



837



Report Inappropriate Ad

[HOME](#) »
[BIBLE TEACHER'S GUIDE: BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR A GODLY MARRIAGE: A PRE-MARRIAGE, MARRIAGE COUNSELING STUDY](#)

FROM THE SERIES:

[BIBLE TEACHER'S GUIDE: BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR A GODLY MARRIAGE: A PRE-MARRIAGE, MARRIAGE COUNSELING](#)

STUDY

[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#) | [NEXT PAGE →](#)

4. Foundation Four: Communication In Marriage

At the core of every healthy marriage is the ability of a couple to successfully communicate with one another. Communication can be difficult because each individual may have a different background, experiences, and sometimes even culture, which all affect communication. In addition, 60 to 90% of all communication consists of body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and tone rather than words. Communication is a skill that must be learned and practiced in order to have a successful marriage.

The Bible teaches us a great deal about communication, since God, the author of the Bible, is a



The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

[Psalm 19:1-4](#)

God speaks to us through nature, telling us of his great glory and splendor. He also speaks to us through his Son, who came to the earth not only to die for our sins but also to give us the Father's words. In fact, John called Jesus "the Word" ([John 1:1](#)); he was the very communication of God. Jesus said this about his teaching: "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me" ([John 7:16](#)). And, ultimately God speaks to us through the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit (cf. [2 Tim 3:16-17](#)). God is a communicator, and man, who is made in the image of God, is a communicator as well.

[Proverbs 18:21](#) says, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

What do you think Solomon meant when he said the power of life and death is in the tongue?

Solomon understood that as people made in the image of God, we similarly have power in our tongues. We have power to create and power to destroy. We can encourage people and lift them up with our words or destroy them with our words.

Whoever said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," was very mistaken. Many people carry great hurt and pain from words spoken over them years ago. They were ugly, skinny, fat, not smart enough, not athletic enough, not social enough, etc., and that stigma stayed with them for years. In the same token, people who have had encouraging friends, family, and community typically are confident and hopeful. In fact, words spoken over people can even affect their destiny. James, the brother of Jesus, taught that even though the tongue is a small member of the body, it controls the body. It guides the body like the bit in a horse's mouth or the rudder of a ship (cf. [James 3:1-6](#)). There is a tremendous power in our words to give life or bring death.

The power of communication is especially important in the context of marriage. By our words, we can develop a beautiful and prosperous marriage that glorifies God. And, by our words, we can destroy the very gift and mission God has given us in marriage.



Know Your Mate

The first principle that will enhance communication is simply getting to know your mate. Peter said this in [1 Peter 3:7](#): “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” “Be considerate” can also be translated “dwell with them according to knowledge,” as seen in the KJV.

What type of knowledge must the husband develop in his relationship with his wife in order to respect and honor her? The husband must develop knowledge of his wife’s person. Each person is uniquely made. Things that bother the wife might not bother the husband. Things that excite the husband might not excite the wife and vice versa. There is often miscommunication in marriage simply because couples do not know each other well enough.

The husband must learn what makes the wife happy, what makes her sad, and what angers her and use this information to build her up and communicate with her better. Even though Peter speaks to husbands, this is certainly true for wives as well. In Greek, the word “know” typically refers to not just an intellectual knowledge but also an experiential knowledge. The husband and wife must know each other intimately so they can better communicate with one another.

How should they develop this knowledge? As Peter said, they develop it by spending time with one another (i.e. “dwell”). While dating, couples often spend as much time as possible with one another, but sadly in marriage, quality time starts to fade. The husband has work; the wife is caring for the house and children and possibly working as well. As the children get older, the husband and wife spend more time focusing on the children and less time on one another. As this rhythm continues, they eventually get to the point where they no longer know one another at all. These two individuals change every day and to continue to know one another intimately, they must make time for one another. This time could include yearly couple retreats, weekly date nights, and daily times of intimate communication. My wife and I try to spend at least the last hour of every day with one another, without the TV or computer on. By doing this, we aim to get to know one another better.

The more distant spouses become, the greater they struggle with communication. This is also true of pre-married couples. Courtship and engagement are very special seasons that help lay the foundation for future building. Couples who communicate well, know each other well. And those who don’t know each other well, don’t communicate well.

How is God calling you to strategically grow in intimacy with your mate?



The next principle necessary in marital communication is not only knowing your mate but accepting and honoring your mate as the man or the woman God made them to be. A common source of miscommunication in marriage is the simple fact that men and women are different. Not only does the opposite sex have many physical and emotional differences but communication differences as well, and these differences are often amplified in the marriage union. A great amount of fighting in marriage comes from not understanding and accepting these differences.

