

Life Coach: Marriage

Communication, Part 2

Introduction: As previously stated, good communication skills comprise the framework for a good marriage. The Bible never discourages freedom of expression within boundaries. Those boundaries, given by God to man for his enrichment and benefit, constitute guidelines for successful communication in all the relationships of life. Failure to heed God's communication guidelines results in weak and turbulent marriages, and frequently complete marriage breakdown.

II. Elements of Biblical Communication, Continued (Eph. 4:25-32)

C. Rapid Reconciliation (4:26b-27)

1. The proverbial phrase "let not the sun go down upon thy wrath" indicates anger should be confined to one day only and not be continued over time.
2. Anger, then, is restricted as to intensity and outcome ("...and sin not") and also as to duration. Prolonged anger threatens human relationships, and human relationships are too important to come under threat.
3. Anger that festers into a second day is sinful anger because it violates the boundaries placed by God upon that human emotion. Note that this is not only applicable in marriage; it applies to all other relationships as well.
4. Reconciliation is the reestablishment of relationships to their former state. It is based upon mutual forgiveness and is possible in most situations. Reconciliation does not flow out of feelings, though human emotion is likely present. Reconciliation, rather, flows out of obedience to the Bible.
5. Failure to reconcile human relationships opens the door for Satan's destructive work (27). Refusal to forgive and reconcile (where possible) creates division, inflates the problems, spreads the issue to others, and ultimately shames the testimony of Christ. Anger that is not resolved by forgiveness and reconciliation is Satan's playground.
6. In marriage, unresolved anger gives "place to the devil" by interrupting marriage intimacy. Such interruptions, Paul warns, can be a prelude to Satanic temptations in the sexual realm (1 Cor. 7:5). Simply put, unresolved anger interrupts intimacy, thereby compounding problems by introducing the temptation to sexual unfaithfulness into an already bad situation.

D. Sterling Ethics (28)

1. At first glance, verse 28 appears to have only to do with honesty and hard work, but in reality it also addresses communication because actions, as well as words, communicate in marriage.
2. Personal integrity is the backbone of communication. If a man is deceptive and dishonest in financial matters, he will have no difficulty being shady in his communication with his wife.
3. Men who adopt the Biblical work ethic communicate both love for God

and love for spouse by their actions. Hard work is one of the best ways a man can communicate love. Practical considerations:

- a. Don't date a guy who doesn't work or who has a sketchy work record.
 - b. If your husband is a hard worker, don't nag him about working "too much." Be thankful God gave you a provider, not a parasite.
 - c. Recognize that, for many men, the hard work of providing for family is a love language. Men who fail at words may express their love a different way—through hard work.
4. The goal of work is not just provision; it is plenty. Notice that work and personal thrift should result in the possibility of generosity outside the immediate family. While "charity begins at home," charity does not end there. Giving to meet the needs of another communicates Christ's love!

E. Gracious Words (29)

1. The Bible expressly forbids the use of "corrupt communication." Corrupt communication is simply "bad" communication that has the prospect of harming the other party. The Bible forbids us from purposing to hurt another by our speech. Corrupt communication poses two threats:
 - a. It can harm the listener emotionally and/or spiritually.
 - b. It can be infecting—causing a response from the listener that is equally corrupt. Corruption spreads—be careful you are not a carrier through your speech!
2. In contrast to corrupt communication, Christians should consistently speak words of edification.
 - a. Edification seeks to correct in a positive way.
 - 1) It notices an issue, weakness, problem.
 - 2) It seeks to build up in the given area, rather than tear down.
 - b. Edification ministers "grace unto the hearers."
 - 1) Edification addresses issues apart from a critical spirit.
 - 2) Edification says, "I'm here to help you because I love you."
 - 3) Edification ministers grace by loving in spite of shortcomings—not because of perfections.
3. Characteristics of Edification that Ministers Grace
 - a. It always considers the response of the hearer before it speaks, its words carefully.
 - c. It is motivated by love and concern in such a way that the love and concern is clearly evident to the hearer.
 - d. Its concern is for the wellbeing of another and is, therefore, not tainted by selfish goals and ambitions. It never has a hidden agenda.
 - e. It leaves the hearer with a sense of God's presence, love, forgiveness, and fatherly kindness.
 - f. It ultimately heals hurts. It never reopens wounds. It never reminds of failure. It never categorizes any issue as hopeless.
 - g. It flows from the heart of one who recognizes daily his own need of God's grace. It, therefore, never comes across as judgmental and censorious, overly pious and holier-than-thou.