



Communication

Communicating _____ is one of the most important elements of any relationship. God's Word _____ valuable insights for every aspect of our lives. When we follow God's instructions we can see how our lives and our relationships _____. When we selfishly ignore God's _____ life becomes bitter and hurtful. Reading Scripture is not simply a good habit; it's how we learn the _____ of God. **Read Proverbs 3:13-15.** Misunderstanding can happen between husbands and wives. One only half _____ the other and assumes he or she was saying something very different from what the person was actually saying.

Communication is the barometer of any relationship, and couples who don't communicate well will find their relationship in _____. Even when a man and woman genuinely love each other _____ can short-circuit or kill a positive relationship quicker than poorly or unfairly communicated messages. For communication to take place the hearer must not only understand what the speaker is saying but also understand what the speaker _____ to say. If one speaks with the wrong tone of voice or with poorly chosen words he may well communicate a message that he never intended. If one's body language accentuates a message the speaker never intended, the _____ may come away hurt or defensive. Both people must communicate their messages with love and respect.

Today's reading comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 4:29-32.

Many of the _____ between husbands and wives start with their inability to communicate effectively. The most valuable _____ couples need is the ability to communicate with each other what they feel, what's happening, and what they need. If they refuse to talk with each other or refuse to listen to each other they cannot have a _____ that honors Christ. They merely have two people who live in the same _____. Love works through communication. When two people _____ communicating love and begin fussing and feuding, their harsh words and cruel ways build a barrier that destroys their home.

Each of us needs to _____ himself or herself. Rather than looking at your spouse, look at your _____ behavior. Are you kind, are you forgiving, and do you treat your spouse the _____ you'd like to be treated? Rather than _____ to your spouse continually about his or her behavior, take a look at what you're doing. What are you doing to make your lives _____?

When Job suffered the loss of his family, his servants, his property, and even his health, three friends came to _____ him. The only _____ was that their harsh, accusing language was no comfort at all. They were "miserable comforters." They couldn't see themselves; all they could see was how Job brought all his _____ upon himself. Which he didn't. Job said, "Oh that you would keep _____, and it would be your wisdom!" (Job 13:5). We must realize that how, when, and what we communicate _____ to those who are listening. Attitudes, tone of voice, and body language can shape how people _____ what we say. Some messages are confused because what we say and how we say it give a _____ message.

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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For communication to take place the hearer must not only understand what the speaker is saying but also understand what the speaker was _____ to say. If one speaks a message with the wrong tone of voice or with a poorly chosen words, he may communicate what he never intended. If one's body language accentuates a message that the speaker never intended, the listener may come away _____ or defensive. In fact, people will believe what we communicate with our body language or our tone of voice more readily than the actual _____ that we've spoken. Both husbands and wives must communicate their messages with love and respect.

How can we speak that what way, a way that will bless others? Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk (unwholesome talk) come out of your mouths, but only such as is _____ for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Our speech to our loved ones ought to bless them, encourage them, comfort them, and build them up. Proverbs 16:23-24 says, "The heart of the _____ makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips. Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."

People who quickly get _____ and say whatever is on their mind often hurt those to whom they speak. Proverbs 29:11 says, "A fool gives full _____ to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back." Verse 20 says, "Do you see a man who is _____ in his words? There is more _____ for a fool than for him." Loud, rude words create anger and cause a lot of trouble for those who speak and those who hear them. Proverbs 18:6-7 says, "A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his _____, and his lips are a snare to his soul." We should pause and think _____ we speak. You can't take back a harsh and hurtful word after you've spoken it. You may crush a heart, spoil a whole day, or wound a soul with an unkind remark.

Proverbs 13:3 says, "Whoever _____ his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin." Like David, say, "Set a _____, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!" (Psalm 141:3). What we say reveals what's in our hearts; and you can tell a lot about the _____ of a person by listening to the things he says. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12:35-37.**

Proverbs 12:18 says, "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a _____, But the tongue of the wise brings healing." Avoid excessive faultfinding and criticism. No one wants to _____ day after day that they are worthless and a failure. Solomon said, "It is _____ to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife" (Proverbs 21:9). Again, "It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman" (Proverbs 21:19). Again, "As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling _____" (Proverbs 26:21). Whether you're male or female, be _____ about being quarrelsome. Never belittle your spouse by calling names or labeling. Calling our spouses _____ like stupid, lazy, selfish, moron, idiot, hard-headed, ugly, fat, stubborn, insensitive, or cruel only demeans them. Such name-calling is destructive to _____. Some use name-calling to _____ their spouses when they're hurt, frustrated, or angry. No one wins a name-calling contest.

James 1:26 says, "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not _____ his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." Some people are rude and cruel to their spouses and families, treating them _____ rudely than they would anyone outside the home. When you don't love people, you show you don't love _____ as you should. First John 4:20 says, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a _____; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen,

cannot love God whom he has not seen.” First Peter 3:7 teaches husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way and to show her honor, “so that your _____ will not be hindered.” God watches how we treat our spouses; it seriously affects our relationship with Him.

