



## What Do I Say When I Talk to My Spouse?

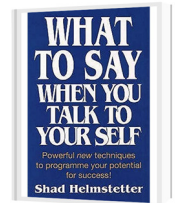
**1 Corinthians 13:4: (NASB) *Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant.***



When it comes to understanding our marriage relationship, there may not be a more revealing question to ask than, “What do I say when I talk to my spouse?”

We make the life-altering decision to marry, and the passion behind it is clear and solid. We see it as a “forever” passion. Time passes and this passionate decision can become a commonplace part of life, one we don’t give much thought to. Then, kind of like putting on our most comfortable pair of shoes or sitting in our favorite chair - our marriage becomes just another element of life we absentmindedly rely on to provide comfort. As we talk to our spouse, our words - perhaps subtly at first - begin to reflect reaffirming our own comfort instead of being interested in their experiences. So sad and too often, so true!

Rick: Our title question was inspired by the book, *What to Say When You Talk to Yourself*, by Shad Helmstetter. I first read this book over 30 years ago, and it helped me understand how to better communicate with others by better understanding how we talk to ourselves.



This episode is about clearly communicating with our spouses so that we can take our marriage to a higher level. We will be sharing several principles of **caring and committed communication**. Most of these will be conclusions at the end of a segment, but this first one is an introduction:



### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

I communicate with my spouse through my words, actions, innuendo and what I choose to focus on as important. These communications reveal the condition of *MY OWN HEART*. How am I looking by just acknowledging these things?



We communicate with our spouses in all these different ways. This is a “mirror” podcast where we look at ourselves and see how we appear when we are communicating.

**The principles of marriage are clearly defined by the first marriage.**

**Genesis 2:23-25: (KJV)** <sup>23</sup>*And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.*

**The conclusion of the matter reveals the profound principle of marriage:**

<sup>24</sup>*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave <1692> unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* <sup>25</sup>*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

**Cleave:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1692 *dabaq*; properly, to impinge, i.e., cling or adhere; figuratively, to catch by pursuit



If someone is pursuing something, they do not stop until they catch what they are pursuing. Applying this to spouses, we should have a never-ending effort - in a positive way - to stay close as one.

For a man to *leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife* is a powerful phrase. To *cleave* means we need to be striving daily to be close. This indicates an unrelenting attachment.

### One other use for cleave:

Joshua 22:5: (KJV) *But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep his commandments and to **cleave <1692>** unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

In this verse, to *cleave* means clinging to God, holding onto **powerfully and intentionally**. We are to *cleave* to God, which means to follow His ways **powerfully and intentionally**. God instructed men to **powerfully and intentionally** be joined to their wives, so much so that the two become one. The way we strive to be close to God must be the way we strive to be close to our spouses.

What do I SAY when I TALK to my spouse?



### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

Does my daily life communicate to my spouse and to everyone else this oneness that the simple message of *cleave unto his wife* in Genesis indicates?

Others should be able to visibly see the oneness in our marriage. We should always display this commitment around others because in private someone might act one way and in public, another way. For example, flirting with someone other than our spouse exposes an improper heart commitment. If others see we are committed to our marriage, they will leave us alone, especially if they see this oneness outwardly expressed by the couple. But what is the harm in a little flirting? Even if it starts out in a harmless way, it sets our minds, affections and emotions in the wrong direction which can become hurtful to our spouse and marriage. This is not clinging to our spouse.

MANY marriages end in divorce and countless more are not happy. What happens to cause such sadness, disconnection and failure? Life happens - jobs happen, kids happen, responsibilities happen, separate interests happen, boredom happens, unfulfilled expectations happen, sickness happens, trauma and tragedy happen, disillusionment happens, jealousy happens and bad decisions happen! Life gets in the way of our ideals.





## AS CHRISTIANS WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO COMBAT SUCH A DEVASTATING LIST?

Let's begin by looking at what cleaving or clinging to your spouse is NOT. The first kind of love almost always takes center stage when we think about love and relationships: the Greek word *eros*.

