

Conversation Guide:

From Problems to Understanding

A tool for navigating differences with hope and connection

Step 1: Pause & Reframe

Before reacting, reframe the moment:

- Old lens: “We have a problem.”
- New lens: “We have a gap in understanding.”

Quick Prayer:

“Lord, help me listen with Your love, not my fear.”

Step 2: Invite Curiosity

Use questions that open the door instead of closing it.

- “Help me understand how you’re seeing this.” or “Tell me more.”
- “What does this situation feel like for you?”
- “What need is important to you here and now?”
- “Is there something you’re needing me to do or say?”

Step 3: Listen Without Defending

- Focus on hearing, not fixing - not explaining - not defending
- Repeat back what you heard: “So what you’re saying is...”
- Acknowledge feelings: “I can see why that matters to you.”

Quote: Bob & Audrey - “desired connection requires vulnerability.”

Step 4: Share Your Perspective Gently

When it's your turn, speak for yourself, not against your spouse.

- Use “I” statements, not “You always/never.”
- Example: “I feel anxious when plans change suddenly, because I value stability.”

Scripture: “Speak the truth in love.” (Eph. 4:15)

Step 5: Find “Our Way Forward”

Shift from competition to collaboration.

- Ask: “What solution honors both of us?”
- Explore compromises that meet both sets of needs.
- Choose one small step to try this week.

Quote: Andrew Murray — “The closer the union with Christ, the closer the union with one another.”

Step 6: End with Resolve & Hope

- Affirm one another: “Thank you for helping me understand.”
- Pray a short blessing together, inviting God to strengthen your unity.
- Reaffirm: “We’re on the same team. Our future is hopeful.”

Scripture: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)

Remember:

“We don’t have problems to fight; we have understanding to grow.”