

Introduction:

- le. Lone Survivor (Could not get their communications up and men died.)
- le. General Lee (Could not get his calvary, Jeb Stuart, to communicate and it cost him the 1st day at Gettysburg) If the 'comms' are not working at home your marriage may be in trouble.
 - I want to talk about communication and marriage this morning. Communication is one of the tools that Joshua spoke about when he preached last. Communication is important in all that we do in life.
 - Much of today message comes out of a book I highly recommend. *Love and Respect*, by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. Another Great book for married couples is *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman
 - *"So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."* (Ephesians 5:33, NLT)

I. Foundations We Work From Eph 5:22-ff

- A. Men are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, unconditionally.
 1. This is a tall order!
 2. You are doing great gentlemen, when you can love your wife, like Jesus does the church!
- B. Women are to submit to their husbands in everything (vs 24)
 1. This is a tall order!
 2. Ladies this should be pretty easy for you to do when your husband is loving you like Christ loved the church.
- C. What Dr Emmerson brings out in his book is the "Crazy Cycle"
 1. Crazy Cycle, Without love - She reacts. Without respect - He reacts. (Repeat until someone decides to get off the crazy train.)
 2. Until someone decides to get off the crazy cycle, your marriage will spiral downward taking both of you with it. The answer is found in unconditional love and unconditional respect.
 3. Love and respect become the core values that motivate men and women. How do these two values affect communication?
 4. "A couple was celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. They cut the cake and celebrated with friends and family. After all the guests had left the home the wife said, "After all these years I find you tried and true. Her aged husband put his hand to his ear and said pardon? She said, "After all these years I find you tried and true." Once again he put his hand to his ear and said, "I didn't quite hear you." This time, his wife of 50 years yelled at the top of her lungs, "After all these years I find you tried and true!" Her husband responded, "Well after all these years I am tire of you too." Poor communication is generally more than the result of poor hearing.

II. Pinpointing The Breakdown

- A. Back to the crazy cycle. Crazyness happens when we keep doing the same things over and over with the same ill effect.
 1. IE. If you walk into a room flip the light switch and nothing happens—you usually flip it two more times. That is o.k. but if you stand there for a 30 minutes flipping the switch and nothing is happening, I have to say something is wrong—with you. Yet this is what many couples are doing in their marriages.
 2. Read two examples—pp. 25-28 Love and Respect – Birthday card/All you want is sex
- B. Why is communication such a problem?
 1. We are missing the understanding of these two very important concepts of love and respect. And not realizing that they are in our DNA as men and women.
 2. Because of them, what I say is not what you hear, and what you think you heard, is not what I meant at all.
 - a) Florida Women
 - (1) Three men were sitting together bragging about how they had given their new wives duties. The first man had married a Woman from Georgia and had told her that she was going to do dishes and house cleaning. It took a couple days, but on the third day he

came home to a clean house and dishes washed and put away. The second man had married a woman from Alabama. He had given his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, dishes, and the cooking. The first day he didn't see any results, but the next day he saw it was better. By the third day, he saw his house was clean, the dishes were done, and there was a huge dinner on the table. The third man had married a girl from Florida. He told her that her duties were to keep the house cleaned, dishes washed, lawn mowed, laundry washed and hot meals on the table for every meal. He said the first day he didn't see anything, and the second day he didn't see anything, but by the third day some of the swelling had gone down and he could see a little out of his left eye, enough to fix himself a bite to eat and load the dishwasher.

- (2) Men and women have their code that they speak in. I.e. A man was walking along a CA beach and stumbled across an old lantern. He picked it up rubbed it and out popped a Genie. The genie said, "Thanks for releasing me, you may have three wishes." The man thought for a while, and said, "I always wanted to go to Hawaii but I am afraid to fly, and I get sea sick on ships. Build me a bridge that I may drive to Hawaii. The genie laughed—that is impossible! Do you know what it would take to do that? Make another wish. The man thought and finally responded: My wife thinks I am insensitive and unable to communicate—Help me to understand women. The genie paused for a moment ...and said, "Do want two lanes or four on that bridge."