(Source: Four Types of Love in the Bible, thoughtco.com) Eros (Pronounced: AIR-ohs) is the Greek word for sensual or romantic love. The term originated from the mythological Greek god of love, sexual desire, physical attraction, and physical love, Eros, whose Roman counterpart was Cupid.

Erotic comes from this word. While *eros*, or sensuality, is not inherently bad, it can easily create unrealistic expectations which can lead to broken hearts, which can lead to marriage destroying actions.

**This word *eros* is not in the Bible, but its effects (that of sensuality) abound, both for good and for evil in the Scriptures:**

Song of Solomon 1:2: (NASB) *May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.*

This is a sensual scripture. We get the sense of a very physical, intimate moment. In the right environment this is a good thing. But in the wrong environment it can be utterly destructive.

**Another example of the good and evil of *eros* or sensuality:**

Proverbs 5:18-20: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. <sup>19</sup>...Be exhilarated always with her love. <sup>20</sup>For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress...?*



*Be exhilarated always with her love* - showing the positive sensual connection between a wife and husband. As Christian spouses, our desires should be met at home and no place else. We need to be careful that our minds are on no one else but our spouse. In this world, that is easier said than done. This same problem arose even back in biblical times. To live a successful Christian marriage means we need to be aware of and above the many different erotic temptations.

*Eros* is not the appropriate basis for a Christian marriage. However, it can and should be a continually-developing byproduct of a solid relationship based on commitment between spouses.

What do I SAY when I TALK to my spouse?



### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

Do I have a healthy enough level of communication with my spouse that affords communicating our sensual and romantic desires between us? Am I willing to build up to that communication level if it is not there?



It is too easy to look because there is so much to see. We need to put on blinders so we can focus on building a marriage that is God-honoring and happy at the same time. It is possible!

Sometimes the greatest hope is found in the simplest things. We need to realize what it means to cling to our spouse and do it!

**Thus far we have talked about the need for spouses to fully communicate, so how do we actually do that?**

As we focus on spousal communication, there are two basic aspects we need to key in on to help us identify the quality of our efforts:

- ➔ First is the “**what**” of our words or actions. What is our focus and what is our intention?
- ➔ Second is the “**how.**” How are we delivering the point? Is it through anger, impatience, exasperation and resignation? Or is it through love, kindness, grace and concern?



**To communicate what you feel is important. To communicate what is important is vital. To do one without the other is foolish.**

What we FEEL is important, but what IS important is something different.

Let’s begin with communicating what we feel:

**First, the “what” of our communication:** Am I angry or fed up or just ready to give up on something regarding my spouse? Should I tell them? YES!

***When you and your spouse are not speaking to each other, the devil is speaking to both of you. – Anonymous***

Communication is so important, especially if we are bothered or angry about something.

**Communicating these things is best done using scriptural principles:**

**Ephesians 4:25-27:** (NASB) <sup>25</sup>Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not give the devil an opportunity.

We need to tell our spouse what is on our mind; they need to know and we need them to know. Do it sooner rather than later! This brings up the concept of **peacemaking** or **peacekeeping**. We addressed the differences in the following episode.



The transformative value of peacemaking in daily life



**Peacekeeping** is something spouses often do. They have a disagreement and just to keep the peace, they feel each can think their own way the issue is put to rest. When this is done over and over, it becomes habitual. The difference in **peacemaking** is that it breaks down the barriers and figures out why each believes as they do. This leads to a higher level of communication which forges a stronger bond. It is harder work, but unlike **peacekeeping** that leads to discontent, **peacemaking** leads to breakthroughs and greater understanding which brings a marriage closer.

**Second, the “how” of our communication:** Too often our communication with our spouses is driven by exasperation, resignation and other negative emotions as we mentioned above. With all this going on we are easily positioned to damage and not repair our relationship.

