



COMMUNICATE OR DISINTEGRATE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Communicate or Disintegrate

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:1-7

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1920

The biggest problem in many marriages is failure to adequately communicate; if we don't learn to communicate, our homes could disintegrate.

Marriage is the most intimate relationship there is; we are designed to communicate on the deepest level. Healthy communication peaks when we have absolute, total, openness with one another, spoken in discerning kindness and gentleness.

Jesus is both the power and the example of healthy communication, and we would be wise to follow His steps.

We must first remember the awesome power of communication; the tongue gives direction, but it can also bring destruction, because our words reveal what is in our hearts. (See Matthew 12:34.)

Adrian Rogers says, "If you want to know what's in their hearts, listen to their words."

The greatest hurts in the home often come from spoken words. The problem of poor communication could be due to our differences as men and women.

There is also the issue of self-centeredness, being full of pride and clinging to the idea of being "right."

1 Peter 3:7 says, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

Poor communication could also be rooted in bitterness, unresolved problems, or an unforgiving spirit, which completely defile marriages. The distractions of life or differences in temperament could also hinder healthy communication.

Insecurity or fear directly threaten our ability to achieve the freedom level of communication.

1 Peter 3:8 says, "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous..."

If we want to practice proper communication, everyone must do their parts. We must learn to be more sensitive with each other, to deal with our own self-centeredness, and to be willing to overlook our partners' problems. We must find the root of a closed-off spirit, create areas of commonality, and make time to talk things through.

Communication is an ongoing process. It evolves over time spent together, and requires maintenance; yet there is nothing more important.

Life Application

Are you practicing healthy communication with your family? Pray for Jesus' power as you follow His example in how you speak to others. Adrian Rogers says, "Quit trying to change your partner and change yourself."



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The number one problem in many marriages today is the failure of husbands and wives to adequately communicate.
- b) All of us, whether married or single, need to learn to communicate.
 - i) Proverbs 18:21
- c) Our Lord Jesus Christ is our example in all things, especially in husband and wife relationships.
 - i) 1 Peter 2:21-23
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:1
 - iii) 1 Peter 3:7
 - (1) The term “likewise” refers to Jesus.
 - (2) Jesus Christ is the pattern and the power for communication in marriage.
 - iv) Both wives and husbands are to follow in the steps of Jesus.
- d) There are five basic levels of communication.
 - i) The frivolous level
 - (1) People talk about the weather, sports, clothes, etc.
 - (2) This is just banter.
 - ii) The factual level
 - (1) People report facts and discuss them, but there is no real personal involvement.
 - iii) The fellowship level
 - (1) Not only do we talk about facts, but we begin to express ideas, judgments and philosophy.
 - iv) The feeling level
 - (1) We begin to talk about how we feel, where we hurt, what our desires and aspirations are, and where our failures and faults lie.
 - (2) Most never get to this level where we share what we’re really feeling behind the mask and camouflage that we wear.
 - v) The freedom level
 - (1) This is the level where we share totally, completely, holding nothing back.
 - (2) We are not ashamed or afraid at this level.
 - (3) There is no fear of rejection.
 - (4) We are seeking for someone to know all about us and still love us.
 - (5) When husbands and wives or friends reach this level, they share a wonderful marriage or friendship.
- e) There can be no intimacy in a marriage without communication.
 - i) There can be no communication without trust.
 - ii) There can be no real trust without the Lord Jesus Christ.
- f) The supreme goal of marriage is to know one another intimately and still love and respect one another.
- g) In our society today, most people confuse intimacy with sexuality.



- i) Real sexual intimacy cannot have its fullest meaning or fullest expression without psychological, emotional and spiritual intimacy.
- h) If husband and wife do not learn how to communicate, the marriage will over time drift apart.

