

A MARRAGE WITHOUT REGRETS

PROGRAM 20 (#910150)

WEEK 4 (910332)

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SERIES: A Marriage Without Regrets

TITLE: Program 20 – Art Of Communication

FRIDAY

OPEN

One of our staff members has a son who's always felt stupid. Because one day a teacher turned around in school and said, "You are stupid." It was a lie. And you've got to know that God wants to use our tongue to bring healing. He wants to use our tongues to tell truth to people, because the devil's out there sowing all sorts of lies and he is a murderer and he is a destroyer and he is a deceiver.

PART ONE

You know what? I wish you were sitting in this chair right opposite me. And I'd just take my notes and slide them around and you and I would go down a list of insights from God's Word that would help you so much as a person in your communication. And you know these principles and these precepts, if we will take them to heart, I promise you, they can be used of God to make you a person that is a delight, a person that people long to be with, a person

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that people invite into their company. Why? Because there's healing in the tongue. The words that we speak can heal or destroy. The words that we speak can change the course of a person's life. And so what I want to do is I want to give you some principles and precepts from God's Word. Just jot these things down put them on the refrigerator, paste them up in the bathroom mirror and just check yourself out day by day to see how you're doing in the area of communication. And as we talk about all this, I just want you to know that this begins at home. This begins in your communication with your mate, with your husband or your wife, and your communication with your children. So what is the first thing that I want you to see and that I want you to get down? Whenever you communicate, whenever you talk to a person, you need to convey your acceptance of that person. That person needs to know, as Ephesians 1:6 says in the King James Version, that you are accepted. You are accepted. God tells us that he "Chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world." He tells us that we are accepted in the beloved. When I know that I'm accepted, I don't have to prove myself. When I know that I'm accepted, I don't have to walk a tight line. I know, hey, I'm accepted by this person. They're not going to reject me. And all of a sudden I can relax and I can be more myself and I don't have to prove myself. And I don't have to get you to come along and say, "Okay, okay, you know, you're in. We'll take you in." Because I just know that I'm accepted. So you always want to make sure in any conversation with anyone, that you accept them. You know, in Romans, chapter 15, in verse 7, he says, "Wherefore accept one another just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God." Now Romans was written to a church that was made up of Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had come from one background. The Gentiles had come from another. The Jews had come from a strict background. They looked down their nose at the Gentiles. The Gentiles were just dogs. The Gentiles came from this law-free kind of background. And now they've come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and they've come in and they've gotten

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the things that belong to the Jews, the covenants and the promises and the Law and the Messiah. And he's saying, "Look, forget this ethnic division here. And just accept one another. Accept one another as Christ Jesus accepted you. So in your communication, one of the things you need to let them know is, "I'm not going to reject you. I am not going to reject you. If God loves you, I am going to love you." And you can know this, that God loves mankind even when we're enemies, even when we're sinners, even when we're helpless, and even when we're hopeless so to speak in man's eyes. God doesn't see us that way. Now the other scripture that I want to take you to is in Proverbs. And you want to write this down because these are important scriptures. In Proverbs, chapter 15, verse 4, it says this. "A soothing tongue is a tree of life but perversion in it crushes the spirit." Whenever you communicate with a person, you want to be so careful that you don't break their spirit that you don't demean them as a human being that you don't make them feel worthless or without any value at all. In Proverbs, chapter 18, he says in verse 14, "The spirit of man can endure his sickness." In other words if I'm having problems in my life or there's some sick situation or some situation where there's not this health and this wholeness that is needed, if I have the right spirit inside of me, if my spirit hasn't been crushed, then no matter what comes my way, I can endure it because I know that I am accepted. I know that I have worth. I know that I have value. I know that I have significance. Let me read the whole thing to you again. "The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but a broken spirit who can bear?" When you constantly demean a person, when you constantly tear a person down, when you constantly point out a person's faults and you never affirm them, you never come along and compliment them, you never recognize anything good about them, you're going to crush that person's spirit and they will not be able to handle the things that come their way. And you don't want to do this to your mate, because remember those priorities of marriage that are so essential to healthy communication. And one of those

