

Communication in Marriage

by Richard Siple

Richard Siple's sermon emphasizes the critical role of communication in marriage, highlighting the barriers created by sin and selfishness and the importance of forgiveness and truth in fostering healthy relationships.

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Proverbs 18:8, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 4:25

Topics: "Marriage Counseling", "Forgiveness Healing"

Description

Dick Siple addresses the prevalent issues in marriages, attributing them to sin and selfishness. He emphasizes the critical role of communication in resolving marital conflicts, highlighting the need for truth and love to be balanced. Siple draws parallels between barriers in communication within marriages and the barriers that emerged between Adam and Eve after sin entered the world, stressing the importance of openness and honesty. He underscores the significance of forgiveness in restoring and transforming troubled marriages, sharing a powerful testimony of a woman who found healing through forgiveness.

Transcript

In 1978 Better Homes & Gardens took a poll & said: 76% of family life is in desperate trouble. A poll taken amongst 2500 educators & counsellors said: 66% of the churches are not doing an adequate job of promoting & maintaining family life. 93% of the youth are not receiving adequate preparation for marriage from their parents.

Cartoon of a woman sitting in a marriage counsellor's office said: "When I got married I was looking for an ideal; then it became an ordeal, & now I want a new deal."

What is the problem? WHY SO MANY PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGES? Some say, it's their health, my headache makes me irritable & tired, my metabolism is different, I have bad nerves, I'm depressed, I'm just upset, it's just me, or they blame others--mother, kids, job, their past, their marriage partner, all he thinks of is food-TV-& sex (& not in that order), if he'd ever clean the house I'd faint. THE PROBLEM IS SIN & SELFISHNESS.

The basic problem of selfishness or self-centeredness comes to the surface in a marriage in a number of areas; & one of the areas that affects all the others is COMMUNICATION. Every troubled marriage has a communication problem.

Is communicating with your husband or wife difficult for you? Does your husband or wife seem to have difficulty communicating with you? What do you think your marriage partner would say about you as a communicator? You are great? So-so? or, Impossible?

A couple came for counselling & she was blazing with anger. He asked the husband to tell him what is the problem, but she constantly interrupted. Finally after being asked to not say anything more & her husband continued to talk, she said, "I didn't know you felt that way." I said, "No, you've never been quiet long enough to find out."

What is adequate communication? It isn't enough to just live together; we need to talk to one another, & in a deep level. Eph. 4:15

"Speaking the truth in love..."--the number one need in a marriage: that there be balance of the two, truth & love.

COMMUNICATION IS LIKE A SEE-SAW: facing one another; one often speaks the truth & the other speaks in love (we often marry opposites) with one being very blunt, just saying what is on his mind, sometimes cutting, no love; & the other person doesn't want to rock the boat & doesn't want to stir up any trouble to hurt anyone's feelings. The problem is that when one is speaking in truth & the other one in love, they speak right over the heads of each other. There has to be a balance.

COMMUNICATION IS LIKE 3 DOORS THAT NEED TO BE UNLOCKED. What are the barriers that stand in the way? They began with the first marriage of Adam & Eve, Gen. 2:18, 22-25. As they faced one another, in that glorious morning of the first creation of marriage there was no barrier between them. Perfect communication & fellowship with one another. No shame, guilt, fear, hiding from one another.

Gen. 3:6-7, No need to hide from each other until they sinned against God & now they try to hide things from each other.

Gen. 3:8-13, The barriers: an impaired relationship with God brought about an impaired relationship with each other. THREE THINGS:

1. Adam was full of guilt & shame - hid from God.
2. Adam had fear - afraid of being rejected by God.
3. Adam was full of pride & justification - blamed his wife.

The barriers that stand between you & God are the same barriers that will stand between you & your spouse. There was no problem in their marriage before sin came. (If I have sin that has not been dealt with I am already resisting God, & then when a problem comes up in my marriage it is easy to continue to resist & want MY way. But when my heart is clear before God I will want to seek to resolve any problem in my marriage; otherwise SIN comes between my God & I, & then greater problems & hurts come into my marriage.)

When I have guilt because of sin, then I don't want to be completely open with another human being. That is because I don't want to be transparent & open & honest because I don't want them to know about my sin. When there is sin, there is fear of rejection (if she finds out what I really am, maybe she won't want me.) Three of the

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best words to use is "I AM WRONG," but our pride stands in the way. With Adam & Eve, they blamed someone else. Open the door of fear & guilt by confession. When you admit & are open to your own need, that opens the door to communication.