**We need scriptural guidance - there is never a day in our lives when we do not need scriptural guidance:**




Ephesians 4:29: (NASB) *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

Love - selfless love - is what provokes the ability to live and speak according to this text:

- ☞ *No unwholesome* (rotten, putrefied) *word* but words of edification (architecture, confirmation). We must use good, powerful, upbuilding words - even when we are upset.
- ☞ Speak words that are valuable according to the need of the moment. Not ranting words, but valuable words.
- ☞ The end result of our words should exhibit *grace to those who hear* - this is especially a challenge when we are mad! When we are angry, are we really expected to be able to speak with *grace*? When our faces are red and our blood pressure is through the roof, how can we speak with *grace*? There is a way, but it requires looking in the mirror.



Some suggestions for a gracious delivery:

 Instead of:	 Try saying:
	
"YOU MAKE ME SO MAD!"	→ "When I saw or heard you say..."
"YOU ALWAYS!" OR "YOU NEVER!"	→ "I find myself getting irritated when I see you..."



What is the difference? In the second response in each example, we own *our own volatile reaction* instead of blaming our spouse. We put the reason for the escalation of the disagreement back on ourselves. After all, we have a **CHOICE** as to whether we react with severity or with grace. If our spouse says something that pushes our buttons, we ultimately have the choice of how we respond. Instead of putting it on them, we put it on ourselves; this is the way to respond with grace. Like it or not, this is under our control and so the escalation of the argument can be our own fault!

### Further scriptural guidance as to how to communicate:

**Ephesians 4:31-32:** (NASB) <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Let's deal with our spouses with the same kind of grace as we deal with other Christians. We need to be *kind...*, *tender-hearted*, *forgiving*. If we are mad, we should state it, but it is important we *take the responsibility* for the anger rather than putting it on them.

What do I SAY when I TALK to my spouse?



### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

The clear scriptural principles of respect for members of the body of Christ must translate to respecting my spouse, whether I see them as right or wrong in any given matter.

We must apply the same respect and care to our spouse as we do to others in the body of Christ. This is such an important basis for communicating.

We have talked about “**what**” we are communicating and “**how**” we communicate it. What is the most important thing?

## NEWS FLASH

What we **FEEL** is **NOT** the most important thing!  
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING is just how much our spouse means to us!

Wait. What? When we are angry, it seems like that anger is the most important thing. But the most important thing is our marriage relationship, and we have to put our anger in the context of that. What does this mean?

To manage how we speak to our spouses we need to be reminded of our personal responsibilities within the sacred covenant of our Christian marriage:

**Ephesians 5:21-23:** (NASB) <sup>21</sup>and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. <sup>22</sup>Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the savior of the body.



If we look at these verses independently outside of the verses around them, this does not seem good; it is not treating women right. It sounds like a recipe for unfair treatment, rebellion and even lawsuits! Let's finish the context. There is a beautiful lesson here in terms of communication. These first verses tell us - *wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord* - and all are supposed to be subject to Christ.

### Husbands are clearly taught to love their wives as a Christian responsibility:

Ephesians 5:25,28-29,31: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>Husbands, **love <25>** your wives, just as Christ also **loved <25>** the church and gave himself up for her. <sup>28</sup>So husbands ought also to **love <25>** their own wives as their own bodies. He who **loves <25>** his own wife **loves <25>** himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and **cherishes <2282>** it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>31</sup>For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

The key to truly valuing our spouse is in the concept of cherishing:

**Cherishes:** Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon #2282 *thalpo*;

1. Properly, to warm, keep warm 2. To cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care

In these verses we are told no one hates his own body but takes care of it. If something in our body hurts, we coddle it, wrap it, rub it, cherishing our bodies. We do this with our spouse as well; we foster (encourage or promote) them with tender care.

In Ephesians 5 there are six points made - only one is about women. Maybe men need admonitions repeated!

- ♥ Women - LOVE and be subject
- ♥ Men - LOVE and give yourself up for her
- ♥ Men - LOVE and care for her as your own body
- ♥ Men - Your LOVE for her becomes your way of self-preservation
- ♥ Men - Cherish her
- ♥ Men - Leave all other ties for her sake

We see that women are to be subject to their husbands, then we see all that the husbands are supposed to do - someone deserving as one to be subject to. Wives want to give themselves to someone who so clearly wants to love, honor, cherish and protect. This is what a Christian marriage ought to look like.

