

Communicating in Marriage

Biblical Principle: Your conduct is based on your beliefs. What do you truly *believe* about God and your marriage? If I believe that God is sovereign and bigger than any problem we have, my communication is going to look a lot less demanding and selfish and more loving and grace based.

Problems in marital relationships come when there is a role reversal. God's plan is this:

The wife to communicate her feelings, fears, and desires to her husband

The husband seeks the Lord and makes a decision for the household

The wife then submits to that decision which is pretty easy to do when the husband is seeking the Lord.

It didn't take long for communication between a husband and wife to go wrong. We barely open the Bible to the beginning of Genesis, in the Garden of Eden, where we have a vivid example of what not to do. Eve was deceived by the Devil because she didn't take advantage of her husband's protection, leadership and counsel. She acted independently of him. Adam's part in the mess was doing what his wife said and not what God said. How different might things have been if they had communicated the way God intended...Adam would have sought the Lord and Eve would have submitted to his decision.

Our communication with our husbands often falls into the same pattern. The goal of communication should be **UNDERSTANDING**. But if we were honest, our goal is more often to convince the other person that my way is right and **WIN**.

Because we have that as a goal, we stand our ground, defend our rights, afraid that by giving in we will lose our self, our identity and what we are fighting for.

Our culture tells us to assert our rights and fight for our rights but Jesus' model for our lives was to give up our rights. The world says to 'love self' and 'satisfy self', but Jesus says to 'die to self'. Early in marriage this is the mistake I made...I waited for my husband to change and clung to my rights, believing that if I didn't fight for them, no one would.

John 15:12-13 "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" Every day we have the choice to live for others or live for ourselves. When we communicate this type of selfless love in word and deed, we glorify God and He blesses it. He changes our hearts so that it is easy.

Love demonstrated is irresistible! What are you communicating to your husband?

Is your tone loving or terse?

Do you speak the truth in love or manipulate with silence?

Do you communicate how you feel or expect him to be psychic?

Does your body language communicate acceptance or rejection?

Do you put him first or yourself or the kids first?

Do you extend grace and forgiveness or judgment?

Do you listen with understanding or are you forming the logic for your next argument so that you can win?

Are you communicating in the way you want to be communicated to?

Are you building up or tearing down your marriage?

As I said before, it's easy to submit to a man seeking the Lord, but what if your husband isn't? First; encourage him in this area. Respect him not because he deserves it or earns it, but because that is his position. Defer to him; build him up. Treat him as the man you want him to be.

But realize that you can't change him. *You can only change your own behavior*, which is possible when you wholeheartedly believe the biblical principle that God is sovereign in your marriage.

I remember thinking that Pete was the man...he should initiate and do the hard thing first. But that is not what God calls us to do. Start with yourself and God will give you the ability and desire to do it.

Doing all these things right isn't humanly possible...they are only possible when you are in the Word, spending time with God and being filled with His love.