C. You have to think to understand.

1. For instance: When Kelly walks into our closet and says, "*I have nothing to wear.*" What she means is, I have nothing new to wear. When I walk into that closet and say, "I have nothing to wear." What I mean is I have nothing clean to wear.
 - a) Are there clothes in the closet for us to wear? Yes.
 - b) Are you seeing how communication affects what we hear and how we perceive our spouses?
2. What is the communication problem? Most times we only think about ourselves and our needs.

III. Tackling the Issue

- A. Do you ever get into a conflict with your spouse but are not sure why?
1. Usually we write it off as, "If only she weren't so touchy or If only he weren't so childish."
 2. Our two examples we read. Often we focus on our own needs and simply overlook the needs of the other person.
 - a) The wife needs love; she is not trying to be disrespectful. The husband needs respect; he is not trying to be unloving.
 - b) Once this basic principle is grasped; that the 'issue' is not the real issue at all—you are on your way to cracking the communication code. You are getting your 'comms' up!
 - c) The first step to better communication is application of what you now understand about one another. Unconditional Love/Unconditional Respect
- B. Given these two truths that we have just learned, it should be obvious that men and women see and listen from two totally different perspectives.
1. From the examples:
 - a) Her real issue was that she felt unloved. She saw him as unloving.
 - b) His real issue was that he felt disrespected. He saw her as disrespectful.
 2. Love and respect therefore become the two key ingredients that must be found in our communication to one another in our marriages. With out them we enter into the crazy cycle.
 3. "When he acts (or reacts) in ways that seem unloving to her, she reacts in ways that feel disrespectful to him. "Who started it? Yes!" pp. 37
 4. Crack the code: Whenever a wife is complaining, criticizing or crying she is sending her encoded message: "I want your love!" And whenever a husband is speaking harshly or sometimes not speaking at all, his is sending his encoded message: "I want your respect."

IV. Breaking the Barriers

- A. Webster defines barrier as a wall for defense. A fortification designed to keep the enemy out; an obstruction; a line of separation.
1. These barriers are what need to be broken down in our marriages. We put them up all the time; especially when our needs (love and respect) are not being met or we have been hurt.
 - a) They become a wall for defense.
 - b) They become fortification to keep the “problem” away from us.
 - c) They become an obstruction to hopefully wear out the aggressor so that they will not come close.
 - d) They become a line of separation that announces keep out. These barriers must be broken down.
- B. How are they built?
1. Accusations. Rev. 12:10 The accuser of the brethren.
 2. Accusations always separate and divide. They never bring people together.
 3. When we see or sense accusation in the making we have to know the voice behind it. To diffuse it one must acknowledge it and do exactly the opposite.
 - a) Get of the Crazy Cycle
 - b) Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Use your words to tell you (measure) what is in your heart. Mt 12:34-37 **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.**" NKJV Be a good man and bring good treasure out of your heart. You are a believer, it is in there.
- C. How are communication barriers broken?
1. Know the code: unconditional love/unconditional respect. Seek to deliver it. Ie. In this day and age you have to know the code to get in. You have to be intentional in giving to your partner what they need.
 2. Listen beyond the sound. What is the message? Supply what is needed.
 3. It will always take the ‘bigger person’ to break the cycle. Someone has to get off the crazy train.
 - a) Become the great one.
 - (1) He would be greatest in the Kingdom must be a servant to all. Mk 10:43 **whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.** NKJV
 - (2) Consider others better than yourself. Php 2:3-4 **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** NIV
 4. Live to hold the heart.
 - a) Living to hold their heart in your hand. If you do not hold the heart of your spouse in your hand then someone else, or something else will.
 - b) Good communication is where holding your spoused heart starts.

Conclusion:

- If you are divorced or separated today. Do not get stuck in your past. You have to think ahead, move ahead and learn from what you are hearing today.
- If your marriage is bad make it better by learning how to communicate more affectively.