

"Communication"

Communicating love is one of the most important elements of any relationship. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And this week we're exploring the importance of communicating in marriage.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's word reveals valuable insights for every aspect of our lives. When we follow God's instructions, we can see how our lives and our relationships improve. But when we selfishly ignore God's teaching, life becomes bitter and hurtful. Reading Scripture is not simply a good habit; it's how we learn the wisdom of God. Proverbs 3:13 to 15 says, "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her." Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Someone said, "I know you think you know what I'm saying, but what you think I'm saying and what I am actually saying may not be the same thing." Misunderstanding can happen between husbands and wives. Someone only half hears the other and assumes he or she was saying something very different from what the person was actually saying.

Communication is that barometer of any relationship, and couples who don't communicate well will find their relationship in trouble. Even when a man and woman genuinely love each other, nothing 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 is intending 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 that the speaker never intended, the listener may come away hurt or defensive. Both people must communicate their messages with love and respect.

Now, we offer this study free on communication in marriage. And we're offering this free book "Together For Life". If you'd like the free book or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Ephesians 4:29 to 32, and explore how we can communicate better.

Today's reading comes from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians chapter 4 verses 29 to 32. Where he talks and gives us great, great instruction about how to have good relationships.

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*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 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. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Oh, yes that's good advice from the word of God. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be more tenderhearted and loving and kind to one another in our speech. In all things we pray that we may serve and love You and love others. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Many of the problems between husbands and wives start with their inability to communicate effectively. The most valuable skill 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 home that honors Christ. They merely have two people who live in the same house. Love works through communication. When two people stop 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 examine himself or herself. And rather than looking at your spouse, look at your own behavior. Are you kind, are you forgiving, and do you treat your spouse the way you'd like to be treated? Rather than complain 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 better? What are you doing to make them more loving?

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

For communication to take place the hearer must not only understand what the speaker is saying but also understand what the speaker was intending to say. If one speaks a message with the wrong tone of voice or with a poorly chosen word, 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 hurt or defensive. In fact, people will believe what we communicate with our body language or our tone of voice more readily than the actual words that we've spoken. Both people, husbands and wives, must communicate their messages with love and respect.

Well, how can we speak that way, a way that will bless others? Well, Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk (unwholesome talk) come out of your mouths, but only such as is good 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, and comfort them, and build them up. Proverbs 16:23 to 24 says that, "The heart of the wise 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 angry and say whatever is on their mind often hurt those to whom they speak. Proverbs 29 and verse 11 says that, "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back." Verse 20 of the same chapter says, "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope 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 verses 6 to 7 says that, "A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul." We should pause and think before we speak. You know, you can't take back a harsh and hurtful word after you've spoken it. You may crush a heart, you may spoil a whole day, or wound a soul with an unkind remark.

Proverbs 13 verse 3 says that, "Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin." You may, like David, say, you know, "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!" (Psalm 141 verse 3). You see what we say reveals what's in our hearts; and you can tell a lot about the character of a person by listening to the things he says. The Lord Jesus

said in Matthew 12:35 to 37 that, "The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

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

James 1:26 says that, "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." You know some people are rude and cruel to their spouses and families, treating them more rudely than would anyone outside the home. When you don't love people, you show you don't love God as you should. 1 John 4 and verse 20 says, "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." 1 Peter 3 and verse 7 teaches husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way and to show her honor, "so that your prayers will not be hindered." You see, God watches how we treat our spouses; and that seriously affects our relationship with our Father in heaven.

We also want to think about how we listen to our spouses. You know, one of the greatest gifts you can give your husband or wife is to pay close attention to them, to hear what they want to say from their hearts. Listening is love! And spouses who listen well give the gift of themselves to their mates. Spouses must not only hear what their spouses say, they must intend to listen carefully. When both spouses give their undivided attention and understanding to their mates, they'll find their marriage relationship steadily improving. James 1:19 to 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 tune out everything else and give your mate your complete attention when you have matters to discuss, whether important or trivial. (After all, what may seem trivial to you could be very important to your mate.) Try to put yourself in your spouse's place. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 and verse 12, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Treat your spouse the way that you want them to treat you is fundamental to a good relationship.

If they start the conversation, give them plenty of time to finish what they intend to say. If you start the conversation, give your spouse equal time to respond. If you cheat your spouse out of an opportunity to speak his or her heart, you'll damage your relationship altogether. When your spouse speaks to you, listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart. Look him or her in the eye. Read their body language and facial expressions. Listen not only to his or her words but also to the tone of voice. Become aware not only of the content of the message but also of the feelings expressed. The speaker's

task is to speak with honesty and accuracy the message he wants the listener to hear. But the listener's task is to hear and understand what the speaker intends to say.

While your spouse is speaking, don't interrupt. Interrupting can be rude and presumptuous. Interrupting causes our spouses to feel that we don't care 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 fully what is on their minds. Instead of interrupting, listen closely so that you'll be able to repeat what they have said and what they mean. Wait on all the facts. Proverbs 18:13 says, "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." Be sure you've understood correctly what they're saying.

It's a helpful exercise to repeat 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?" You see, listening to fair criticism can be painful. It demands humility, concentration, and self-control to be a great listener. We must be willing to put our own thoughts aside so that we can understand what another is feeling and wanting to say to us.

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

When we listen well, we give our spouses the opportunity to think out loud, to say something to himself or herself. Listening with love and patience allows our spouses to vent the emotions that have built up inside them. 1 Peter 4 and verse 8 says, "Above all, keep fervent 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 refuse to listen to their complaints and frustrations. Let them express 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 how they communicate with each other. Nagging, put-downs, unfair accusations, constant complaining, and lying never helps to build 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 pray fervently about them and read 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 own problems first. When you make changes for the better, your mate will notice and appreciate them. And it'll lead him or her to make changes in their lives too. You can have a better marriage by following the Lord Jesus Christ, by overcoming your hurts, and by drawing closer to your spouse. We all make mistakes, yes, but we can change the way we speak and behave towards those we love. Why not make your commitment today to be more loving and kind to your spouse!

Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to love our spouses from our hearts. Help us to communicate and to listen effectively. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

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

Reassurance is vital to a happy home. Tell your spouse, "You can trust me. I want us to be best friends and love each other. I'll never hurt you intentionally—not with words, or with actions. I want us to grow—individually and as a couple. I want us to be open with each other, transparent. And I will be that way with you." When difficulties come and mistakes are made, we should tell our spouses, "You have permission to be angry with me. Let's talk 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. And I'll be here for you, always."

The Lord Jesus can make our homes stronger when we follow His teaching. We can also find eternal 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 and verse 38). Now, when you're baptized into Christ (now baptism is an act of emersion in water) you become a child of God (Galatians 3:26 and 7), and the Lord adds you to His church (Acts 2 verse 47).

Now if our study about communicating with your spouse has been helpful to you, we're offering a free booklet, "Together for Life," to all who ask. And if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy this booklet or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not here to exploit you or to ask or beg for money. We're here to help you understand what God wills for your life so that you can live with Him forever.

Get your heart focused with God today by worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us you tell a friend about this program. Let em know that you're watching and encourage them to watch as well. As always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.