

Grow Your Marriage Through Godly Communication

Biblical _____

1. Overview of communication

- Words are _____ (Prov 11:9; 12:18; 15:4; 18:21; Matt 12:37; James 3:1-8)
- Words are _____ (Prov 20:15; 25:11-14)
- Words reflect our _____ (Prov 6:12; 15:28; 16:23,24; Matt 12:34)

2. Guidelines of communication

- Set a _____ over our lips (Ps 141:3)
- May our lips offer up a sacrifice of _____ (Heb 13:15)
- Let me speak _____ (Eph 4:29)
- _____ my tongue (James 1:26)

Four rules of communication

1. Be _____ (Eph 4:25)

- _____
- Speak _____
 - Speak the truth _____
 - Avoid _____
 - Avoid _____
 - Avoid _____ -truths
- Speak the truth _____ (Eph 4:15)
 - Be concerned with _____ you say
 - Be concerned with _____ you say it
 - Be concerned with how _____ you say
 - Be concerned with _____ you say it (Eph 4:29)

- Become a skilled _____
2. Keep _____ (Eph 4:26-27)
- Solve each day's problems _____
 - Failure to do so:
 - _____ way to resentment, hatred and bitterness
 - _____ subsequent problems
 - Among married couples, it _____ the sexual relationship
 - Sets the stage for spiritual _____
 - Questions to ask before bringing up an issue:
 - Do I have all the _____ right? (Prov 18:13, 15)
 - What is my _____ for bringing this up? (Prov 27:6; Matt 12:34b)
 - Have I dealt with _____ responsibility? (Matt 7:1-5)
 - Am I _____? (Eph 4:15; Prov 15:1)
 - Is it _____? (Prov 15:23)
 - Have I asked the Lord for understanding? (Prov 3:5; Phil 4:6-7; 1 Thess 5:17)
3. Attack _____ – not _____ (Eph 4:29-30)
- Avoid harmful words
 - Words that _____ down
 - Words that _____ the conflict
 - Words that _____ the Holy Spirit
 - Use edifying words
 - Words that edify or _____ up
 - Words that _____ with what the person says or does
 - Words that help reach a _____
4. _____ don't _____ (Eph 4:31-32)

- Reactions (v. 31)
- Actions (v. 32)

Conflict _____

1. The nature of conflict

- Literally means to strike or fight against
- Generally, conflict is when both parties _____ against one another (in their communication and/or their actions) and are then in _____ to one another.

2. God's view of conflict

- It is _____ (Matt 5:21-22)
- He wants His children to _____ (Rom 12:18; 14:19; Eph 4:1, 3)
- He wants His children to _____ needlessly or sinfully offending someone (1 Cor 10:31-32)
- He wants His children to love, pray for and do _____ to those who sin against them (Matt 5:44-45; Rom 12:21)

3. Origin of conflict

- _____
- _____
- _____ and the flesh (Gal 5:19-21; James 4:1-3)

4. Some benefits of differences and disagreements

- They can _____ us to search the Scriptures (Ps 119:71-72)
- They can _____ us think carefully about how and what we think or what we believe (Prov 15:28; 1 Cor 11:19)
- They can _____ us work harder at communicating effectively (Eph 4:25)
- They can _____ maturity and endurance (James 1:2-5)
- They can _____ us sharpen one another (Prov 27:17)
- They can _____ our faith in the truth that God is working all things together for good (Rom 8:28-29)

- They give us _____ to practice servanthood and preferring one another (Phil 2:2-3)
- They _____ us opportunity to love and glorify God (1 Cor 10:31-32)

