

**Built to Last!**  
**Speaking to the Heart of Your Mate**  
**Ephesians 4:25-32**

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 22, 2000

<b>Rule #1 BE HONEST v.25</b>
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“Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor...”

**A. God Tells us to Speak**

Refusing to speak does not solve the problem. It may give a momentary reprieve and temporarily avoid pain and gives a breather or some relief to the tension... but the problem remains. God has called us to resolution... to reconciliation... to oneness... harmony... unity... NOT SILENCE.

**B. God Tells us to Speak the Truth**

Don't play games with your speech. Don't mask the message. Avoid innuendoes and hidden agendas. Honesty is more than not lying – it is being open and truthful.

**C. God Tells us to Speak the Truth in Love**

You can be brutal with the truth! God commands us to speak the truth with the other person's best interests in mind.

<b>Rule #2 STAY CURRENT v. 26-27</b>
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“Be angry and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” *New Living* “...anger gives a mighty foothold to the devil.”

**I Cor. 13:5** “...love keeps no record of wrong...” (NIV) “...love does not take into account a wrong suffered...” (NASB)

You see it's the failure to communicate and try to solve each day's problems that same day that opens you up to several other problems:

**A. You're guilty of sin** – you are commanded to not let the sun go down on your anger. So now you've got a bigger problem than one with your spouse. You've got a problem with God!

**Psa. 66:18** “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

**I Peter 3:7** “Likewise you husbands, dwell with them (live according to knowledge) with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together or the grace of life, **that** your prayers may not be hindered.”

**B. You're opening up the door for Satan to plant resentment and hatred to grow in your heart.** If you refuse to leave loose ends in your relationship it won't allow the necessary time for the infection of resentment to set in and begin its destructive course of eating the heart out of your marriage.

**2 Cor. 2:10-11** "Now whom you forgive anything I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, *lest* Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

**Heb. 12:15** "looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

**Col. 3:19** "Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter toward them."

You might say, "Oh there's no way I'm bitter against my spouse. I'm just deeply hurt." Then ask yourself two questions to see whether or not you've become bitter.

### **Do You Continually Rehearse the Past Hurt?**

The bitter person broods about what their spouse has done. They think about it often and play it over and over in their mind.

**I Cor. 13:5** "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered."

### **Have You Lost Most of Your Joy and at Times Do You Even Despair in Life?**

Bitterness produces a 'wounded' spirit that is like an open wound... so tender... excessively sensitive... ready to react with anger or with tears at the slightest provocation. And after while grief and hurt begin to crowd out any joy, peace, or love that you used to have.

**Psa. 38:3-8** "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor is there any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long... I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart."

**Jeremiah 3:17-18** "And my soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. So I say, 'My strength has perished, and so has my hope from the Lord.'"

**C. You will distort all subsequent problems** because this unresolved issue will be mixed in with any future conflicts. Every future conflict is going to be made worse by all the previous conflicts that were left unresolved.

**D. You'll be putting your sexual relationship in danger.** Why? Because the sexual relationship is the apex of communication and intimacy. The unresolved issues and problems that have been avoided will surface in the bedroom and put a strain on what God intended to be a wonderful gift to married couples.

## Rule #3 ATTACK THE PROBLEM NOT THE PERSON v. 29,30

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

### A. We've Got to Get Rid of 'Grenade' Words

1. Grenade words usually bypass the real issue and begins to attack the other person. It does not focus on solving the problem but just venting... expressing... exploding.

**Matt. 12:34, 36** “...For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks...men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”

2. Grenade words zero in on the other person's character and judges motives. It attacks the character of the other person rather than the incident or behavior.

**I Cor. 4:5 NASB** “Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts...” *New Living* “So be careful not to jump to conclusions...”

3. Grenade words tear down or rip apart

**Prov. 12:18** “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

**James 3:5-6, 9-10** *The Message* “It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell... The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With out tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! My friends, this can't go on.”

### E. You've Got to Start Using Life Words

1. Life words zero in on the real issue – stay focused on the problem at hand. Don't begin to attack one another personally. “You always...” “You never...” “I never should have married you...” “You'll never change...”

**Prov. 16:21** “Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness”  
*New Living* “...instruction is appreciated if it is well presented.”

2. Life words center on your own personal responsibility “I want God to show us what I am doing that is contributing to this problem.”

**Matt. 7:3,5** “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?... Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

3. Life words encourage or build up your mate

**Prov. 15:4** “A soothing tongue is a tree of life”

**Prov. 25:11** “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

4. Life words approach the other party with Humility **“Honey, I need your help on something...”** Rather than, “You’ve done it again. I am so sick of you doing...”

<b>Rule #4 ACT! DON'T REACT!! V. 31-32</b>
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**A. Listen carefully**

**Prov. 18:13** “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.”

**James 1:19** “...let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...”

**Proverbs 18:2** “A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.”

*NLT* “Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.”

