

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!

1 Peter 3:1-12

Intro. – The following is true. A girl was trying to communicate with her boyfriend. She said, “After directory assistance gave me my boyfriend’s new telephone number, I dialed him and got a woman. ‘Is Mike there?’ I asked. ‘He’s in the shower,’ she responded. ‘Please tell him his girlfriend phoned,’ I said and hung up. When he did not call back, I dialed again. This time a man answered. ‘This is Mike.’ ‘You’re not my boyfriend!’ I exclaimed. ‘I know,’ he replied, ‘That’s what I’ve been trying to tell my wife for the past half-hour.’”

Communicating is serious *business*. A few companies learned this the hard way when they tried to translate their catchy English slogans directly into Spanish. Braniff Airway beckoned its passengers to "Fly in Leather," and Eastern Airlines proclaimed, "We Earn Our Wings Daily." Both of these, now-defunct airlines, were terribly mistaken. Spanish speaking people thought Braniff was asking its passengers to "Fly Naked," and a Spanish translation of the Eastern slogan evoked a final destination in heaven, following death.

Communicating ought to be serious business when it comes to marriage. Sadly, though it is not. In a recent survey by the American Sociological Review, working women said they talk with their husbands an average of twelve minutes a day. The following typifies most twenty first century marriages. A gynecologist telephoned a MD friend of his who also practices obstetrics/gynecology. He asked a favor. “My wife has been having some abdominal problems and she’s in particular discomfort this afternoon. I don’t want to treat my own wife and wonder if you’d see her for me?” The other doctor graciously agreed and invited his doctor friend to bring his wife for an examination, whereupon he discovered that she was five months pregnant! The obstetrician husband was so busy communicating with other patients he didn’t even know his own wife was expecting. As one writer put it, “I must admit wondering how in the world this woman ever got his attention long enough to conceive!”

Let me use this to introduce this message. If a husband and wife will make this area a priority, they will enjoy a meaningful relationship for life. If they neglect this area, chances are they’ll be in a miserable existence together. What is that point? Communicate, communicate...

Purpose: to show how significant it is to communicate with your mate

Our text “assumes” this when it comes to marriage. There is a constant need to communicate in home.

I THAT WHICH HAMPERS GOOD COMMUNICATION

A. Ungodly Schedules

1. Recent poll revealed that 61% of Americans would trade money for... more TIME!
2. Many wives and husbands have and are trading their marriages for their schedules
 - a. appear happy/healthy simply because have so much going on... but couples eventually find themselves out of time, energy and emotions leaving little if anything for communicating
 - b. work, sports, appointments, sports, errands, recreation, sports, kids, extended family – these and more contribute to the communication vacuum between husbands and wives...
3. Healthy communications are impossible in a marriage where ungodly schedules use all the time!
 - why told in Ephesians 5:15-16 *“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil”*

B. Demanding Kids

1. Kids bring some of X’s richest blessings; yet, also bring some most demanding responsibilities...
2. I ask, what is a more demanding creature on this world than a human baby?
 - a. good parents know when a hungry baby cries, the parent can’t say, “Not now, I’m tired!”
 - b. when your sixth grader ask for help with an algebra problem... “Figure it out for yourself!”
 - c. teenager want to talk about personal issues... don’t put off “O, that’s part of growing up!”
3. All this takes time away from your spouse in some cases leading to the exclusion of each other...
4. What happens after they leave (aka “empty nest syndrome”) husband/wife left with whatever relationship they built while kids lived at home... Couples in restaurants saying nothing...

C. Captivating TV

1. Let me introduce this hindrance by asking, can you function without television?
2. Stephen Seplow and Jonathan Storm (writing in the Philadelphia Inquirer) said, “40% of all the hours not committed to working, eating, sleeping or doing chores” is consumed by watching TV. They go on to note that the average American at death has spent ten years in front of a TV.
3. Not suggesting TV is all bad... but when it becomes mind-numbing escape = bad addiction.
4. How much time in essential conversation is lost by watching too much TV?

D. Fear of Disagreement

1. If a husband/wife seldom or never have any disagreement/conflict, probably not communicating.
2. Suppose husband grew up in home where disagreements were settled by who was the loudest or a wife grew up in a home where her mother was always put-down and belittled = hesitate to speak...

Schedules, kids, TV, fear of disagreement are some of the more obvious hindrances...

