

Session 1: Communication

OPEN

What's one of your favorite things to talk about? Why do you love talking about that topic?

This series with marriage experts Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott is all about communication and is based on their book Love Talk. While it can be easy to talk about sports, music, or work, it's not always a breeze to communicate with our spouse. Les and Leslie will give us the tools we need to have healthy communication within marriage.

VIEW

Watch Session One: *Communication 10* (14 minutes)

REVIEW

In order to master something, it's important to know the basics really well. Les and Leslie challenged us in this session to go back to the basics of communication with our spouse. They said communication is the lifeblood of marriage. **In what ways do you hope to grow in your communication with your spouse through this study?**

We all have areas we can improve our marriage. Even if you're excellent communicators, there are some ways you can continue to grow. **If you had to grade your communication with your spouse on a scale of one to five, what would you give it? Would you say you're doing well in your communication? Why or why not?**

In the story, Terry and Frankie demonstrated two very different styles of communicating with one another. Frankie said that she is more aggressive and Terry is more laid back. At times they appeared to be at cross purposes. **What advice would you give them to improve their communication with each other?**

Les and Leslie spoke about two essential skills for communicating with your spouse. The first was clarifying content. To clarify content means to make sure you accurately understand what your spouse is saying because we tend to make assumptions. **What could it look like for you to clarify content with your spouse?**

The second skill Les and Leslie highlighted was reflecting feeling. Reflecting feeling means we try to figure out and say what we think the other person is feeling during a conversation. It doesn't matter if we're accurate or not, the point is to be genuine. **What's your reaction when you feel like your spouse truly understands your feelings in a conversation? What could you do to reflect feelings for your spouse?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Read Ephesians 4:29.

In the broader context of this passage, Paul is teaching the church in Ephesus how to live the new life God has given us through Jesus. This verse talks about avoiding unwholesome talk for the benefit of others. **What kind of speech is unwholesome? What effect can it have on another person?**

The alternative to unwholesome talk is helpful speech that builds people up according to their needs. **What are some examples of helpful speech?**

Les and Leslie provided two ways for us to have helpful speech with our spouse. We can clarify content and reflect feeling. **In what ways could these two communication skills build up your spouse?**

What could you and your spouse do this week to put Ephesians 4:29 and the principles from this session into practice?

Communication begins with the basics. While the lessons from this session might seem simple, they're often difficult for us to implement. This week, pick one of the two skills Les and Leslie talked about to work on as a couple. At the end of the week, take a few minutes to evaluate how you did.

APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Select an activity from the list below to begin applying the lessons of this session to your life.

Pray: Spend time in prayer with your spouse this week. Pray about your communication with each other. Ask God to grow you in the way you communicate with each other.

Read: Read chapters 1–3 of Les and Leslie's book *Love Talk*. Talk about the chapters with your spouse.

Assess: Take Les and Leslie's Better Love Assessment. Discuss your results with your spouse.

Practice: Practice clarifying content and reflecting feeling with your spouse this week. After your conversation, evaluate how you did and come up with ways you can improve moving forward.