

Do you have an ideal family? Or are you like the rest of us who find ourselves asking, “How do *I deal* with my *real* family?”

When dealing with your real family you can be sure about one thing and that is: You will never have an ideal family if you don't learn to communicate. Communication is the key to all relationships!

“There is no worse lie than a truth misunderstood ...” William James

Differences in the Way Men and Women Communicate

A. Men are hunters and women are hinters.

Wife to Husband, “What are you going to do today? She is hinting. She doesn't really care about what you are going to do. She is hinting about several things that she wants you to do for her.

For a man, it would be so much easier in life if women would just tell them what they want.

- Guys are wired to be hunters. Give us a list, room to work, and a time limit and we will go hunt, catch, or bring back whatever you ask of us. Then, we'll report on it.

Women want men to take the initiative; they want us to be proactive.

- They often think that if we really loved them, if we were really connected to them, then we would intuitively know what they want and intuitively understand their needs. We need help!

B. Men are fixers and women are sensors.

- Men are wired to solve and fix. We will analyze a situation, weigh the pros and the cons, formulate a game plan, and implement the plan. We think and communicate in black and white.
- Women will think of the facts, but in their communication process they also consider emotions, intuition, and feelings. Women think and communicate in intense colors, shading, and depth.

C. Men are tight-lipped and women are talkers.

Scientists tell us that men, on the average, will speak about 12,000 words a day.

Women will speak twice as many words — sometimes up to 24,000 words a day.

Problem: Then he comes home and asks, “How was your day, honey?” Well, he suddenly realizes that she has saved most of her 24,000 words just for him!

Men tend to internalize our communication.

- We like to think, we like to solve, and we like to hunt in silence. THEN we may talk about it.

Women need to verbalize the communication process.

- It's important for women to talk through their thought process. They want us to hear what they are thinking.

Communication was an integral part of creation.

- God created the man and the woman wired for a personal relationship.
- God allowed the man and the woman to communicate with Him.
- God created vertical communication, and He also created the horizontal communication.
- God gave the gift of communication to the man and the woman so that they could build a relationship with each other.
- Communication with our children works the same way. They are little men and little women.

Communication Strategies For An Ideal Family

1. CHOOSE TO COMMUNICATE.

- Many of you have a disconnected marriage. You're tired of trying to talk to each other. You're beaten down. You have one spouse who won't talk, you have the other spouse who won't listen, and you are ready to give it up.
- God will help us even if we don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to say it.

When God told Moses to communicate and lead his people, Moses didn't consider himself much of a communicator either.

Exodus 4:10 Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

Exodus 4:11-12 The Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

How many times in marriage, especially the husbands here, do we kind of not really know what to say? How many times do we think, "Should I say that?", Or "Should I remain silent?" Or "How did I get into this conversation?"

We need to simply say, "God, teach me how to speak. God, help me to say the right words. God, help me to connect and to communicate with my spouse."

A Godly family is all about communication.

- First, we have to communicate with God.
- Then He will teach us and help us communicate with our spouse and our children.

NEXT LIFE STEP: I will make a Life Choice to communicate with my family as God teaches and helps me.

2. MAKE FAMILY TALK TIME.

Couples are busy, families are flying in different directions and we live in a high paced over entertained and over active world. We have to make time for talk time.

- Is there a time when you and your spouse get together on a weekly basis?
- Do you have an appointed time for family talks?

It's so ironic that we live in the age of technology and social media yet, oftentimes, technology can become a literal blockade for true communication.

- There is nothing wrong with using that technology, but, what I'm talking about is having **an appointed time and place where you and your spouse/children know that you are going to be meeting face-to-face, to communicate.**

The Bible teaches us that God took time for us.

Gal 4:4-5 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. "The fullness of time" or "When the time had fully come," means, "In God's perfect timing."

- God took the time to communicate with us, to demonstrate His love for us, by sending His son Jesus Christ to live on this earth, to be crucified, to die on the cross and to rise again. If we come to Him and we invite Christ into our hearts, if we bow the knee to Him and we invite Him to take over our lives, then the Bible says we can have a personal, permanent relationship with God through His son Jesus Christ.
- The only reason that is possible is because God had time for us. You have to make time for talk time in your marriage. You have to make time to talk to your kids.

