

# Marriage on the Rock

## Skills for Communication in Marriage

### Lesson 9 Discussion/Homework Questions

- Proverbs 18:20-22: From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.
- Matthew 12:36-37: But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The power of life and death reside in our tongue. Words last forever. Words are important to God! Our words are recorded. However, when we repent we are forgiven.

God created the world with His words. The world of my home is created with my words.

#### **Not understanding the difference between men and women**

1. **Women have a profound need for communication.**
  - a. A key to her sexuality is communication (kind & detailed). Women have the gift of sex. Men have the need for sex. (A study showed that sex was ranked 13 just behind gardening) If a woman is to meet her husbands need for sex, she has to be more sexual than she feels. He needs more sex than you feel sexual.
  - b. Any man who meets his wife's need for communication, must communicate more than you feel a need to. She wants to know how you "feel". She needs all the facts.
  - c. Men come emotionally unassembled and it is her job to assemble us through communication.

2. **Men are emotionally modest and women are emotionally immodest.**  
Women are physically modest and men physically immodest.
  - a. Women are modest about their bodies and sex. Men are immodest.
    1. For the wife to share details about her husband's emotions to anyone would be the same as the husband sharing naked pictures of his wife with his buddies at work.
    2. I have to know that the things that I share from my heart are private.
    3. If I open up to you and you shame or dishonor me, I will not open up and talk again. (ie. You won't feel safe around your wife.)
3. **We can only hear and receive information if it is encoded in our deepest needs.** Our deepest need is to be honored. (I believe it is even deeper than a man's need for sex.) He hears through his deepest need – honor.
  - a. Men thrive on esteem and significance.
    1. Every man wants a cheerleader. "I think you are a good man, a good father, you have good character, etc."
    2. Wives, if you are not saying it in an honoring way, you are making it difficult for your husband to hear what you are saying.
4. **A woman's deepest need is the need for security.**
  - a. Women need to know that they are going to be taken care of by someone who will sacrificially meet their deepest needs. "I am going to be OK financially, spiritually, etc."
  - b. They need a selfless, sacrificial male. They feel insecure with an insensitive, detached man in her life. "I care... I am going to be here for you even if it hurts me, I am going to take care of you, I am not checking out."
5. **The reason most men and women have problems is that they speak in "their own language" expecting it to be heard by their mates.**  
Women don't need the same level of honor that men need, so they may not speak in an honoring way. Men don't have the same need of security that women have and may not speak enough in this way to their spouses.

6. **Fatigue, stress, and laziness may be reasons why we don't spend the time on doing it right.** Be disciplined to do this right. Take the time to do it!
  - a. Communication is the lifeline of your relationship. When you stop communicating, you give the devil a foothold.
  - b. This cannot be something done when you have time or feel like it. It has to be a discipline.
  - c. Don't let problems keep you from communicating on a regular basis.
  - d. Do not give up trying to communicate. It is the foundation and cornerstone of our relationships (how we know each other, how we understand each other's needs, how we resolve conflict, how we know our dreams and desires.)
  - e. The power of life and death is in our tongues. If we respect that we can eat its fruit.
  - f. The words we speak are not inconsequential. They are eternally powerful.

### **Unresolved Conflict**

**Ephesians 4:26-27: "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.**

1. If you don't talk about your problems because of your inability to communicate due to anger, they don't go away; they accumulate.
2. We must learn to talk from hurt, NOT anger. Most people jump over hurt and go to anger because anger is a controlling emotion. However, it is far better to say, "That hurt me..." and let the other person come back. Anger begets more anger.
3. Types of Communication
  - a. Proactive - We talk about issues in advance and work through them.
  - b. Reactive - We talk about issues WHEN they become problems.
  - c. Radioactive - We can't talk about these so they become unresolved conflict and eventually damage your relationship.