2) The AWESOME POWER OF COMMUNICATION (1 Peter 2:21-23)

- a) Jesus Christ is our example.
 - i) When Jesus spoke, He spoke truth.
 - ii) His life was full of grace and truth.
 - iii) Jesus taught us that real communication comes out of the heart.
 - (1) Luke 6:45
 - (2) If you want to know what is in the heart, listen to the words.
 - (a) Harsh words: a harsh, angry heart.
 - (b) Negative words: a negative heart.
 - (c) Overactive words, talking all the time: an unsettled heart.
 - (d) Boastful words: an insecure heart.
 - (e) Filthy words: a dirty heart.
 - (f) Critical words: a bitter heart.
 - (g) Encouraging words: a happy heart.
 - (h) Gentle words: a loving heart.
 - (i) Truthful words: an honest heart.
- b) James 3:1-10
 - i) The tongue gives direction.
 - (1) If you do not like where your home is headed, remember that your words are to your marriage what a bit is in a horse's mouth.
 - (2) Just as you can steer a mighty ship through fierce winds with a little rudder, you can steer your home into a safe harbor by watching your words.
 - ii) The tongue brings destruction.
 - (1) Your tongue can be like a torch that sets aflame and burns down your home and happiness.
 - iii) The tongue brings pollution and defilement.
 - (1) It is possible to poison your marriage with your words.

3) PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION (1 Peter 3:1, 3:7)

- a) We lack communication skills.
 - i) We have never learned proper communication skills because we have not studied the Word of God.
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:1
 - (1) Peter tells the wives to follow Jesus' example.
 - (2) Women are to have a meek and quiet spirit, limiting conversation.
 - iii) 1 Peter 3:7
 - (1) Peter tells the husbands to follow Jesus' example.
 - (2) Husbands are to wise up and live with their wives according to knowledge.
 - iv) Men and women are designed differently.
 - (1) God created the man to be the protector and the provider.
 - (a) Men tend to be more aggressive, using predominantly the left side of the brain.



- (b) The man tends to not express emotion as often.
 - (c) The man is built for achievement.
 - (2) God created the woman as the mother of all.
 - (a) God made the woman with an emotional nature.
 - (b) The woman uses both hemispheres of the brain at the same time.
- b) Self-centeredness
 - i) 1 Peter 2:24
 - (1) This is the ultimate mark of selflessness.
 - ii) The biggest problem in marriage is selfishness.
 - iii) Philippians 2:6-7
 - (1) We claim to have rights, but Jesus Christ laid down His life for the church, His bride.
 - iv) Self-centeredness is a hindrance to good communication.
 - v) Most of the problems between a husband and wife are not due to actual problems but egos.
 - (1) There are no problems too big to solve, just people too small to solve them.
 - (2) Oftentimes, we are so full of pride that rather than attack the problem, we attack one other.
 - (3) We need to focus on the problem rather than trying to prove who is right or wrong.
- c) Bitterness, unresolved problems and unforgiving spirits.
 - i) 1 Peter 2:22-23
 - (1) We must get rid of bitterness.
 - ii) The root of bitterness will defile your marriage.
 - iii) Hebrews 12:15
 - iv) When God forgives us, He buries our sins in the grave of His forgetfulness, never to bring them up again.
 - (1) We must also forgive.
 - v) The way to get rid of bitterness and prevent it from building up is to keep a short account.
 - (1) Ephesians 4:26-27
 - (2) Do not go to bed angry; get it settled before you go to sleep, otherwise, you will be giving place to the devil.
- d) The distractions of life
 - i) Our lives are often too busy.
 - ii) 1 Peter 2:25
 - (1) Nothing distracts the Lord Jesus from seeking His sheep.
 - (2) Peter tells husbands and wives to do the same thing as the Lord Jesus.
 - iii) Make it your prime goal in marriage to communicate and to seek peace.
 - (1) 1 Peter 3:11
 - iv) One of the biggest problems that keeps us from communicating is television.
- e) The differences of the temperaments
 - i) 1 Peter 3:7-8
 - ii) Husbands and wives must come together and agree, even though they are psychologically different.
- f) Insecurity and fear
 - i) We are afraid to reach that freedom level of communication.
 - (1) We are afraid if someone truly knew us, then they would not love us anymore.
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:8
 - (1) Have the kind of love for your spouse where you can share anything without fear of being criticized or condemned.



- iii) Husbands often do not like to pray with their wives because they do not like to show that level of vulnerability with their wives; but husbands ought to pray with their wives.

