



Lesson 5 Let's Talk! (And it ain't cheap!)

First, work through the homework from last week.

Galatians 3:26-27

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Because of my baptism, I'm clothed with Christ. That means **I'm clothed with Jesus!**

Because my spouse is also baptized, that means **my spouse is clothed with Jesus!**

That leads me to want to say **"Thank you!"** to God.

General truths about communication:

James 3:3-6

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

God wants us to recognize that the tongue (i.e., verbal communication) is . . . **It's powerful, either for bad or for good.**

James 1:26

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

One of the important ways that a Christian shows his/her faith is by . . . **Keeping a tight rein on the tongue. Some want to say they can't help what they say. This passage belies that.**

James 1:19,20

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

An important way to make sure that we keep a tight rein on our tongue is to be **quick to listen** and **slow to speak**. For what reasons is that such good advice?

Listening helps us to understand. Answering too quickly may prevent us from getting the full story. Quick answers may be emotional, rather than thoughtful. Etc.

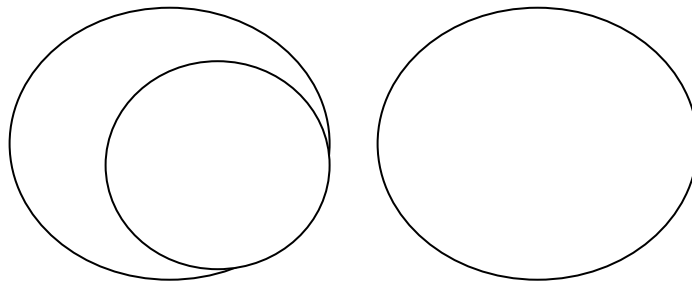
Biblical principles of communication:

Ephesians 4:15

Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

God wants me to speak **the truth in love**.

The bigger circle on the left is "truth," the smaller one inside of it is "love." The single circle on the right is "falsehood." To use the illustration, perhaps let the couple try to guess what each circle represents. The main point is to realize that lying isn't love. Don't do it, because lying breaks trust, which is critical in a marriage. But, speaking truth may be sinful, too. Sometimes words just don't need to be spoken, even though they may be true. The next passage helps us.



Ephesians 4:29, 31-32

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. . . . ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

God wants me to use my words to **build others up, according to THEIR needs (not my needs)**.

That means that I won't speak **in an unwholesome way**. Bitterly, in rage, etc.

Instead, I will speak **kindly, compassionately, forgivingly**. In short, my speech is to reflect Christ's **forgiving love**.

Biblical examples of communication:

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Paul, Silas and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ²Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. ⁴Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

As God speaks about believers, he uses terms that are glowing and positive, uplifting. Yes, God is talking this way about sinful people! Wow! What grace! What practical principle(s) can we take from God's example?

We want to speak positively, as much as we can. God speaks positively about us because he sees us through the lens of what Jesus did for us. We see each other through that lens, too. So we can speak about each other—and to each other—positively.

Song of Songs 4:1-7

How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead. ²Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone. ³Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. ⁴Your neck is like the tower of David, built with elegance; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. ⁵Your two breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies. . . . ⁷All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.

As the husband speaks to the wife, he . . .

While the imagery and similes don't resonate with the way we speak today, they're all really positive! The husband is praising his wife, building her up!

This would have awakened what positive emotions in the wife?

(In teaching this, it can be wise to ask the wife to answer this.) She would have likely felt valued, loved, beautiful, etc.

Song of Songs 5:10-16

My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. ¹¹His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. ¹²His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels. ¹³His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh. ¹⁴His arms are rods of gold set with chrysolite. His body is like polished ivory decorated with sapphires. ¹⁵His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. ¹⁶His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

As the wife spoke about her husband, she . . .

Again, the expressions aren't what we would use, but the point is clear—she's praising him!

This would have awakened what positive emotions in the husband?

Similar to the wife, he'd feel valued, loved, important, etc.

Takin' it home:

1. How well—and how much—we praise/encourage our spouse can be affected by how much of that we received in the home in which we grew up. In the home where you grew up, were words of praise common or rare? What influence has the presence (or absence) of praise had on you? What influence could it have on your marriage?

Common Rare

People who haven't been positively encouraged may struggle to give positive encouragement to others. This is meant to help the couple at least think about it. If one spouse rarely received positive communication, it may help the other spouse to understand why (s)he doesn't give praise very often and may help that person realize that they need to work on this.

2. In every marriage there will be some conflict because every marriage is made up of sinful humans. (Note, it's not necessarily that one person sinned, but both are *sinners*.) So, differences of opinion will come up. When that happens, it's important to keep the discussion at the level of the issue itself. Because of our sinfulness, often we can allow it to escalate. Here's what can happen:

Relationship
Person
Issue

An example: *You never remember to pick up your socks. You're such a thoughtless jerk—I should have never married you.* The presenting issue is picking up socks; the person and the relationship end up getting attacked. In what ways could this have been handled so that the communication remained at the *issue* level?

Perhaps the spouse could have explained why socks on the floor bothers them so much. Perhaps the spouse could have asked, "What can I do to help you remember to pick up your socks?" Perhaps the spouse could have simply picked up the socks, realizing this isn't the biggest issue in life! (Though, the spouse leaving the socks should, in love, make a better effort!)

Consider the following examples, identify what the real issue is in each.

Part of this exercise is to help the couple to think through if each of these is “worth” the conversation. Some of them are, others probably aren't.

One of the ditches into which couples may fall is to have arguments (or to make snide comments) about things which really don't matter, like breaking spaghetti in half . . . or not.

On the positive side, taking care of “little things” can have a big impact! If I know my spouse appreciates the spaghetti being broken in half, I can do that, as it's a quiet way to show love to my spouse.

This can also be a good time to remind them that often communication isn't the real issue. Rather, living in a Christlike way is the real issue.

For example, the one complaint is about keeping promises. That's a big deal! Christ keeps his promises. If the spouse was being Christlike, (s)he would keep their promises, too. Then, this conversation about breaking promises would never happen! Again, living in a Christlike way can cause many negative conversations to never take place.

Someone said

What's the issue?

You're as sensitive as a slug! The next time you forget our anniversary, I'm going to pack your bags and send you off to your mother!

When I cook the spaghetti, I take the time to break it in half before I boil it.

How do I know you'll keep this promise? You're full of promises! They don't mean anything to me anymore!

A pair of pants that costs \$200?!?! Money doesn't grow on trees—or didn't your parents teach you that!

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Below are links to several Marriage Moment videos. The first group focuses on what God says about "love," while the second group contains thoughts about communication. Watch at least one from each group. Bring two reactions to the next session.

Group one: "Love"

33 - <https://vimeo.com/540253163>

34 - <https://vimeo.com/540255698>

35 - <https://vimeo.com/540259549>

36 - <https://vimeo.com/540262141>

37 - <https://vimeo.com/540265040>

38 - <https://vimeo.com/540270696>

39 - <https://vimeo.com/540802032>

Group two: "Communication"

48 - <https://vimeo.com/548522884>

49 - <https://vimeo.com/548527029>

50 - <https://vimeo.com/548530889>

51 - <https://vimeo.com/548535153>

52 - <https://vimeo.com/548539910>