Many women grow up with a female best friend who they share all their feelings with, and in return, the best friend primarily gives affirmation. Men are typically more goal-oriented communicators. Communication is meant to accomplish something. Often male communication is used to decide where one is going, how to get there, and then what to do after getting there. It has a goal in mind. Whereas for a woman many times the goal is different. The goal could be as simple as expression, feeling heard and accepted.

Often women cry out, "Men!" And men cry out, "Women!" Both cry out in despair because they cannot figure out the other. The Bible teaches that God chose man and woman for one another. Eve was taken from Adam's ribs and formed perfectly to match him. Though different, man and woman were made for one another, and when unified in a godly marriage, there may be no greater way in which they demonstrate the image of God (cf. [Gen 1:27](#)).

In creating man and woman, we can be sure God was aware of the immense differences that could cause conflict in their relationship. Therefore, he gave clear instructions in his Word about how to navigate the communication gap in order to have a successful marriage.

Again, the apostle Peter, a married man, said this in his epistle:

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, *and treat them with respect as the weaker partner* and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

[1 Peter 3:7](#)

Peter called wives the weaker partner (or weaker vessel) and commanded husbands to be considerate of them and to treat them with respect (or honor). What did he mean by the woman being the weaker vessel? Certainly, it means weaker physically, but it probably means much more than that. One interpretation is that weaker vessel has the connotation of more precious or more delicate vessel. Because the woman is more delicate than the man, he is more prone to hurt her physically, emotionally,



differences but also to honor them (1 Peter 3:7). Though Peter speaks to the husband, the wife, certainly, must obey this as well. She must be considerate of her husband and the way God made him, and honor those differences.

As stated before, many men and women, instead of honoring the differences God created in the opposite sex, dishonor them and set out to change them. The man wants the woman to be more direct, to stop being so lady-like, and so sensitive. The woman wants the man to be more sensitive and to listen better. Certainly, there is much we can and should learn from the opposite sex. With that said, we must always “honor/respect” the unique differences that are rooted in how God created them. God made males and females different from one another.

Surely, as many married men do, Peter probably started out trying to make his wife more like himself. But Peter learned that God uniquely created women and those differences were to be honored. Therefore, this is an important principle to remember in marriage and one that God commends. Honor the unique characteristics of the vessel God created for you.

In my marriage, this has helped me tremendously. Where previously, I wanted my wife to change; I couldn't understand or accept her thinking. I've learned to accept and honor her as the more delicate vessel. God made her different from me, and praise God for those differences. Instead of trying to change her, I am learning to daily accept and honor her more. I want her to feel the acceptance and joy that God has for her uniqueness. In addition, I'm also learning how much I need each one of those unique differences.

Pre-married couples should learn to accept the differences in their mate, to honor those differences, and to learn from them. Since God made the woman to help the man and the man to help the woman, they need to learn from one another. Learn how to honor those differences, and make your spouse feel accepted and honored for being who God has uniquely made him or her to be. This mutual honor will enhance communication.

Always Speak Edifying Words

Related to honoring our spouse, God makes it very clear that we should never dishonor him or her through our words. Watch any movie or TV show and you will see people disrespecting and dishonoring one another. Sadly, this often happens in marriages, in direct conflict with God's commands.

Paul says this in [Ephesians 4:29-30](#):



Through Paul, God commanded us to never let unwholesome talk come out of our mouths. This includes cursing, blaming, accusing, gossiping, lying, etc. All these are unfit for Christians to speak, especially in the context of marriage.

Paul also gives the positive directive of speaking “only” words that build the other up according to their needs (v. 29). In marriage, the majority of fights would never begin if couples spoke words that build up rather than tear down.

Psychologists have affirmed a useful method to aid in this process called using “I statements” instead of “you statements”. When a wife says, “You never listen to me!” and “You don’t care about me!” This automatically makes a husband feel attacked and go on the defensive.

Instead, it is suggested that we use “I statements” such as: “When you start talking before I finish sharing, I feel like you’re not listening to me.” “When you watch TV all night, I feel like you don’t care about me.” This is simply giving information, instead of accusing one of personal wrong. And, it opens the door for evaluating these feelings instead of fighting. This is a great tool that will help one speak only words that edify, especially when dealing with a potentially sensitive topic.

Practice the Art of Listening

In conjunction with speaking only words that edify, Scripture also gives us further teaching about healthy communication. James, the brother of Jesus, said, “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” ([James 1:19](#)).

