



MARRIAGE HOMEWORK:

THE CONFERENCE TABLE

By Matthew Black

In order to bring your marriage to the next level, you need to communicate about absolutely everything, at least initially. Each of you needs to fill out the “[Marriage Inventory Questionnaire](#)”. We will use this in your scheduled times of talking together, what we call the “Conference Table.” We define the Conference Table as a structured use of the [4 Rules of Biblical Communication](#) (Eph 4:25-32)

- Speak the truth in love, v. 25
- Reconcile conflicts quickly, vs. 26-27
- Speak to build up, not to tear down, v. 29
- Respond biblically, don’t react sinfully, vs. 30-32

The conference table is a time that the couple sets up for six days during the week. This is about a structured way to use the four rules of communication. You are not to discuss any of the items on the list until you are at the conference table. This week I want you to use the five main issues you wrote down last week.

At the conference table you will alternate who leads with what you will talk about. The person not leading will take notes of the session and bring them to class. This week though during conference table, I want you to begin by talking about what you are thankful for in your marriage (be honest and truthful—don’t say something as a veiled insult—name things you are *truly* thankful for in your marriage). Take time to talk about what needs to change, and then give these things to the Lord. Take only *one* issue only for each day. Take one of the least emotional issues to talk briefly about and then spend time in prayer giving yourselves, your problems, and all that you are to the Lord. Have the conference table for 15 minutes to a half hour. Do not exceed 30 minutes.

The goal is not “I’ve got to get my spouse to change.” The goal is “I need to change to be more like Christ regardless of whether my spouse changes.”

Fill in the times you will meet this week for a half an hour.

Sat: _____ (Moderator: _____)
 Sun: _____ (Moderator: _____)
 Mon: _____ (Moderator: _____)
 Tue: _____ (Moderator: _____)
 Wed: _____ (Moderator: _____)
 Thu: _____ (Moderator: _____)

Fri: Counseling Session

Practice: Let’s right now go through a conference table session. Let’s say the wife’s issue is communication and the husband is taking notes. Have the four rules of communication out in front of you. Here is the order of what to do each night (1) Open in prayer, (2) Each give one thing you are thankful for in your marriage, (3) Discuss the assigned issue, (4) Pray about it.