4) HOW TO PRACTICE PROPER COMMUNICATION (1 Peter 3:7)

- a) Husbands, learn to be more sensitive.
 - i) Listen to your wife.
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:7
- b) Both husband and wife need to deal with self-centeredness.
 - i) If you encounter a problem in your home, it is because of ego and pride.
 - ii) Most marriages need two funerals and one wedding.
 - (1) Die to yourself.
 - (2) Take self off the throne and enthrone the Lord Jesus.
 - (a) 1 Peter 3:8
- c) Be willing to overlook your partner's problems.
 - i) Neither partner is a perfect person.
- d) If your husband or wife has a closed spirit, try to find out why.
 - i) 1 Peter 3:11
 - ii) Create some areas of commonality and put fun back into your marriage.
 - (1) Not only work at your marriage but play at it; keep on dating.
- e) Make time for communication.
 - i) Plan on communication.
 - ii) 1 Peter 3:11
 - (1) To seek peace, you need to get out of the house.
 - (a) Go to a restaurant, go for a drive, etc.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) 1 Peter 2 tells of Jesus dying on the cross, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.
 - i) Jesus Christ took the initiative.
 - ii) We love Him because He first loved us.
- b) In our homes, we need to quit trying to change the other person and change ourselves instead.
 - i) The only way to change your partner is to give them something different to react to.
 - ii) If you change yourself, then they cannot be the same because you are not the same.
 - (1) They have to react to you differently because you're different.
- c) Wives and husbands need to practice 1 Peter 3:1-3, 7.
- d) There is a price to pay.
 - i) Jesus paid the price with His own blood.
 - ii) The result is that we love Him with all of our hearts.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you be finding First Peter chapter 2, and when you've found it, look up here. First Peter chapter 2.

I heard of a woman who went to the lawyer and said, "My husband wants to divorce me." And the lawyer said to the lady, "Well, what's the problem, does he have any grounds?" Well, she said, "He has about 20 acres." He said, "No, I don't mean that, does he have a grudge?" She said, "No, I think it's a carport." And he wrinkled his brow just a little bit and said, "No, no, no, no. Does he beat you up?" She said, "No, I get up before him every morning." He said, "Lady, what is the problem?" She said, "He says we can't communicate." Ha, ha, ha, ha, well I can understand a little bit that some homes are on the rocks because of a lack of communication.

That's what we're talking about today, communication in marriage. One Lord, One Love: Communicate or Disintegrate. The number one problem in many marriages is the failure of husbands and wives to adequately communicate, and some marriages that are okay still need a lot of help in communication.

I was reading where one psychologist said that 80% of those who come in for counseling really come in because of communication problems. Well, whether it's 80%, 100%, or whatever, it is a big percentage. And I'm telling you that those of us who are married, those who may be single, those who are planning to get married, whatever, all of us as Christians, brothers and sisters in Christ, need to learn to communicate. For the Bible says, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

Now let me read you some Scriptures here, first of all talking about the Lord Jesus, who is the example for us in all things, especially in husband and wife relationships. Now look if you will in chapter 2 verse 21. Peter says, "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example," now underscore that phrase, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Now I'm going to skip to chapter 3 verse 1, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." Now I'm going to skip down to chapter 3 verse 7, "Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge." Now what does the likewise refer to? It refers to Jesus. Jesus is the pattern and the power for communication in marriage.

First of all it talks about Jesus and then he says, "All right, wives, you do the same way. You follow in His steps." He talks about Jesus and then he says, "All right, husbands, here's the example; follow in His steps." We need to learn to communicate, and the pattern and the power is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now there are actually five basic levels of communication. First of all there's what we call **the frivolous level**. People just talk about the weather or they talk about sports, or they talk about clothes, et cetera. It really doesn't amount to much, it's just, banter, it's just frivolous talk. Many people are overheard mostly saying nothing. Now that's the frivolous level.

Now the second level of communication is the **factual level**. People talk about facts. We report facts and talk about them, but there's no real personal involvement. It's kinda like the man who delivers the



evening news, he just simply gives you the facts, or like Sergeant Friday in Dragnet, if you remember that, “Just the facts, ma’am, just the facts.”

Then there’s a third level of communication, not only the frivolous level or the factual level, but there is the, **the fellowship level**. Not only do we talk about facts, but we begin to express ideas and judgments and philosophy and that’s the level that most of us are on with one another here at the church today, the fellowship level.

But then that deepens and you get down to **the feeling level**. You begin to talk about how you feel, where you hurt, what your desires and aspirations are, where your failures and your faults are, what really moves you inwardly, most of us never get to that place with anyone, the feeling level, where we’re really opening up and telling what we really, really feel behind this mask and this camouflage that we wear.

