



Secrets to a Successful Marriage

Principle number Sixteen

Communication

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Communication is a great key to a successful marriage. Many times, if not most of the time, when an offense is taken, it was never intended, but because of a miscommunication a spouse was offended. Often a spouse is offended by something that never even happened. A gesture or conversation was not interpreted correctly and an offense was the result. We often expect our spouse should know what we need. They should know how we feel. The truth is they don't. You have to tell your spouse what you need; you have to tell them how you feel. If you assume they should know, you are setting yourself up for an offense. Each of us was raised differently. Your parents may have told each other every day they loved each other; your spouse's parents may have never told each other they loved each other. Now you're married and your spouse hardly ever says they love you. You assume they should know to tell you they love you and when they don't, you are offended. The truth is they don't know they should tell you every day they love you. You have to communicate with them that you desire them to tell you every day they love you. When it comes to communication never assume anything. Sit down with your spouse and tell them how you feel. My wife and I had something happen in our marriage shortly after we were married. It was devastating. I didn't know how to deal with it so I never brought it up. The way I dealt with it was to forget it. For the next couple of years my wife would sing along with the radio when certain songs would be played. These songs would remind me of the thing that had happened. I could not understand why she would do that, I thought she just enjoyed tormenting me. For the next ten years our marriage went into a vicious cycle. When we would have a bad fight, my wife would threaten to leave me. I would say I'm sorry, I will change. Then she would apologize and we would make up. We went through this cycle about every month for the next ten years. I was so frustrated that one night I went outside in my backyard and I cried out to God for help in my marriage. I told him I was willing to do anything to save my marriage. He spoke to me and told me to take my wife out and to bring that thing up that had happened ten years earlier and to forgive one another and to repent to one another. I felt very uncomfortable about doing it, but I truly believed I had heard from God. The next day my wife and I went out for a soda. I told her what the Lord had said to me. I told

my wife the only way I knew to deal with what happened was to put it out of my mind and pretend it never happened. Her interpretation of my actions was, he don't care. She would sing along with the radio those songs in an attempt to get my attention to deal with the problem. My interpretation of her actions was she is very cruel trying to torment me. We repented to each other and forgave each other. Our marriage began to mend that day. There was a hurt in each of our hearts that was producing this vicious cycle in our marriage. We had misinterpreted each other's actions. We assumed that each other was supposed to act a certain way. We went through ten years of hell in our marriage because we did not communicate. Many marriages die because actions are misinterpreted. They never should have died. Simply communicating could have saved that marriage. The scripture in *Hebrews 13:16* says that communicating is a sacrifice. You have to purpose in your heart you are going to communicate with your spouse. You are no longer going to assume anything. Communication can solve many of the problems in a marriage. When you make the sacrifice to communicate, it is pleasing to God.

Everyone communicates differently. Sometimes we are so frustrated we just explode. If you will allow each other to explode, and get the frustration off their chest, without defending yourself, or retaliating, you can work through anything. Just get past the initial confrontation and let the emotional calm down then you can talk and work things out. You must be willing to compromise. You must be willing to make decisions for what is best for the marriage and the family. There is no one who wants their marriage to fail. Be willing to work it out and it will survive and thrive.

A Time to Reflect

1. Do you see the value in communicating?
2. Will you make a decision not to assume anything?
3. How does your spouse communicate? How do you communicate?
4. Are you willing to let your spouse explode to get the frustrations out of their heart without defending yourself or retaliating?
5. Will you make a commitment to sit down and not leave until you work things out?