



MARRIAGE SEMINAR & WORKSHOP – LESSON 5

Section 5.1 – Verbal Communication

“A marriage lives and dies on the communication that it has.”

There are many forms of communication and talking is only one of them. Everyone in marriage communicates, whether they are expressive talkers or not. The keys to an effective marriage is to understand that *you* are always communicating *something*! You cannot help that or conceal it, only control what you are communicating. There are two primary forms of communication, verbal and non-verbal, and those should be defined further to become better at living in this life.



Did you know proper communication can change your marriage for the better? Yes, it can! Every marriage I have observed has its share of problems. I have also noticed that the problems get exacerbated when the same communication necessary for public life, or work relationships, is ignored in the privacy of the home and marriage settings.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

“This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...” James 1:19

Why do we so often feel free to hurt those that we supposedly love, but we manage to mind our manners with coworkers and strangers? To answer this question we should look at how we were brought up, or what we were allowed to get away with in our families. Let’s look at this example.

Example #1. A man cannot control his temper at home, but when confronted by another man at work his same size, he is in complete control of his tongue and actions. In this example fear of a reciprocal response from his spouse does not exist, but it does when the same thing happens in the presence of someone stronger. His self-control is out of control at home, but in public, or with his boss, he is a complete gentleman. The difference between those two environments is what dictated his behavior, therefore, he proves that he

does have self-control, when needed. However at home, he does not care to realize that his behavior is affecting his health, and the spiritual and mental health of his relationship with his wife. This is what the bible calls corrupt communication. In Ephesians 4:29-32 we can discover how to identify corrupt communication and also how to fix it.

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Sometimes, anger has its place. In Ephesians 4:26 we read, ***“BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger...”*** Anger is inevitable, but it must be controlled and mastered. Anger must not spill over into sinful behavior, conduct or language. Here is another example of corrupt communication.

Example #2. A married working woman barely speaks to her husband as she leaves for work every morning. But, on the way to work at the gas station, coffee shop and at her desk, she is glib and smiling and spontaneous. You might even say flirtatious. At noon she is the life of the lunch table, and talks about the weather, sports, politics and sex. A brief afternoon call to her husband is short, dull, and about nothing newsworthy. That evening she reaches home before her spouse and barely acknowledges his arrival. If anything is said at all by her, it is to *complain* about the heat, the house or the government. In this example, she has used up all her interaction skills for the day, and has nothing left over for her husband and family. Like example #1, she has control over her level of enthusiasm, but chooses to use it on people that she may never see again, rather than with her spouse and family. Since, in the eyes of God, the family is our first earthly responsibility, this also is corrupt communication.

You can switch out the male and female roles in both examples and get a better glimpse of how much improvement the spouses could be making. Let’s again look again at James 1:19-26,

“This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an

effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless."

Notice that this scripture segment is sandwiched top and bottom between the concepts of good and bad communication. Being slow to speak and slow to anger is an act of righteousness, and the person that does not bridle his tongue acts unrighteously.

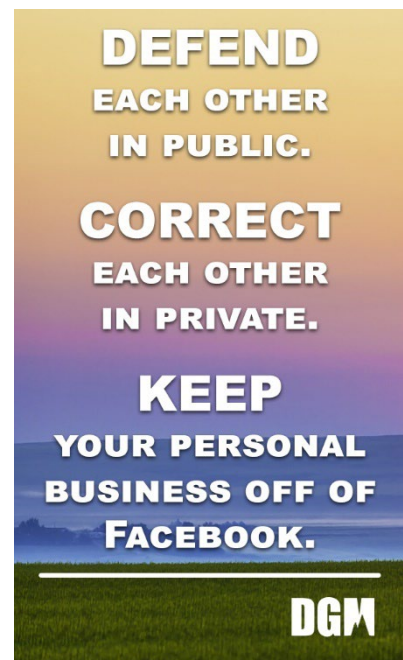
Remember, marriage is not about you and your feelings. Marriage is first about obedience to God's command. Second, it is about the development of your maturity, your attitudes, your personality and your spirit. Marriage is designed to grow you and your spouse up in God. The Spirit of God would not have you use it as an opportunity to behave thoughtlessly. The very skills you will need to be successful in life as you mature, are developed **first** at home, not in the public arena. It is said, "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink". In order to grow properly before God, you have to be willing and desirous to mature in your communication skills and habits. In both examples, who is well served? Neither spouse is, for the actions do nothing to develop the marriage and home for the better.

Men and women without any doubt, communicate verbally and non-verbally differently. Studies have shown that a woman may be able to talk three times more a day than a man. So, the man must be willing to develop in his communication skills with his wife, and the wife must be able to encourage her husband to talk about his day and his thoughts. Both exercises take work and effort. But, as with any developed skill sets, communication becomes easier with continued practice and education.

A woman may come away satisfied from a ladies' chat with all kinds of new information on people in the community. A man may come home satisfied from a golf outing with the guys, and not learn anything except his golf partner got a new sand wedge. 😊 We are asked of God to bridge that gap.

