

his fellow servants saw what they were deeply discontent to their master and related affair. ³² His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgive you your entire debt because you were my fellow servant, as I was your fellow servant, as I was your fellow servant, as I was your fellow servant?' ³⁴ Then in anger his master threw him over to the torturers and they paid back the whole debt. * So heavenly Father do to you, as you forgive your brother

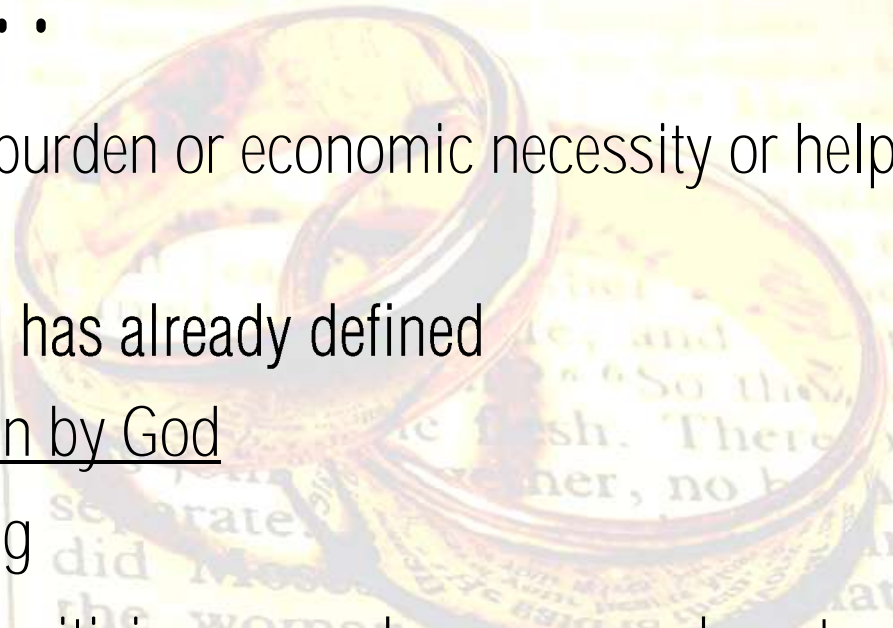


MARRIAGE

Given by God

First thoughts...

- Marriage is not a chore or burden or economic necessity or helpful tax write-off
- We can't redefine what God has already defined
- Marriage is a blessing given by God
- Some here today are hurting
- First Melissa is not here to criticize or condemn; we are here to proclaim grace and biblical truth
- There is hope for the future, move forward from today



Earlier in this teaching series...