### For husbands, the importance of their wives cannot be stated enough:

1 Peter 3:7: (KJV) *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour <5092> unto the wife, as unto the weaker <772> vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

**Honour:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5092 *timē*; a value

**Weaker/feeble:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #772 *asthenēs*; strengthless



Honor means “esteem, especially of the highest degree.” Give great esteem to your wives, as you would to something of great value, yet fragile. Protect, honor and respect her above all others - cherish her! Husbands are never to forget they need to cherish and care for their wives. This is a high standard!



**This principle of honoring those who are not prominent in the body of Christ is exhibited in the following text:**

**1 Corinthians 12:22-23:** (ASV) <sup>22</sup>Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more **feeble <772>** are necessary: <sup>23</sup>and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant **honor <5092>**; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness;

If we are required to honor those who are with us in the body of Christ, why would we not honor those we are covenanted to love in our marriage? This uses the same words we quoted in **1 Peter 3:7**. The honoring of the *more feeble* (weaker) is a model for our marriages. Those who are not prominent in the body are given *greater* honor. The same with marriage!

What do I SAY when I TALK to my spouse?



### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

Honestly and consciously restating the extraordinary value of my spouse in my life is a vital element of me expressing my emotions and state of mind when communicating with them. They need to hear of their value and I need to be reminded of it!

This is *the most important thing*. When we are most upset with each other, our spouse needs to hear how valuable they are to us, and we need to be reminded of that same fact. This is what the Scriptures teach us.

Applying scriptural principles completely refocuses how we handle our spousal challenges. Let's get to work!

**Strong communication in marriage is deeply important and often difficult.**  
**How do we keep it a priority?**

This ends up being one of the key questions we can ask. It is one thing to recognize a lack of good communication, and it is another thing to do something positive about it. It is yet another thing to KEEP doing the right things on a regular basis to keep spousal conversations vibrant, no matter how busy or mundane life may become.



Let's reverse things as we continue exploring the sanctity of our spousal communication. Instead of asking: **What do I say when I talk to my spouse?** let's now ask: **What do I think when I listen to my spouse?** This digs a little deeper in a whole different way!

If we pay attention to this new question: **What do I think when I listen to my spouse?** our thoughts can be the obvious storytellers of what we are really experiencing.

If our thoughts towards our spouse are not positive and driven by God's grace, we need to acknowledge this and be reminded of the ways to draw those thoughts back in line with Christian behavior.



*Selah* (pause and consider) moment: Where is our mind when we are asked a question by our spouse? Are we really pausing and giving them our attention? In the world we live in, there are so many distractions. Do we put our phones down or turn off the TV when our spouse is speaking?



This is an important point. To stop working, stop playing with the kids, stop watching the game, or stop whatever we are doing is a big thing. I work a lot in terms of preparing for Christian Questions. Often, I am working in my podcast office and my wife, Tricia, comes in to share something with me. Usually I am in the middle of something, so I say, *"Hold on honey, let me finish writing this thought so I don't forget it."* I type it out, I stop, and I turn so that now I can listen. It is NOT, *"Sure, tell me what you are thinking"* - as I continue to type. It is too important for me to actually listen.

How do we get to the point of actively listening?

Remember, there are two basic kinds of love that scripturally apply to marriage. It is very possible to have one kind without the other and also possible to lose sight of both kinds:



A strong marriage is built upon mutual respect. This includes an ever-growing ability to take that which we **tolerate** and transform it into that which we **embrace**.

There are three Greek words that indicate different kinds of love in the Bible - *philia*, *agape* and *storge* (the last one is not often used).

Remember the fourth, *eros*, does not actually appear in the Scriptures, though the effects of sensuality do appear throughout.

The root word of the first of these is *philos*:

**Love:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

#5362 *philandros*; fond of man, i.e., affectionate as a wife: - love their husbands

#5387 *philostorgos*; (cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children), fond of natural relatives, i.e., fraternal towards fellow Christian: - kindly affectioned

#5388 *philoteknos*; fond of one's children, i.e., maternal: - love their children



These forms include affection between spouses, parents to children and children to parents. This level is the most basic and instinctive. In other words, this is natural family love. This kind of love also applies to the Christian brotherhood.

