

Communicating Love Eph. 4:29-32

Someone once said, *“I know you think you know what I’m saying, but what you think I’m saying and what I am actually saying may not be the same thing.”* Misunderstanding can happen between husbands and wives. Often, we only hear half of what someone is saying and assume he or she was saying something very different from what the person was actually saying.

Communication is the barometer of any relationship, and couples who don’t communicate will often find themselves in relationship trouble. *For communication to take place the hearer must not only understand what the speaker is saying but also understand what the speaker is intending to say.* If one speaks with the wrong tone or voice or with poorly chosen words, he may well communicate a message that he never intended. Even the wrong body language can change the message intended. The listener may come away hurt or even defensive. *Both speakers must communicate their messages with love and respect.*

Many of the problems between husbands and wives start with their inability to communicate effectively. The most valuable *skill couples need is the ability to communicate with each other what they feel, what’s happening, and what they need.* ***If they refuse to talk with one another or refuse to listen to each other, they cannot have a home that honors Christ.*** Love works through communication. When two people stop communicating love and begin fussing and feuding, ***their harsh words and cruel ways build barriers that can destroy their home.***

Each of partner needs to ***examine themselves.*** And rather than looking at your spouse, ***look at your own behavior.*** Are you the kind to forgive, do you treat your spouse as you would like to be treated? Rather than complain to your spouse continually about his or her behavior, ***take a look at what you are doing.*** What are you doing to make your lives together better? What are you doing to make yourself more loving to your partner?

When ***Job*** suffered the loss of his family, his servants, his property, and even his health, ***his three friends came to comfort him.*** The only problem was that their harsh, accusing language was no comfort at all. They were miserable comforters. The three couldn’t see themselves; all they could see was how Job brought all this trouble upon himself. *Which, by the way, he did not.* In ***Job 13:5*** we read a response of Job to one of his friends, ***“If only you could be silent! That’s the wisest thing you could do” (NLT).*** What we need to realize is that how, and when, and what we communicate matters to those who are listening. Attitudes, tone of voice, and body language can shape how people perceive what we say. *Some messages are confused because what we say and how we say it can give mixed messages.*

For communication to take place the hearer must not only understand what the speaker is saying but also understand what the speaker was intending to say. If one speaks a message with the wrong tone of voice or with a poorly chosen word, he may communicate what he never intended. If one’s body language accentuates a message that was never intended, the listener may come away hurt or defensive. In fact, people will believe what we communicate with our body language or our tone of voice much more readily than by our words. Both people, husbands and wives, must communicate their messages with love and respect.

Eph. 4:29 says, *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

Well, **how can we speak so that**, what we say, **will be a blessing to others?** God intended that our speech to loved ones be a blessing, so as to encourage them, comfort them, and to build them up. **Proverbs 16:23-24** says, *“The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips. Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”*

People who quickly get angry and say whatever comes to their mind often hurt those to whom they speak. **Proverbs 29:11** says, *“A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.”* And then in **verse 20** we read, *“Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* Loud, rude words create anger and cause a lot of trouble for those who speak and those who hear them. **Prov. 18:6-7** says, *“A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.”* We should pause and think before we speak. You know, you can’t take back a harsh and hurtful word after you have spoken it. You may crush a heart, you may spoil a whole day, or wound a soul with an unkind remark.

Proverbs 13:3 says, *“Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”* We might want to add to our prayers a prayer that David once prayed in **Psalms 141:3**, *“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!”* Our lips only reveal what is in our heart; you can tell a lot about a person’s character by listening to what he says. Our Lord Jesus put it this way in **Mt. 12:35-37**, *“The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

Solomon had many wise words to say about the tongue in Proverbs, we can read in **Prov. 12:18**, *“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”* **Avoid excessive faultfinding and criticism.** No one wants to hear day after day that they are worthless and a failure. Solomon put it this way, *“It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife”* (**Prov. 21:9**). And in **Prov. 26:21** we read, *“As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.”* So, **whether it is male or female**, be careful about being quarrelsome. Never belittle you spouse by calling names or labeling. Cruel names only demean people, **and such name calling is destructive to a life of love.** Some use name-calling as a way to punish their spouses when they are hurt, frustrated, or angry. And know this, no one wins a name-calling contest.