God's design for marriage

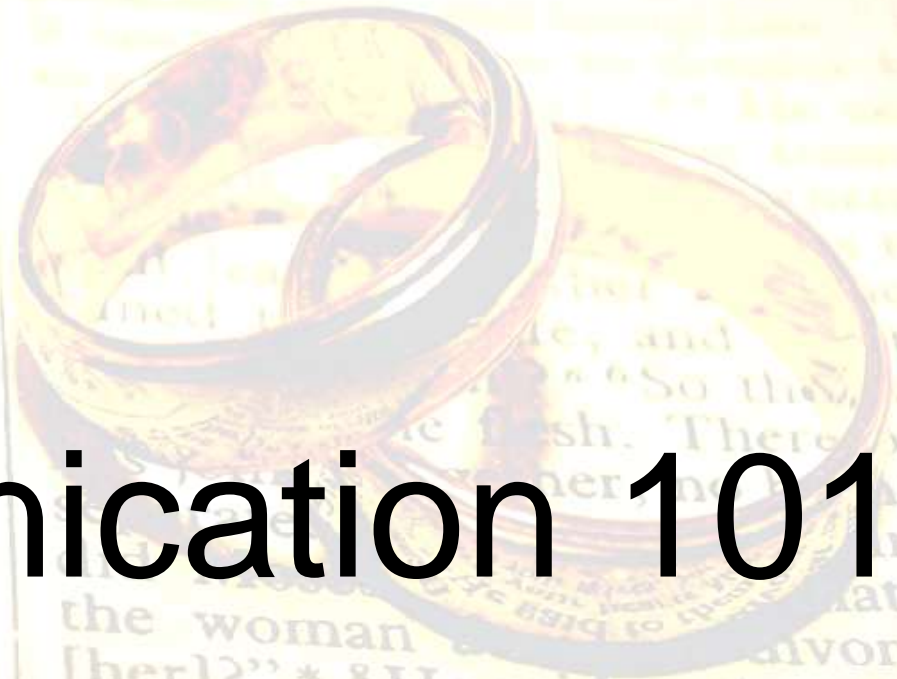
Keeping my vows

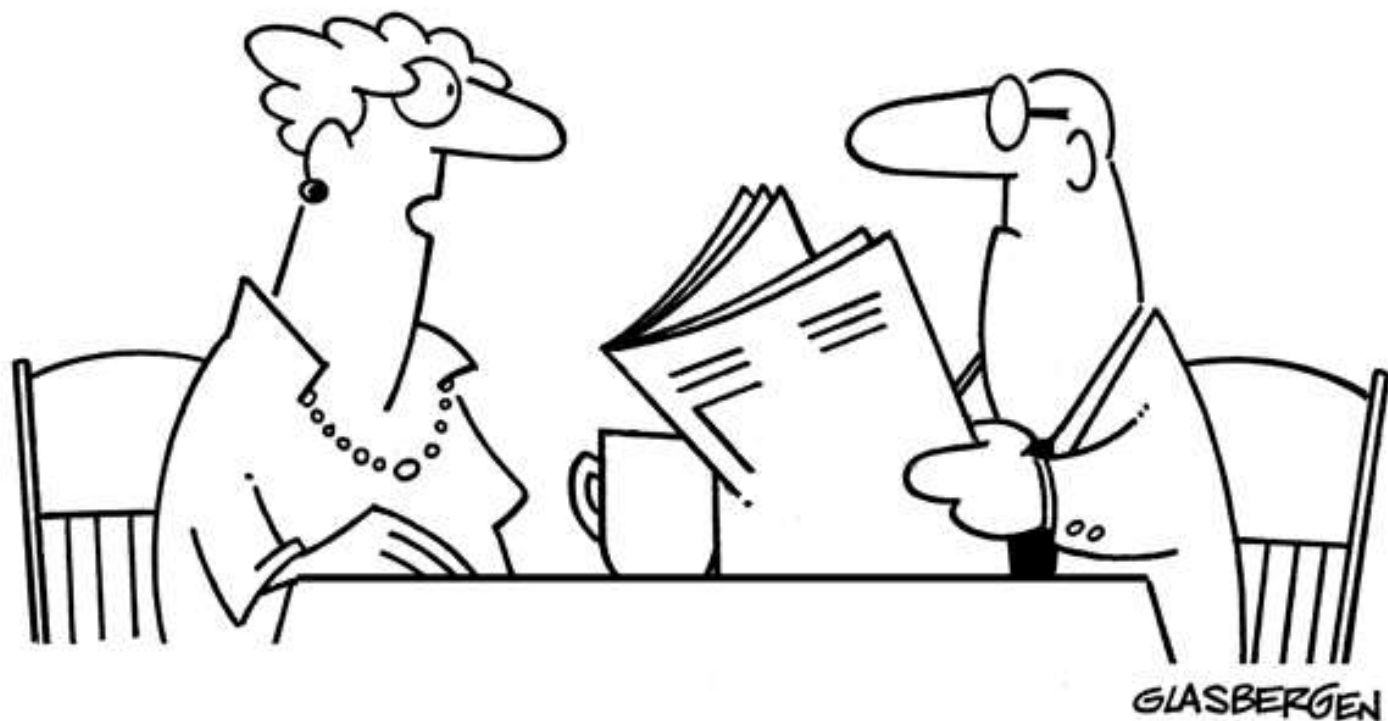
Learning to fight fair



Today...

Communication 101





**“You grunt a lot better since we took
that marriage communication workshop.”**

What really separates contented couples from those in marital misery is a healthy balance between their positive and negative feelings and actions toward each other.

In our research, we found that in stable marriages there was a very specific ratio that exists between the number of a couple's positive interactions – touching, smiling, paying compliments, laughing – and their negative ones.

