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# Growing even closer through our communication

## Introductory Reading

Today we can communicate faster, with more people, and in many more ways than ever before – mobile telephones, email and text messages, to name a few. Yet in spite of all our technology, we know **communication is more than just transmitting a message between one person and another – it's about understanding and building a close connection.** Good communication in marriage is essential. So what gets in the way – what makes us feel disconnected?

*What are the things that make communication difficult for me and my partner?*

## Feeling disconnected?

There are many reasons for feeling disconnected from our partner, including:

- I. **Lack of time and energy.** Busyness and stress so fill most people's lives today that many couples complain they simply haven't got enough time for each other. Living in the fast lane also drains our emotional batteries. It's no wonder our relationships suffer.
- II. **Our differences.** Family backgrounds, experiences during childhood, personalities, value systems and religious beliefs all affect how we think and respond to situations. Our gender differences may also cause misunderstandings. Generally speaking, women like to express their feelings and men prefer to share information.
- III. **Styles of expression.** Some prefer to talk about facts and concrete realities, whereas others focus on concepts, ideas and possibilities. An introverted personality often prefers small groups and time alone, whereas extroverts get their energy from interaction with more people. Some like analysing situations before making decisions; others let their hearts rule.

## God's design for couples

In the creation account we read that God makes humans 'in his image', as male and female.<sup>1</sup> We also read about His design for marriage: that two should leave their families, unite, and become one. A new unit is formed as we join our hearts, minds and bodies in marriage. God now sees us as 'one'. We are still individuals but somehow, together, we have become something new – a unique expression of the image of God.

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 2:24–25

**Communication helps us to get close to our partner – to build emotional intimacy and to experience and develop our 'oneness'.** Busyness, stress and our differences can make communication difficult, even though that's not what we intend. **But the root of communication problems lies in the distortion of God's design.** We have an inner bent towards putting our own thoughts, feelings, desires and our lives at the centre of everything and before others. The Bible calls this sin. We also tend to hide our true selves from each other. This makes it difficult to get close to our partner.

*How do I overcome my self-centredness and connect deeply with the thoughts, feelings and desires of my partner?*

## Good communication

We can build understanding and get closer to our partner by improving our communication skills. We can learn to be better listeners, to express ourselves more clearly, understand body language and the like, but at the end of the day these are only tools.

**The heart of deep communication is about being transparent, which requires complete openness and trust.**<sup>2</sup> There should be nothing to hide and no secrets to undermine the bond of trust. Transparent communication is free from shame, blame and fear. This level of sharing is a great challenge, but together – with God's help – we can work to see our communication become something that brings joy, closeness and new energy to our marriage.

**This session looks at how we can develop a closer relationship through the way we communicate.**

