

Strengthening Your Marriage

Review Lesson #3:

God-Given Roles & Responsibilities

1. What are a husband's God-given roles? (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 3:4; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)
2. What are wife's God-given roles? (Gen. 2:18; Prov. 14:1; Ti. 2:4,5)
3. How are you loving each other like Christ loves the Church? (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Lesson #4:

Relational Intimacy: Learning To Truly Know

What is relational intimacy? (oneness)

Why does marriage stand apart from all other human relationships?

What does it mean to communicate?

When you say you are not communicating as a couple, what do you mean?

Probing Questions:

- *How well do you know your marriage partner?*
- *How transparent are you with each other?*
- *Are there things you keep hidden and don't feel comfortable sharing with your spouse? Why are there hidden closets?*
- *Do you feel free to express your fears? Your joys? Hurts?*
- *How deeply do you share your feelings of jealousy, anger, things that frustrate you about your partner, disagreement, or things you are concerned about with your mate?*
- *When you try to communicate, how does the other person respond that hinders you from being more vulnerable?*
- *When the other partner responds to you in a less than desirable fashion, how do you respond in return?*
- *Based on your conversations with your spouse recently, what would you say were you most passionate about?*

- *Why is co-existence the death grip to a marriage - where two people just tolerate each other? (together yet apart)*
- *What needs to change between the two of you to have better communication and experience greater intimacy?*

The Effects Of The Fall: (Genesis 3)

Experiencing Oneness & Marital Intimacy: (unity/one flesh)

Philippians 1:27b "that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Philippians 2:2-4 "fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

How is relational intimacy between husband and wife so much more than just casual or superficial conversation?

What are the things that hinder relational intimacy?

pride, independence, selfishness

Relational Intimacy Requires: (Ricucci)

- Honesty
 - Being completely open
 - My spouse should never doubt my sincerity or willingness to disclose myself.
 - Caution and self-control should still be in effect
 - Kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, patience, love
 - Balance between love and truth (speaking the truth in love)
- Humility
 - Listens, asks questions, and be willing to learn

Biblical Wisdom On Communication:

Conversation: (speech/choice of words)

Colossians 4:6 "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Proverbs 8:6-8 "I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true; for my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse."

Proverbs 10:19 "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."

Proverbs 10:21 "The lips of the righteous nourish many..."

Proverbs 10:31 "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom."

Proverbs 12:25 "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up."

Proverbs 13:2 "From the fruit of his lips, man enjoys good things."

Proverbs 13:3 "He who guards his lips guards his life..."

Proverbs 16:21,23,24 "A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction. Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Proverbs 21:23 "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity."

Proverbs 24:26 "An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips."

Luke 6:45 "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Listening:

James 1:19 "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."

Proverbs 18:12 "He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame."

Proverbs 29:20 "Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

Responding:

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (mutual submission)

Proverbs 14:29 "A patient man has great understanding..."

Proverbs 1:23 "If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you..."

Ways To Enhance Good Communication:

- **Striving to listen intently** (attentive, undivided attention)

Proverbs 18:12 "He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame."

Listening is much more than just not talking.

Listening is not thinking through our response.

- **Striving to know and be known.**

(to fully understand or be understood)(Prov. 27:23)

Proverbs 20:5 "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out."

Proverbs 18:2 "A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions."

Our partners should be our life's study to know and understand them completely.

When you don't understand, gently ask good questions.

- **With an appropriate tone of voice**
 - “It is not so much what we say, but how we say it.”
 - (Disrespectful, belittling, demeaning, sarcastic, harsh)
 - Luke 15:29 “Look!”
 - Proverbs 18:21 “The tongue has the power of life and death.”

