



“Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6).

Let’s Talk Together

Central Truth: Communication is essential to family harmony.

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Topic: Marriage.

“He won't talk to me. He comes home from work and buries his head in the newspaper or television. He never talks to me.”

That problem is far too common. It arises in part from the difference between the natures of the male and female. Even when they talk, they speak from a different plane of reference. A woman talks to express her feelings; a man talks to communicate facts. So there is a natural bridge to cross when a man and a woman talk meaningfully with each other.

A happy marriage must have communication. Animals are moved by instinct, but humans are moved by plans and purposes. A husband and wife will not have the same plans and purposes if there is not free communication between them. Many of the problems in marriage would never arise, or would be solved easily, if the partners just talked to one another. Turn off the television and lay down the newspaper or book. Now, talk about matters of common interest to your mate. Go ahead and do it. Talk!

The Nature of Communication

Wait a minute! Communication is more than mere talk. It is giving and receiving information; it is opening your spirit to another person. Communication in the home is more than the “small talk” you might exchange with a stranger or acquaintance.

In real communication you share your thoughts, opinions, preferences, and dreams. You make yourself vulnerable to the other person who might

not agree with your opinions (in love) and might not share your dreams.

On the other hand, in real communication you seek to hear with understanding the thoughts, opinions, preferences, and dreams of the other person. You open your spirit to him.

Real communication is a two-way street. Thoughts flow back and forth. It is a joining of spirits in which each receives the other and responds with sincere interest. That is much deeper than “small talk” with a stranger. It is much greater than a mere exchange of information with a friend. It is an intimate exchange which refreshes the spirit of both parties and deepens their relationship. That is why communication is so important in the home between husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. The central truth of this study is, “Communication is essential to family harmony.”

The Necessity of Communication

Amos 3:3 asks the question, “*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*” No, they cannot. One wants to go one way and the other another way. One wants to travel at one speed and the other at a different speed. One wants to stop here and the other wants to stop there.

Parents who try to rear children without good communication between themselves and between them and the children are doomed to damaging relationships. There must be agreement (on discipline, for instance) in order for there to be consistency.

God communicated with us in order for us to know Him and obey Him. He spoke through prophets, His own Son, the Holy Scriptures, and by the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Hebrews 1:1-2). Why? He wanted us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him. We conclude, therefore, that communication is the basis of all effective relationships.

Communication is a sign of mutual love and concern between two persons. Proverbs 1 reveals the broken heart of God because He sought to communicate with a people and they refused to hear Him. There can be no real communication when one party is disinterested in the other. God communicates with us as the Holy Spirit interprets the Bible to us today. You will commune with God as you read the Bible, meditate on it, and seek God's message through it.

Communication is the way to share our faith in God. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 instructs parents on how to establish their children in faith. It is by communication! The things of God are to be the subject of conversation upon rising, going about the daily affairs, going in or out of the house, and upon retiring. A child who hears his parents talking often of God will grow

up with a sense of God that will lead him to faith. God likes that. *“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name”* (Malachi 3:16).

Problems in the Failure to Communicate

Read II Samuel 6:12-23 again. There were four tragic consequences which followed David and Michal upon their failure to communicate and understand each other. Those consequences still apply. Observe them and be on guard against them.

Motives are misunderstood when communication fails (verses 15, 16, 20). The ark of the Lord was being brought to Jerusalem to the place David had prepared for it. For twenty years the ark had remained in Kirjath-jearim while *“Israel lamented after the LORD”* (I Samuel 7:2). It was a great day for the nation when the ark was brought into Jerusalem. David was so excited that he leaped and whirled about as he led the procession before the Lord. Michal, his wife, did not understand his enthusiasm and rebuked him for his inappropriate behavior. His problem was a failure to communicate to his wife the extent of his devotion to God.

A spirit of criticism develops when communication fails (verse 20). David returned from bringing in the ark of the Lord. He was excited with the inspiration of worship. He proposed to *“bless his house”* in view of the blessing he had enjoyed (I Chronicles 16:43). But he was met with a cold spirit of criticism. His enthusiasm before the Lord made Michal despise him in her heart.