But there’s a deeper level than that, and that is **the freedom level**. Where we share totally, completely, nothing held back, we’re not ashamed and we’re not afraid, and we’re not worried about rejection, we’re seeking for somebody to know all about us and still love us. Freedom!

Now, folks, when husbands and wives come to that place, they have a wonderful, wonderful marriage. When friends come to that place, they have a wonderful, wonderful friendship, but that is not easy to get to.

Now, we strive for intimacy in marriage. We’re talking about achieving intimacy. I want to tell you, there can be no intimacy without communication, there can be no communication without trust, and there can be no real trust without the Lord Jesus Christ. The supreme goal of marriage is to know one another intimately and still love and respect one another.

The problem with the intimacy is in our society, when we talk about intimacy, everybody’s thinking sexually. But real sexual intimacy cannot have its fullest meaning or fullest expression without psychological and spiritual intimacy. When husband and wife would come together in Bible times in the act of marriage, the Bible uses this term, “They knew one another.” That speaks of true, true intimacy, physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy.

Now, if you as husband and wife don’t learn to communicate, I can tell you, your marriage is going to drift apart. After the honeymoon is over, after the children are up and out, when the bitter toil of life sets in, you’re going to find yourself slowly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, drifting apart. The goal of marriage is no longer I and I but we. “They two will become one flesh.”

Now I want to say three basic things, but a lot of sub-basic things today as we’re talking about communication. And remember now, that Jesus is both the power and the example. He left us an example that we should follow in his steps.

Now first of all, I want you to think about **the awesome power of communication**, the awesome power of communication. Notice again, Jesus is the example in verse 21, “That ye should follow in His steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” Jesus spoke truth, He was called the Word, His life was full of grace and truth.

And Jesus, who knew this, taught us that real communication comes out of the heart. Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” If you want to know what’s in the heart, listen therefore, to words.

They say in the country, what’s down in the well comes up in the bucket. Harsh words, a harsh



heart, an angry heart. Negative words; a negative heart. Overactive words; talking all the time, an unsettled heart. Boastful words; an insecure heart. Filthy words; a dirty heart. Critical words; a bitter heart. Encouraging words; a happy heart. Gentle words; a loving heart. Truthful words; an honest heart. You want to know what's in the heart, listen to the word.

Now, you're in First Peter. I want us just to put a bookmark there and just turn over to James for just a moment, James chapter 3, because James also ramifies what we're saying, and I just want to go over there for just a moment. And turn to James chapter 3 and read with me the first ten verses, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." Now what that means is, that if you try to tell and teach other people, God's going to judge you more severely. Every preacher needs to read this and listen to it carefully. And then he says in verse 2, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body." When you get your tongue in line, you become mature and then you can take care of everything else.

Friend, it is the tongue that is causing problems in most marriages. If you're able to tame the tongue, you're able to bridle the whole body. Then he gives an illustration, "Behold, we put bits in the horse's mouths that they may obey us and we turn about their whole body." You can turn a little teenage girl who weighs 110 pounds and put her on a 2,000pound stallion and he has a bit in his mouth. And it is the bit that gives direction to that horse, and what James is saying is, it is **the tongue that gives direction to life.**

Now if you don't like where your home is headed, remember that your words are to your marriage what a bit is in a horse's mouth. He says the same thing about ships, "Behold, also, the ships, which though they be so great and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, withersoever the governor listeth." What's he saying? He's saying you can take a mighty ship and with a little rudder you can steer that mighty ship through fierce winds. Again, if you want your home to come into a safe harbor, watch your words, the tongue gives direction.

But not only does the tongue give direction, **the tongue brings destruction.** And look in verse 6, "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members, it set, it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature and it itself is set on fire of hell." The tongue not only gives direction, it brings destruction. You can burn down your marriage with your tongue. Your tongue can be like a torch that sets aflame your house of harmony and happiness and burn it down.

And then he says in verse 8, "But the tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Not only does the tongue give direction, not only does the tongue bring destruction, but the tongue brings pollution, **it brings defilement,** it's like a poison.

Did you know that you can poison your marriage, lady, just as surely as if you were putting a few drops of arsenic in your husband's tea in the morning, with your tongue? Sir, did you know that you can pollute and poison your marriage with your tongue? No wonder we need the Lord Jesus Christ to be the example here, and so I want us to talk first of all about some **problems in communication.** Some problems in communication. We've talked about the power of the tongue, let's talk about some problems in communication.

