

Embracing God's Design for Marriage

Part 2

II. Fundamentals of Biblical Marriage

1. Communication

"One of the biggest obstacles to a good marriage is poor communication."

-Stuart Scott¹

I. Created to Communicate

We see from scripture that God is the perfect communicator. He is the creator of communication. Those who would seek to communicate effectively must look to Him for direction in our speech, our listening, and our heart's attitudes.

a. Our God is a communicating God

Ex. 33:1 *"The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend."*

Heb. 1:1-2 *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom He also He made the world."*

b. We, who are created in His image, are intended to be a communicating people.

Mk. 16:15 *"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'"*

Eph. 4:29 *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

¹ Stuart Scott The Exemplary Husband Pg 227

II. Defining Communication

- a. Communication is the accurate exchange of information for the understanding of content.
- b. God's purposes for communication include the building up and encouragement of all participants in the conversation and the edification of all who may overhear the conversation.
 - i. Eph. 4:29 *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*
- c. The God of Communication commands that all speech must serve to bring Him glory.

- i. I Cor 10:31 *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*

III. Practicing Communication

- a. We communicate with words.
(Ex. 20:16; Ps 17:3, 19:14, 27:6 & 12; 32:3-7, Ps 39, Ps 120; Pr. 11:13-14, 17:3, 18:13,15,17,21:23; Eph 4:15,25,29, 5:4 & 19; Col 4:6; 1 Cor 1:26-31)

- i. Ps. 17:3b *"I have resolved that my mouth will not sin."*

- b. We communicate with our tone of voice.
(Ps. 10:2-11, 15:1-3; Pr. 12:6,15 1-4,16.24 &32,17:27)

- i. Proverbs 15:1 *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."*

- c. We communicate with our body language.
(Gen 4:5-6; Ex 32:9-10, 34:9; Pr. 30:11-14)

- i. Gen 4:5a *"Then, the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face so downcast?'"*

- d. We communicate both by listening and by non-listening.
(Pr. 10:19, 15:28, 17:28, 18:2, 13, 15, 17, 20:12,19, 22; 23:12, 26:20)

- e. We communicate with our actions.
(2 Cor. 2:8; Gal. 5: 13-15; 1 Tim. 5:8; Eph 4:2-3 & 31-32)

IV. Communication inhibitors

a. i. Sarcasm

Tearing at a person's inner being, often disguised as "only joking" (Pr.26:18-19)

b. Lazy Listening

Someone who is just waiting for their turn to talk, checking out mentally or just not interested in what the other party has to say.

c. Excessive Talk

Someone who has a motor mouth about past problems or continues going on and on after they have made their point.

d. Exaggeration

Such as "You ALWAYS or You NEVER, when the situation was not absolute!"

e. Not using self responsible statements

"You should." or "I did this because you did that."

We must replace this style of communication with self responsible statements such as,

"I will do this or that" or "In my opinion, _."

V. The Impact of Communication²

Some negative effects of poor communication are:

- a. God will not be honored by a good testimony for Christ.
- b. The relationship will be superficial and strained.
- c. Discord and conflict will be common.
- d. Issues will remain unclear and unresolved.
- e. Wrong ideas will remain uncorrected.
- f. Bitterness will begin to set in.
- g. Wise decision-making will be thwarted.
- h. The temptation will be great to communicate with another person outside of the marriage.

Some of the positive effects of good communication are:

- a. God is honored by a good testimony for Christ.
- b. The relationship will be strengthened and by meaningful.
- c. Companionship and oneness will be enjoyed more.
- d. Harmony will be present
- e. Any disagreement can be handled quickly and without conflict.
- f. Problem issues can be clarified and resolved.
- g. Wrong ideas can be corrected.
- h. Forgiveness and trust will be exercised easier.
- i. Good decision-making will be enhanced.

"A man who communicates in a way that displeases God should not think he is a godly man."

² Stuart Scott The Exemplary Husband Pg 228-229

VI. The Standard for Communication³³

a. You must desire to please God more than anything else.

You must desire to please God more than having your own way. You must desire to please God more than being right. You must desire to please God more than being vindicated.

1 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

b. You must be humble.

It takes a great deal of humility to communicate for the right reasons, and to not react in pride to something that is being said by the other person. A humble man or woman is patient. If a spouse is humble he or she will be patient when what they say is misunderstood, or when they are having trouble understanding what the other spouse is trying to say.

Ephesians 4:1-3 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

c. You must be aware that you are accountable to God for everything you communicate.

God hears every word and will hold us accountable for them.

Matthew 12:36 "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment."

d. You must know how to listen.

Good communication is dependent on good listening skills. If a person is a good listener, they will most likely not jump to conclusions. We will want to listen and listen well prior to concluding their thoughts.

Proverbs 18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

³³ Stuart Scott The Exemplary Husband Pg 230-232

e. You must know communication involves more than just words.

Communication involves words, tone of voice, body language, and deeds. Be sure that your deeds communicate the same thing as your words. Don't just say what is right to your spouse but do what is right.

James 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

f. You must be willing to put forth the effort and spend the time it takes to communicate.

A spouse who is self-serving will most likely not communicate well. We need to talk when we don't want to talk and listen when we don't want to listen.