James 1:26 teaches us, *“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”* When you don’t love people, you show you don’t really love God as you should. **1 Jn. 4:20-21** puts it this way, *“If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”* That is why Peter teaches husbands in **1 Peter 3:7**, to live with their wives **in an understanding way and to show her honor**, *“so that your*

prayers will not be hindered.” You see, **God watches how we treat our spouses**; and that seriously affects our relationship with our Father in heaven.

We also want to think about how we should listen to our spouses. *One of the greatest gifts you can give your spouse is to pay attention to them, hear what they want to say from their hearts!* And spouses *that listen well give the gift of themselves* to their mates. When both spouses give their undivided attention and understanding to their mates, they will find their marriage relationship improving. **James 1:19-20** says, ***“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”***

When you are listening learn to tune out everything else and give your mate your undivided attention when you have matters to discuss, whether important or trivial. After all, *what may seem trivial to you, could be very important to your mate.* Try to put yourself in your spouse’s place. In **Mt. 7:12** Jesus said, ***“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*** *Treat your spouse the way you want them to treat you* – this is a fundamental principle to a good relationship.

If they start the conversation, give them plenty of time to finish what they intend to say. If you start the conversation, give your spouse equal time to respond. And when your spouse speaks to you, *listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart.* Learn to become aware not only with the content of the words, but also the feelings being expressed with tone, body language and facial expression.

Try not to interrupt when your spouse is speaking. Interrupting can be rude. *Interrupting causes you spouse to feel like they are unimportant to you.* Here is what Solomon has to say on this subject, **(Prov. 18:13)** ***“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”*** Learn to listen to one another.

It helps to repeat what you heard to make sure you heard it right. I understand that *hearing fair criticism can be painful.* **To hear it demands humility, concentration, and self-control.** But we must be willing to put aside our thoughts on this so we can understand what another is feeling and wanting to say.

Also avoid mind-reading. Assuming you know, what the other person thinks doesn’t always work, and you can be very wrong in your assumption. *It is better to ask questions than make rash accusations.* Nicodemus once asked the leading Jews in **John 7:51**, ***“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”*** Once again Solomon has some wisdom to offer on this subject, **(Prov. 18:17)** ***“The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.”***

Listening with love and patience allows our spouses to vent emotions that have built up in them. Peter says, **(1 Peter 4:8)** ***“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”*** It is better to let your spouse get everything out then to allow it their frustration to develop into anger and then revenge.

The love two people share with each other should dictate how they communicate with each other. **Nagging, put downs, unfair accusations, constant complaining, and lying never help to build strong marriages.** *Learning to ask politely, and to endure patiently, to forgive repeatedly are the things that will strengthen a marriage.* If you are facing serious problems in your marriage, you may want to pray fervently about them and read through the book of Proverbs. You may also want to consider a marriage counselor who has Christian values to help you work through your problems.

Don't start on the problems of your mate, start with your own problems first. When you make changes for the better in your life, then your mate will notice and appreciate them. And this attitude will have a better chance at helping the mate to make changes as well. You can have a better marriage by following the Lord Jesus Christ, by overcoming your hurts, and by drawing closer to your spouse. We all make mistakes, but we can also make the changes needed to be a better spouse, when we involve the love of Christ in our lives. Why not make the commitment today to be a better and more loving spouse.

Every husband and wife *need to communicate some essential things to their spouses.* We all need to stop the world for a day and focus on our spouses. **First**, we need to say to them, "**I love you.**" This is something we ought to communicate to them every day – in word and in action, in action alone is not always enough, your mate also needs to hear the words being spoken. But also, the reverse is true, in word without action is also not enough. It must be in word and in deed. We must make the time each day to do this – but also, **second**, we need to communicate, "**I like you**" – I want to spend time with you, I enjoy being around you, I want to be your friend and not just your lover. Both are important for successful marriage.

Reassurance is vital to a happy home. Your spouse needs to know that you trust them, and that they can trust you. Spouses need to know that they are the one and only – friend and lover. Each partner needs to know that they have no intentions of purposely hurting the other in either word or action. When difficulties come and mistakes are made, we need to let each other know that we are willing to forgive – that if we need help, we will agree to get help. Each partner needs to know that if the other gets angry it will not lead to violence. Each partner needs to know that the other will be there for them always (In sickness and in health, until death do us part.)

The Lord Jesus can make our homes stronger when we follow his teaching. We can find eternal life when we deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow Him.