Premarital Counseling
Session 2: A Theology of Communication

Instructions: Be sure to finish the Scripture study, readings, and exercises before Session 2.

Key Ideas

1. The goal of marital communication is
   a. spiritual growth – to use your words to help your spouse look more like Christ.
   b. union in marriage – to achieve a oneness of understanding.
   c. responsible, loving, careful speech – to use our words to build up and not to tear each other down.

2. Our Model for communication is the incarnation – the Son of God took on flesh and entered into our experience. He was tempted like we were tempted, etc. Just like Christ, a husband and wife’s call is to use words to enter into their spouse’s experience and to understand their spouse.
Scripture Study Guide for Biblical Communication

Instructions: Read Matt 12:22-37; Eph 4:17-32; James 3:1-18; 4:1-10. Below you will find a list of verses and questions that help you think about the text. For each verse, explain briefly what the verse means and how it applies to marriage. (Note that I’ve only included a few lines to write on because I want you to be brief!)

Matt 12:22-37 (focus on vs. 33-37)

Questions: How do you recognize a tree (v. 33)? If the good and bad trees are meant to be a word picture for human beings, what does the “fruit” represent? What is the connection between the heart and the mouth (v. 34)? What’s the relationship of your “empty” or “careless” words and God’s judgment (vs. 36-37)?

Explanation: ____________________________________________________________
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Application to marriage: ________________________________________________
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Eph 4:29

Questions: What should not come out of your mouth? What should come out of your mouth? What is meant by the phrase “according to their needs” (NIV) or “as fits the occasion” (ESV)?

Explanation: ____________________________________________________________
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Application to marriage: ________________________________________________
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James 3:1-18

Questions: James gives several word pictures—bits in horses’ mouths; small rudders for ships; and a fire (vs. 3-6). Explain what each of these word pictures mean in regards to the tongue. Who can tame the tongue (vs. 7-8)? James creates contrasts
in vs. 9–12 (praise and cursing; fresh and salt water flowing from the same spring; etc.). What’s the point of these contrasts?

*Explanation:* ____________________________________________________

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*Application to marriage:* __________________________________________

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James 4:1–10

*Questions:* Where do fights and quarrels come from? Why does James call his readers “adulterous” (vs. 4)? What attitude/posture will transform the way you communicate (vs. 6-7, 10)?

*Explanation:* ____________________________________________________

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*Application to marriage:* __________________________________________

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Exercises for Biblical Communication

Part 1. Below you will find a list of proverbs that deal with communication.

Prov 10 vs. 8, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 21, 31, 32.
Prov 11 vs. 9, 11, 12, 16, 17.
Prov 12 vs. 6, 13 – 19, 22, 25.
Prov 13 vs. 2-3
Prov 14 vs. 3, 5, 7, 9-10, 17, 25, 29.
Prov 15 vs 1-2, 4, 7, 12, 18.
Prov 16 vs. 5, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28, 32.
Prov 17 vs. 7, 9 –10, 14, 19, 20, 27, 28.
Prov 18 vs. 2, 4, 6-8, 13, 15.
Prov 19 vs. 11.
Prov 20 vs. 3.
Prov 21 vs. 9, 19, 23, 24.
Prov 22 vs. 10, 11, 24, 25.
Prov 23 vs. 9.
Prov 24 vs. 17, 26.
Prov 25 vs. 11, 12, 14, 15.
Prov 26 vs. 4, 5, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28.
Prov 27 vs. 2, 5, 14, 15, 19.
Prov 28 vs. 23, 26.
Prov 29 vs. 1, 8, 11, 19, 20, 22.

*Instructions*: Read through the proverbs listed above. Pick three proverbs that in some way reflect your communication *struggles*. Explain how each proverb describes your relationship.

#1. Proverbs ___:____
*Explanation:______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

#2. Proverbs ___:____
*Explanation:______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

#3. Proverbs ___:____
*Explanation:______________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Instructions: Refer again to the proverbs listed above. Pick three proverbs that in some way reflect your communication strengths. Explain how each proverb describes your relationship.

#1. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
#2. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
#3. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Instructions: Refer again to the proverbs listed above. Pick three proverbs that in some way reflect communication skills that you (do not yet but) hope to one day reflect. Explain why you picked each proverb and explain its relevance to your relationship.

#1. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
#2. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
#3. Proverbs ___:____
Explanation: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Part 2. Working through Conflict

With your fiancé, choose either a problem that is unresolved or something that was recently resolved. If you put things on a scale of 1 (superficial problem) to 10 (very, very sensitive), pick something between 5 and 7. Be prepared to talk about the fight with the pastor, but work through the questions below before you come in.

1. What was the problem/conflict/fight?

2. What was each of you coveting, desiring, hoping for?

3. At what point did you get disappointed/annoyed/frustrated/angry with your fiancé? And, why did you get disappointed/annoyed/frustrated/angry with your fiancé?

4. Did you really understand your fiancé’s perspective? Ask him/her if he or she feels like you understood him/her?

5. What are your typical rules of engagement in a fight? If you don’t have any, what should they be?

6. What sins do you need to own up to and confess to God and your fiancé? (Take some time to do that now...)
Sermons

From Desiring God (www.desiringgod.org):

• Paul Tripp – War of Words: Getting to the Heart for God’s Sake – Desiring God National Conference (2008)

From CHBC audio (www.capitolhillbaptist.org):

• Zach Schlegel – God’s Wisdom for our Words – Proverbs (2014)

Readings

The Ricucci’s Love that Lasts: Ch. 4-6

An Optional Reading and Companion Exercise about Fighting and Conflicts

If you want to get better equipped at handling conflict consider:

1. Reading Ken Sande’s Resolving Everyday Conflict
2. Talking with a wise, older, godly couple about your conflict patterns. Ask them to hold you accountable and to pray for you.
3. If you don’t fight much (yet) then meet with an older, godly couple and ask them to explain how they learned to handle conflict.