



Communi-  
cation

## FOUR LAWS OF COMMUNICATION

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(Acts 15:7)



ommunication is the key to successful relationships. We get along best with those we understand the most. Learning to communicate our thoughts and feelings is vital to understanding one another. It helps us see into the minds and hearts of our spouse, children, parents, friends, and coworkers. Expectations are clarified and problems are solved when we learn to communicate our deepest needs, feelings, and frustrations.

God models communication for us in His character and in His Word. From the very beginning, God created us with a capacity for interpersonal communication. He has spoken to us in His Word and He teaches us how to communicate with one another. God's rules of communication are expressed in four basic commands found in Ephesians 4:25-32 and illustrated numerous times in the Book of Acts.

**Law One—***Stop lying and start telling the truth (Eph. 4:25).* Most Christian couples will stare in disbelief if their counselor suggests they might be lying to each other. But lies can be as simple as refusals to tell the truth. For example, when people ask us how we are doing, we almost always say that we are "fine." But sometimes that is a lie because we are not fine. When someone asks: "Is anything wrong?" we will often say, "Oh, nothing."

Lying is a constant problem in human conversation and it keeps us from genuine communication. If we are obviously upset, but insist that we are all right, others will assume we just don't want to talk about it. Instead of gaining their compassion, we often push them away altogether.

People lie to protect themselves from the stress they perceive will come from a confrontation. When we insist that we are OK or that nothing is bothering us, we ac-

tually erect barriers to communication. Our facial expressions, body language, and verbal communication are all saying, "Go away, I don't want to talk about it."

**Law Two—***Keep current (Eph. 4:26, 27).* God clearly says that going to bed angry with each other is a sure way to allow the devil to drive a wedge into a relationship. Anger not dealt with is anger saved for future use. It is possible that the problem that was the occasion for the anger cannot be solved so quickly. However, the anger can be put to rest by agreeing to address the issue at a later time. The relationship can be reestablished even though the issue cannot be immediately settled. The point of the passage is the *relationship*, not the particular *issue*. Taking responsibility for offending each other, attempting to deal with the issues, and seeking and granting forgiveness is necessary. Since initiating reconciliation is the responsibility of both the offended and the offender, neither can use a ruptured relationship as an excuse to "let the sun go down" on their wrath. The sooner we deal with it, the better!

**Law Three—***Tackle the issue, not the individual (Eph. 4:29, 30).* This rule focuses upon the control and intent of our speech. Following his pattern of put off and put on, Paul indicates that we must choose the

content of our speech. "Cutting words" are to be put off. In their place we must express words that build up the other person(s) in the relationship. Some may object by saying, "That's not how I feel!" To help us, the apostle uses God Himself as our example. God was the offended party and certainly did not feel kindly disposed toward us, yet "God in Christ forgave" us (Eph. 4:32). He spoke and acted for our benefit! He tackled the issue of our sin, not us.

Proverbs 18:6 says, "A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows." One cutting remark leads to another. Communication ceases and character defamation often develops, destroying respect and love. Little wonder that the injunction not to grieve the Holy Spirit is given between this law and the next. The use of our mouths directly affects the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the lives of others.

**Law Four**—*Pro-act, don't react* (Eph. 4:31, 32). All the emotions listed in Ephesians 4:31 are reactionary and retaliatory. They destroy communication. They force defensiveness because they directly attack the other person. On the other hand, the instruction of verse 32 is positive pro-action that leads to a solution, not further conflict. To be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving means being understanding of the other person's frustrations. It is listening to another viewpoint. It is gently considering another's feelings. It is letting love cover a multitude of sins. In short, it is acting in the very practical matter of daily living as God has acted toward us through Christ.

The Ephesians 4 passage provides a biblical frame of reference for communication. Nothing illustrates a principle better than learning how to apply it to one's own experience. We can give various psychological reasons for not communicating. In fact, developing all the "games people

play" will tend to detract from change and encourage the excusing of attitudes and behaviors. If we will learn to practice the biblical behavior suggested in this passage, we will learn to communicate more effectively. In many instances this focus on positive change will not only enhance the communication process, but it will begin effecting lasting thinking and attitude adjustments in us as well. We become what we communicate, so let us learn to speak the truth with love and grace.

#### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of communication include:

- Psalms 19:14; 31:18
- Proverbs 10:8, 31, 32; 12:14-19; 15:1
- Ecclesiastes 5:2
- Matthew 5:37
- Ephesians 5:4
- James 4:11
- 1 Peter 3:10

<sup>9</sup>(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first<sup>a</sup> descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

<sup>11</sup>And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup>that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in

the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup>but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

#### THE NEW MAN

<sup>17</sup>This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of<sup>a</sup> the Gentiles walk, in the futility of

4:9 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *first*. 4:17 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *the rest of*.

#### KEY PASSAGE



#### Communication

### WORDS' WORTH

(4:15)

Without communication, human beings would be isolated. God gave us language to allow us to talk, express ideas and opinions, provide information, and share feelings. Some people communicate in hurtful ways, saying words that cause pain to the hearer. Believers, however, are to communicate differently. Paul wrote that Christians' words should always be truthful and spoken in love. He added that no corrupt words should come out of believers' mouths; instead, they should speak only "what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

Think about how many times a day we open our mouths to talk. What if every word first had to be passed through a sieve of truthfulness, love, and edification? Would we be left speechless? We would do well to consider what we have to say before we say it. Then we would have time to apply Paul's test to our words.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about communication on pages 1442, 1443. See also the personality profile of Paul and Barnabas on page 1441.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Even at Home** (4:15) Sometimes it is most difficult to be a Christian at home. Believers may work hard at speaking carefully in the world; at home, however, they may not try so hard. While home is a place where we can be ourselves, those "selves" should still show Christlike character. Marriage partners should speak as carefully to each other as they would to a friend or an unbeliever. To speak the truth in love means honesty and openness with the seasoning of love that always respects the other person, seeking his or her best interests. Christian couples who follow Paul's advice to "speak the truth in love" have healthy communication.

**Topic: Marital Communication**

- 16 'After this I will return  
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David,  
which has fallen down;  
I will rebuild its ruins,  
And I will set it up;  
17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the  
LORD,  
Even all the Gentiles who are called by  
My name,  
Says the LORD who does all these things.' <sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>"Known to God from eternity are all His works." <sup>19</sup>Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, <sup>20</sup>but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, <sup>a</sup> from things strangled, and

from blood. <sup>21</sup>For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

#### THE JERUSALEM DECREE

<sup>22</sup>Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas, <sup>a</sup> and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

15:17 <sup>a</sup>Amos 9:11, 12 15:18 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text (combining with verse 17) reads *Says the Lord, who makes these things known from eternity (of old).* 15:20 <sup>a</sup>Or fornication 15:22 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text read *Barsabbas*.

### PERSONALITY PROFILE



Communi-  
cation

## PAUL AND BARNABAS— COMMUNICATING TRUTH IN LIFE

(ACTS 15:36)

Paul and Barnabas formed a powerful missionary team. They met because Barnabas saw Christ in Paul's life before other people did. Barnabas, whose name means "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36), believed God actually could transform someone like Paul into a genuine disciple. Until the end of their first missionary journey, Paul (the former Saul) still needed Barnabas as a character witness. But their partnership was temporary because their reasons for participating were different. Paul was called to a worldwide mission; Barnabas was called to recognize and encourage those who needed it.

Eventually, their different purposes took them in different directions. A dispute over the young disciple John Mark became the occasion of their separation. Paul thought Mark had proven himself unreliable; Barnabas believed Mark was worth another chance. They settled their honest difference of opinion with a solution that allowed each of them to continue to pursue his calling from God. Something important would have been lost if either had given in to the other. The missionary task might have been affected if Paul had agreed to allow someone he did not trust to accompany them. Mark's life might have taken a far different course if Barnabas had agreed to leave him behind.

People sometimes believe that communication and action are separate parts of life. They wrongly assume that we can communicate one way and live another. But if what we say and what we do contradict each other, one of them is a lie. Both Paul and Barnabas acted consistently with what they honestly believed to be true. They parted as brothers on different missions. They didn't make staying together more important than obeying God. The Lord, in turn, blessed each one of them.