The exercise of this family love, this give and take, the fun, the excitement, the sharing through the mundane chores and difficulties of life, should be ever present. This is important. This is a kind of love we need.

### The necessity of this kind of love:

**Titus 2:4-5:** (NKJV) *<sup>4</sup>that they admonish the young women to **love <5362>** their husbands, to **love <5388>** their children, <sup>5</sup>to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

These verses include two of the forms of *philos*, family love. They are not saying that this love is not there, but that young wives (and husbands) should not lose sight of this love because it is our Christian responsibility. This love needs to be central and continuous in our lives.

This family love keeps the spousal connection flowing on an emotional give-and-take basis. It is so important to feed this emotional back and forth: *I take care of you, you take care of me, and we take care of each other. I listen to you, and you listen to me.* It is this give and take that keeps a marriage strong and is what is being described in these Titus texts.

What do I THINK when I LISTEN to my spouse?

### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

Truly listening to my spouse comes far more naturally when I am centered in my affectionate love for them. If my listening is weak or disinterested it is a sign of waning affection. The sooner I recognize and respond to this development, the sooner I can return to being the cherishing spouse I am called to be.



When our spouse brings something to our attention, how are we responding? If we respond in a half-hearted way, we are going to get half-hearted communication. Half-hearted plus half-hearted means no-hearted! It goes the opposite way from where we want to be.



We need to think, reassess and recognize something is wrong, then correct it. Sometimes we just do not feel this first kind of love. Where do we go from there?



**A strong marriage is built upon putting your spouse first.**



Loving them enough to not be concerned with what you get in return is a foundation of true marital connection and growth.

**Love:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #25 *agapao*; to love (in a social or moral sense)

**Love:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #26 *agape*; love, i.e., affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love feast

This is a selfless love, a benevolent love that gives without expecting a return in kind. This is a picture of God whose benevolence for us presented his son Jesus as a sacrifice so that we have an opportunity for life. There is a giving without a thought of receiving. This is also the way Jesus loved. He gave and it did not concern him what he got in return. His entire ministry was teaching others to live up to the same standard.

We will look at two examples of this kind of benevolent love.

**This example below takes place the night before the crucifixion of Jesus:**

John 15:12: (NASB) *This is my commandment, that you **love <25>** one another, just as I have **loved <25>** you.*

It is not a suggestion - *This is my commandment*. Love in the way you have seen me love you! *Love one another* - as an example, Jesus washed the feet of the apostles not too long before this. This carries a sense of giving without worrying about receiving.

**A beautiful example of selfless love:**

Ephesians 5:25: (NASB) *Husbands, **love <25>** your wives, just as Christ also **loved <25>** the church and gave himself up for her.*

A husband should love his wife in one way - to give without worrying about receiving back. This is that higher kind of love.

**The original marriage proclamation implies this selfless kind of love:**

Genesis 2:24: (NASB) *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined (cling or adhere) to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

That "clinging to" does not have conditions on it. It does not say to cling to our spouse when we are really clicking together, communication is good, and life is really rolling along. It says: this is what we must do, no matter what. Marriage is a life-long commitment. It does not matter what the circumstances are; we have to cling to our spouse even if nothing is reciprocated.

This is harder to accomplish because our relationship to our spouse is the most common and continual thing in our lives. This is the problem - it becomes TOO common instead of something we extraordinarily strive for. When we look at the next principle of Caring and Committed Communication, let's think of it in terms of this kind of selfless love.

What do I THINK when I LISTEN to my spouse?

### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

When I find myself having personal challenges with being able to readily access the affectionate love I should have in listening to my spouse, I need further steps. I must claim the love that Jesus showed me – a love that gave without needing anything in return, and apply it to my spouse as I intentionally cling to them through my personal doubts.