The magic ratio is five to one. In other words, as long as there is five times as much positive feeling and interaction between husband and wife as there is negative, we found that the marriage was likely to be stable. **Based solely on this ratio, we were able to predict whether couples were likely to divorce.** *- Dr. John Gottman

An open antique book with a gold ring resting on it, overlaid with the text "Why is communication so difficult?". The book's pages are filled with faint, illegible text, likely from a religious or historical text. The gold ring is positioned in the center, partially overlapping the text. The overall image has a warm, yellowish tint.

Why is
communication
so difficult?

REAL LIFE ADVENTURES
By Wise and Aldrich



Actual Church Bulletin Bloopers

- The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.
- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.
- The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Don't let worry kill you -- let the Church help.

What is the problem?

Poor Communication



Levels of Communication

1. Use clichés
2. Share facts
3. State opinions
4. Say what we are feeling
5. Reveal our needs



Source: *Making Love Last Forever* by Gary Smalley

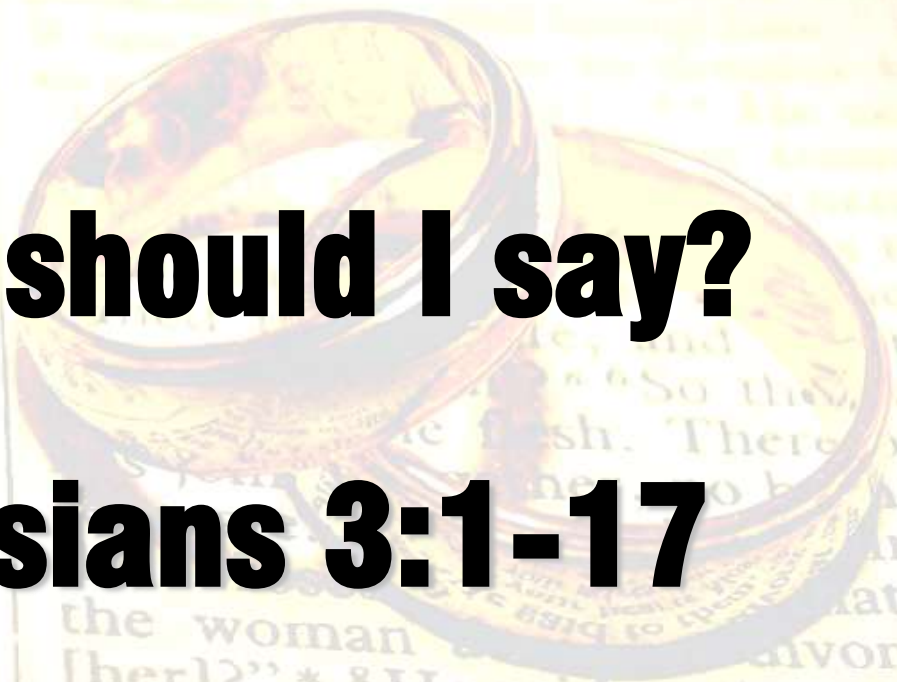
Causes of Difficulty in Communication

1. Low Self-Esteem
2. Fear of Criticism and Judgment
3. Lack of Knowledge about Internal Happenings
4. Inability to Put Thoughts and Feelings into Words

Source: *The Triumphant Marriage* by Neil Clark Warren, Ph.D.

What should I say?

Colossians 3:1-17



Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set (concentrate) your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (Rapture). Colossians 3:1-4

*Husbands and wives whose hearts have been transformed by the gospel of Jesus CAN AND SHOULD experience different marriages than those who do not know the Savior.

* "Life in this world will be better if it is lived by a power beyond this world, the power of the resurrected, ascended, glorified Christ." – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Colossians 3:5-8

