

Walk in the Spirit

Good communication skills are essential for a strong and successful marriage. One of the most important things we can do to contribute to a solid marriage is build our communication by walking in the Spirit.

Gal 5:16 So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

Gal 5:17 The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.

If we walk in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in our lives

Gal 5:22 But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
Gal 5:23 gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

The fruits of the Spirit are the bedrock of good communication.

Things we can do to nurture a walk in the Spirit is to read our Bibles daily. The Spirit uses the Bible to give us direction and guidance in our lives. It puts the desires of God's heart into our heart. A good old saying is "7 days without God's Word makes one WEAK!"

To help us walk in the Holy Spirit, we also need to pray on a regular basis.

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

Pro 3:6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.

Reading the Bible and praying together are two basic and profoundly powerful practices you should do as a married couple to develop a powerful bond of Love in Christ between you and your spouse. Because Bible reading and prayer develop a Walk in the Spirit, which produces the fruits of the Spirit, which produces an attitude good for communication.

Encourage One Another

The Bible is very clear that we are to encourage and build one another up. This includes our spouses. We ought to say and do things that will encourage and strengthen our marriage relationship.

Eph 4:25 So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" [fn] because we belong to each other.

Eph 4:26 And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." [fn] Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,

Eph 4:27 for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

Eph 4:28 If you are a thief, stop stealing. Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need.

Eph 4:29 Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Eph 4:30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior.

Eph 4:32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

The things we say should always build others up. It is too easy to say cutting, mean, and unkind words. We want to make sure our words don't destroy, but that they actually bring healing to each other's lives.

Do you look for the good in others?

Does our conversation center on ourselves or are we interested in and try to relate to others?

Do we build up, tear down, or nag, when we speak to people?

When we do not get our way, do we become angry?

Pastor Greg Laurie uses the acronym T.H.I.N.K before you speak. Is what you are about to say is it? T = true, H = helpful, I = inspiring, N = necessary, and K = Kind.

Remember Proverbs 15:1 - A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.

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What does it mean to edify?

Think about how you communicate with your fiance or spouse. Would you categorize yourself as a builder? List some ways you can build up one another.

How Do We Communicate?

There are two ways to communicate: verbally and non-verbally. There are also different levels of communication. A basic greeting is a very shallow form of communication, and then there is sharing your fears, struggles, and goals which is a much deeper level of communication. It is important that you can communicate at all levels with your spouse, about anything without fear of being rejected.

List some non-verbal way you communicate with your fiance or spouse and non-verbal ways they communicate with you. After you do this define each non-verbal communication. Compare and discuss your answers.

Listen!

Do you know the fears of your fiance or spouse? Have you ever asked them? If so did you take the time to listen closely and actively to what they share. Listening is just as important as speaking in a relationship.

Jam 1:19 My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Jam 1:20 Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.

We can't develop much of a relationship with anyone if we are doing all the talking. We must listen too. When we listen we will find out all kinds of information that we had no idea existed.

[1Pe 3:7](#) In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard.

The word understanding means to investigate. Men, we need to be an investigator in or to understand our wives, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We need to ask our wives questions and listen to their answers.

Listening is a vital part of communication. On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate your listening skills? How would you rate those of your fiance or spouse?

Why do you think the Lord tells us to be "swift to hear"?

Hindrances to Communication

Works of the flesh or those opposed to the Spirit will hinder communication.

Col 3:8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.

Col 3:9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds.

Col 3:10 In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

We are "to put off the old man", wrath, anger, malice, lying, and filthy language will hinder the communication and growth of our relationship.

Make a list of things that have hindered you communication.

What is our Attitude?

What is our attitude when we communicate with one another? Prideful and arrogant attitudes will breakdown communication with our spouse.

James 4:6 - "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble."

Here are some question to ask yourself:

What kind of words do we use when we talk to each other?

Do we use harsh tone?

Are we critical?

Are we condemning?

Do we try to justify our actions or sin?

Do we have a tendency to tear down, nag, or point fingers?

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Do we exaggerate or lie?

Do we use foul language?

What is your attitude when you communicate with others?

If you tend to be critical, judgmental, or abusive in you communication, to what would you attribute this?

Not Telling the Truth

Lying destroys communication. We always need to speak the truth. Jesus said that Satan is the Father of all lies. Paul said to speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15)

Anger

Anger is another hindrance to good communication. Anger can produce, fear, bitterness, and hatred for one another. In short anger causes division.

Interestingly the bible says: [Eph 4:26](#) And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, [Eph 4:27](#) for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

This scripture simply means that we are not to be angry and go to sleep without resolving our differences. If we do will will give the devil a foothold in our marriage to divide, conquer and destroy it. We need to be able to pray together each night before you go to sleep without bitterness in your heart toward your spouse.

Each person in the marriage needs to be able to express their opinion without ridicule, condemnation, or belittlement. Open honest communication with

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each other is the goal, even when we see things differently. It is important to agree to:

We will no raise our voices.

We need to be able to express our opinions with out being interrupted.

If we can't agree, then we need to talk to a pastor, elder or leader in the church to mediate. We need to be at peace with one another and the Lord.

An important scripture to remember is this: [Col 3:19](#) And you husbands must love your wives and never treat them harshly.

Not Confessing Our Faults

Another hindrance to communication is an unwillingness to confess our faults.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. James 5:16

If we sin against our spouse and don't confess it to them, then or relationship will suffer.

We need to take responsibility for our actions and not blame the ramifications of our choices on others.

We need to take responsibility for our own actions, confess our faults to one another, and ask for forgiveness. We need to join one another in prayer and ask the Lord for victory in our areas of weakness.