If we do not have affection for our spouse in the moment, we should ask ourselves if Jesus loves US no matter what. We need to love our spouse that way and work on getting that affection back into our relationship. Do not give up, go up - live higher like Jesus. If we do not feel it, then let us do what Jesus did for us. Jesus never stops loving us even when we sin and ask forgiveness - he still loves us the same. This is such a beautiful thing. We should apply this to our spouses regularly. If we do not feel particularly loving, then we should do what Jesus does. This way we have two kinds of love working for our marriage.

**When struggling to communicate, how often do we just stop and think about the advantages, opportunities and privileges we have because we have our spouses?**



**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. <sup>10</sup>For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. <sup>11</sup>Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? <sup>12</sup>And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

**A cord of three strands** refers to us, our spouse and the covenant we made before God Almighty. This is a powerful bond that makes the cord of three strands so strong.

When we think of our spouses, we also ought to think of the godly grace that binds us together! Think of the power of that godly grace. What an advantage we have because of this. Do not put these things aside. We must keep them in the forefront of our minds.

To realize there are several ways to love our spouse is to realize there are several paths to reconcile our differences.



## What happens when we get to a point where we just do not want to listen and just feel like quitting?

When we do not feel loved it is easy to resign, bringing up thoughts of retreat. We can easily fall into the thought pattern of *there's no hope* or *biggest mistake of my life* or *what did I do to deserve this?* Retreating triggers a shutting down of the heart, which makes effort a thing of the past. This is a common, worldly state of being. We have to be very careful of this retreating and resigning.

For the committed Christian these should be a rarity, but what do we do when they show their ugly face? Let's look at the big picture of how the Bible describe the importance of the connection of family love.

**A lack of family love is twice cited as a sign of the depth of sin and as a sign of the end times:**

Romans 1:28,31: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, <sup>31</sup>without understanding, untrustworthy, **unfeeling <794>** (also translated as "unloving") and unmerciful.

**Unfeeling/Unloving:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #794 *astorgos*; hard-hearted towards kindred, without natural affection

**Unfeeling/Unloving:** Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon #794 *astorgos*; without natural affection, (lacking love of family)

Back in the Apostle Paul's day, he was writing and observing the corruption of the world around him. He said one of the major symptoms of the depth of this corruption was a lack of love of family. This is a huge indictment! To see that it even existed back then is a warning sign that we are on the wrong track. We will not experience goodness in our marriage if we fall into such a state.

**Let's look at it from a prophetic standpoint:**

2 Timothy 3:1-3: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup>For men will be... <sup>3</sup>**unloving <794>**, (also translated as "unfeeling") irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal...

Here we find the same Greek word *astorgos* - **unloving/unfeeling** - lacking a love of family. As we look around, we can easily see the many ways recent generations have subtly fulfilled this prophetic statement. We see this lack of family love everywhere in the world around us now.

**Am I bending to the pressures of this world as I relate to my spouse?**

Are we fulfilling the words of this prophecy? If we are, that is terrible. We do not want to be doing this! We cannot be going down this road if we are given so much to rise above and stand for something that is higher and stronger and so much better.

We cannot resign or retreat when it comes to our efforts to hear, and communicate with, our spouse. What we feel is important, but it is NOT the most important thing in the marriage environment and the marriage covenant. **The most important thing is to honor our spouse.** How do we do this?





With patience and with God's grace, even if we feel discouraged. We do not have permission to be dishonorable.

The general principles taught by Jesus apply to our marriages as well.

**If we are at odds with our spouse, consider this:**

Matthew 5:43-44: (NASB) <sup>43</sup>You have heard that it was said, you shall **love <25>** your neighbor and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, **love <25>** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

If we are working on developing the Christian quality of loving our enemies, why would we not also work on loving our spouse when we are at odds? The love here refers to that selfless, benevolent love because maybe we are not feeling a warm, family love right now.

We do not feel this family love for our enemies, of course, but we must be willing to love them as Jesus loved them because he died for them! If we are supposed to be working on loving our enemies, how much more should we work on loving our spouses who are so much closer to us? If we do not feel it, we must rise above and do what Jesus did.