### **Allow your spouse the right to complain**

1. Reasons why people won't allow their spouses to complain

- a. Insensitivity – I don't care to hear your problems. I don't care about your feelings. (What is your concept of marriage. Do you think in marriage we don't need to meet the other's needs?)
  - b. Insecurity – When we don't meet this need, no matter what we say, we are communicating, “you are the worst person in the world.” In this case, needs don't get met and problems just accumulate. Instead, I want to learn, I want to be able to be taught, I want to improve the relationship.
  - c. Defensiveness – (see below)
2. Four predictors in a marriage that point to divorce
- a. Criticism – “A spirit of criticalness” (sarcasm)
  - b. Defensiveness – Not allowing your spouse the right to complain. “I can't tell you what my frustrations are, I can tell you what is hurting me, I can't tell you where I disagree, so it just accumulates.” When I am defensive, I am telling you that I am not willing for you to point out my shortcomings. You go and get fixed.”
  - c. Contempt – Aged anger. The problems have been in our marriage for so long, it is no longer just anger, it's contempt. I forgot why I ever married you or why I loved you.
  - d. Stonewalling – Don't bring the subject about again (Parents, sex, the kids, money, etc). I will not deal with that issue. “You don't have the right to complain”.
3. The best people in the world will make mistakes. These people will make you feel safe because they have a “customer relations department” where you can complain. They say, “I am sorry. Let me make it right for you.”
- a. You will not have to pay a price for being honest with me. You are safe with sharing your thoughts with me.

**Do not go to bed angry – Deal with your problems daily**

- 1. Anger opens the door to the devil (slander – accuser of the brothers). The devil hates marriage because it is the most sacred institution that God ever created. It is the foundation of society and all children's lives.

2. When you allow anger to simmer over night, the devil comes into your life and begins to say to you, “here is what you spouse meant...” You wake up a month from now and think you are married to the devil.
3. Anger kills our emotions – it is toxic. The love becomes hate, contempt. We were numb. Deal with the anger and the love will come back. Today's anger is manageable. Yesterdays anger is toxic and will destroy your marriage.
4. Depression is anger turned inward. Anger puts your emotions on a treadmill and they are limited like your physical body. Finally you get up one morning and your emotions say, we are worn out! We can't get up. When you resolve that anger, you can get out of the depression.
5. Begin every confrontation with humble affirmation. “I love you. You are worth it.”
6. You can share your feelings but don't try to *interpret* or *enforce* them.
  - a. You have the right to complain. “I feel this way now”.
  - b. Don't accuse. Deal with how YOU feel.
  - c. You can tell me how YOU feel, but *don't tell me what I meant by my words*. Honor me by allowing me to CLARIFY what I said. It is called communication.
  - d. DO NOT judge what was said. Just deal with HOW YOU FEEL.
  - e. Then ALLOW the other person to adjust the communicate closer to what they wanted to communicate.
7. Talk, repent and forgive, if you have done something wrong.
8. Start with one issue (not all of them)
  - a. PRAY FIRST.
  - b. Acknowledge that WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE MARRIAGE
  - c. Acknowledge that WE ARE GOING TO BREAK THESE BAD HABITS.
  - d. We are going to eat the elephant one bite at a time.
9. When you cannot resolve items yourselves, go outside your marriage and get assistance – Pastor, etc.

- a. This is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of wisdom.
- b. Every successful person is teachable in the area of their success. Show me a successful athlete, they are teachable in the area of their success. People who want to be successful in finances, they go and find people to teach them about money. They learn. Show me a person who is teachable in the area of marriage, and I will show you a person who is successful in the area of marriage.

10. If we have problems we can't solve, we are going to submit ourselves to a counselor to get help.

## **Homework:**

### **Individually:**

1. What types of comments and communication would you like to have from your spouse?
2. What could you do to be a better listener to your spouse?
3. What areas of my life or our marriage would I like to discuss with my spouse?
4. What behaviors interfere with good communication in our marriage?
5. What words did your spouse use during your courtship that affirmed and encouraged you?
6. What are some words from your mate that encourage and uplift you now?
7. What are some words from your mate that bring you down and discourage you?

### **Together:**

1. Share what you have written with your spouse. Listen to what your spouse shares without interrupting or attempting to defend yourself. The goal of this exercise is to eliminate or uproot negative words from your marriage?
2. Pray with your spouse, asking God for His help in removing negative words from your marriage.