Go back if you will, please to First Peter chapters 2 and 3. Now one of the first problems is this. Are you ready? And I want you to jot these down if you will. One of the first problems is this; **we lack the skills,** we lack communication skills because we have never learned and we've not learned because we have not studied the Word of God.



Now Peter talks about the Lord Jesus, and He says, "Here is the example, Jesus is the example," and then he says in chapter 3 verse 1, "Wives, do like this." And then he says in chapter 3 verse 7, he says, "Husbands, you do like the Lord Jesus Christ." And he tells wives not to talk so much and he tells husbands to wise up. Now we both need to learn, and somewhere we need to meet in the middle.

I asked my wife as I was preparing this sermon, I said, "Joyce, what is the basic problem in communication." She didn't even think. She said, "Men." One word answer and you know, I got to thinking about it and I think she's right. I think the problem, sirs, men, guys, is primarily with us, and that's the reason that He says to men, to, "Dwell with your wives according to knowledge," that means to wise up. You see, we men are limited when it comes to communication. We are limited when it comes to communication.

I was reading Dr. Gary Smalley, and Dr. Gary Smalley said this, he said, "In the, in the 18th through the 26th month of gestation, when a little baby is in its mother's womb that little baby's brain gets a chemical bath of certain hormones, sex-related hormones, causing changes in the brain of a little boy that does not cause that same change in the brain of a little girl."

Now remember last week we talked about that the brain is divided into two halves or two hemispheres and they're connected by a fibrous tissue that these physiologists call the corpus colisum, and when this corpus colisum between these two hemispheres is a connector between the two, it's sending back signals back and forth. When that testosterone bathes the brain of this little boy in his mother's womb, this corpus colisum begins to shrink back in a little boy. He does not have the connectivity between the two hemispheres of the brain that women have. And the left side of his brain works more adequately than the right side of his brain.

Now, the left side of the brain, you know, deals with the logical, the analytical, the factual, the aggressive centers of thought. Now this is not bad, because what did God make a man to do? Remember we told you last week? God created man to do two things: to tend the garden and to keep it. That is, he is to be the provider and he is to be the protector. And so God gave him a stronger, outer psyche. That's what he is to do. He is the protector, and so he is not as emotional in many ways and he cannot afford to get too emotional sometimes in the decisions he has to make.

But what did God make the woman to do? Woman is the mother of all. That's what Eve, the very word Eve means, is the mother of that which lives. And so God made her with the emotional nature and so both sides of her hemispheres are working at the same time. And you ladies have always thought that you men were not in our right mind. You're right! We're in our, our left mind. That's just the way we work.

Now that's by divine design, but it makes it hard to communicate. A man is built for achievement, he's built for competition, he's built to overcome, he's built to get out there and be aggressive. That's the reason you have such trouble on vacation. You're going on vacation, what does the woman want to do? She wants to pull off this side road, she wants to stop here, she wants to dawdle in the restaurant and just what does the husband want to do? Zoom! Five hundred miles in one day. Why? He is achievement oriented.

Do you know what a husband does not like to do? Let his wife drive. Why? He wants to be in control. Why will he not stop and ask for directions? Because that's a surrender. He doesn't know how. He has to admit that he doesn't know something if he stops and asks for directions. It's like giving in and he doesn't want to do it. Now I'm just telling you, folks, that we are different, God made us different that he might make us one.



Lady, your husband will keep on being interested in football when you want to watch those hospital shows. He doesn't want to watch people get well, he wants to watch them getting hurt. There's just something about his nature that is aggressive and little girls talk sooner than little boys.

Matter of fact, they have photographed the lips of little girls in the nursery. I mean, little girls just born. Before they can even utter a syllable, their lips are moving more than little boys. I'm serious. Their lips are moving more than little boys in the crib.

At Harvard, in the preschool section, the studies at Harvard University, they did something. They wired little boys and little girls for sound on the playground, just to see what little boys would say and what little girls would say. The little girls were talking all the time and they were talking in words and sentences and if the little girls were not talking to other people, the little girls were talking to themselves, all the time, just talking. But the little boys, same age, only 68% of what they said were words, the rest of it noises. Zmm! Ahh! Yah! Just noises! Not words! That's little boys. They're listening to them because these, these little boys are out of their right mind. That's the reason, lady, your husband today just grunts. Grnt! That's all he knows how to say.