Christians throughout history have repeatedly failed to apply this lesson about obedience to God. Believers have separated or stayed together too often for the wrong reasons. When we decide to win an argument rather than obey God, we have already taken a wrong turn.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about communication on pages 1442, 1443. See also the key passage note at Ephesians 4:15 on page 1551.

make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

<sup>32</sup>If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish. <sup>33</sup>Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering. <sup>34</sup>The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the *remaining* blood at the base of the altar. <sup>35</sup>He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

#### THE TRESPASS OFFERING

**5** If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

<sup>2</sup>Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty. <sup>3</sup>Or if he touches human uncleanness—whatever uncleanness with which a man may be defiled, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty.

<sup>4</sup>Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters.

<sup>5</sup>And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; <sup>6</sup>and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which

he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.

<sup>7</sup>If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. <sup>8</sup>And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide it completely. <sup>9</sup>Then he shall sprinkle *some* of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. <sup>10</sup>And he shall offer the second as a burnt offering according to the prescribed manner. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

<sup>11</sup>But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. <sup>12</sup>Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It is a sin offering. <sup>13</sup>The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. *The rest shall be the priest's as a grain offering.* "

#### OFFERINGS WITH RESTITUTION

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

<sup>15</sup>"If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from



#### SOUL NOTE

**To Tell the Truth (5:1)** The strictest honesty was required in telling a story under oath. To witness something and not tell the truth about it caused the person who had been a witness to bear the guilt. As when an oath is spoken in court proceedings to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,"

a witness was bound to speak truthfully and not to hide or shade their meaning in any way. Telling the truth should be a way of life for God's people (Matt. 5:37).

**Topic: Communication**

## DO NOT GRIEVE THE SPIRIT

<sup>25</sup>Therefore, putting away lying, *"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"*<sup>a</sup> for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>*"Be angry, and do not sin";*<sup>a</sup> do not let the sun go down on your wrath, <sup>27</sup>*nor give place to the devil.* <sup>28</sup>Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. <sup>29</sup>Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. <sup>32</sup>And be

kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

## WALK IN LOVE

**5** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup>And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

<sup>3</sup>But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; <sup>4</sup>neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

4:25 <sup>a</sup>Zechariah 8:16 4:26 <sup>a</sup>Psalm 4:4

## SOUL NOTE



**Saying Grace** (4:29) Words are powerful. They can wound or heal. Spoken in love or in anger, words often are remembered by the hearer for many years. A believer's words must be carefully chosen and considered in light of one's relationship with Christ. New life in Christ not only affects where a person will spend eternity, how that person lives, or their self-esteem, but it should also profoundly affect their words. We should never speak with "corrupt words"—such as coarse language, gossip, or slander. Instead, our words should "impart grace" to our listeners. What do our words say about our faith? **Topic: Communication**

## KEY PASSAGE



Presence of the Holy Spirit

## A VERY REAL PRESENCE

(4:30)

When we accept Christ as Savior, we receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Jesus had promised this Spirit to His followers (John 14:15–18). The Holy Spirit marks God's people as His own (Eph. 1:13); we are "sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

Although the Holy Spirit enters our lives to help us live for God, He does not turn us into robots. We constantly battle the sin nature, and at times we fail. When we willfully continue in sin, however, we "grieve" the Holy Spirit.

Having the Holy Spirit with us and in us is a great privilege, but it brings great responsibility. We do not want to grieve Him, so we must be responsible enough to be sensitive to what He tells us. We try to follow His guidance because He has given us a great privilege, sealing us to be with God forever. Far from being an excuse for sin, that privilege gives us high motivation to live for God.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about the presence of the Holy Spirit on pages 1400, 1401. See also the personality profile of the Holy Spirit on page 1416.



above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup>Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

#### QUALITIES NEEDED IN TRIALS

<sup>19</sup>So then,<sup>a</sup> my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; <sup>20</sup>for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

man observing his natural face in a mirror;

JAMES 1:21

<sup>1:19</sup> <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *Know this or This you know.*



**Strength to Resist (1:12-15)** Temptation comes from evil desires inside us, not from God. It begins with an evil thought that becomes sin when we act on it. God does not tempt His people, but He will allow Satan to tempt us in order for us to refine our faith and grow in our dependence on God. And He will not allow us to be tempted more than we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). When temptation raises its head, often unexpectedly, we can resist it by counting the costs and turning to God, asking Him for help, and choosing to obey Him. He will give us the strength we need.

