

Communication and Conflict in Marriage

How we use our tongue is a reflection of what is in our hearts (Matthew 12:33-35).

We are always to remember the great power of the tongue to inflict harm (James 3:2-7)

1) At the heart of Biblical Communication is Biblical listening (James 1:19). To listen Biblically means to:

Concentrate on what is said, without forming conclusions before you have heard everything, without interrupting the other person (Proverbs 18:13). Do not assume or interpret beyond what has been said, if needs be, ask questions to clarify meaning (Proverbs 15:28). Be aware of how body language is a form of listening.

2) To communicate biblically, there must be a desire to control the tongue (Proverbs 21:23)

3) A controlled godly tongue is firstly **truthful** (Proverbs 12:22)

Forms of lying include:

- 1) outright lie
- 2) half-truth e.g. Abraham
- 3) evading the truth e.g. Cain
- 4) exaggerating ('always', 'all the time', 'never' etc)
- 5) flattery (Proverbs 28:23)

A truthful tongue will speak the truth in love (Proverbs 27:5-6)

4) A controlled godly tongue is also **helpful**. It builds and edifies (Col 4:6)

Destructive speaking is:

Piercing (Proverbs 12:18)

Harsh and reactive (Proverbs 15:1)

A helpful tongue measures the choice of words and the tone of voice to see if it will have a helpful effect.

5) A controlled, godly tongue is also **pure**.

Defiling speech includes:

Lewd talk, filthy innuendo (Ephesians 5:3-4)

Gossip (Prov 11:13)

Murmuring (Philippians 2:14-15)

Swearing oaths frivolously (Matt 5:37)

Insults (Matthew 5:22)

Blasphemy (Exodus 20:7)

Nagging (Proverbs 27:15)

Pure words are filled with thankfulness (Eph 5:4).

Practical tips:

Put a premium on your words (Proverbs 10:19).

Think before you speak (Proverbs 15:28).

Consider not only what you say but when you say it (Proverbs 15:23).