So the very first reason we have trouble communicating, is hey, we're different. And that's the reason God gives instruction to the woman in chapter 3 verse 1 look at it, "Don't talk so much." And that's the reason he says to the man in, chapter 3 verse 7, "Wise up, live with her according to knowledge."

I'll tell you another reason for failure to communicate, and that's **self-centeredness**. Look if you will in chapter 2 verse 24. The Bible speaks of Christ, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body." That's the ultimate, ultimate mark of selflessness. What is the biggest problem in marriage? Selfishness. We get selfish. We want to be the king or queen on the throne of our own lives.

We say we have our rights. But Jesus, the Lord of glory, "Thought it not robbery to be equal with God then made Himself of no reputation," He laid down His life for the church, which is His bride. Selfcenteredness is a hindrance to good communication. Let me tell you, most of the problems that you as husband and wife are going to have, you want me to tell you what they are? They're not really over problems, they're ego. There are no problems too big to solve, just people too small to solve them.

And the problem is, we're so full of rotten pride, that rather than attacking the problem, we attack one another because we are selfish by nature and we're so full of pride, we want to be right. But if both husband and wife would center on the problem rather than trying to prove who's right or wrong then we would have communication. So lack of knowledge is one of the problems, we're different. Another reason is selfishness, and that's the reason Peter gives us this example of the selfless life of the Lord Jesus, and then he says, "Likewise ye wives," and, "Likewise ye husbands."

I'll tell you another reason for poor communication, and it is **bitterness, unresolved problems, an unforgiving spirit**. Now look at what Peter says here in verse 23. He says we're to be like Jesus. Notice in verse 22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Now he's saying, you've got to get rid of that bitterness. Bitterness, the root of bitterness, will defile your marriage. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 15, the Bible says we're to be, "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled."



There's some who are listening to me now, you've been married for 15 or 20 years and you're still nursing the same grudges. You have a root of bitterness. You say, "Well I'm not aware of it." No, because it's a root, it's underground, but you can see the fruit of it, in the constant bickering, those old things that just keep coming up, they've never been resolved, they've never been buried in the grace of God's forgetfulness, they've never been committed to the Lord, they've never truly been forgiven.

One man said, "When my wife and I argue, she gets historical." His friend said, "You mean hysterical." He said, "No, I mean historical. She brings up everything I ever did in the past and she keeps bringing it up and bringing it up." What does God do with our sins when he forgives them? He buries them in the grave of His forgetfulness, never to bring them up again. And the problem with many of us, folks, I'm telling you is the problem of bitterness. It is a real problem.

Now, let me tell you another problem in communication. And by the way, the way to get rid of bitterness and to keep from letting it build up is to keep a short account. You know, the Bible says in Ephesians 4, "Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath," don't go to bed back to back. Don't go to bed angry, get it settled before you go to sleep. Because the Bible says, if you don't, you're giving a place to the devil. "Neither give place to the devil." The devil just comes and you're just saying, "Devil, come on in and wreck our home." One couple read this verse and said we stayed up for three straight weeks over that.

Alright, there's something else that hinders communication, and that's **the distractions of life**. I mean, we're so busy. Now notice in chapter 2, when we're talking about the Lord Jesus here, and what the Lord Jesus does. In chapter 2, look if you will in verse 25. It says, "But ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls." What does that mean? Well, you and I strayed away from our Lord. All we like sheep go astray, but the Lord Jesus, who is the Shepherd and the Bishop, He's gone out seeking us, nothing is distracting Him from seeking His sheep. Then he says, "Now wives, you do the same thing. Husbands, you do the same thing." Make this the prime thing in your marriage is to seek peace. And again, the Bible says, go over here if you will in chapter 3 verse 11, "Let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace." That means, make it your prime goal to communicate. Seek peace and ensue it.

You know one of the biggest problems that keeps us from communicating as husbands and wives; is television. Might as well admit it. I mean, one of the great enemies of communication is television. Somebody sent Ann Landers this letter, had a little poem, I want to read it with you. I'll read it to you.