**Another general principle Jesus spoke about (especially in parables) is diligently taking care of those things entrusted to you:**

Luke 16:10: (NASB) *He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*

We have been entrusted with our marriage covenant which God has given us. How are we doing? Are we being faithful to it in every degree? We have heard the phrase: *Well, at least I'm not cheating on her...* Is that how we are supposed to describe our faithfulness? If we are starting there, we know we have troubles. If this is where we are, we need to find a fellow Christian who has their feet firmly on the ground and talk to them.

This is serious. We do not want to go with *at least I am not...* The moment we go there, we enter the realm of rationalization. This leads to destruction, discontent and disquiet in the home life. It is so hard to recover from this deep disquiet. We are entrusted with the covenant, so what are we doing with it?



Let's think of these next texts as though they were designed primarily as a "Christian Marriage Guide."

**Treat your spouse with the same love, compassion and understanding with which we treat the brotherhood:**

1 Peter 3:8-9: (NKJV) <sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as **brothers <5361>**, be tenderhearted, be courteous; <sup>9</sup>not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

**Brothers:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5361 *philadelphos*; fond of brethren, i.e., fraternal: - love as brethren



How will I be judged by God if I have not been taking care of my spouse?

This is a piercing question that we, as Christians, need to be willing to ask ourselves. If we are having issues and are angry a lot of the time, and not communicating often, we must ask ourselves this question. The scripture says: *...knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. How are we supposed to react? We are supposed to be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing. We are to be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as **brothers**. There is that family kind of love again. These verses tell us there is much on the line.*

When we talk about marriage and communication, it is not so that we can necessarily have a perfect married life, but it is so that we can have a fruitful Christian life. That is a big part of this. The good, appropriate treatment of our spouses gives us a much more fruitful Christian life.

### The next text in our Christian Marriage Guide:

Philippians 2:2-4: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>*make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same **love** <26>, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* <sup>3</sup>*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* <sup>4</sup>*do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

We know this is talking about how we are to treat the brotherhood. However, if we truly treat our spouse as being more important than ourselves, our anger, frustration and annoyance at not being understood is going to take on a different light. We will then approach it with grace and honor first, just like we are supposed to with the brotherhood.

As I think on these things, what is going through my head and what *should be* going through my head? How much should I be pausing and considering and listening and honoring as I go through these scriptures?

What do I THINK when I LISTEN to my spouse?

### CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION

I must realize that any issues I have with my spouse can easily get swept under the rug and ignored. When I feel like doing this let me instead love selflessly as Jesus taught me to love my enemies. Let me extend myself as I am instructed to with the brotherhood, realizing my spouse's importance is beyond all of these other things.



We have covenanted to be with our spouse our entire life. This means they are the most important human being to us. That is what the covenant is. Let's live it.

### **An example of a great marriage that shows us all what it looks like to co-labor with your spouse as you serve the Lord:**

Acts 18:2-3: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>... found a Jew named Aquila... having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, <sup>3</sup>and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them... for by trade they were tent-makers.

Aquila and Priscilla were chased out of Rome. The Apostle Paul stayed with them and co-labored at tent-making and preaching the gospel with them. They then went to Ephesus with him. They were greatly attached to Paul and he to them.

### **Apollos the gifted communicator came to Ephesus to teach, but he was not fully versed in all Christian doctrine:**

Acts 18:25-26: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; <sup>26</sup>....But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

The two of them together took this wonderful orator aside, who was so beautifully presenting the gospel, to tell him with quietness and humility that there was more truth than he knew - the baptism of Jesus. This would make him an even better teacher.

### **Priscilla and Aquila continue to do things in Scripture; they show up again:**

Romans 16:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup>who for my life risked their own necks... <sup>5</sup>also greet the church that is in their house...

The Apostle Paul said they risked their lives for him. They were also hospitable, inviting the brethren to worship in their home.

### **They were leaders and faced danger together for the sake of the greater cause of the gospel TOGETHER:**

1 Corinthians 16:19: (NASB) *The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*

Priscilla is often mentioned first. It shows how special she was to Paul and the other brethren. We see this incredible union that served God. Never are Aquila and Priscilla mentioned in Scripture without one another. What an inspiration to us!