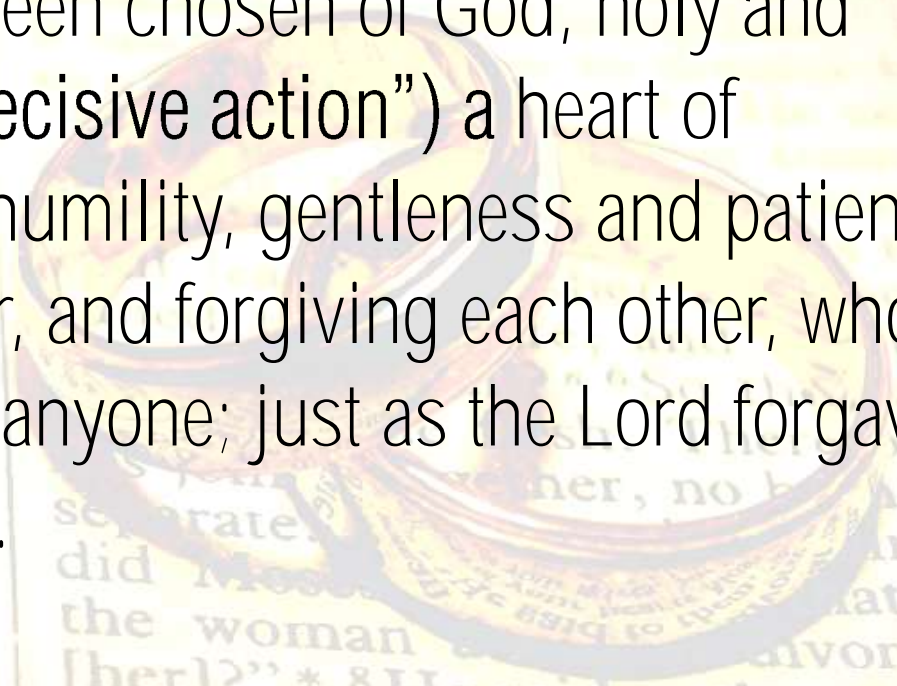
Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being (constantly) renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:9-11

In Jesus Christ distinctions are removed:

- national distinctions (Greek or Jew)
- religious distinctions (circumcised or uncircumcised)
- cultural distinctions (barbarian or Scythian)
- economic or social distinctions (slave or free)

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on (“take decisive action”) a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Colossians 3:12-13



Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:14-17

How about your communication?

Put aside/get rid of/avoid:

- **Anger** - (orgēn) a chronic attitude of smoldering hatred
- **Wrath** - (thymon) an acute outburst or rage (Eph. 4:31).
- **Malice** - (kakian) the vice that lies below anger and rage as their root
- **Slander** — (blasphēmian) railing or evil speaking
- **Abusive speech** - (aischrologian) shameful or abrasive speech

See Colossians 3:8

How about your communication?

Put on/emphasize/remember to do:

- **Compassion** - (splanchna oiktirmou) tender sympathy of heartfelt compassion
- **Kindness** – (chrestotes) benevolence in action
- **Humility** – (tapeinophrosune) a lowly attitude toward God
- **Gentleness** - (prautēta) meekness, a lowly attitude toward others
- **Patience** – (makrothymian) self-restraint, a steady response in the face of provocation

See Colossians 3:12

Intentional, not Accidental

The Colossians have already been raised with Christ. They now share in His resurrection life, so their lives are to be different. Their interests are to be focused on Christ; their minds, aims, ambitions, in fact their whole outlook, are to be centered on that heavenly realm where He rules and where their lives truly belong. A continuous, ongoing effort is required for such a focus does not come automatically. The godly man or woman will regularly assess whether their ambitions and life-style are consistent with the ultimate goal to which God has called them, i.e. heaven itself where He rules. - New Bible Commentary

How should I talk to others?

“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” Proverbs 16:24

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **Let your speech always be with grace**, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Colossians 4:5-6

Effective Communication Skills for your Marriage

Skill #1: Show your spouse respect

Begin with keeping an open mind and reserving judgment.

Skill #2: Focus on your spouse

Try to put yourself in your spouse's shoes.