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priorities of marriage is the fact that you are one. So when you demean your husband or you demean your wife or you're constantly putting them down, then what you're doing is you're hurting yourself. Because in marriage, you're no longer two individuals, you are individuals, but you've come together and there's a oneness. There's a complete identity in marriage. And so when you mistreat your wife, you're mistreating yourself. You're to love your wife as yourself. It says, "No man ever mistreated his flesh. He nourishes and he cherishes his own flesh." And your wife is your flesh, and the same with your husband being your flesh. So if you want to be a woman or a man that is secure in your marriage, secure so that they're not going to be looking around for someone else that are going to meet their needs, you need to let them know, "Hey, you are accepted. You are accepted exactly the way you are." And let me just say this. In communication, don't try to change your mate by demeaning them. Don't try to change your mate by lashing out. Don't try to change your mate by pointing out their negative qualities. That's not the way you're going to change them. You're going to defeat them. Rather, when you see something positive, compliment that person. You know, I tell in my book, "A Marriage Without Regrets", about an assignment that a woman gave to her class. And the assignment was that they were to go home and compliment their husbands for one thing that they admired in their lives and when you come back we're going to have you share this. Well this woman came home and she absolutely despised her husband, absolutely despised him. There wasn't a thing that she thought that was good about this husband. And she just stayed with him because it was the days when you just stayed with them and you just endured and she was just a martyr. And she was racking her brain because she knew she might get called on in class and she didn't want to be embarrassed. So they're sitting there eating dinner. Now they had very little communication because she had just squelched it, she had killed any communication in their marriage. But as he was eating, she said, "Do you remember 15 years ago or so many

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years ago when you worked on our income taxes?" She said, "I was thinking about that today and you did such a good job." And he had his spoon midway. He was looking down. He looked up at her and he said, "What did you say?" And she said, "You did such a good job." And he just looked at her. And a tear came out his eye and down his cheek. And he said, "I did?" She hadn't said anything kind to him for years. We need to remember that you don't change a person by pointing out the negatives. You change a person by affirming the positives. You say, "Well does that mean I can never share anything with him?" No, you can share. But you need to know how to share. And we're going to learn some principles and some precepts on this. Okay, the second thing I want you to know is that, when you speak, there's certain things that that speech should always measure up to. It's like a plumb line; the symbol of our ministry is a plumb line because the Word of God is a plumb line. All right, so when I speak, according to Ephesians, chapter 4, "I am to speak the truth in love." Whatever I say, it always is to be in love. It's never to be destructive. When I speak and when I correct, whenever I have to point out anything or whenever there is a hassle or a disagreement, then I'm always to do it in gentleness. Now let me show you this. This is 2 Timothy, chapter 2. Let me go back to verse 24, "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those that are in opposition." So whenever you talk, whenever you speak, there's to be kindness. And when you correct, there's always a gentleness there. There's always a meekness there. You never do it from a level of pride at all, because if you do, then you're demeaning the other person. All right now, Proverbs, chapter 15:1 has something to say about that. It says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger." So whenever you're talking just remember that when you give an answer, when you give a correction, when you respond, you do it in gentleness. "Harsh words stir up anger." And I think that's why so many people are so angry today and acting as in such anger,

because what do they get at home? How are they talked to? Full of harsh words and that anger just boils and boils and boils until finally the lid pops off and it comes rolling over the side of the pan and you hear the sizzling all around. Don't do it and don't speak in any way but in gentleness.

PART TWO

I came across Proverbs, chapter 16, verse 21. And it says, "The wise in heart shall be called discerning." Now that didn't speak to me that much. But it was the second part of that verse. And many times Proverbs are parallelisms. And this is what he says, "And the sweetness of the lips, the sweetness of our speech increases learning." And what God showed me that night was so tremendous that when I speak, I can speak truth, but I've got to speak it in love and I've got to speak it with a sweetness of the lips. You know, I've learned how to say on planes to people over and over and over again, "Excuse me, dear, or excuse me, sir, I've got to tell you this, you're going to hell." And you know what? Since I've learned to say it sweetly, I've never had anybody slug me. I've had them stop and listen and say, "You think that?" or "Why?" or something like that. "The sweetness of the lips increases their learning." It increases, it says, it "increases persuasiveness." In other words, when you say something in a sweet way, in a kind way, then it opens up a person to hear what you have to say. And it makes it more persuasive. Just try it and see what happens. In fact, isn't this a little line that's worth putting on your refrigerator and making it a habit in your life and in your home? I mean, it would be a good policy, wouldn't it? Well, let me go on. When you speak, then you should speak thoughtfully. Don't just be quick to let things roll off your tongue. Stop and think about it. I want you to know, this lesson is for me. I don't know what it's doing to you, but I can tell you, it's doing things to me because God is reminding me of these important, important truths. But I'm so quick to answer and so slow to listen. And God says that we should be just the opposite. In James, he says we