Section 5.1 - QUESTIONS

1. The book of James tells us to be quick to speak and never get angry. True or False? _____
2. Any time that you are angry at your spouse you are sinning. True or False? _____
3. I can be sociable at work, as long as I have something similar to give my spouse and family when I get home. True or False? _____



4. God never intended or commanded men to talk more and women to talk less. True or False? _____ (Read Proverbs 12:18, 15:2, 4, 18:13, 21:23)

Section 5.1 - DISCUSSION

Talk with your partner about your communication. Are you trying to communicate to each other? Do you have some energy for the relationship at the end of your day? How are you doing with each other in the area of anger management issues? Have a frank discussion right now. Make notes about what things you might be able to improve on. (4 min)

1. _____
2. _____

Who is better at verbal communication and why? Are you able to talk and communicate ideas clearly? Discuss now. (2 min)

1. _____

Section 5.2 – NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

While in a marriage setting non-verbal communication takes place ***all the time***. This second form of communication we use by our Creator’s intent and design. Sometimes we use non-verbal communication by choice to relay our feelings to our partner. However, most of the time we are using this behavior unconsciously and without knowing it.

Non-verbal communication is an art form. It creates a healthy environment when used correctly, and an unpleasant environment when used as a way to treat your spouse. Men and women can equally be good at using and reading non-verbal communication.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION DEFINED

“Nonverbal communication is defined as; “the transfer of information from one person to another without the use of words or spoken language. Nonverbal communication can occur in a variety of ways, including through facial expressions, gestures, body posture or position.”

That is a lot of different things to look for in your spouse and in yourself!

YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS ARE TALKING ALL THE TIME

We all have a spectrum of human emotions that were given to us by God. These emotions include; happiness, fear, love, disappointment, anger, surprise, shock, trust and love. These emotions and others can be recognized in a non-verbal setting. We can all read others thoughts, by looking at their body language, as we trained ourselves. Your spouse will come to know your “tells”, concerning what you are thinking or feeling, when you are quiet. So it is important to answer questions faithfully when asked about what you are thinking about by your marriage partner. These questions and your answers will help develop your marriage and your spirituality. They most importantly kick the devil out of your relationship with your spouse. Many times, when we see our spouse acting quietly, or behaving differently, we can begin to think the worst. Communication clears up our worst fears instantly!

Healthy communication is the foundation on which **trust evolves**, and the way your spouse can understand you better. Non-verbal communication allows you to read your spouse and anticipate the way they feel about a matter. More things are said in a non-verbal way than people commonly think. Non-verbal communication builds intimacy and trust. If one of you refuses to look at the non-verbal communication for some reason, you miss an opportunity to grow your relationship with your spouse.

Your response to your spouse can be non-verbal tool, but when verbal is required, you can start with a series of simple questions. Questions such as:

- “Is this something that you like?”
- “Is this something that you want to do?”
- “Did I word that correctly?”

In communication circles, these are called probes. If your spouse is not talking, a series of short questions (probes) will uncover likes and dislikes, rather than allowing something to take root in your mind that was never intended. Satan hates marriage, because it is the foundation of all society, and the first command from God between men and women. These kinds of questions and insights take time and work to develop, but it is worth the peace that results from it.

In Proverbs 4:23 we read, “**Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.**” So, two things can happen when you ask a question about how your partner is feeling, or what they are thinking. The first is honest, the second is deceitful, covering for something that you want to hide from your spouse. Something that you are hiding in your heart can be from misunderstanding, or from wrong motives. All wrong thinking on your part will push your marriage into long periods of non-verbal communication without resolution. If the thoughts that you are having, is in relation to someone outside your marriage, your zest for real marital intimacy can shut down, because of your desire to be communicating about personal things with someone who is

not your spouse. This of course is wrong, and many times leads to affairs and divorce. When you keep the intimacy channel open with your spouse only and realize that the grass is not greener on the other side, then you will work well with who God has given you as a spouse.

If you are hiding feelings like this in your heart from your partner, repent and stop the extramarital behavior. Marriage is for life, and your spouse will recognize the change in both your verbal and non-verbal communications, that something is amiss. Then there is the all-seeing God, who sees our hearts and our behaviors. He will be knocking on your door to get you to realize the dangers ahead, if you continue in the course you are following.

The musician Willie Nelson grew up as a Christian and later attended, for a time, the Christian college, Baylor University in Texas. Now, years later after four marriages and eight children, he told his biographer, "There is no such thing as an ex-wife, there are only additional wives. It's an accumulation." In People magazine years ago, Willie Nelson said that you never really quite get divorced, and you find that you still have to see them just as much.

Your life is real! This is your chance to grow, and your marriage is your incubator for development into the person that God intends for you to be. If you are going to grow, you must make your marriage work, and not give up on it, or give into the lusts of the flesh.

