prov. 18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.
2. Application:

J. Don't Be an Actor

1. Prov. 26:23-25 Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart. He who hates disguises it with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart. When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart.
2. Application:

K. Don't Expect Your Spouse to Read Your Mind

1. Prov. 14:10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy.
2. Application:

L. Don't Interrupt

1. Prov. 18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.
2. Application:

M. Be a Thermostat Not a Thermometer

1. Prov. 26:21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.
2. Application:

N. Think about How You Communicate Nonverbally

1. Prov. 10:10 He who winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will be thrown down.
2. Application:

O. Remember That Voice Tones Communicate Too

1. Prov. 25:15 By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone.
2. Application:

P. Never, Always and Ever Remember to Never Say Always, Never, and Ever in a Negative way

1. Prov. 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.
2. Application:

Q. Don't Use Humor that Wounds Your Spouse

1. Prov. 26:18-19 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death, so is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "Was I not joking?"
2. Application:

III. COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO PRACTICE

- A. Reflective Listening.** When communicating with your spouse, listen carefully, and then after they are finished speaking, summarize what you thought you heard them say. Let them tell you if you understood them. If not, let them rephrase what they meant until you get confirmation from them that you have heard them correctly.

- B. The kinds of phrases you use in reflective listening are, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” Or “So you feel/think that . . . is that right?”
- C. **Let Your Spouse Know You Are Interested in What They Are Saying by Your Non-verbal Communication.** This means looking at them and using body language that lets them know you care about what they are saying. It means looking at them in the eyes, holding hands, facing them, nodding when they say things, etc.
- D. **Don't Judge Your Spouse's Feelings and Emotions:** This means listening to them and not saying things like, “*You shouldn't feel that way.*” The fact is they do feel the way they feel and have the emotions they have. When someone opens their heart to you they don't want it kicked. Remember that just because someone has feelings that contradict the facts, this does not mean they don't have the feelings or that what they feel isn't real. So listen, summarize what you think they are feeling. If they want advice or a solution to their feelings they will usually ask. But normally, just having someone listen is enough to help. If feelings or emotions are causing sin, wait until you hear them out and clearly understand their feelings and at the right moment address what the Scriptures say and what is true and right. Sometimes it's just best to listen and sympathize.
- E. **Communication quenchers:**
1. “I don't care!”
 2. “I don't want to hear it!”
 3. “So what!”
 4. “What about me?”
 5. “You never,” “you always,” “you do that every time!”
 6. “Let me tell you what you need to do. . .”
 7. Eye rolling, arm crossing, air brakes, TV watching, face crinkling, pouting, hands on hips, or deep labored breathing.
 8. Looking somewhere else or at something else e.g. playing with a feather.

IV. **HOMEWORK**

- A. **Make a date** with your spouse, go over the lesson, and list what you consider to be **your three worst areas** of communication and **your spouse's three best areas**.

- B. Then discuss your answers with each other.

- C. Tell your spouse how they can help you change the areas you know you need help with. Make a plan to notify each other when bad communication techniques are being used. Give them permission to remind you when you need reminded and what time would be best to be reminded.

- D. **Your three weakest areas**
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

- E. **Your spouse's three strongest areas**
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.