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should be “quick to hear” and we should be “slow to speak.” Why? Well look at Proverbs, chapter 15, verse 28. In Proverbs 15, verse 28, it says, “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” In other words, you just spill out the words before you ever stop and think about how you’re going to answer. You forget that life and death are in the power of the tongue. And you forget that you can speak words, and as I said, you can break a spirit, a person’s spirit. You can damage them. One of our staff members has a son who’s always felt stupid. Why? Because one day a teacher turned around in school and said, “So and so, you are stupid.” And that boy believed a lie. It was a lie. And you’ve got to know that God wants to use our tongue to bring healing. He wants to use our tongues to tell truth to people, because the devil’s out there sowing all sorts of lies and he is a murderer and he is a destroyer and he is a deceiver. And maybe even as I say these things, you know what’s gone on in your life. You know what people have said to you. And, Precious One, you need to determine what they said. Is that truth or is it a lie? Is it something that was spoken rashly, something that was spoken hurriedly, something that was spoken untruthfully, something that was spoken in anger? This is why we need to ponder how to answer. We need to watch the words that we speak. And this is so important in marriage. The next thing I want you to see is and the final thing on speaking is this. When you speak, you need to speak with grace. Your speech is to be with grace as it’s seasoned with salt. Let me show you that. It’s in Colossians, chapter 4, verse 6. Colossians, chapter 4, verse 6. And this is what he says, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how...to respond to each person.” In other words, when I talk to a person, the words that I speak are to be palatable to that person. Has your mother ever made you oatmeal and she forgot to put in the salt? If you cook oatmeal and there’s no salt in it, I mean you just want to spit it out. It tastes bad. Why? Because salt brings out the flavor. Salt makes it palatable and that’s

what your speech is to be. It's to be gracious words. It's to be kind words. It's to be words that God would speak. It would be words that would affirm a person and not destroy a person. I want to take you to Proverbs, chapter 16 and we want to look at verse 24. It says, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul..." now catch this, "...and healing to the bones." Now what is the honeycomb? It's that woven part that's in that honey. And sometimes you can buy honey that's clear or you can buy honey that's in the honeycomb. And people love to take out that honeycomb and it's wax and they love to chew on it. They say that honey has healing properties. So what are pleasant words? Pleasant words are sweet to the taste, and they're like honeycomb. They bring healing to the body. So remember when you speak, always convey acceptance of a person. When you speak, make sure that you speak in love and in truth. Make sure that you speak in gentleness. Make sure that there's the sweetness of the lips that can increase learning. Make sure that you do it thoughtfully and make sure that your speech is seasoned with salt. That's its gracious, gracious words. In the light of that, there's some things that you should never do. When you speak and you talk or you're in a conversation, never use the word "always." Never say, "You'll never change. It's always this way. Nothing will ever be different." Why? Because the minute that you say that, you're saying, "There's no hope." And listen, you've got to remember and I've got to remember that God is the God of all hope. I want you to go to Proverbs, chapter 19, verse 11, and it says, "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger. And it is his glory to overlook a transgression." Now when you don't overlook a transgression and you always hold something against a person, you've put them in a stagnant state. You've categorized them. You've put them in a box. And you've said, "That's the way you are and you will never change." Peter says to Jesus, "How many times should I forgive this person?" And he said, "Should I forgive him?" And he names a small number. And Jesus just absolutely multiplies it. So that you couldn't possibly keep track of how many times

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you're to forgive that person. Why? Because if you're like God, you're willing to overlook a transgression. You're willing to give hope. And that's what you need to do. It's what brings healing. Well, the next thing I want you to see is that in your communication never accuse a person. Never just come against that person and accuse them of a feeling or an attitude that they have that they haven't verbalized, that they haven't spoken. Just don't say, "Well, you're really angry, aren't you." Or you're really this or you're really that, or, "You don't like me, do you?" Or, "You're not...." You know, you accuse them of an emotion or an attitude that they haven't expressed and the minute that you do that you have shut off communication. Instead, you need to say to them, "This is what I seem to be hearing." or "This is what I seem to be feeling." or "This is what I sense that you are feeling. Is this what you're feeling? Is this where you're at?" And then you give them an opportunity to come back and tell you where they are. Well, these are just some principles of communication. And we'll deal with more next week.