**Topic: Temptation**

#### SOUL NOTE



**Listen Up (1:19)** Communication is more than just talking. If two people are talking at the same time, they aren't communicating—they're just making noise. Communication involves both parties taking turns speaking and listening. Good communication, wrote James, occurs when people are quicker to listen than they are to speak. We want to speak and make our opinions known, but we must also be willing to listen to others. We show respect for others when we listen intently and then speak carefully. **Topic: Communication**

#### SOUL NOTE



**Do It! (1:22)** Many people sit in church and listen to the sermon, only to forget what they heard upon exiting the sanctuary. James says, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." It is important to read, listen to, and know God's Word, but it is also important to obey it. We can measure the effectiveness of our Bible study and attentiveness to the Sunday sermon by our behavior and attitudes during the entire week. How much is our faith affecting how we live? It should make a huge difference, for "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (2:17). **Topic: Change/Maturity**

rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup>Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

<sup>8</sup>If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*,"<sup>a</sup> you do well; <sup>9</sup>but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup>For He who said, "*Do not commit adultery*,"<sup>a</sup> also said, "*Do not murder*."<sup>b</sup> Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

#### FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

<sup>14</sup>What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? <sup>17</sup>Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your<sup>a</sup> works, and I will show you my faith by my<sup>b</sup> works. <sup>19</sup>You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup>But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?<sup>a</sup> <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? <sup>23</sup>And the Scripture was fulfilled

which says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*."<sup>a</sup> And he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

<sup>25</sup>Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

<sup>26</sup>For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

#### THE UNTAMABLE TONGUE

**3** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup>For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup>Indeed,<sup>a</sup> we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. <sup>4</sup>Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. <sup>5</sup>Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup>But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our God and Father, and

<sup>2:8</sup> <sup>a</sup>Leviticus 19:18 <sup>2:11</sup> <sup>a</sup>Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 <sup>b</sup>Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17 <sup>2:18</sup> <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *your* <sup>b</sup>NU-Text omits *my* <sup>2:20</sup> <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *useless* <sup>2:23</sup> <sup>a</sup>Genesis 15:6 <sup>3:3</sup> <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *Now if*.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Before You Speak (3:5-10)** James compares the damage the tongue can do to a raging fire. People dare not be careless in what they say, thinking they can apologize later, because hurtful words cause deep wounds and lasting scars. A few words spoken in anger can destroy a relationship that it took years to build.

Before speaking, we would do well to picture our tongues as sparks that can start a destructive fire and cause irreversible damage. Kind words, however, can build up the spirit and strengthen the bonds of friendship and love. The tongue may be small, but it can cause great harm or do great good. Which it does is up to us. **Topic: Communication**



God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

#### CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND OURS

<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us<sup>a</sup> to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited<sup>a</sup> in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>There is also an antitype

which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

**4** Therefore, since Christ suffered for us<sup>a</sup> in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the

3:18 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text read *you*. 3:20 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text read *when the longsuffering of God waited patiently*. 4:1 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *for us*.

#### KEY PASSAGE



Marital Communication

### LET'S TALK

(3:8)

This verse gives a recipe for building unity among believers. While these ingredients apply to believers in general, they go double for building unity in a marriage.

1. *Be of one mind.* Spouses will not agree on everything, but they should work toward having "one mind." One may have to give in to the other so the two can be united, especially in important decisions.
2. *Have compassion.* Knowing that the other person truly cares enables spouses to share their deepest thoughts and feelings with each other.
3. *Love.* While it seems obvious, love can be the most difficult thing to maintain. Spouses should show the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13.
4. *Be tenderhearted and courteous.* This means having an attitude that puts the other person's needs ahead of one's own.
5. *Blessing one's spouse.* This means always wanting the best for him or her.

Spouses who follow this recipe of honor will find vitality and will communicate effectively.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about marital communication on pages 1660, 1661. See also the personality profile of Aquila and Priscilla on page 1448.

#### SOUL NOTE



**Word Watch** (3:10) These words are for all Christians facing trials. Despite outward circumstances, believers can still "love life and see good days" because of their relationship with God. Verses 10–12 quote from Psalm 34, a psalm for people in trouble. The first recommendation is for us to watch what we say.

Speaking "evil" can refer to any type of speech that displeases God; "deceit" refers to deliberately misleading by lying. A believer's communication should instead be comforting, encouraging, and uplifting. Positive communication pleases God and helps others.

**Topic: Communication**