

Enhancing Communication

27 October 2019 AM – Philippians 2:2 – Communication – Scott Childs

Introduction: "Communication is the lifeblood of marriage." Les Parrott "In an era of increasingly fragile marriages, a couple's ability to communicate is the single most important contributor to a stable and satisfying marriage." Gallup Poll 1988 If that is true, and I believe it is, then we must work diligently at enhancing our communication in marriage.

God wrote our text this morning to the local church at Philippi; however, the admonitions in this verse also apply to every marriage.

Transition: This morning I want us to study six actions that will enhance the communication in any marriage.

1. DISCUSSION

a. Many marriages lack discussion.

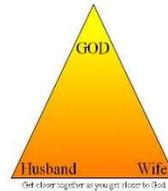
- 1) Communication is not just statements of fact (e.g., *pass the salt, I got the mail, I am going on a walk, it is time to go*). It must include discussion or sharing ideas. Many husbands and wives live like separate individuals rather than like teammates. They seldom discuss anything.
- 2) Lack of discussion leads to conflict.
 - a) The husband buys an expensive accessory for his car without discussing it first with his wife. Now they are short on money. Conflict arises.
 - b) The wife plans to have her friends over on Thursday evening without discussing it first with her husband. He wanted a quiet family night. Now a conflict!
- 3) You and your spouse form a team. Team members must work together to win.

b. Consulting your spouse is essential.

- 1) Talking over ALL your activities and plans will improve the end result. (Proverbs 19:20) "*Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.*"
- 2) Discussion takes effort. (Proverbs 20:5) "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.*"
- 3) Consulting with your spouse can be enjoyable, calm, pleasant, and beneficial if you follow the actions below.

b. Differences can diminish.

- 1) You are two different people. You came into marriage with different backgrounds, different family influences, different personalities, and different ideas.
- 2) You are not always going to agree. However, if you will both draw closer to the Lord and desire to do His will in everything, this will GREATLY increase your harmony.



6. COOPERATION

a. Uphold your joint decisions.

- 1) When you have biblically communicated with your spouse and decided on a plan, then abide by it, even if it was not your first choice. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10) "*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.*"
- 2) If the choice turns out to be a bad one, do not say, "I told you so!" Work as a team.

b. Do not stubbornly demand your way.

- 1) When God said in Ephesians 5:21 that a result of being filled with the Spirit is "*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God*", He was saying that a Spirit-filled husband will submit to lead his wife in love, following Christ's example, even when he would rather selfishly demand his way. The Spirit-filled wife will submit to follow and respect her husband even when she would rather selfishly demand her way.
- 2) Marriage is working together to fulfil God's will for your lives. To achieve this, you must be willing to make changes and work as a team.

Conclusion: Marital communication is always a challenge because we are all sinners. However, I believe you can enhance your communication if you will apply the six biblical actions we talked about this morning. 1) Discussion, 2) Consideration, 3) Concentration, 4) Supplication, 5) Compromise, 6) Cooperation. Do not wait for your spouse; YOU take the first step to enhancing your communication.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

2. CONSIDERATION

a. You must consider your spouse's feelings

- 1) Show empathy. Empathy is understanding and entering into another's feelings.
- 2) Value your spouse above yourself. (Philippians 2:3) "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*"
- 3) What you say to your spouse is far less important than how you say it. Nonverbal communication accounts for 58 percent of the total message. Tone of voice makes up 35 percent of the message. The actual words you say account for only 7 percent of the total message. (Les Parrott, p.79)
- 4) Consideration is the core of the sermon I recently preached entitled "*Is this how I want to be treated?*" from (Matthew 7:12) "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*"

b. Make consideration an everyday practice.

Rob Flood in *Family Life Today* gives the following helpful tips for communication (reworded).

- 1) Guard your **first response** to a discussion. The course of a conversation is not determined by the person who talks first, but by the person who responds.
- 2) **Physically touch** your spouse during conversations. It is difficult to sin against someone while the two of you are tenderly touching.
- 3) Choose **proper timing** for communication. The conversation will be more successful if you avoid busy, inconvenient times (e.g., meal prep time) and bedtime.

3. CONCENTRATION

a. Communication is impossible without listening

- 1) When your spouse is talking, treat your spouse as you want to be treated and listen attentively. That means, stop, look and listen. (James 1:19) "*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*"
- 2) Do not let your mind drift while your spouse is talking.

b. Develop skills of concentration

- 1) Do not interrupt. Listen respectfully until your spouse is finished. (Proverbs 18:13) "*He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*"
- 2) Emerson Eggerichs in his book "**Love and Respect**" teaches couples to decode what their spouse said. What you thought you heard your spouse say might not be what your spouse really said at all.
- 3) Repeat what you think you heard to make sure you heard correctly.

4. SUPPLICATION

a. During communication you must desire God's will

- 1) For a Christian couple, communication is not about demanding what YOU want, but determining what GOD wants.
- 2) If you leave God out of your communications, you will often miss God's will.

b. Praying together is an essential part of finding God's will in your discussion.

- 1) Pray for wisdom. (James 1:5) "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*"
- 2) Pray for peace about the right choice.
- 3) Pray for harmony and agreement. God wants you to be "*of one accord, of one mind*" (Php 2:2).

5. COMPROMISE

a. Be willing to compromise with your spouse.

- 1) God's role for the husband is to lead lovingly in the marriage. However, good leaders are willing to take suggestions and make compromises on non-essentials.
- 2) God's role for the wife is one of submission and respect for her husband. At the same time, there are respectful ways to suggest compromises.
- 3) Do not make a decision without determining God's will in the matter. You may have to postpone the decision for hours, days or weeks, but keep praying and discussing until God gives direction and peace.