5. Avoiding conflict

- Some sinful ways to avoid conflict
 - Just keep _____ (cf. Eccl 3:7b; Eph 4:29-31; Col 3:19)
 - _____ away from one another (cf. John 15:12; 1 Pet 4:8)
 - _____ the subject (cf. Prov 12:22; Prov 24:28)
 - _____ information, sins, or bitterness (cf. Prov 24:8)
- Some God-honoring ways to avoid conflict
 - _____ to _____ your spouse well, appreciate him/her and understand his/her perspective (1 Pet 3:7)
 - Gather plenty of data before speaking (Prov 18:13, 17)
 - Pray study and think about the issue before speaking, if possible (Prov 15:28)
 - Demonstrate and/or communicate your _____ and _____ at the time of disagreement (Rom 12:9-10)
 - _____ more than you _____, but do speak
 - In matters of sin approach your spouse in love (Eph 4:15)
 - In matters of preference, prefer your spouse (Rom 12:10)
 - In matters of wisdom and conscience, suggest searching the Scriptures and getting godly counsel (Prov 11:14; 2 Tim 2:15)
 - Refuse to sin in your communication (Prov 8:6-8)
 - Be more interested in God's glory and the other's good, rather than having your own way, or being right (Josh 22:5; Rom 15:2)
 - Give a _____ and _____ answer to their angry words (Prov 15:1)

6. Resolving conflict

- Some sinful ways to resolve conflicts
 - Let _____ heal it (cf. Matt 5:23-24; Eph 4:26)

- Try to bury it
- Pretend it never happened (cf. Phil 4:8a)
- _____ for the other person to initiate the resolution process (cf. Matt 5:23-24)
- _____ the other person until they change and take all the blame (cf. Gal 6:1; Rom 12:9-20)
- A biblical way to resolve conflict
 - Confess any sin that you are aware of to God (Ps 139:23-24; 1 John 1:9-10)
 - Go to your spouse, ask forgiveness for each thing you did specifically and discuss your plan not to do those things again (Eph 4:32; James 5:16)
 - Express a desire to resolve the conflict fully and decide together when the best time to do that would be (Prov 15:28)
 - Come together at the appointed time
 - Pray together for God's wisdom, self-control and speech (Prov 16:32; James 1:5)
 - Review God's rules of communication (Eph 4:15, 26-32)
 - Each one should take a turn to confess any sin that has not been confessed (to God and spouse), and ask forgiveness (Eph 4:32; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)
 - Begin discussing the issues that precipitated the conflict
 - Decide what you can agree upon (each takes a turn)
 - Decide what you do not agree upon (each takes a turn)
 - Decide what kind of issue(s) you are dealing with (each offers input)
 - Decide on specific steps to resolve the issue (each offers input)
 - Together, begin carrying out the appropriate steps to resolve the issue
 - Decide if and when you need to discuss the issue again
 - End your time together with prayer and an expression of love

Conference Table Guidelines

Place

Agree upon an area in which daily conferences may be held without interruption. Choose a table, preferably one that is not used frequently for other purposes. Hold all conferences there. If problems arise elsewhere, when possible, wait until you reach home to discuss them – at the conference table, of course. The first week read Ephesians 4:17-32 each night before meeting.

Place _____

Time _____

Purpose

The conference table is a place to confer, not to argue. Begin by talking about yourself – your sins and failures – and settle all such matters first by asking forgiveness. Ask also for help (cf. Matthew 7:4-5).

Speak *all* the truth in love. Do not allow any concern to be carried over into the next day. Not all problems can be solved at one sitting. You may find it necessary to make up an agenda and schedule out the work over a period of time according to priorities. Direct all your energies toward defeating the problem, not toward the other person. Your goal is to reach biblical solutions to the problems presented, so always have Bibles on the table and use them. It helps to record the results of your work on paper. Open and close all conferences with prayer. When you need help, reread Ephesians 4:25-32.

Procedures

If either party argues, “clams up” or does anything other than confer at the table, the others must rise and stand quietly. This prearranged signal means, “In my opinion we’ve stopped conferring.” Whether he was right or wrong in this judgment does not matter and ought not to be discussed at the moment. The person seated should then indicate this willingness to confer, and invite others to be seated again.