

How's Your Talk Life?

Couples often say they talk a lot. When probed a little deeper, however, many couples realize they swap *clichés* (“How’s it going?”), report *facts* (“Mason did well at school today.”), and share *opinions* (“I think your sister should look for another job.”). Every marriage needs these levels of communication—they’re good! The problem is, many couples stop there and increasingly feel misunderstood by their spouse and alone. God intends for couples to be *naked and unashamed* (Genesis 2:25). This verse is more about our emotional life and our “talk life” as a couple than about our sex life.

So how are you doing as a couple? How would you respond to these statements on a scale of 1-5 (1 being *Strongly Disagree* and 5 being *Completely Agree*)?*

- _____ I can say what I’m really thinking to my spouse.
- _____ When we have a problem, my spouse often won’t talk about it.
- _____ My spouse sometimes makes comments that put me down.
- _____ I am very satisfied with how my spouse and I talk with each other.
- _____ I wish my spouse were more willing to share his/her feelings with me.
- _____ My spouse often doesn’t understand how I feel.
- _____ Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my spouse tells me.
- _____ It is difficult for me to share negative things with my spouse.
- _____ My spouse is a very good listener.
- _____ At times it is hard for me to ask my spouse for what I need.

* Adapted from the widely used *PREPARE/ENRICH* relationship assessment.

Include your children in the conversations. Pastor Randy Frazee likens dinner table conversations to tribal campfires. Facts and feelings about our day get shared. Encouragement, laughter, instruction get applied. God’s faithfulness and truth get remembered. Family stories get told. And values and purposes for living get strengthened. All this happens when we *communicate* as families, especially at the end of the day. Be sure to finish chewing your food, but take time to TALK.

TALK
***We Still Do* series**

Build Up and Benefit

Shared conversations bring you closer as a couple. Talk, talk, talk.

1. Did you have a nickname when you were growing up? How did you get it? Share your nickname with the group, then follow your leaders' instructions for some fun!

2. What are the different "parts" of communication that Pastor Dan mentioned in his message (example: tone of voice)? Which *two* are most important to you when talking with your husband or wife? Explain.

3. What do these Scriptures teach about how we should talk with our spouse (and others)?

- Proverbs 16:24—

- James 1:19—

- Proverbs 15:28—

- Proverbs 24:26—

4. What do you enjoy talking about with your spouse? How do you know when they are *really* listening?

5. In a typical week, estimate what percentage of your couple communication is about:

_____ % FACTS—How's the weather, what's for dinner, what we need to do next

_____ % FEELINGS—how I'm doing today, how God is speaking to me

_____ % DREAMS/NEEDS—*I'd love to . . . , I'm really struggling with . . .*

6. What have you learned or been reminded of through this study? What is God prompting you to change or improve in your communication?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29