

“ What Blood is to Life”

Hello Dear Listeners;

Last time on this program we started to explore what the bible has to say about a lasting, happy marriage. We discovered that marriage is a *covenant*, a very close bond of promise and obligation designed by God himself. Designed so that a man might cling to his “one-and-only” in true Christian love. Crafted as well by God’s own hand so that the human race might be propagated.

To keep such a marriage ‘on track’ as it were, the Lord gave His ‘roadmap,’ His holy Word. That couples and their families might not lose themselves in fickle human reasoning and blunder into hopeless marital conflicts. That instead, they might be blessed, by the Lord, and receive all that is necessary for a fruitful, union of sincere love and holiness.

In marriage one of the most vital ‘ingredients’ is that of wholesome communication. Someone ¹ has said, “ *Communication is to love what blood is to life*”. I dare say you and I would be hard-pressed to find a marriage counselor who doesn’t stress the importance of communication. Reuel Howe, is representative of a host of counsellors who hold to this opinion,

If there is any indispensable insight with which a young married couple should begin their life together, it is that they should try to keep open, at all cost, the lines of communication between them.

We may quickly add that this is crucial not just for “Young married couples” but also for those married for many years. For communication skills and priorities can become stale and relationships sullen and disjointed over time.

Communication has been defined as “*The process of sharing yourself, both verbally and nonverbally, in such a way that the other person can both accept*

¹ H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts in their Before You Say “ I Do” p. 56

and understand what you are sharing” ² Or, putting it in a slightly different way, “*It is the ability to convey your thoughts to those who are listening & have those thoughts understood completely.* “

Good communicators suggest there are three components of communication that must be complementary. These are: *content, tone and nonverbal communication*. Those who’ve studied the gift of communication suggest that the nonverbal component as well as tone are by far the most important components. We convey messages, loud and clear, in the way we face, react to, and engage with each other. Our faces and the way we sit or move as well as the tone of our voice can both enhance and mess up our communication. The way that we listen to each other (if we listen at all!) is vital to establish a healthy framework for communication.

The bible is a wonderful goldmine that we do well to treasure to assist us in communicating wisely and effectively. Especially the book of Proverbs is like a rich ‘mother-lode’ for ‘communication miners’. We read things like the following:

- * Prov. 18: 2 - *A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.*
- * v. 13 - *He who answers before listening-that is his folly and his shame.*
- * v. 15 - *The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.*
- * 15:1 - *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

The goal of good communication is to arrive at that kind of deep oneness in which a couple don’t hesitate to share their emotions, thoughts and dreams. It aims at fostering that kind of understanding with which not only the other, but the Lord is pleased. That kind of communication spends little time in cliches that don’t get any further than the surface of our words: “ How is the dog?” “Where have you been?” “ Did you iron my shirt?”

The Lord God requires of couples that they are open and honest with each other. Writing to the faithful believers in the city of Ephesus the apostle Paul spoke

² Wright and Roberts, Before You Say “ I Do” p.61

about the fact they had come a long ways spiritually. Rescued from their former harsh, sinful and insensitive living they'd been rescued by Jesus Christ. Having been taught to put off what Paul calls, "Your old self" that is their sinful, selfish way of living they'd been taught a "new self" a way of right and truth and holiness. "Therefore," says Paul in ch. 4:25 ff.

Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor for we are all members of one body,".... "Do not let unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

"For we are all members of one body" says Paul. He was talking about the church which is the "body of Christ" . That body of which he is the Head. The members of that body are obligated not, as a song years ago would have you believe, that to do it "my way" is the right way. Yet that way is often a way of selfishness and arrogance.

Some of the verses of that song admit that a person can bite off more than one can chew. Yet in one's pride that same person says, "When there was doubt I ate it up and spit it out. I faced it all and did it my way".

We can readily agree that marriage partners ought to express what they truly feel to each other, However, the emphasis should be on the marriage partner but not on oneself. It will frequently be that one's feelings are tainted with sin, with thoughts of which you are ashamed. What should stare you in the face is God's demand that you and I repent and that couples pour out their hearts before the Lord, knowing that only He can make straight what was crooked, restore what was bent sadly out of shape. What better way than doing so on one's knees, hands folded in prayer before the Lord. That His record, may show that in our marriages we bow before Him, and do it *His way!*

Keeping in mind He knows our every word and deed. And we will have to give an account of these one day!

Yet *His* way is not burdensome. It is a gracious, generous, safe way of nurturing a couple that they may enjoy their marriage in genuine love and happiness. The Lord treasures our faithfulness, our sincerity. He delights in seeing a couple work at patience and understanding in their relationship.

That's why it was so sad when "*The church of God at Corinth*" (2. Cor. 1: 1b) appeared to suggest that Paul was some kind of a 'con man' who couldn't be trusted. We read as much in 2 Corinthians 1 and 2 and 4. They evidently accused him of deception and of 'blowing his own, selfish horn'. But Paul said,

We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you . We are not withholding our affection from you. (ch. 6:11)

What did Paul expect therefore? He says this in ch. 7. *Make room for us in your hearts* . When it comes down to it, that is the secret to good communication. It has to be a matter of the heart. And those hearts of both a husband and his wife need to be devoted to the Lord. For Jesus Christ doesn't only lay claim to those hearts. He *purifies* them by His Spirit and Word.

In that way a couple can truly open up to each other. For only in the way of believing that God has "done it His way" in Jesus Christ His Son can they be happy. This Christ laid down his life to wash our relationships, including that of marriage ,clean, and pure. It is Christ's blood that is your life, and mine in the way of faith. May your hearts be joined to him and you too will sing His praises, now and forever, Amen! Thanks so much for listening.