Skill #3: Notice what's *not* being said

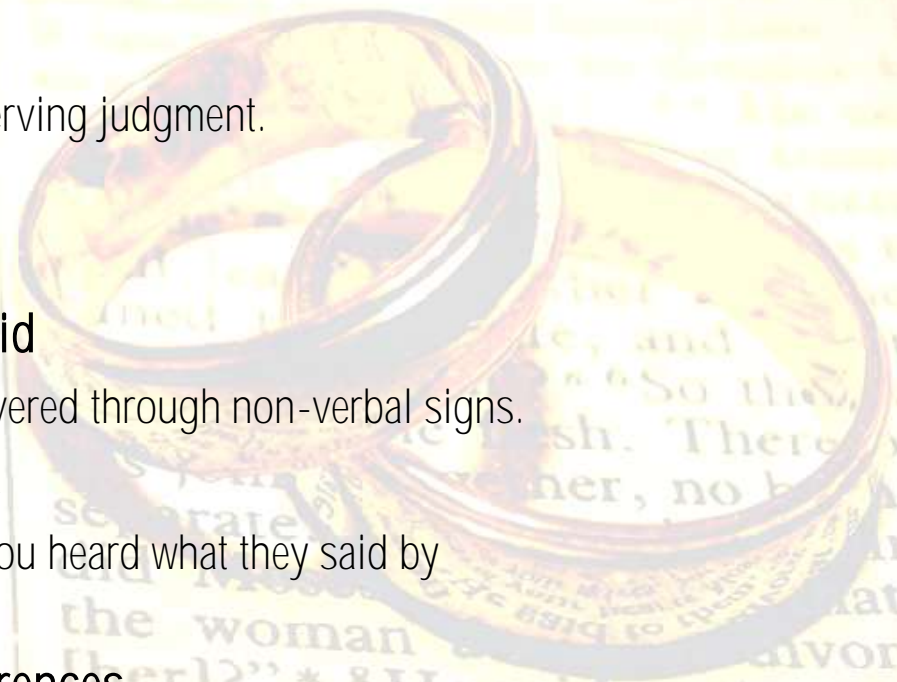
Approximately 55% of what we say is delivered through non-verbal signs.

Skill #4: Think about your response

When responding, let your spouse know you heard what they said by restating what was said.

Skill #5: Acknowledge Gender Differences

Men share because they want to give information or solve a problem. Women talk to connect with someone or to get information. Women talk more about relationships than men. Men are more concerned about details than women.



The ABCs of an Effective Speaker

A: Acknowledgement. Start with your needs. As the speaker, your goal is to acknowledge your needs and share them with your partner, not to shine a spotlight on your partner.

B: Body Language. Be aware of how you send your messages. All communication includes a *what* (the content of your message) and a *how* (how you deliver the content). Body language is the how--very often, this is the message your partner will remember most.

C: Clarity. Keep your message simple and consistent. Your message needs to be clear and easy to understand, or else your spouse will be confused and unsure of your needs.

The ABCs of an Effective Listener

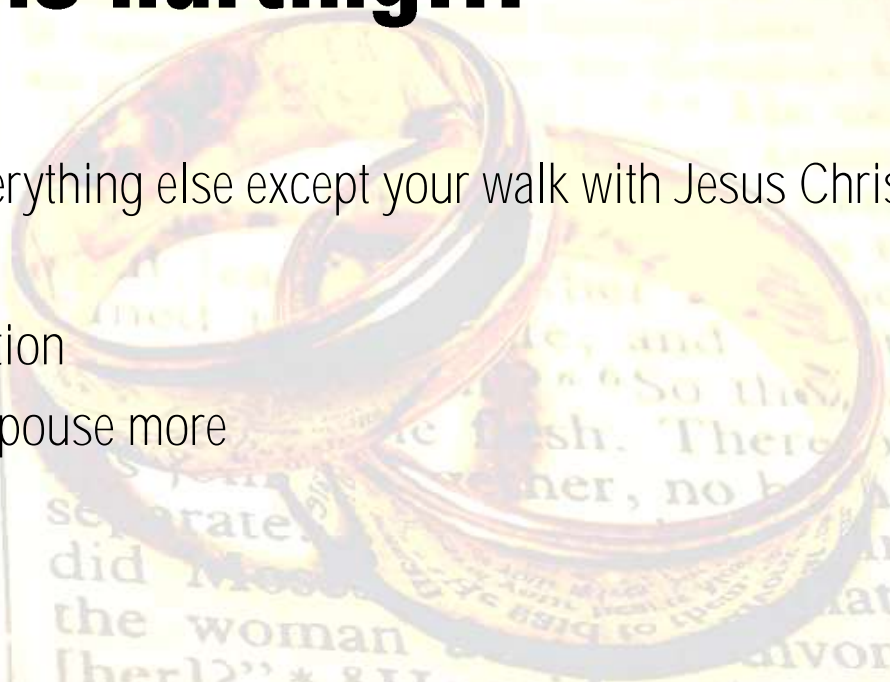
A: Attentiveness. Be attentive and focus your energy on your partner's message. As the listener, your job is to show that you are interested in what your spouse is saying.