NEXT LIFE STEP: I will make time for Family Talk Time!

3. GIVE YOUR FAMILY SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

Do you know why many families stop communicating with each other?

- Because we are boring. It's the same old conversations, in the same old places, and at the same old times. No wonder we look at each other and just sigh.
- The key to a great marriage and the family communication is to jazz our marriage up and our family time up with a little creativity.

One of the best examples of marital creativity and marital communication is in the biblical book The Songs of Solomon. It's the story of King Solomon and his courtship, his marriage, and his honeymoon with his Shulamite bride.

Song of Solomon 1:9-10, Solomon's bride is talking about him. I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses.¹⁰ Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels Guys, how often has your wife said that about you?

Solomon writes about his *bride Verse 14. "My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi."* Wow, do you hear that kind of talk, ladies, from your husbands? Now that is some creative communication.

Creative communication starts with creative activities. What are you doing in your marriage or family that's creative? What fun things are you doing? Look what Solomon did.

Chapter 2:

- Solomon talks about the fact that he would take her to the banquet feasts.
- Chapter 2 also talks about the fact that they would go to the mountains together, they would run through the flowers and run through the streams.

Chapter 3:

- Talks about how they would go to the city together and hang out and do all this stuff in the city.
- Talks about how they would ride around in Solomon's cool chariot. Man, he had a great set of wheels, and they would get in that chariot and they would just ride all over.

Chapter 4: Talks about how they took exciting trips together. They went to Lebanon, they went through the deserts, they went to the valleys, and they would go to the garden and talk.

What are you doing in your marriage or with you family that causes creative activity that leads to creative communications?

- Time together in town. GSU Museum. Raptor Center, Splash, Parks, etc.
- How about taking a vacation together? (With and without kids.)
- How about taking up a hobby together as a couple or family?
- How about doing ministry together? Ministry will really help your communication skills, because it will force you to communicate on a deeper level.

NEXT LIFE STEP: This week I will do something with my family different, fun, and creative.

4. COMPLIMENT, ENCOURAGE, AND PRAISE DAILY.

We need to communicate praise regularly. This is the quickest way to show your spouse and your kids love and affection. Just give them praise, verbally praise them.

Do you know what happens when we praise someone? Their self-esteem and their self-worth just soar.

Praise Daily *Proverbs 31:28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: (NIV) "Arise."* In other words, when the children and the husband get up every day, they give her words of praise.

- Most of us are great about praising the spectacular. When our spouse or kids do something that is incredible, we will praise them, and that's fine.
- But, what this passage is talking about is that we need to praise our spouses for the mundane things of life; or, the things that we do every day.
 - This is why men will run to do things for others that they won't do at home.
 - This is why your kids will start spending time at someone else's house.
 - This is why your wife will constantly volunteer for community projects.

Praise Publicly *Proverbs 31:31 Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. "At the city gate."* In biblical times, that's where commerce took place, that's where politics was discussed, and where people got together for community and talk.

- In private and in public. (We love to praise our heroes in public, don't we?)
Are you praising your spouse in public?
- When was the last time you went to dinner with a group of people and you made sure that during dinner that you publicly brought up something that your spouse did for you?
- Ladies, brag on your husbands. Men, brag on your wives. Publicize it.
- Parents publicly praise your kids. Kids publicly praise your parents.

NEXT LIFE STEP: I will give a compliment and/or praise to my family today!

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. Do you agree or disagree with these three statements: Men are hunters and women are hinters. / Men are fixers and women are sensors. / Men are tight-lipped and women are talkers. Give examples.
2. What are some of the ways that you make the "Life Choice" to communicate with your family?
3. What things or actions have you taken to "Make Time" for Family Communication?
4. When it comes to family activities, how creative are you?
5. What are you doing in your marriage or with your family that causes creative activity that leads to creative communications?
6. How often do you praise your family for the everyday things? How often do you praise them publicly?