

## TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

### Session IV — Communication: Understanding What Communication Is

#### INTRODUCTION

For a long time I have realized that no matter what area in a relationship you are having a problem, most of the time it goes back to the problem of communication. Martial communication is that part of the relationship that enables a couple to talk together and to listen to each other about all the other areas of concern.

Let me share a few quotes with you about marriage:

This first one is by Shmuley Boteach. “The reason you marry is in order to find someone to love with all their faults, not to change them. That’s why we hug the people we love. We are showing them that we embrace all of them. Knowing that there is a God, man can never aspire to be anything more than number two. Therefore, be humble.”

Second quote: “At first we were concerned about meeting the “right one” to marry. Now we are learning how important it is to be the “right one” for someone else. If you treat the wrong person like the right person, you could well end up having married the right person after all. Marriage is a gift in a box. After marriage, you take the gift out of the box and it is sometimes a little different than you thought it would be.

On the other hand, if you marry the right person and treat that person wrong, you certainly will have ended up marrying the wrong person. I also know that it is far more important to be the right person than it is to marry the right person. In short, whether you married the right or wrong person is primarily up to you.” Source unknown

These quotes speak to the kind of attitude we have that comes from within and is expressed outwardly through our communication.

Remember this: every person marries a foreigner. We must learn to speak their language.

Now, what is martial communication?

I. There are six messages of communication.

A. The message you meant to say.

\* You knew what you meant to say.

B. The message you actually said.

\* Sometimes it comes out differently than what we were trying to say.

- C. The message your spouse actually hears.
- D. The message your spouse thinks he/she hears.
- E. The message your spouse says about what you said.
- F. The message you think your spouse said about what you said.

Certainly when you see these possible messages you begin to realize that communication is very important in any relationship.

## II. What does the Bible have to say about communication?

A. James 3:8-10, We cannot control our tongue by ourselves. We must have God's help.

There is tremendous power in our communication.

B. Proverbs 25:11, The right word at the right time is very important.

C. Proverbs 18:21, Matthew 12:37, Those who love to talk will experience the consequences.

D. Proverbs 12:18, The tongue can cut like a sword or can bring healing to a relationship.

E. Proverbs 14:29, If our anger is under God's control then so shall our tongue be. If not, then it may be like a fire out of control that will burn us and anything in its path.

F. Proverbs 21:23, The best way to stay out of trouble is to keep your mouth shut. A new translation - be very careful what you say.

G. Proverbs 29:20, We must be careful not to allow our emotions to cause us to explode with what we say and we should think about what we say before we say it.

\* It is obviously very clear that communicating in marriage is very, very important.

\* Marital communication is like blood in the body. Without it the body dies. With it the body flourishes and functions normally.

Let's look at what communicating does to make married couples happily married.

## III. A happily married couple is a communicating couple.

A. They make it a practice to talk to each other.

B. They willingly share and convey their feelings when they understand what is being said.

C. They talk about a variety of subjects not just the mundane things like work.

D. They carefully preserve the communication channels and keep them open.

\* They do this even during difficult circumstances. They do not use the silent treatment on each other.

E. They carefully express more sensitivity to each other's feelings.

\* They watch for certain expressions on each other's faces.

\* Unhappy couples will make some radical changes in their relationships if they will apply these communicating principles.

\* Speaking is one part of communicating.

IV. Listening is the second part of communicating.

A. What is the definition of listening? To really listen means that when another person is speaking you are not thinking about what you are going to say when the other person stops talking.

How many men have the answers to the questions your wife is trying to ask you even before she can get them out to you?

\* Look at James 1:19, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

\* When we talk too much and listen too little, we communicate to others that we think our ideas are much more important than theirs.

Help your companion realize what they have to say is important to you.

B. Listening includes the complete acceptance of what your companion says and how it was said without judgment.

C. Genuine listening is also the ability to restate accurately the content and feeling of your companion's message.

D. Listening always takes work and personal effort.

\* Listening takes a lot of work.

\* Physiologically, we can listen five times as fast as we can speak. If someone speaks at 120 words per minute and you can listen at 600 words per minute what are you going to do with the extra time?

You are going to say, please get to the point!!

Ex. Wife talking about her jobs.

There are:

V. Nine common hindrances to listening.

A. A spirit of defensiveness - this is where we do not like what is being said, so boom, a wall goes up and we have a hard time listening.

B. A personal bias – we will listen to people in power who are over us but not to people below us.

C. A variety of different listening styles - some listeners are optimists and some are pessimists. It depends upon what filters we use in our thinking.

Good news – bad news.

D. Emotional inner struggles – PB.

E. A habit of interrupting while others are speaking – The problem is greater among men if the woman started the conversation.

F. A serious case of mental overload – we have a tendency to shut down when we receive too much information at one time. A summary can help this problem.

G. A wrong time for discussion – you may be too busy. Too many people around. You want to go to sleep. Be aware of the circumstances that cause improper timing.

H. When you are physically exhausted – it is hard to listen to anything when you are tired.

I. A decision of selective attention – this is when we hear what we want to hear. How many have had your wife say I told you and you respond, I did not hear you.

Our ears are not the most important thing for hearing. Our heart is needed as well.

VI. In marital communication our messages are made up of three integral parts.

Now obviously this involves face to face communication.

A. The content of the conversation.

\* This makes up 7% of the message.

## B. The tone of our voice.

- \* This part makes up 38% of the message. This is more than five times that of the content.

- \* This really works well with training dogs. Dogs are trained with the tone of voice.

- \* One major problem is that our anger may not show up in our words but in our tone.

- \* It can cause conviction, or reaction.

## C. The non-verbal communication.

- \* This part makes up 55% of the message.

- \* Examples: hands on hip, look at the ceiling while someone else is talking, you say I love you but you keep on reading the paper.

- \* It is important that our content, tone and non-verbals match.

## ILLUSTRATION ON COMMUNICATION

Even though we have so many communication capabilities we seem to have more difficulty communicating than ever before.

Everybody has a watch, but no one has the time.

Did you hear about the lady from Dallas who went to see her lawyer about getting a divorce?

The lawyer said, "What's the problem?"

She started generalizing.

He said, "No. You need to be specific."

She said, "Well, like how?"

He said, "Well, do you have any grounds?"

"Yes," she said. "As a matter of fact we have about 40 acres right out here on the north end of town."

He said, "No, No, No. That is not what I am talking about. Are there personal problems?"

She said, "Like how?"

He said, "Well, do you have a grudge?"

She said, "No. But we've got this really neat little carport there on the side of the house."

He said, "Woman, let me ask you a question. Does he every beat you up?"

She said, "Oh, no. I am up every day at least an hour to an hour and a half to two hours before he turns over."

He said, "Well, do you accept any responsibility for the difficulty?"

She said, "Like how?"

He said, "Well, for example, do you ever wake up grouchy?"

She said, "Oh, no. I just let him get up on his own whenever he will."

He said, "Then why do you want to divorce him?"

She said, "Well, the man just can't communicate."