B: Bite Your Tongue. Your job as the listener is to understand your partner's point of view. As the listener, don't interrupt or talk over your spouse (even when you don't agree with what s/he is saying). Don't plan your retort the entire time your spouse is speaking.

C: Curiosity and Clarification. Simple questions communicate genuine interest while helping you gain clarity. Show genuine curiosity by asking questions--questions that will help you clarify what your spouse needs. The most powerful questions are simple: *Are you OK? What can I do? How can I help?*

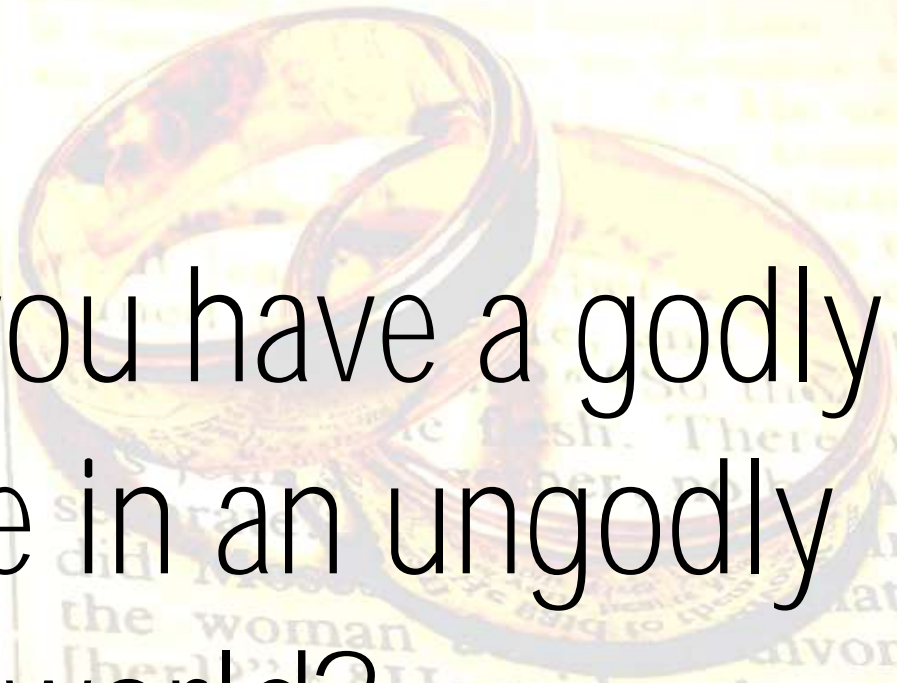
If your marriage is hurting...

- Call on the Lord constantly
- Prioritize your marriage over everything else except your walk with Jesus Christ
- Remember your vows
- Ask God for healing and restoration
- Ask God to help you love your spouse more
- Major on forgiveness and grace
- Pray together
- Worship together
- Visit our Prayer Room or complete the prayer request tear-off slip
- Email info@firstmelissa.com Call 972.838.2277



Next Sunday...

How can you have a godly marriage in an ungodly world?



Ten Rules for Good Communication

by Theda Hlavka

1. There Will Be No Non-subjects
2. Whatever You Say, Say It With Love
3. Timing Is Everything
4. Get to the Point
5. If They Are Not Looking at You, They Are Probably Not Listening
6. He/She Can't Read Your Mind
7. Be As Positive As Possible
8. Once You've Shared Your Concerns, Be Quiet and Listen
9. When the Time Comes, Be Willing to Accept Correction from Your Spouse
10. Be Forgiving



How should I talk to others?

“Do not let any ⁽¹⁾ unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is ⁽²⁾ helpful for building others up according to ⁽³⁾ their needs, that it may ⁽⁴⁾ benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29

Eternity's most important communication

Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

Isaiah 30:21

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

Is Jesus the center of your marriage?