

COUPLE COMMUNICATION – SELF-AWARENESS AND DISCLOSURE

Introduction – Our society is characterized by careless communication. We are bombarded by sarcastic, critical, and crude words on a daily basis. To be effective communicators we must recover the sacred nature of words.

Ephesians 4:25-27, 29-32

A. Self-Awareness

1. We experience life through our five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.
2. Our sensory experiences must be rationally interpreted as we seek to make sense of things.
3. A couple can experience the same event, but come away with different interpretations.
4. Our emotional state depends on our interpretation of our experience.
5. We must become more aware of what we want out of various life events.
6. Based on complex data from our experiences, interpretations, feelings, and desires, we make choices about our behaviors.
7. We need some solitude every day to reflect on what is motivating our behaviors.
8. You cannot communicate your true intentions, interpretations, and motivations behind your observable behavior unless you know yourself.

B. Self-Disclosure

1. Couple closeness can only be achieved if we disclose the interworking of our heart to our partner.
2. Successful self-revelation is learning to speak for ourselves and not others. (This is often explained as using “I” statements, not “you” statements.)
3. Self-disclosure starts with the raw data of our life experiences. “When I saw or heard....”
4. No one can know how you interpret a situation unless you reveal it. This helps the other person understand your present feelings.

5. We should always reveal our interpretations in a tentative way because we do not have exhaustive knowledge. We need to remain open to changing our minds.
6. To achieve deeper intimacy in our relationship, we must become willing to share what we want. What do you desire in a given situation?
7. Our goal is to make our true intentions clear to our partner.

C. Why We Fail to Connect through Our Communication

1. It is not what we believe but how we communicate it that determines success when we talk.
2. Becoming verbally critical based on your limited perspective usually results in a defensive or combative response.
3. “You always...” statements are guaranteed to fail in connecting with your partner.
4. Your goal should not be to persuade your partner or win the argument.
5. Your goal should be to accurately reveal your experiences, interpretations, feelings, wants, and behaviors to another.

Conclusion – We must become introspective and carefully reveal ourselves using healthy words, so that our partner can grow in their insight into our inner workings.

Matthew 12:35-37

(Please write down any questions you have for Bruce and pass them to the aisle for a brief dialogue after the message.)