His wife said, “That was no way for a king to act. You were ridiculous as you danced unashamedly before our servants. You made a spectacle of yourself. You looked like a vulgar citizen, not at all like a king.”

O Michal, if you only knew your husband's devotion to God, you would not think his behavior at all inappropriate; in fact, you might have joined in it with him. But you did not because you had broken communication with your husband. I pity all those who follow you with no communication of spirits.

The separation of husband and wife comes from failure to communicate (verse 22). David responded to Michal's criticism: “You may think I have acted vulgar, but others do not. You may not appreciate my zeal for God, but others share it. While you criticize, they praise. I will not change my behavior to suit your preferences. On the contrary, I will act more undignified than I have thus far. The servant girls will honor me, even

if you do not.”

I weep for David and Michal. Their relationship is breaking apart. They make no effort to understand one another. They work on conflict rather than communication. And I weep for husbands and wives who are making the same mistake today.

A curse on home and marriage comes from the failure to communicate (verse 23). Michal never bore a child. Her heart must have been broken because failure to bear a child was considered a curse from God. There seems to be a relationship between her failure to communicate with David and her barrenness. Details are not given, but the warning to husband and wives today is apparent.

Does a husband or wife see a reflection of his or her own marriage in this historical record? Is your marriage suffering from a misunderstanding of motive, a spirit of pride, a breach of loving fellowship, and a barrenness of spirit if not of body? Take heed and concentrate on restoring communication.

The Keys to Restoring Communication

How do you restore communication with your family member once it has been broken? Follow these suggestions.

Deal with your own attitude first. Michal did not share David's joy before the Lord. (Remember that she was a daughter of King Saul, who was almost a pagan in the later years of his life.) Why did she not realize that her husband might have an enthusiasm for the Lord which she did not have? Why did she not accept his “inappropriate” behavior even if it was a little embarrassing to her? Why did she not express her opinion without the biting sarcasm in her words? If there was to be communication between them, she must deal with her own attitude first. And so must you!

Move toward your partner, not apart from him. It is natural to move away from one with whom you disagree. But mere distance solves no problems. Draw near with the right spirit and the issue can be resolved. Don't hide behind the bushes as did Adam and Eve in Eden (Genesis 2:7, 8), but meet the other party with a sincere desire to resolve the issue.

Deal with issues, not personalities. Michal criticized David personally, not just his actions. It was natural that he rise in defense of his person. So the conflict was increased. It is possible to reject the act rather than the person. You must follow that procedure if reconciliation occurs.

Never accept separation as the final answer. You can communicate. You can settle the difference. You can be reconciled. You can “agree to

disagree” and be at peace with one another. David and Michal must have never reconciled their differences from that day forward. It is indicated in her remaining barren for the rest of her life. What a tragedy! With a little humility and effort at communication, the issue could have been settled and peace established between them.

Take the initiative to restore communication. First, stop all criticism. Neither David nor Michal did that, and you see the consequences. Work at establishing peace. It will not come easily or automatically, but it will come if you work at it. You make the first move, then the second and the third if the other person is hesitant to respond. Keep on until communication is restored and peace reigns.

Accept responsibility for your part of the problem. Remember that it takes two to fuss. One cannot give an offense unless another takes an offense. Deal first with your communication with God. If that is wrong, you can never communicate with your family member. Ask God to help you. He will.

You and your family can actually talk together and enjoy it! That is what communication means.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is communication in the family?
2. Why is communication essential to family harmony?
3. How did Michal fail in communicating with David?
4. How did David fail in communicating with Michal?
5. How is communication a sign of love?
6. How is failure to communicate a sign of pride?
7. How does your own attitude affect communication?
8. How can you restore broken communication in your home?
9. Why is criticism an enemy of communication in the family?
10. What will you do to communicate more effectively with members of your family?