

# Marriage & Family

## Communication

### I. COMMUNICATION & SCRIPTURE.

- A. Communication is one of the most important aspects of marriage.
  - 1. It is important for it helps couples (1) communicate their needs to each other, and (2) learn how to meet each other's needs.(1)
  - 2. The Bible has much to say about communication.
- B. Some Scriptures:
  - 1. "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (Js 1:19).
  - 2. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (Eph 4:31).

### II. GO OVER [COMMUNICATION LOOP](#).

### III. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

- A. Do the symptom & assessment worksheet from the Association of Christian Counselors.
- B. Do the communication worksheet from the Alabama Marriage Handbook.
- C. Go over the communication skills worksheet.
- D. "Four Communication No-Nos."(2)
  - 1. Criticism.
    - a. Compare criticism to a complaint.
    - b. Complaints are generally specific: "I don't like it when you tell you're going to take out the trash and you don't do it."
    - c. Criticism, however, is much more global and is sometimes packaged as a question that implies the other person has a

character flaw: “Why do you always do that? You never do what you say you’re going to do. This is just another example of how I can’t count on your for anything.”

2. Defensiveness.

- a. When we receive criticism, it’s easy to retaliate with countercriticism: “What do you mean I never do what I say? What about the dishes? When’s the last time they were piled up all over the counter? Is that all you can do, whine and complain? No wonder you can’t get anyone to do anything for you!”
- b. Countercriticism and an “I’m-a-victim, why-does-everything-have-to-happen-to-me” attitude are both forms of defensiveness.

3. Contempt.

- a. When criticism and defensiveness are ratcheted up several notches, they can lead to derogatory remarks, put-downs, and extreme disrespect.
- b. For example, not mowing the grass can lead to “You make me sick! You never do what you say you’ll do. You’re a big talker, just like your mother, but you never follow through. I’ve grown used to not being able to rely on you, so I’ll just do everything myself, like always.”

4. Stonewalling.

- a. When the intensity gets too strong, a person can shut down and decide he or she will no longer participate in the conversation.
- b. The person may walk out of the room or just stop talking and stare off into space.
  - One man called this the thousand-yard stare.
  - In the heat of the argument, it would, understandably, drive his wife crazy, intensifying her rage and setting up the battle for another round of criticism.

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1. Willard F. Harley, Jr., *His Needs Her Needs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1994), 64.

2. Association of Christian Counselors, CCT Magazines 1990-2004.

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