II THAT WHICH HELPS GOOD COMMUNICATION

- in marriage, both husband/wife must learn to directly but tactfully communicate their needs and wants
- John Gray *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* best seller suggesting men and women think/react differently to same situations -- men and women are “wired” differently when it comes to communicating. Our text makes clear there are at least 3 basic steps to good communication:

A. Listen and Talk Straight

1. Our text “assumes” straight listening and talk – other passage James 5:12 “*Above all, my brothers, do not swear – not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No,’ no, or you will be condemned.*” In other words, say what you mean and mean what you say.
2. Easier said than done – Les/Leslie Parrott *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* state: “...98% of good communicating is listening.” “Nonverbal communication accounts for 58% of the total message. Tone of voice makes up 35% of the message.
3. Many couples struggle in communicating effectively because they avoid straight talk/listen – not saying what they mean, need or want.
 - a. some find straight listen/talk uncomfortable/frightening... they fear to communicate forthwith so they drop hints (often undetected) expecting their mate to read their minds
 - b. still others go too far with *straight talk* spouting their demands with little tact/awareness making it cruel and abusive... Leery of those who brag “you’ll never have to guess what I’m thinking”
4. Straight listening/talk essential – it is hard work. It means listening with ears, watching with eyes and understanding with your head through years of marriage life... lifelong effort in doing this...

B. Know How They Are Wired

- how does mate best give and receive messages – are they *auditory, visual, feeling* or combination?

 1. Auditory people are those who communicate verbally – they use and hear words carefully... they want and need to *hear* how much they are loved and appreciated... e.g. “I love you”... women...
 2. Visual people paint mental pictures and communicate accordingly... men more prone to this...
 3. Feeling people accurately discern messages with little or no visual or verbal communication... pick up on body language sensing what others communicate nonverbally...
 4. Illus. – salesman picks up customer’s communication wiring... e.g. if I was car salesman and customer was visually oriented I’d steer them to a flashy, sleekest vehicle on the lot... etc.
 - here’s my point: How good are you in identifying your mate’s communication wiring?

C. Praise When Possible

1. Communicate “praise” to your mate whenever and however you can... Not the best at this...
2. When communicating praise always make sure it is genuine – i.e. avoid flattery or speaking insincere words of praise in order to gain personal benefit.
3. Illus. – read of marriage counselor dealing with wife said, “I want to not only divorce my husband, I want to hurt him. I want to destroy him.” Counselor sent wife home with instruction to “act as if you really love him. Praise him, honor him and building him up. Cook his favorite meal... Play as

if madly and helplessly in love. Give yourself unreservedly to him. Do that, counselor said, “and he will spend the rest of his life in absolute misery...” “I’ll do it!” she cried. Counselor called three weeks later, “Are you ready for divorce?” “Divorce?” the wife said, “Why, I’m married to the most wonderful man on earth! Why would I want to divorce him?”

5. Even the most difficult of marriages can become the loving/supportive institutions God intended through effective, intentional communication.

Conclusion: Married couples have nothing more to say to each other after 8 years, according to a study. Professor Hans Jurgens asked 5000 husbands and wives how often they talked to each other. After 2 years of marriage, most of them managed two or three minutes of chat over breakfast, more than 20 minutes over the evening meal and a few more minutes in bed. By the sixth year, that was down to 10 minutes a day. A state of "almost total speechlessness" was reached by the eighth year of marriage.

Astronaut Michael Collins, speaking at a banquet, quoted the estimate that the average man speaks 25,000 words a day and the average woman 30,000. Then he added: "Unfortunately, when I come home each day I've spoken my 25,000 -- and my wife hasn't started her 30,000."

Not long ago Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, MO made public 1,300 recently discovered letters that the late President wrote to his wife, Bess. Truman had a lifelong rule of writing to his wife every day they were apart. He followed that rule whenever he was separated from his wife. Scholars continue examining the letters for any new light they may throw on political and diplomatic history. For our part, we ought to be most impressed by the simple fact that every day he was away, the President of the United States took time out from his dealing with the world's most powerful leaders to sit down and write a letter to his wife. I believe this communicated what Bess Truman wanted to know. I believe above all else it *communicated!*

Can you see how this text makes clear the principles covered today which identify that which hampers good communication? Do you see how this text also reveals the principles covered today which identify that which helps good communication? May God help us to be the kind of communicators our mates need!