One of the greatest _____ you can give your husband or wife is to pay close attention to them, to hear what they want to say from their _____. Listening is love! Spouses who listen well give the _____ of themselves to their mates. When both spouses give their undivided attention and understanding to their mates, they’ll find their marriage relationship steadily _____. James 1:19-20 says, “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.”

When you’re listening, _____ out everything else and give your mate your complete attention when you have matters to discuss, whether important or trivial. What may seem trivial to you could be very important to your _____. Try to put yourself in your spouse’s _____. The Lord Jesus said, “In everything, therefore, treat people the _____ way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). Treat your spouse the way that you want them to treat you is fundamental to a _____ relationship.

If they start the conversation, give them plenty of time to _____ what they intend to say. If you start the conversation, give your spouse equal time to _____. If you cheat your spouse out of an opportunity to speak his or her heart, you’ll _____ your relationship altogether. When your spouse speaks to you, listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart. Look him or her in the _____. Read their body language and facial expressions. Listen not only to his or her words but also to the _____ of voice. Become aware not only of the content of the message but also of the _____ expressed. The speaker’s task is to speak with honesty and accuracy, but the listener’s task is to hear and understand what the speaker intends to say.

While your spouse is speaking, don’t _____. Interrupting can be rude and presumptuous. Interrupting causes our spouses to feel that we don’t _____ about them, that we aren’t listening, that we only want to speak our mind, or that what they have to say isn’t important. Interrupting means that we haven’t given our spouses a chance to say _____ what is on their minds. Wait on all the _____. Proverbs 18:13 says, “If one gives an answer _____ he hears, it is his folly and shame.” Be sure you’ve understood correctly what they’re saying.

It’s a helpful exercise to _____ what a partner has said and meant, asking your loved one, “Did I hear what you meant to say to me? Did I accurately understand your feelings?” Listening to fair criticism can be _____. It demands humility, concentration, and self-control to be a great listener. We must be willing to put our own _____ aside so that we can understand what another is feeling and wanting to say to us.

We must also _____ mind-reading. Assuming what the other person thinks so that there is no _____ to listen or ask questions is both unloving and disrespectful. It’s better to ask questions than it is to _____ someone rashly. John 7:51 says, “Our Law does not judge a man unless it _____ hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?” Proverbs 18:17 says, “The first to plead his _____ seems right, Until another comes and examines him.”

When we listen well, we give our spouses the opportunity to _____ out loud, to say something to himself or herself. Listening with love and patience allows our spouses to _____ the emotions that have built up inside them. First Peter 4:8 says, “Above all, keep _____ in your love for one

another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” It’s better to let someone speak what is on their heart than to _____ to listen to their complaints and frustrations. Let them _____ what they feel rather than let their frustrations develop into anger and the decision to strike back.

The love two people share with each other should dictate _____ they communicate with each other. Nagging, put-downs, unfair accusations, constant complaining, and lying never help to _____ strong marriages. Learning to ask politely, to endure patiently, to forgive repeatedly will strength any marriage. If you’re facing serious problems in your marriage, you may want to _____ fervently about them and _____ through the book of Proverbs. You may also consider a marriage counselor who has Christian values to help you work through your problems.

Work on your _____ problems first. When you make _____ for the better, your mate will notice and appreciate them. It will lead him or her to make changes in their lives too. You can have a better marriage by _____ the Lord Jesus Christ, by overcoming your hurts, and by drawing closer to your spouse. We all make _____, but we can change the way we speak and behave towards those we love. Why not make your commitment today to be _____ loving and kind to your spouse!

Every husband and wife _____ to communicate some essential things to their spouses. We all need to stop the world for a day and _____ on your spouses. First, we need to say to them, “I love you”. We ought to tell our mates we love them _____ every day. These are the most important times of your day as a married person. Second, we should also say, “I _____ you.” This is the key to romance and marriage—friendship. Let them know that you _____ being with them.

Reassurance is _____ to a happy home. Tell your spouse, “You can _____ me. I want us to be best _____ and love each other. I’ll never _____ you intentionally—not with words, or with actions. I want us to _____—individually and as a couple. I want us to be _____ with each other, transparent. I will be that way with you.” When difficulties come and mistakes are made, we should tell our spouses, “You have permission to be _____ with me. Let’s _____ about it. I won’t hurt you when I am angry.” We should say, “If you need help, I’ll give it. If we need help, we’ll get help. I’ll be here for you, always.”

The Lord Jesus can make our homes stronger when we follow His _____. We can also find _____ life when we deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow Him. Believe in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). When you’re baptized into Christ (baptism is an act of emersion in water) you become a child of God (Galatians 3:26 -7), and the Lord adds you to His church (Acts 2:47).