In order for a person to only speak edifying words, they must master the art of listening. Here are a few tips to aid in becoming a better listener. One should:

1. Practice listening to what your spouse is saying.

It has often been said that God gave us two ears and one mouth so that we would listen twice as much as we talk. This is a wise principle in communication. We must practice listening.

Something that will help with this is practicing “active listening.” We do this by repeating what our spouse said in order to get confirmation. For instance, one could say, “This is what I hear you saying, you feel neglected when I watch TV all night. Is that correct?” By repeating, you get to clarify your spouse’s words and intentions. You also show him or her that you are trying to understand, which is important in communication.



Many times, there is more communicated by what a person is not saying than what is actually said. Communication is between 60 to 90% nonverbal. Sometimes, just the fact that a spouse is quiet may say a great deal. It may say he is not feeling well or he has more to talk about. This is something a good spouse will learn to discern. Study your spouse's body language and tendencies in order to enhance communication.

3. Practice listening to the Holy Spirit.

God wants to give us wisdom to minister to the uniqueness of our spouse. He knows our spouse in a greater way than we do. Therefore, we should practice praying, even sometimes during conversations, so we can hear what God wants us to hear and say what he wants us to say (cf. Neh 2:4-5). [James 1:5](#) says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

4. Practice speaking less.

Of course, in order for a person to clearly listen to his spouse and God at the same time, he must learn how to talk less. Solomon said this in Proverbs, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking" (10:19, NKJV). In many relationships, people talk way too much and, therefore, listen way too little, which leads to constant arguments. James said we should be quick to listen and "SLOW TO SPEAK."

Learn to Remain in Christ

As mentioned, Scripture gives us many principles about communication since our God is a communicator; however, with that said, one must realize that understanding these principles is obviously easier than putting them into practice. The Bible teaches that not only do we need God's wisdom but also God's power to communicate well because of our propensity to sin. Jesus said in [John 15:5](#): "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

These principles can only be successfully applied to a pre-marriage or marriage relationship if the people involved are walking closely with their Savior and abiding in his presence. When you remain in Christ, God will give you the fruits needed to be successful. These fruits include patience, self-control, love, forgiveness, and even the right words to say. Remaining in Christ is the secret to fruitful communication for both spouses.



grace, we will destroy what God has given us. And for those who humble themselves daily before God, they will find great grace to communicate in marriage (cf. [James 4:6, 10](#)).

Conclusion

As we consider communication in marriage, we must remember God is a communicator and we are made in his image. Therefore, we are made to communicate. As we rely on God, through practicing principles in his Word, we can begin to use our communication to build our marriages instead of breaking them down. And, by his grace, we can start to realize his original plan for marriage—a union that brings glory to him and is a blessing to all.

Communication in Marriage Homework

Answer the questions, then discuss together.

1. What was new or stood out to you in this session? In what ways were you challenged or encouraged? Were there any points/thoughts that you did not agree with?
2. Peter said to dwell with your spouse according to knowledge ([1 Peter 3:7](#), KJV). What intimate knowledge about your mate have you discovered that is especially helpful when communicating? What intimate knowledge about yourself would help your mate better communicate with you? How will you continue to cultivate this intimate knowledge in the marriage relationship, especially when life becomes busy with work, kids, ministry, etc.?
3. It is very common for couples to have communication problems in part because of gender differences and gender expectations. Are there any common miscommunication patterns in your relationship that may come in part from gender differences? How does a miscommunication often begin and what are its triggers?
4. What changes can be made on your side to better navigate these miscommunications? What spiritual or practical techniques will be used to enhance communication?
5. What ways have you experienced the importance of abiding in Christ for communication? How will you protect and cultivate an abiding relationship with Christ? How will you help protect and encourage this abiding relationship in your mate?
6. Write your parents a letter, an email, or give them a call to ask questions. Ask what positive attributes



7. Write your mate's parents a letter, an email, or call them and ask them questions. Ask what positive attributes does your mate possess that will help in marriage. Ask what negative attributes does your mate possess that might hurt your marriage and find out how you can fix them. Ask for any pointers that will aid in achieving successful communication in marriage and a successful marriage in general.

8. After completing this session, how do you feel God is calling you to pray for your marriage? Spend some time praying.

FROM THE SERIES:

BIBLE TEACHER'S GUIDE: BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR A GODLY MARRIAGE: A PRE-MARRIAGE, MARRIAGE COUNSELING

STUDY

[← PREVIOUS PAGE](#) | [NEXT PAGE →](#)

Related Topics: [Marriage](#)



[Report Inappropriate Ad](#)

