

Marriage



MARRIAGE PART 21 - DEVELOPING EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

From resource 20 onwards, we will start to look at the physical or practical side of the marriage covenant between the husband and wife. This part is just as important as the spiritual, while being second in the order of ranking or importance.

The types of things we will unpack going forward are;

1. Communication
2. Emotional intimacy
3. Physical intimacy
4. Boundaries
5. Parenting

When I marry people, I say to them that they are to stay attractive to their spouse spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. I personally believe relationships struggle and end, due to husbands and wives no longer investing into these four areas of their lives. We may invest into one or two but it's imperative we are found investing and developing all four.

One element of this growth and development is in the area of communication. The greatest challenge, I believe, in any relationship is good clear communication.

It's important to realise that no communication is a form of communication and can be very destructive to any relationship.

The goal of communication is to be heard and understood by the other person. It's one thing to think and believe you are communicating well, it is an entirely different thing to do so.

Learning how to communicate well, so you are heard and understood, is an art form and one that doesn't come naturally to many. The ability to communicate well is a skill that needs to be practised and developed over and over and over again.

There has been, and will continue to be much hurt, frustration, disillusionment, anger, missed expectations, resentment, etc., etc. caused by poor communication.

Like with everything in God there are always two parts to every element and communication is no different. We firstly have the person who is speaking and then we have the person who is listening. Both parts are essential and just as important as the other. We must grow and develop in both areas for there to be great communication in our relationships.

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Let's unpack the first element, which is speaking, and then in the next one look at listening.

James 3:2-12 "For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.

But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh."

We can see from these verses that James describes the tongue as a fire, which sets on fire the course of our lives. This course can be one of good or evil; depending on what it is which comes forth from our mouths. Do we speak life or death? Do we speak promise or problem? Do we release positive words or negative words over our lives?

Words can either build up or put down. Words can either edify or completely insult someone. Our words can create life or death. Our words can heal or cut someone to pieces. Our words can create our future or keep us stuck in our present or past.

This is why it is essential that we learn the art of good communication in our relationships; so that we not only know how to share our thoughts and feelings about any given topic or circumstance we face, but we are able to do so in a healthy and respectful manner.

We should use phrases like; "I feel" or "I thought" in a sentence to help us convey the affects that a particular action or circumstance has had on us.

For example, "I felt completely left out the other night and this made it appear that I wasn't important."

When we share like this, we are just explaining how we felt without accusing or blaming anyone for our feelings. This is a healthy and respectful way of sharing with another person what is going on for us.

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Being able to be assertive in our communication in a healthy and respectful manner with our spouse is the key to a great relationship. We are not to assume our husband or wife can read our minds.

Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and ask for what you want in your relationship.

Giving our spouse at least one positive compliment each day is a great way of building a healthy, vibrant and positive relationship.

For example:

- “You are fun to be with”
- “I love the way you spoke up for yourself today”
- “I love that outfit on you. It makes your eyes really sparkle”

Communication skills to increase intimacy

1. Give your spouse your full attention when speaking to them
2. Focus on the good qualities in each other and praise each other often
3. Be assertive
4. Avoid criticism
5. Listen to understand, not to judge
6. Use active listening
7. Avoid blaming each other and work together for a solution

QUESTIONS

1. Why is good communication such an integral part of any relationship?
2. How important is it to be assertive in our relationship in the area of communication?
3. Why is no communication a form of communication?
4. Why is using words like “I feel” or “I would like” so important?

Watch the accompanying You Tube videos here: <https://youtu.be/TKBKRSCjhx>