Marriage Enrichment



Lesson Topic: Intimate Communication

Week Two Homework

The homework and Small Group discussion time this week will help you establish a healthy rhythm of intimate communication and deepen your level of communication using the “WALK” (“Watch, Ask, Listen, Know”) acronym that you learned. Next month we will learn how to resolve conflict in a healthy way that honors the Lord and each other.

**Scripture Memory Verse:**

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29)

**In the Word Together**

Read and discuss the following verses with your spouse:

What do the following verses coupled with what we learned at Large Group teach us about Communication?

* Proverbs 10:19-20 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Proverbs 12:18 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Proverbs 15:28 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Proverbs 25:11-12 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Luke 6:45 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Talk About It Together:**

**(**Please discuss the following questions with your spouse and write down your shared responses):

You learned that one of the keys to developing intimate communication with your spouse is to establish a healthy rhythm. This includes the frequency, length/duration and depth of your communication. We should strive to have 15 minutes of face to face communication with no distractions 3-4 times per week. As far as the depth of communication we learned that there are four levels:

* + Superficial (weather, sports etc..)
  + Informational (talking about tasks, things that need to get done, sharing information)
  + Relational (more feelings based, talking about family, friends and other relationships)
  + Heart to Heart (deep & meaningful communication, praying together)

1. Are you satisfied with the communication in your marriage? What can you agree to do together to establish a better rhythm for your communication? Discuss all three components: the frequency, length/duration and depth.

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1. How does praying for each other help to foster a deeper level of communication?

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1. To encourage deeper communication in your relationship, ask your spouse to give you three things to pray for them this week. Focus on personal needs rather than prayer requests centered around children, work, other relationships, etc.

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1. Review the attachment sent along with this week’s homework called “Barriers to Good Communication”. Which of these barriers are the most common in your communication together? What can you agree to do as a couple to overcome these barriers?

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1. During Large Group you learned how to WALK (“Watch, Ask, Listen, Know”) in regards to your communication:
   * Watch: Study for clues on how to serve each other. Watch nonverbal clues. Communicate that you care. Watch to see how your spouse is following your communication. Understand how they are “coming into the talk” (how was their day, what mood are they in, how are they feeling).
   * Ask: After watching, ask questions to learn and understand better. A question pricks the conscience but an accusation hardens the heart. “What can I pray about for you?”
   * Listen: There is an art to focused listening – it is more that hearing the words. Attentively listen to understand. You need to avoid thinking of your response or something else. Especially for Husbands: Ask and learn to know when your wife wants you to just listen rather than problem solve (just listening is 90% of the time).
   * Know: You need to know your spouse better than anyone else. Protect that knowledge too. What are each other’s hopes, dreams, fears etc.

What is one strength that you can build off of as you implement the WALK strategy in your communication?

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1. What insights have you gained through this month’s focus on communication? Have you seen any specific growth in your marriage in the area of communication? Encourage your spouse if you have observed growth in their efforts and ability to communicate with you.

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**Recommended: Apply What You Learned:**

* During the Large Group talk you were encouraged to have 15 minutes of intimate communication 3 or 4 times per week. Plan your time this coming week to make this happen. Lay the foundation this week to continue in future weeks.
* One of the ways to becoming more godly in our communication skills is to “THINK” before we speak. As one of your 15 minute times of intimate communication for this week noted above, you could review the following list and discuss the importance of each one. Which part comes the least naturally for you?

**“T.H.I.N.K.” before you speak:**

**T:** Is it **true**?

**H:** Is what you are going to say **helpful** to the other person?

**I:** Is what you are going to say **inspired** by the Holy Spirit?

**N:** Is it **necessary** to be said?

**K:** Is it **kind**?

**Recommended: Additional Resources to Read:**

* *Barriers to Good Communication* (included at the end of this week’s homework)
* *When Sinners Say “I do”* by Dave Harvey
* *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande

**Come prepared to discuss your answers to the following questions during the Small Group Breakout Time:**

1. How have you followed through with the goals you set at your last Breakout Time to improve the oneness in your marriage in regards to your communication with your spouse?

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1. What has the Lord taught you during your personal times with Him this past week? How many days this past week were you in the Word and prayer? What are you reading?

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1. How do you think that you sin against your spouse as far as how you communicate?

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1. What is the next step that you believe God has for you in improving your communication with your spouse? What really got your attention and needs to be an area of intentional growth? What will you commit to do have genuine growth in this area?

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1. How is the Lord leading you to pray this week for your spouse and your marriage specifically in regards to your communication together? What personal goal towards deepening the intimacy of your communication with your spouse will you commit to? [Keep your goal “SMART” – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time (done by a specific time). Pray with each other about these things, encourage each other to pursue them, and lovingly hold each other accountable for applying what you are learning and committing to do.]

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**Barriers to Good Communication**

**Examples and Solutions**

**Physical Distance:** We are in different rooms and my spouse is trying to say something to me. I do not understand what he/she is trying to communicate so I raise my voice to answer. My spouse can’t tell if I am angry or simply raising my voice to be heard. (SOLUTION:  Be able to see each other before communicating. Make an effort to speak in conversational tones in the same room).

**Emotional Distance**: If we have a difficult disagreement that hasn't been resolved, simple misunderstandings can escalate. Innocent remarks or statements can be interpreted as an extension of the previous negative or painful conflict. (SOLUTION: Conflict needs to be resolved quickly to avoid past hurts being carried into future discussions).

**Emotional noise:** I'm troubled or hurt by what happened to me today at work or elsewhere so I read into what you just said, rather than trying to understand what you really meant. (SOLUTION:  Don’t let other people or issues negatively impact your current communication with your spouse).

**Background Noise:** Cell Phone, TV, computer, radio, music, conversations of others in the room...all of these can cause me to not quite hear what my spouse is saying to me or can cause my attention to wander. (SOLUTION:  Put the device away, turn the noise down or off, or move to a place less distracting).

**Ambiguity:** Ambiguous communication shortcuts such as “this” or “they” are used instead of specific descriptions. I am unclear during a disagreement if we are now talking about the current “this” or “they” that we were talking about 3 minutes ago. (SOLUTION: Be specific in your communication. Try to avoid vague words such as he, she, them, this, that, etc. when it could be referring to a variety of people or topics – especially if you have had several people or topics as part of your discussion).

**Body Language:** Crossed arms, negative head shaking, a certain look, or a deep sigh suggesting "not this again" will never accomplish anything except more division. (SOLUTION: Looking into your spouse’s eyes and have other positive and open body language that will tell your spouse "I am paying attention and interested in what you're saying.").

**My Agenda:** I'm listening only to formulate a response (because I will eventually get my chance to talk and express my agenda for our discussion) rather than actively listening. (SOLUTION: Love your spouse and put her/his needs above your needs. Be an active listener to understand your spouse and what he or she is saying).

**Emotional Response:** Crying or heightened emotional responses such as outbursts of anger are used to get what I want in a situation. I do what I do so that my spouse will do what I want. (SOLUTION: Don’t use tears or heightened emotional responses to manipulate your spouse. Show love and respect toward your spouse when you communicate).