

Introduction

Steve and Janice are happily married with three young sons. In her spare time, Janice makes crafts, teaches children's classes and collects colorful dolls. One day as Steve prepares for a business trip to Europe, Janice tells him, "You don't need to buy me any more dolls." On his trip, Steve happens upon an amazing doll shop. He takes photos to impress Janice when he returns home. When Janice flips through the images a few days later, she asks, "Where's my doll?" Like many spouses, Steve learns the hard way communication in marriage has many levels. In this second week of *What Happy Couples Know*, we focus on communication and conflict in marriage. By learning to listen and maintain communication, we'll foster a lasting and loving relationship.

Discussion

1. On Valentine's Day, Jessica reposts a picture of the gift a friend got from her fiancé commenting, "Must be nice to be remembered on such a lovely day!" What unmet expectation is Jessica expressing? **Read James 1:19-20**. How should Jessica's fiancé respond to her? Share a similar experience you had with your spouse or significant other. How did you work through that conflict?
2. **Read Proverbs 21:23**, and discuss how you would apply this verse with the following situation: Alice has a bad headache after a stressful day. The baby woke up early, her boss was grumpy and someone cut her off on the way home from work. Her husband walks in at 5:30 and asks how long before dinner is ready.
3. When relationships are stressed, it's healthy to seek help from God and others. How do you navigate the "hard stuff" as a couple? Share how you and/or your spouse has sought help to strengthen your communication.

Do something

1. In your quiet time this week, ask God to show you how to communicate better with your spouse or significant other. Share what God reveals to you with someone who can come alongside you and help you take steps in this process.
2. If there is a couple in your circle who struggles with communication, pray about how you can help them overcome bad habits and create healthy communication patterns. Consider inviting them to a Bible study or suggesting a Christian counselor.
3. Study Scripture verses on respect and love, such as **Ephesians 5** and **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**. Pray about and journal what God is showing you regarding respecting and loving the people in your life.

Resources

To view the videos below, sign up for a free RightNow Media account at prairielakeschurch.org.

1. *Conflict: A Constant Opportunity* is a four-part video series based on the premise, "When relationships exist, conflict is inevitable, but the way we face it is up to us."
2. *Resolving Everyday Conflict* is an eight-lesson study unpacking the amazing things the Bible has to say about conflict and relationships.
3. Tim and Lee Lundy's eight-session video series *Marriage Oneness* equips couples to grow in true intimacy, connection and purpose and experience closeness for a lifetime.