

Fighting for Your Marriage Session 4

A Biblical Pattern of Communication

Communication: A Topical Approach from Proverbs

How should we communicate with one another? Here is the wisdom from the book of Proverbs on communication . . .

The Power of Our Words	Don't Talk Too Much
With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous escape. (11:9)	When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise. (10:19)
Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (12:18)	A man who lacks judgment ridicules his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue. (11:12)
The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. (15:4)	A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. (11:13)
The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (18:8)	He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin. (13:3)
The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (18:21)	A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. (17:27-28)
	A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions. (18:2)
The Source of Our Words	A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (20:19)
My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (4:20-23)	He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (21:23)
A scoundrel and villain goes about with a corrupt mouth. (6:12)	Avoid Nagging
A villain plots evil with deceit in his heart? he always stirs up dissension. (6:14)	Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a nagging wife. (21:9)
The heart devises wicked schemes. (6:18)	
The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. (15:28)	Use a Calm, Soft Answer

All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD. (16:2)	A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (15:1)
A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction. (16:23)	Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone. (25:15)
Listen	Ignore Insults
He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. (15:31)	A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult. (12:16)
He who answers before listening? that is his folly and his shame. (18:13)	A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. (19:11)
The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. (18:15)	
Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. (19:20)	Speak the Truth
	A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies. (12:17)
Think Before You Speak	The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (12:22)
Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (12:18)	A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free. (19:5)
A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly. (14:29)	Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" (26:18-19)
The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. (15:28)	He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue. (28:23)
Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city. (16:32)	Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet. (29:5)
He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (21:23)	
Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. (26:4)	Avoid Quarrels
Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (29:20)	Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. (17:14)
	It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. (20:3)
Timing	As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. (26:21)
A man finds joy in giving an apt reply? and how good is a timely word! (15:23)	
A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of	

silver. (25:11)

What would a communication pattern that followed these principles look like? It would look like the Speaker/Listener Technique!

What is the Speaker/Listener Technique?

The Speaker/Listener Technique is a method of communication that forces the speaker and listener to follow a Biblical pattern of communication. The technique is used in the Christian Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program to teach couples how to handle conflict in a Biblical manner. (Christian PREP teaches Biblical skills for handling marriage conflict and preventing divorce.) The Speaker/Listener technique comes by other names: Pass the Ball, Gary Smalley's feather method of communication, etc.

Essentially the Speaker/Listener Technique is the same pattern that you use when you drive up to McDonald's to order fast food. You are the speaker and the clerk is the listener. Your job is to tell him what you want. His job is to listen carefully and reflect back to you what he hears, so that he knows he has your order correctly:

Listener: "Good morning! Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order?"

Speaker: "Yes, you may. I'd like a cheeseburger, fries, and a chocolate shake."

Listener: "That was a cheeseburger, fries, and a chocolate shake. What would you like on your cheeseburger?"

Speaker: "I'd like lettuce, pickles, onions, and catsup."

Listener: "That was lettuce, pickles, onions, and catsup."

Speaker: "That's correct."

Listener: "And what size of fries would you like? Medium or large?"

Speaker: "Large please."

Listener: "Okay, let me see if I've got this: That a cheeseburger with lettuce, pickles, onions, and catsup; a large fry; and a chocolate shake."

Speaker: "You got it!"

Listener: "That will be \$4.35. Please drive around to the first window."

Rules for the Speaker/Listener Technique

Both

1. Share the floor ? One at a time, but take turns.
2. No problem solving ? This is discussion only.
Seek first to understand then to be understood.

Speaker

1. Break what you say into short bites ? Don't go on and on.
2. Speak for yourself ? No mind reading or assumptions about the other person.

Listener

1. Paraphrase back to the speaker what you hear.
2. Focus on Speaker's message ? Don't rebut.
Edit out your tendency to respond or disagree ? internally and externally.

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