COMMUNICATION IS A TRIANGLE, Eph. 4:25-27, 29-32.

4:25-27, Do not give the devil a foothold. Every marriage either has the footprints of the devil in it or the seal of the Holy Spirit.

4:29-32, Let all bitterness & wrath & anger...be put away.

"Sticks & stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." But that is not true. In some marriages they would rather that their marriage partner had hit them with something rather than use the hurtful words. Don't go to bed angry--one of the greatest hindrances in marriage communication.

Words of a whisperer go down into the innermost parts of the body, Pr. 18:8.

Death & life are in the power of the tongue, Pr. 18:21.

Job said to his friends: How long will you torment me & crush me with words?

James: the tongue is a world of iniquity...

What do we do when we are angry? Ask God to help you to get control.

Don't refuse to deal with the problem, or don't blow up & tell your spouse off. Get it into check & hold it by His grace. And before you go to sleep that night, talk out that problem & get a solution & get rid of that anger. Otherwise it will turn into anger, resentment or a deep bitterness, & then you will let it simmer, but you will keep adding to it & then you will have a load of bitterness a mile high.

Illus. of woman, came for counselling. She presented a pad of 38 pages & laid it on the desk. Never talked things out. Anger destroys a marriage--gives Satan a foothold.

The kind of words that we use: often we attack one another instead of the problem. They start hurting one another about the problem instead of dealing with the problem, & then the problem gets bigger & bigger.

Pr. 10:10, Don't talk so much & put your foot in your mouth; turn off the flow of words. Confucius said: a spouse with horse sense never becomes a nag.

Learn how to deal with your problems with words that are both truthful & loving. Attack the problem, not each other.

Illus: Husband dumped his dirty clothes, laying them all around the house when he came home at night. He wasn't the problem, the clothes were the problem. Deal with the clothes; don't attack him & say you're just like your dad, etc. Instead, turn to the Lord & ask Him to help you together to

attack the problem & find the solution.

Two ways to handle it:

1. A sheep herder said: in the winter, the wild wolves would attack a band of wild horses; the horses would form a circle with their heads in the circle & their back ends out. They got their heads together & dealt with the problem by kicking & defending themselves.

2. Donkeys did just the opposite, with their heads out, & then when the wolves came they would start kicking, & instead would kick each other.

Lesson: You can either kick the problem or you can kick each other.

Husbands & wives need to get their heads together & deal with the problems.

Illus: woman came for counsel, her marriage was in trouble & she was depressed to the point of almost suicide. They were both Christians, but she was destroying her home. Years ago she was involved in an accident which left her partially crippled, & through all these years she was filled with rage & bitterness towards the one who was

(NOTE: The beginning of SIDE 2 of this cassette tape is on page 2, indicated above by the bold words, 4:23-32, Let all bitterness...)

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responsible for her crippling. She was not willing to forgive. I encouraged her to forgive, but went away bitter. The marriage kept going down hill & she was abusing her children, & finally became desperate, falling down on her knees she began to make a list of all those she was bitter towards--& forgave them. One year later she called me & said

the Holy Spirit placed it upon her to call & tell him that her husband has a new wife & her children have a new mother. She was totally transformed. Her husband is now one of the happiest married men you want to meet--because she learned to FORGIVE.

TWO PARTS OF FORGIVENESS:

1. When you forgive like God forgives you accept the hurt & you let the other person go free. Jesus bore our sins & let us go free; we should do likewise. No communication until forgiveness.

2. Choose not to remember the wrong.

When you forgive you do not bring it up again, ever!

Some people come for counselling & say everything that was done wrong on their honeymoon--no forgiveness for 20 years sometimes.

SUMMARY: What do you think of yourself as a communicator in your marriage?

-Have you gotten through the door of guilt by the cleansing of the blood of Christ & confession of sin?

-Have you gotten through the door of fear by acceptance of Christ & your marriage partner?

-Have you gotten through the door of pride by saying, I am wrong--humbling yourself, stopping the blaming game & self-justification?

-What about the matter of the problem, the disagreement, the anger--does the devil have a foothold in your marriage or the seal of the Holy Spirit?

-Is there open, loving, truthful communication?

-Is there total forgiveness of one another?

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