**What do I THINK when I LISTEN to my spouse?**

#### **CARING AND COMMITTED COMMUNICATION**

When struggling to communicate with my spouse, let me pause and consider the "what" and "how" of my communication, rephrase my words and embrace my spouse's value to me. Let me strive to love my spouse on all levels and seek examples of true Christian marriages to inspire me to truly cling to my life partner through all experiences and at all costs.





When we ask ourselves, *What do I say when I talk to my spouse*, we have a choice. Hopefully I bless them with every word that comes out of my mouth, even when I am upset. I can choose to do this by applying God's grace. What we say when we talk to our spouses should be inspired by the scriptural principles we read about today. Let me bless my spouse with all of my words *and* all of my actions and therefore serve God in a way that I was not before.

We can do this! We just need to choose to bless them every day. We need to talk with our spouse with love, honor and respect. Cherish them and see what happens in our lives.

*So, what do I say when I talk to my spouse?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



### Bonus Material and Study Questions

**Our ability to forgive one another on any level really depends on how we see one another:**

Philippians 2:2-8: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>*make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* <sup>3</sup>*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* <sup>4</sup>*do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**How we see one another really depends on how we see ourselves and Christ in ourselves:**

<sup>5</sup>*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup>*who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,* <sup>7</sup>*but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.* <sup>8</sup>*Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*



Holding onto an unforgiving attitude **WILL** affect us physically and emotionally, as our thinking and life will be continually influenced by its clear and powerful influence. Because we are affected physically and emotionally, we **WILL** be affected spiritually and that will directly detract from our ability to follow Christ.

**Generally, it is pride that is behind our marital destructive behavior:**

Proverbs 16:18-20,24-25: (NKJV) <sup>18</sup>*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* <sup>19</sup>*Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.* <sup>20</sup>*He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he...* <sup>24</sup>*Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.* <sup>25</sup>*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

**Our ability to forgive one another on any level really depends on how we see one another:**

Philippians 2:2-8: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>*make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same **love <26>**, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* <sup>3</sup>*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* <sup>4</sup>*do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1216: What Do I Say When I Talk to My Spouse?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1216-marriage/>

See:  CQ Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. What does to “cleave” to our spouse entail? How do our lives change when we marry? What should the simple message of *cleaving* communicate to my spouse as well as to all others? How does Joshua 22:5 tell us how we should treat our spouses? (See also Genesis 2:23-25)
2. How can *eros*, or our romantic desires, improve our relationship with our spouse? How can it harm the relationship? Is passion a good basis for marriage? Should passion be a part of a committed marriage? (See Song of Solomon 1:2, Proverbs 5:18-20)
3. How should we communicate when we are angry or frustrated with our spouse? What is the difference between “peacekeeping” and “peacemaking”? Why is this important? What words should we use to frame our response when we are angry? How should we deliver them? (See Ephesians 4:25-32)
4. What responsibilities does a husband have in a Christian marriage? What responsibilities does a wife have? How do we cherish, honor and value each other in a marriage? (See 1 Corinthians 12:21-23, Ephesians 5:21-31, 1 Peter 3:7)
5. Why is it important to evaluate the thoughts we have while listening to our spouse? How can this help our communication? Why is the *philia* type of love so important here? (See Titus 2:4-5)
6. What is the basis of a strong marriage? What is *agape* love? How did God exemplify it? How did Jesus? What does Ephesians 5:25 mean to you as a husband? As a wife? (See also Genesis 2:24, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, John 15:12)
7. How should we act towards our spouse when we are at odds and are struggling to communicate? What should we do when we cannot find the *philia* love in our marriage? Why is *agape* love so critical in this situation? (See Matthew 5:43-44, Luke 16:10 Romans 1:28, 31, Philippians 2:2-4, 2 Timothy 3:1-3)
8. What can we learn from the marriage of Priscilla and Aquila? What attributes make their marriage such a good example? (See Acts 18:1-3, 25-26, Romans 16:3-5, 1 Corinthians 16:19)
9. How do you communicate with your spouse? What blessings have you received from your relationship? How can you make your communication with your spouse more Christlike?