Romans 12:10-12 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

Discussion Questions for Husbands and Wives

1. Are there any areas of communication in which you need to seek your spouse's forgiveness? If yes, make a list and humbly seek their forgiveness.
2. In what ways is communication strong in your marriage?
3. In what ways does communication need to grow in your marriage?
4. In what ways do you specifically need to grow in communication?
5. Where do you see God's grace most evident in your spouse's communication skills? (What does your spouse do best?)
6. Each of you rate yourself on the following:

Note: Give an explanation as to why you gave yourself the rating you did.

a. Sarcasm

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. Lazy Listening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. Excessive Talk

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

d. Exaggeration

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

e. Not using self-responsible statements

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Addressing Sin in the Marriage Relationship

All husbands and all wives sin. There will be times when the most loving thing a spouse can do is to address their spouse's sin.⁴

Our fundamental problem is not ignorance of what is right. Our problem is selfishness of heart that causes us to care more about what we want than about what is right.⁵

Confession and forgiveness. It is only when we commit ourselves to daily patterns of humble confession, coupled with the willingness to quickly and completely forgive, that a marriage can exceed our limited expectations.⁶

I. Reasons to desire that sin be addressed in your marriage:

- a. Sin Matters to God
(Jer 16:17; Rom 1:18; I John 1:9; Prov 28:13)

- b. God's glory is your ultimate aim as a couple
(I Cor 10:31; Col 3:17,23)

- c. Because you love each other
(Eph 5:25-27)

- d. Because as believers it is commanded
(Matt 18:15; Gal 6:1)

⁴ Adapted quote from The Exemplary Husband, Stuart Scott

⁵ What Did You Expect?? Paul David Tripp Pg 64

⁶ What Did You Expect?? Paul David Tripp Pg 65

II. How to address sin in your marriage:

a. Knowing that the issue is indeed sin

"We must be careful not to have a standard that is higher than God's, to seek our own preferences, or to presume that we know what are the motives in our wife's (spouses) heart. These things would be grave sins on our part." -Stuart Scott⁷

1. Investigate, ask questions to draw your spouse out. Understand not only the action committed but the heart behind it.

2. Start with assuming the best in your spouse. (I Cor 13)

b. Looking to yourself first

(Matt 7:3-5; Gal 6:1)

c. Understanding forgiveness

(Matt 6:12, 18:21-35; Luke 17:3; Col 3:13)

d. Being full of grace

(Psalm 103:8-14; Eph 4:1-2)

"In addition to having the right motive of her good, one way of being gracious is to be more focused on what our wife is doing right than what she is doing wrong."

-Stuart Scott⁸

Does your spouse hear your encouragement more than your concerns?

e. Being more concerned for their holiness than your vindication

(Romans 12:17-19; I Peter 2:23)

⁷ From The Exemplary Husband, Stuart Scott Pg 208

⁸ From The Exemplary Husband, Stuart Scott Pg 212

f. Helping your spouse identify a path for walking in repentance
(II Cor 7:9-11)

g. Being patient
(I Cor 13; I Thes 5:14)

h. Living a life that demonstrates you are for your spouse
(Eph 5:25-33)

i. Keeping it private
(Matt 18)

III. How to receive correction from your spouse

a. Hoping all things
(I Cor 13)

b. Being humble
(I Peter 5:5)

c. Desiring instruction
(Prov 9:9, 12:1, 13:18, 21:11)

d. Knowing sin is deceitful
(Heb 3:13)

e. Being self-controlled
(James 1:19-20)

f. Recognizing God works through people
(Eph 4:14-16)

In our efforts to help our wives, we must be more concerned about our own sin and our motives for helping her than about what our wife does or doesn't do. In addition, we must be sure that we are in the habit of loving her in other ways. God is also concerned that we respond His way by helping her with true repentance and by truly forgiving her.

One of the most important things for us to do is practice prayer. We need to utterly depend on God. Husband, be sure that you regularly ask Him to help you to love your wife, to be wise, to have courage and faith, and to use His Word in both of your lives. The most important thing of all is to be an example to your wife in the area of dealing with your own sin. This example will do more to help her than anything. Hopefully, she will see from your life what it means to walk humbly with God and deal quickly with sin.

-Stuart Scott ⁹

⁹ From The Exemplary Husband, Stuart Scott Pg 226

Discussion Questions for Husbands and Wives

1. Are there any unresolved issues either in being addressed by or addressing your spouse where you need to seek forgiveness?
2. In what ways is sin being addressed well in your marriage?
3. In what ways does addressing sin need to grow in your marriage?
4. In what ways do you specifically need to grow in being approachable?
5. In what ways do you specifically need to grow in how you care for your spouse's sin?
6. Ask your spouse the following questions:
 - a. Do I make it easy for your to address sin in my life? What could I do better/differently?
 - b. What things are most helpful for winning you when you are sinning? Are these things in-line with scripture? Are they contradictory to scripture in any way?
 - c. Do you perceive me only seeing sin in you or do you perceive me seeing and vocalizing God's grace in your life as well?
 - d. Is there any sin in my life that you have seen but not felt opportunity to address? Please address it.