

From Broken to Beautiful  
A Primer on Marriage Counseling  
Week 6 – Dynamics of Biblical Communication

Introduction:

Last week we talked about the difficult topic of domestic abuse. You were left to read the statement on divorce and remarriage, as written by the pastoral staff of Faith Church in Lafayette, Ind and as adopted by the leadership team of Breesport Baptist Church.

Question:

What are your questions on that document or on anything related to the subject of domestic abuse?

[Allow for Questions – allow for as much time as needed]

- “Pleased to dwell” – does the spouses indicate they are pleased to dwell with or not?
- “We believe a married person has the right to feel safe and experience an appropriate amount of peace in his/her one home (1 Cor.7:15).”
- On page 10 they speak of a spouse not allowing their spouse to practice their faith (Attend church) – that would be one not being pleased to dwell with a “Christian” spouse because they are restricting them from obeying God.
- On page 9 they leave open the possibility of a divorce and no one would be disciplined from the church – if there is repentance and a process of change (counseling).

Dynamics of Biblical Communication:

See James 3:1-12

James gives us two analogies (the bit and the rudder) to illustrate something very small exerting control over something very large. The horse is very large, but it can be turned with only small amounts of pressure from the bit. The ship is very large, but it can control the course of the whole ship. James says that the tongue is like that. It sets itself at the center of our lives like the hub of a wheel and it has the power to set in motion forces that once unleashed cannot be contained.

Your words can start a relationship, and they can end a relationship. Your words can get you a job and they can lose you a job. Every marriage begins with the speaking of words and if that marriage ends, it often ends with the speaking of very different words.

A word, once spoken, cannot be unspoken and the destructive potential inherent in language can't be put back in the can. This is the **LOGOS** inherent in every word.

Listen, our words are intrinsically energetic. They communicate ideas, intentions, desires, and demands that are meant to land on ears and illicit a response. And you can see the effect. It gets written in the eyes, on the face, and in the posture of the person you're talking to.

The tongue is a powerful instrument of **HEALING** and **DESTRUCTION**. Words have burned down more marriages than any other single factor.

There is simply **NO POSSIBILITY** of reconciliation and transformation that does not include sound biblical communication. Every couple that requires marriage counseling will, at some level, have a communication problem.

Luke 6:43–45

43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

The Four Rules of Communication:

See Ephesians 4:25-32

If you’ve been through Track 1 of the BCTC, you should know the Four Rules of Communication. I have never done marriage counseling where I didn’t have to walk through this. Sometimes it’s just a week and sometimes it’s a week for every rule. But every couple who comes for marriage counseling will have communication issues.

Question:

Who can tell me the Four Rules of Communication, as taught in Track One of the BCTC from memory?

Be Honest (Ephesians 4:25)

Keep Current (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Attack the Problem, Not the Person (Ephesians 4:29-30)

Act, Don’t React (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Note the following texts pertaining to Biblical communication:

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

James 1:19

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Psalms 141:3

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

Proverbs 12:18

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 15:1

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:28

The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Proverbs 16:24

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Proverbs 29:11

A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

The Conference Table:

See attached document

This tool isn't necessary in every situation. I use it in cases where there is severe disfunction and conflict that doesn't allow for effective communication – meaning both spouses have an opportunity to speak without interruption and mutual understanding can be achieved.

A table is important for several reasons.

- Tables tend to **DRAW** people together.
- **WRITING** can be done on the table.
- The **TIME** it takes to get to the table sometimes is important for cooling tempers.
- It is **HARDER** to walk away from a discussion when you are seated.
- The table will soon be a symbol of **HOPE**, a place where previous problems have been solved successfully.

If during the Conference, someone forgets the rules and feelings start to run high and arguing begins:

- A pre-arranged **SIGNAL** is given to indicate that a rule has been broken.
- This pre-arranged signal lets everyone know that there is no longer **EFFICTIVE** communication going on and the conference needs to get back on track or ended.

This signal or permission to interrupt should be established in a moment of peace and in the absence of tension. That signal or verbal cue should cause the erring spouse to correct themselves and move to a more reasonable position.

See Included Documents:

- The Conference Table Guidelines
- Improving the Quality and Quantity of Your Communication Inventory
- Speak the Truth in Love
- Keeping Current in Conflict
- Attack the Problem, Not the Person

### Conclusion:

God is the first speaker in the grand story of humanity. He has given us the gift of communication that we might know Him in truth and for the fulfillment of the divine mandate of Genesis 1. The goal of communicating through conflict is always to move to a more reasonable position and to remove as much heat from the conversation as possible so genuine understanding can be achieved, problems can be solved, and intimacy can be strengthened.