**B. Choose the right time to talk**

**Eccl. 8:6** says “Yes, there is a time and a way for everything, even as people’s troubles lie heavily upon them.”

**C. Ask Questions – get further clarification. Don’t accuse.**

**Prov. 20:5** “The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.”

**D. Think / prepare before speaking**

**Prov. 15:28** “The heart of the righteous studies (NASB ponders) how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.” *New Living* “The godly think before speaking; the wicked spout evil words.”

## COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer each question as quickly as you can according to the way you feel at the moment (not the way you usually feel or felt last week). There are no right or wrong answers.

There are a variety of statements about how you communicate with another person. Consider each numbered statement with reference to your present relationship with \_\_\_\_\_. Mentally place his/her name in the space provided. Check under each statement the category that applies:

		SOME- USUALLY	TIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
1. Do you and ____ discuss the manner in which shared income should be spent	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Does ____ discuss his/her work and interests with you?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Do you have a tendency to keep your feelings to yourself?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Is ____'s tone of voice irritating?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Does ____ have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Are mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Do you find it necessary to keep after ____ about his/her faults?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Does ____ seem to understand your feelings?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Does ____ nag you?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Does ____ listen to what you have to say?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Does it upset you to a great extent when ____ is angry with you?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Does ____ pay you compliments and say nice things to you?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Is it hard to understand ____'s feelings and attitudes?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Is ____ affectionate toward you?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Does ____ let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Do you and ____ remain silent for long periods when you are angry with one another?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Does ____ allow you to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from his/hers?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	USUALLY	SOME-TIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
18. Does _____ try to lift your spirits when you are depressed or discouraged?	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Do you fail to express disagreement with _____ because you are afraid he/she will get angry?	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Does _____ complain that you don't understand him/her?	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Do you let _____ know when you are displeased with him/her?	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Do you feel _____ says one thing but really means another?	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Do you help _____ understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe?	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Do you and _____ find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your temper?	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money?	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you and _____ able to discuss it together in a calm manner?	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Do you find it difficult to express your true feelings to _____?	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Does _____ offer you cooperation, encouragement, and emotional support in your duties as a partner?	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Does _____ insult you when angry with you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Do you and _____ engage in outside interests and activities together?	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Does _____ accuse you of not listening to what he/she says?	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Does _____ let you know that you are important to him/her?	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than _____?	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Does _____ confide in others rather than in you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
35. Do you feel that in most matters _____ knows what you are trying to say?	_____	_____	_____	_____
36. Does _____ monopolize the conversation very much?	_____	_____	_____	_____

USUALLY      SOME-  
TIMES      SELDOM      NEVER

37. Do you and \_\_\_\_\_ talk about things which are of interest to both of you?

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

38. Does \_\_\_\_\_ sulk or pout very much?

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

39. Do you discuss intimate matters with \_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

# BIBLICAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

1. I use **words** that are inappropriate when I talk with you.
2. I use **inflections** that are inappropriate when I talk to you.
3. I use inappropriate **facial expressions** when I talk to you.
4. I do not **look at you** when I talk to you.
5. I do not **touch** you enough when I talk to you.
6. I **blow-up** (ventilate my anger) when I talk to you.
7. I **clam-up** (internalize my anger) instead of talking to you.
8. I **interrupt** you when you're talking to me.
9. I'm **inattentive** when you're talking to me.
10. I **judge** your **motives**.
11. I seem **uninterested** or **unwilling** to talk to you.
12. I use **sweeping generalizations** when I talk to you.
13. I **blameshift** my responsibilities, to you.
14. I do not **ask for your forgiveness**.
15. I **exhume** from you past things I've promised to forgive.
16. I **scold** you.
17. I **put you down** when I talk to you.
18. I use **harshness** when I talk to you.
19. I **do not** make every effort to **resolve conflicts** with you.
20. I've **not sought help** from other Christians as I should have.

## Evaluation of Self by Self:

- |         |          |          |          |
|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. ____ | 6. ____  | 11. ____ | 16. ____ |
| 2. ____ | 7. ____  | 12. ____ | 17. ____ |
| 3. ____ | 8. ____  | 13. ____ | 18. ____ |
| 4. ____ | 9. ____  | 14. ____ | 19. ____ |
| 5. ____ | 10. ____ | 15. ____ | 20. ____ |

## Evaluation of Self by Spouse:

- |         |          |          |          |
|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. ____ | 6. ____  | 11. ____ | 16. ____ |
| 2. ____ | 7. ____  | 12. ____ | 17. ____ |
| 3. ____ | 8. ____  | 13. ____ | 18. ____ |
| 4. ____ | 9. ____  | 14. ____ | 19. ____ |
| 5. ____ | 10. ____ | 15. ____ | 20. ____ |

### Rating Scale:

### Points:

Hardly ever	5
Seldom	4
Sometimes	3
Frequently	2
Almost always	1