

August 8, 2006

Encouragement for Today

“Beep-Beep”

Micca Monda Campbell, Director of Outreach, Proverbs 31 Ministries Speaker Team Member

Key Verse: Job 15:3, “Would he [she] argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value?” (NIV)

Devotion:

Communication is like dancing the tango. It takes two. However, just because you communicate your thoughts to someone doesn't mean they will be understood. The person I have the hardest time communicating with is my spouse. While this reality can be frustrating at times, I believe the saying is true... *Men really do come from Mars and women are from Venus!* We simply communicate differently.

It wasn't until my husband and I were preparing to teach a pre-marriage class for engaged couples at church that we began to learn and practice good communication skills. We understood the techniques. To communicate clearly you must listen, ask questions, and repeat back what you heard the other person say. Sounds easy enough, right? Not for the teachers. My husband and I found these tools to be easier “taught” than “practiced.”

Most of the time we were not listening to what the other was saying, but rather thinking up our own defense and then sharing it loudly! So to teach the class and ourselves how to use these techniques, one of our co-teachers developed a little game called, “Beep-Beep.” She discovered that practicing good communication skills is as easy as ordering a Big-Mac at McDonalds.

It is easy to play the game. It only takes a little imagination and willingness to play by the rules. However, before we begin, let's review the process of ordering fast food..

Before placing your order at any drive-in window, your car rolls over a wire that sounds “Beep-Beep” inside of the restaurant informing them they have a customer. Then, the happy employee acknowledges you. “May I take your order?”

“Yes, thank you. I would like a Big-Mac with fries and a Diet Coke to balance the calories, please.” You state clearly.

The cheerful employee repeats and clarifies your order. "You would like a Big-Mac with fries and a Diet Coke. Is this correct?" "Yes, it is!" you confirm with mouth-watering excitement.

Likewise, the process is the same when communicating with your partner. To gain your spouse's attention, drive over beside them in your imaginary car and say, "Beep-Beep." This signals to the other person that you need their full attention without interruption. Once you have "placed your order" by making your thoughts known, your partner happily repeats your statement back word for word just like the employee at McDonald's. Then your spouse asks, "Is this correct?" to clarify they have heard you properly. If so, the pay off is you have successfully made your thoughts known without fuss or fight.

This has become a regular means of communication for my husband and me. Sometimes while I'm reading a book, my honey will sit down beside me and say, "Beep-Beep." Immediately I know there's an issue he needs to discuss. Other times I've stepped in front of the TV and sounded my horn, "BEEP-BEEP" to gain his attention. Did you notice my horn is a little louder than his?

Approaching you partner with "Beep-Beep" is a great way to break the ice and let them know, "I want to talk heart-to-heart." Staying within these guidelines allows each person a turn to speak, the assurance of being heard, and the satisfaction of communicating with success.

With this method, you don't have to wait until Venus is in alignment with Mars to talk to your spouse. You now have the skills to approach your partner, sound your horn and order up some good conversation. Play by the rules, and you'll always get what you order- Good communication!

My Prayer for Today:

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of communication. Help me and my spouse to use this gift for sharing our thoughts and ideas with compassion and thoughtfulness instead of demanding our own way. Help us to continue talking until we reach unity. If not, help us to agree to disagree without anger or resentment. Make my words useful, pleasing and uplifting at all times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Share this devotion with someone with whom you wish to have better communication. Ask if they are willing to play along. If so, then no matter where you are, at home, in the car, or on the beach, good communication is only a "beep" away.

Reflection Points:

Do you listen when others are speaking, or are you always thinking about what you're going to say next?

Do you care about what the other person is expressing, or do you care more about defending yourself?

When someone is speaking to you, do you stop, look them in the eye, and let them know they have your full attention? Or does your body language communicate something different?

When it comes to communicating with your spouse, do you want to be happy or right?

Power Verses:

Proverbs 22:11, "He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend." (NIV)

Proverbs 8:13, "To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech." (NIV)

Titus 2:8, "And soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us." (NIV)

1 Peter 3:10, "For whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech." (NIV)

Additional Resources:

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_fiveLoveLang.htm

Capture His Heart by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_captureHis.htm

Love Notes on His Pillow by Shannon Ethridge

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_hisPillow.htm