Section 5.2 - QUESTIONS

1. We communicate verbally and non-verbally only when we want to. True or False?

2. We verbally communicate three times more than we non-verbally communicate to our spouse. True or False? _____
3. The Bible says you can complain about your spouse as long as it is only to other people at church. True or False? _____

Section 5.2 - DISCUSSION

What are some of the ways that your spouse verbally communicates well? Share that with your spouse and compliment them on it. (2 min)

1. _____
2. _____

What are some of the ways that your spouse has seen your non-verbal communication and responded lovingly and with kindness?

1. _____
2. _____

Have you been able to recognize when your spouse is hurting, and without them requesting it, you brought comfort to them? Talk with your spouse right now about anytime that you or they missed an opportunity to read their tells and to comfort them.

1. _____

Section 5.3 – Morning Devotions and Marriage Revival

I absolutely believe in morning devotions. A traveling minister I know would call his wife when ministering away from home. It was at that time they would pray for the day and each other. Morning devotions clear the air, reunite the couple in a brand new day, and reassert the beliefs and dreams for the family. In Philippians 2 we read,

“Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

When you pray together, there is real spiritual authority and power being exercised! Jesus gave us this promise of power in Matthew 18:19,

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.”

If you are not yet praying consistently together, then talk about how you can change your schedule to accommodate early morning prayer and devotions. It might be waking up 15 minutes earlier, or turning off the news and your cell phone. All kinds of studies have shown that rising early and praying has only good results for a person and the marriage relationship. “The family that prays together, stays together.”

Then pray for things that you want. Here are some examples.

1. Pray for your marriage and that revival breaks out in your marriage.
2. Pray for each other, and the challenges and the struggles that they may be facing.
3. Pray for each other’s healing, well-being, and soundness of mind.
4. Pray for your children/grandchildren to do well in school, and to be protected from the evil one.
5. Pray for your finances to get better, and for more wisdom in your spending habits.
6. Pray to be debt-free on your home, cars and credit cards.
7. Pray for your country and its leadership.
8. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
9. Pray for your community and your state, that godly representatives are elected.

10. Pray for revival.

This test was given in Lesson 4. Please take this test again with your spouse.

RESPECT FOR YOUR SPOUSE SURVEY – Answer 1-5, 5 being the best score.

I-DEPENDABILITY.

1. Are you a dependable spouse? Can you be trusted to carry out tasks and projects in the timeframe agreed on? _____
2. Do you show up on time when expected? _____
3. Are you where you are supposed to be? _____

II-SPEECH

1. Do you explain yourself well, or are you leaving out vital details about your experiences? (Costs of spending, contacting people) _____
2. Do you give constructive feedback to questions and comments? _____
3. How well do you read your spouses non-verbal communication? _____

III-ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Do you share your achievements with your spouse, including hobbies, goals and personal development? (as opposed to not sharing your day) _____
2. Do you rejoice with your spouse when they receive credit, accomplish a task, or receive any type of promotion, completion of a goal, or an experience? (as opposed to not responding to joy of an event) _____
3. Do you look for small steps of growth in your spouse to compliment them on and encourage them with a positive observation? _____

IV-EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

1. Do you know the words thank you, excuse me and you're welcome? On a scale of 1-5, how often do you use these words daily with your spouse, and do you use them more with your spouse than others? _____
2. Do you thank your spouse for the common performance things of, cleaning, laundry, cooking, mowing, etc.? _____
3. Do you express gratitude in from of others about your spouse's accomplishments and small and great victories? _____

V-LISTENING

1. Are you a good listener, and do you hear the whole statement of what your spouse is attempting to communicate? _____
2. Do you cut off your partner short to talk about how you did/do things, concerning the same subject, or do you let them proceed to finish their statements? _____

3. Do you overreact when listening, hearing things that were not intended, or are you a clarifier of what was just said? _____

VI-INTIMACY

1. Are you your spouse's lover? Do you kiss regularly, hold hands in public, show public displays of affection around the children and relatives and friends? _____
2. Are you regularly complimenting your spouse on body-parts, attire, physical attributes and stamina? _____
3. Are you regular at initiating the love signs and indicators? _____

VII-FORGIVENESS

1. Do you practice the words, I'm sorry and I forgive you? _____
2. Do you hold grudges for days and weeks, or are you quick to accept an apology? _____
3. Do you try and work at hearing why your spouse did what they did before expecting an apology? _____

Add up your scores now. A perfect score is 105 points, average is 63 points. Have some fun bringing your score up higher and make it a contest at home!

Section 5.4 – HOMEWORK- LESSON 5

Here is your daily homework to practice as a couple for the next 30 days.

1. Pray the Our Father daily together. The family that prays together stays together. Then pray for other things as well.
2. Set aside a meeting time three times a day to talk about your day with your spouse. Make it a pattern to follow daily.
3. Talk to each other about your love life and develop bonds on a spiritual level.
4. Enjoy lovemaking more often and pay attention to the difference in your moods and feelings.
5. Also, talk about what changes you both could make to serve God better in your marriage. (This is to be non-confrontational)
6. Compliment each other at least 3 times a day.
7. Fulfill your marriage duties.
8. Tell your spouse daily that you love him/her.
9. Practice PDA daily, and let your kids see it!

