

## COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

(These communication guidelines were provided by Timothy Keller.)

First read Proverbs 18:21; 25:11; Job 19:2; James 3:8-10; I Peter 3:10; Ephesians 4:25-32.

Think about the guidelines and study the supporting Scripture verses. Rate yourself on each of these items : Excellent (3), Good (2), Fair (1), Poor (0).

1. Be a ready listener and do not answer until the other person has finished talking (Prov. 18:13; James 1:19).
2. Be slow to speak. Think first. Don't be hasty in your words. Speak in such a way that the other person can understand and accept what you say (Prov. 15:23, 28; 29:20; James 1:19).
3. Don't go to bed angry! Each day clear the offenses of that day. Speak the truth always, but do it in love. Do not exaggerate (Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:8; Matt. 6:34).
4. Do not use silence to frustrate the other person. Explain why you are hesitant to talk at this time (Prov. 15:28; 16:21, 23; 10:19; 18:2; Col. 4:6; Prov. 20:15).
5. Do not become involved in quarrels. It is possible to disagree without quarreling (Prov. 17:14; 20:3; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 4:31).
6. Do not respond in uncontrolled anger. Use a soft and kind response and tone of voice (Prov. 14:29; 15:1; 25:15; 29:11; Eph. 4:26, 31).
7. When you are in the wrong, admit it and ask for forgiveness and ask how you can change (James 5:16; Prov. 12:15; 16:2; 21:2, 29; 20:6; Matt. 5:23-25; Luke 17:3).
8. When someone confesses to you, tell him/her you forgive him/her. Be sure it is forgiven and not brought up to the person, to others, or to yourself! (Prov. 17:9; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; I Pet. 4:8).
9. Avoid nagging (Prov. 10:19; 17:9; 16:21, 23; 18:6, 7; 27:15; 21:19).
10. Do not blame or criticize the other person. Instead, restore . . . encourage ... edify (Rom. 14:13; Gal. 6:1; I Thess. 5:11).
11. If someone verbally attacks, criticizes, or blames you, do not respond in the same manner (Rom. 12:17, 21; I Pet. 2:23; 3:9).
12. Try to understand the other person's opinion. Make allowances for differences (Prov. 18:2, 13, 15; Phil. 3:15, 16).
13. Be concerned about the interests of others (Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2; Rom. 12:15).

## **MARRIAGE HOMEWORK**

Supply the requested information for the following items:

1. My marriage would be better if only
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
2. In specific terms, list 10 things you have done to make your marriage a success.
3. In specific terms, what do you expect out of marriage? What are your goals in marriage? What do you expect from your partner?
4. In specific terms, list 10 ways you have been at fault in your marriage.
5. In specific terms, list 10 ways you may change to make your marriage a better marriage.
6. In specific terms, list 15 ways that you and your mate differ in attitude, actions, behavior, interests, desires, goals, mannerisms, etc.
7. In specific terms, using specific instances if possible, write out in detail how you show it when you are angry, hurt, opposed, criticized, or denied.
8. In specific terms, write out what you would ask Jesus Christ to change about your marriage if you were assured He would work a miracle and do it.
9. Honestly evaluate the changes you would like to see in your mate. Are they really important? Do you have biblical grounds for desiring these changes? Are they for the good of your mate or just because you want them? Are you really concerned about your mate or just having your own way and making it easy on yourself?
10. Consider Philippians 2:3, 4 and Ephesians 4:1-3 and write out 10 specific ways in which you may demonstrate to your mate that you think he/she is really important and that you are sincerely interested in the things that interest him/her.
11. List 10 things you do to please your mate.
12. List five things you should do more often.
13. List 10 things your mate does that please you.
14. List five things you would like your mate to do more frequently.