- **With God-honoring content**
 - Proverbs 10:32 “The lips of the righteous know what is fitting.”
 - Proverbs 18:6 “A fool’s lips bring him strife and his mouth invites a beating.”
 - Proverbs 15:4 “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”
 - Ephesians 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.”
 - Ephesians 5:3,4 “But among you there must not be even a hint... of impurity... because these are improper of God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking, which are out of place.”
 - Colossians 3:16 “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.”
 - ** Our spouses would love nothing more than to have us share what we are learning in our reading and study of God’s Word. *How are you intentional with your pursuit of God and His Word? Is talking about your relationship with God natural conversation with your mate? If not, why not?*

- **With proper eye contact**
 - (Not distracted, disinterested, as though hiding something)
 - Proverbs 4:25,27 “Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.”
 - Acts 3:4,5 “Peter looked straight at him... ‘Look at us...’ and the man gave them his attention...”
 - What do you communicate when you focus on the one you are talking to?*

- **With appropriate nonverbal posture**
 - How are you responding with what is being said? Does what you are doing communicate that you are listening?*
 - What are you communicating by what you are not saying?*

- **With appropriate facial expressions**
 - Proverbs 6:16,17 “Things the Lord hates... haughty eyes.”

Proverbs 30:13 "Those whose eyes are ever so haughty,
whose glances are so disdainful."

(Prov. 21:4; Ps. 18:27; 101:5)

Proverbs 15:13,15 "A happy heart makes the face cheerful."

- **At the appropriate time**

Proverbs 15:23 "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply, and
how good is a timely word."

Proverbs 15:28 "The heart of the righteous weighs its
answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil."

Proverbs 17:27,28 "A man of knowledge uses words with
restraint..."

Proverbs 25:11 "A word aptly spoken..."

- **With honor and respect**

(Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 12:24-26; Eph. 5:21,33; 1 Pet. 3:7)

- **Committed to the truth**

(Jn. 8:32; Eph. 4:15; Prov. 27:5,6; Gal. 4:16)

- **Willing to admit when you are wrong**

Proverbs 28:13 "He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds
mercy."

Barriers To Good Communication:

* The dulling effect of busyness and routine in marriage.

* Pride (self-confidence, self-exalting, self-protecting)

Do you love to hear your own voice and opinions?

Pride does not need a spouse, just an audience.

Proverbs 13:10 "Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in
those who take advice."

(Prov. 3:7,34; 8:13; 16:5,18; 18:12; 26:12; Ja. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5)

* Withdrawal/The silent treatment/The cold shoulder

* Mind reading/Assumptions

* Distractions (TV, paper, Internet, cable, novel, magazine)

* Lack quality time to talk (un-interrupted time)

* Living two separate lives (co-existence)

- * Not being straight forward with the truth (Prov. 26:18,19; 26:24-26)
- * Interrupting the other rather than listening intently.
Are you more worried about getting your point across than really listening to what the other is trying to say?
- * Defensiveness or pointing out the others weaknesses/faults.
- * Allowing misunderstanding or differences to go unresolved or not discussed. (stacking/layering issues)
- * Bad timing
"Is there a better time we can talk about this? When?"
- * Unresponsiveness (dazed/blank stare)
"Have you listened to anything I just said..."
- * Broken promises:
Proverbs 6:2,3 "If you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth... Go and humble yourself and press your plea with your neighbor."

Questions For Couples:

What are your basic needs?

How do you communicate those needs/desires/dreams to each other?

What character or personality traits are needed to make up a healthy marriage relationship? (Galatians 5:22,23; 1 Peter 4:8)

What positive qualities draw you to each other? (strengths)

What weaknesses do you see in each other that need your attention?

When a decision needs to be made, how will you talk to each other about what needs to be done?

Hot Spot Discussion Points Between Couples:

(How would you respond to these comments?)

(What is the best way to say it? Ask it? Respond to it?)

1. I love your parents, but they are too involved in our marriage...
2. You are working so many hours, I feel like I never see you any more...
3. You are spending too much time with _____, I feel jealous...
4. I am worn out, I can't get it all done, I really could use some help...
5. We are barely making it financially, I feel we are spending too much money on things that are not important...

6. Honey, I think we should lay off the sweets and get some exercise...
7. Do you think you could take a turn with the kids...

Philippians 1:6; 2:12-15