"In the house of Mr. and Mrs. Spouse, He and she would watch TV. And never a word between them was spoken until the day the set was broken. Then, 'How do you do?' said he to she, 'I don't believe we've met. Spouse is the name, what's yours,' he asked? 'Why, mine is the same,' said she to he. 'Do you suppose that we could be?' But then the set came suddenly right about and they never did find out."

Oh, it is the distractions of life and we have to make up our mind that we are going to seek peace. And children, hobbies, business, whatever it is, all of these things come and get ahead of us, that keep us from communicating.

And then I'm going to tell you something else that keeps us from communicating. Not only the differences between the sexes, the male and female differences, the way we're wired, but **the differences of the temperaments** among either sex. Joyce and I are psychologically different temperamentally. Now some people are the same, but Joyce and I are different.

All of our staff took a test one time and it gave all the staff a psychological profile and Joyce and I took that and when we compared it, we found factually what we'd always suspected. Folks, not only are



we opposite sexually, we're just plain opposite. The very things that I'm high on, I'm radically high. The things that I'm high on, she is radically low, not just low, radically low. The things that she's radically high on, I am radically low on, not just low, I'm off the charts. It's only the grace of God that's kept us married. I'm telling you the truth. We have a wonderful marriage, we have a wonderful marriage, but I think it must be God's joke. You know, God puts people who are different together and then they have to work at that marriage.

And I just thank God for the grace of God that keeps us together, but differences can sometimes drive us apart. Look if you will in chapter 3, verses 7 and 8, "Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind." What does he mean by that? Well, he talks to husbands and wives and then to everybody. He says you've got to come together; you've got to agree, even though you may be psychologically different.

Let me tell you another reason for failure to communicate; its **insecurity and fear**. We are afraid to reach that freedom level of communication. You know why? We're afraid if somebody knew us, really knew us, they wouldn't love us any more. Look if you will again in chapter 3 verse 8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another." Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

Have you ever felt like you couldn't really tell her how you really feel, or you could not tell him how you really feel? We have to wear this camouflage, we have to stand behind this mask, we have to pretend even with those that we love the most because we feel if they knew how we really feel they wouldn't love us anymore, if they really knew us, and after all, this is all I've got, so I've got to hide it because if, if I just show them what I really am, then they might not love me anymore. And so fear keeps us from communicating.

I have found out that men basically don't like to pray with women. Most women desire for their husband to pray with them. And they just want him to get down on his knees with her and just pour out his heart before God and tell God of his needs, his wants, his fears, his joys, his victories. Men don't like to do that. You know why men don't like to do that? Because that's not macho.

I mean we've got to have this shell. I mean we've got to have this tough crust. And a man will tell God those things, maybe you don't think your husband prays. He may pray a whole lot more than you think he prays; he just doesn't like to pray with you because he feels if he prays with you he's on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, if he just uses the camouflage when he's praying with you, he knows he's a hypocrite before God. But if he tells God what he really feels, he's made himself vulnerable to you. And so therefore what we need to do in life is to overcome this fear and this insecurity and that's what Peter is telling us.

Love as brethren, be courteous, be pitiful, have the kind of love for your wife and have the kind of love for your husband that you can share anything and not be criticized or condemned but that you can have that receptivity. And, fellows, I'm not giving you an excuse not to pray with your wives, you ought to pray with your wife and the Bible commands it in verse 7, but the Bible says that you are to, "Dwell with them according to knowledge, that your prayers to God be not hindered."

Let me give you some things now to practice proper communication. **Husbands, learn to be more sensitive.** Chapter 3 and verse 7, "Listen to your wife." One man said, "I'm concerned about my wife, she goes around the house talking to herself all the time." His friend said, "Does she know she's doing it?" He said, "No, she thinks I'm listening to her." Learn to be more sensitive.



Number two, **both partners deal with self-centeredness**. I'm telling you the problem in your home, if you're having a problem, is ego and pride. Die to yourself. Most marriages need two funerals and one wedding, where you die to yourself and take self off the throne and enthrone the Lord Jesus, chapter 3 verse 8.

Number three **be willing to overlook your partner's problems**. You are not a perfect person and this person is not a perfect person, and if they are negative, overlook it for a while in order to get things right. Stop being so worried about yourself.

