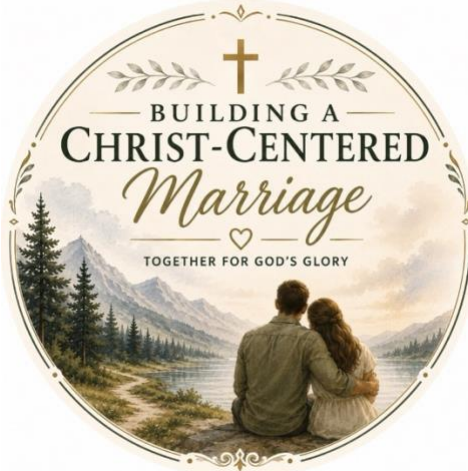




COMMUNICATION THAT BUILDS UNITY

LESSON THREE

BUILDING A CHRIST CENTERED MARRIAGE

Ten Biblical Lessons for Growing Together in Love, Faith, and Unity

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| 1. God's Design for Marriage (A, B, C) | |
| 2. Love, Respect, and Biblical Leadership | 6. God's Gift of Physical Intimacy |
| 3. Communication That Builds Unity | 7. Making Decisions Together |
| 4. Healing from Past Hurts, Bitterness, and Unforgiveness | 8. Money, Work, and Stewardship |
| 5. Growing Spiritually Together | 9. Protecting Your Marriage |
| | 10. Growing Old Together and Leaving a Godly Legacy |

Main Scripture Passage: Ephesians 4:25–32

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Main Truth: Godly communication listens with care, speaks truth with grace, and seeks peace instead of victory.

Lesson Purpose: To help husbands and wives use their words, ears, and hearts to build trust and unity.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Every marriage depends upon communication. A husband and wife cannot share life well if they do not listen, speak honestly, and work through problems together. Good communication takes time, patience, and the grace of God.

Words can bring comfort, courage, and peace. They can also bring fear, shame, and distance. A harsh answer may turn a small concern into a large fight. Silence may also hurt when it is used to punish, avoid truth, or shut the other person out.

Christ must guide both the mouth and the heart. He teaches us to listen before answering, tell the truth without cruelty, admit wrong, forgive, and seek peace. The goal is not to win an argument. The goal is to understand one another and honor God together.

IN THIS LESSON, WE WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING TRUTHS:

1. Listening is an important part of love.
2. Words should speak truth and give grace.
3. Conflict should be handled with honesty, forgiveness, and peace.

MAIN SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:25–32

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

PART 1: LISTEN BEFORE YOU ANSWER

James 1:19–20

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: **20** For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 18:13

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

1. Listening tells your husband or wife, 'You matter to me.'
2. Listen to understand, not only to prepare your next answer.
3. Do not decide what the other person means before hearing the whole matter.
4. Ask simple questions when something is not clear. Then repeat what you heard in your own words.
5. Strong feelings can make listening hard. It may help to pause, pray, and return to the talk at an agreed time.
6. Listening does not mean agreeing with everything. It means showing care while you seek the truth.

Practical Illustration: The Burden Behind the Silence

Levi came home quiet and troubled. Anna thought he was angry with her. She was ready to defend herself, but she first asked, 'Is something weighing on your heart?'

Levi explained that a customer had not paid him, and he was worried about meeting their bills. Anna listened without cutting him off. When he finished, she repeated what she had heard and asked how they could face the need together.

Anna could not remove the problem, but her listening removed a false fear. Instead of becoming divided by an assumption, they became united around the real burden.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you listen carefully, or do you begin preparing your answer while your husband or wife is speaking?
2. What often keeps you from listening well?
3. What question could help you understand your husband or wife better?
4. When a talk becomes heated, how can you pause without shutting the other person out?

PART 2: SPEAK TRUTH WITH GRACE

Proverbs 15:1

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Proverbs 12:18

There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

1. Truth and kindness belong together. Kind words should not hide the truth, and true words should not be used as weapons.
2. Tone matters. The same concern can sound like an attack or a loving request.
3. Speak about the present problem. Do not bring up every past failure or use words such as 'always' and 'never' to accuse.
4. Do not shame your husband or wife before children, relatives, church members, or friends.
5. Avoid threats, mocking, name calling, yelling, and the silent treatment. These tear down trust.
6. Use words that explain your concern and invite a response. Ask for what is needed in a clear and respectful way.

Practical Illustration: Two Ways to Speak About Money

Rachel found a bill that had not been paid. She could have said, 'You never take care of anything. I cannot trust you.' Those words would have attacked her husband instead of addressing the bill. Instead, Rachel said, 'I found this unpaid bill, and I am worried about the late charge. Can we look at it together tonight?' She spoke the truth, named her concern, and asked for a clear next step.

A gentle answer does not make the problem less serious. It makes it easier for both people to work on the problem without first fighting over hurtful words.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What words or tones most often cause hurt in your marriage?
2. Can you explain a concern without attacking the other person's character?
3. Is there an apology you need to give for careless or cruel words?
4. What encouraging truth can you speak to your husband or wife today?

PART 3: HANDLE CONFLICT WITH HONESTY AND FORGIVENESS**Matthew 18:15**

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Colossians 3:13

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

1. Disagreement is not the same as disunity. Two people can see a matter differently and still treat each other with love.
2. Talk directly to your husband or wife instead of gathering others to take your side.
3. Choose a wise time. Do not force a hard talk when either person is angry, hurried, sick, or very tired.
4. Confess your own wrong clearly. Do not say, 'I am sorry, but you made me do it.'
5. Forgiveness does not call sin good. It releases revenge and makes room for truth, repentance, and healing.
6. If there are threats, violence, sexual abuse, severe control, or danger, do not face the matter alone. Seek safety and proper help from trusted and trained people.

Practical Illustration: Mending the Fence Early

Jonas and Miriam noticed a loose board in the fence between their field and the road. It seemed small, so they left it for later. After several windy days, more boards came loose, and an animal escaped.

Small hurts in marriage can grow in the same way. Jonas had spoken sharply to Miriam, and both had become quiet. That evening he said, 'My words were wrong. Will you forgive me?' Miriam explained how the words had hurt her, and she forgave him.

They mended the hurt before distance grew. Honest confession and forgiveness did not make them weak. It helped protect their unity.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you deal with hurts early, or do you let them grow in silence?
2. When you are wrong, can you confess it without making an excuse?
3. Is there a past failure that you keep using against your husband or wife?
4. What safe and godly help is available if a problem is too serious to handle alone?

A SIMPLE PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

1. Set aside fifteen quiet minutes for a talk.
2. Each person share one joy and one burden from the week.
3. The listener should repeat what was heard before giving an answer.
4. End by thanking each other and asking God to guide your words.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for my husband or wife. Thank You for giving us words so we can share our hearts, burdens, joys, and needs.

Help me be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Forgive me for the times I have answered before listening. Help me care about what my husband or wife is trying to say.

Guard my tongue. Keep me from lying, yelling, mocking, blaming, and using silence as a weapon. Help my words speak truth, give grace, and build up our home.

When we disagree, help us seek peace instead of victory. Give me humility to confess my wrong without making excuses. Help me forgive as Christ has forgiven me.

Where there is deep hurt, hidden sin, or danger, bring truth, safety, and proper help. Teach us to pray together and speak to each other with love. Use our communication to build trust and unity.

In Jesus' name, Amen.