Number four, **if she has a closed spirit or he has a closed spirit, try to find out why**, chapter 3 and verse 11. I hope you'll look at these. If you notice that your wife is sullen or your husband is quiet or cold or distant, begin to work on that. Create some areas of commonality. Put some fun back into your marriage. Lighten up. Laugh at yourself, laugh together. Don't let your marriage be dull. Lighten up. Not only do you need to work at your marriage, you need to play at it. Keep on dating.

A man comes home and his wife is cold and distant, her spirit is closed up, maybe she snaps and growls at him, he could learn a little bit maybe from the paper boy. The paper boy is sometimes a better psychologist with the neighborhood dog than the husband is with his wife. The paper boy gets a new house on the route and there's a dog there behind the fence and he has to go behind that fence and deliver the paper and that dog is growling and snapping. The little boy, if he's smart, will get down off his bike and very slowly and very carefully through the wire of that fence for a little while make friends with that dog. Pssk, pssk, come here fella, come here, come here, pssk, come here gal. And he touches the dog and scratches the dog behind the ear a little bit and rubs it a little bit, the dog begins to wag his tail, then from there on they're friends.

Now why was that dog barking? Well, the dog, it wasn't that the dog disliked the paper boy, the dog's just fearful, that this may be an intruder, not a friend, so the dog is barking. You come home and your wife snaps at you and growls. Don't just growl back. Jesus, when He was reviled, reviled not again, but Jesus overcame evil with good. What she may need is the same thing that dog needed, she may need some affection. She may need you to be gentle and come to her and speak to her gently.

Last of all, **make time for communication**. Plan for it. Our verse tells us to seek peace; to seek it. You need to get out of the house. You as husband and wife need at least a half an hour four times a week as a minimum when you get away. Take her to a restaurant, doesn't have to be expensive, go for a drive, get away from the kids, get away from the television; don't bring up all those negative things. Just begin to talk, communicate, drown insults in a river of love.

I'll tell you, there's a price to pay, and if you'll think about it, folks, if you'll think about it, this whole second chapter tells about Jesus dying on the cross, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He took the initiative. We love Him because He first loved us.

What you need to do in your home, listen very carefully, is quit trying to change your partner and change yourself. Do you know the only way you're going to change your partner, listen very carefully, the only way you're really going to change them is to give them something different to react to. You change yourself and then they cannot be the same because you're not the same. They have to react to you in a different way because you are different. That's the whole thing.

Christ, the Just for the unjust. Quit trying to prove who's right or wrong, whether you be the husband or the wife. There's a price to pay. Jesus paid a price with His own blood; the result is that we love Him with all of our heart. You lay down your life for your wife, for your husband. Practice chapter 3 verse 1,



wives, and verse 2 and verse 3. Husbands, practice chapter 3 and verse 7 and you'll find out that you'll have something very, very wonderful, a home where you both communicate and it'll be a little bit of Heaven.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Father, I pray today that many will come to Jesus and they'll give their hearts to him and be saved. Lord God, I pray that homes that have been unraveling and disintegrating will begin to come back together. I pray, Lord, that all of us who've been so full of pride and selfishness and trying to be right would lay our rights down and accept our responsibilities.

And if you're not saved, would you pray right now, "Lord, I need You. I want to know You personally. Help me right now that I might give my heart to You." And if you do want to give your heart to the Lord, let me lead you in a prayer, and I can promise you on the authority of the Word of God, if you'll pray this prayer and mean it, Jesus will save you. "Dear God, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost, and my sin deserves judgment, but, I want mercy. I want to be saved, I want to be forgiven. I want You to live in my life. I want You to live in my home. I want You to take me to Heaven. I need You God. Lord Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, Lord Jesus. Right now in this seat, this morning. Right now, right now I trust You. I believe that You died for my sin, I believe that God raised You from the dead, and now I trust You only to save me. I don't look to my goodness, I don't depend upon my feelings, I trust You. Come into my heart, forgive my sin, save me Lord Jesus." Pray that prayer. Pray that prayer. "Save me, Lord Jesus." Pray it, pray it from your heart, "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then take the next step and pray this way, "I trust You to save me. Thank You for doing it. I don't ask for feeling and I don't look for a sign. I stand on Your Word. I am trusting You. You're now my Lord, and my Savior, my God, and my friend. Now, Lord Jesus, because You died for me, I will live for You and follow You the rest of my life. By Your grace, and for Your glory. Amen."



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