



## SESSION EIGHT

### God's Third Rule of Relationship: Communication

We've come a long way in considering God's *plan* for marriage and also in the detailed specifications of the way God *builds* a marriage like this. We've got to finish this but we're right in the middle, the *heart* of the relationship between husband and wife. There must be *laws of relationship* which are equitable and durable. Equitable, it must be fair for both. It's durable; it continues all the way. And the laws of relationship, as God lays them down, are equitable for husband and wife—and they're durable. They'll last all the way! And the first law of relationship is what I have called management. That's what they call it in business.

The second law of relationship, which the anthropologist calls the role issue. What does the wife do? What does the husband do? And God simply says, "I *have* given you certain responsibilities and I want you to do—wherever possible—I want you to do them together."

Here's law number three. We've got these things together and it looks like they're beginning to work, but do you realize this will not cut? See, you've got it nicely related, but there's something missing. If this thing is going to cut, these blades must *touch!* And the engineer has designed it very beautifully! You see, I left out this part. And the engineer has put that spring there, so that these blades will always *touch*. No touch, no cut. Listen. No touch, no oneness. *You must touch*. You *might* be thinking, "I am going to talk about the *physical touch*." That's *one way* you touch.

But I'm thinking about another way that when human beings touch that way it is *very, very wonderful*. And apart from that touch there'll be no oneness. You can bring them together in the management relationship and even in the role distribution relationship, but if they're not touching in this sense, there won't be the real oneness that we're talking about.

I want to talk to you just a moment about the importance of communication between husband and wife. Some call it the key to marriage. I'm not *that* committed to it. I don't know what I'd call the key; the whole thing I'd call a key because I can't leave out any of it. I don't know what I'd call the key apart from the mercy and grace of God, but have you ever run into a couple like this? Every person who deals with marital counseling will run into this *continually*. The wife will come to you and she will tell you of the difficulty between her and her husband. And then she'll say something like this: "I want to talk to him and I say to him, 'Let's talk about it.' And he says, 'What is there to talk about? The ball game? I don't know anything to talk about.'"

I don't know why we men don't talk and the women do. I talked to a couple of young wives recently: "He doesn't see anything to talk about. What's the big deal?" And there are serious problems between them. If you've got a problem and you can't communicate about it, it will never be resolved. "Every time we start to talk about it, it ends up in a fight. We can't communicate." If you can't communicate, you can't solve your problems. That's what they mean when they say communication is the key to marriage. So then if you can't do it—if you can't communicate—then you have to bring a third person in and he will lead you through.

During the Christmas holidays, I had a couple in from Columbia. And I had both of them together. I thought we were going to have a fight in the office. *Man, that is a problem*. But listen to me. Communication is more important than that. If there are no problems between couples, *they still must communicate*. Communication is more—. That's purely negative! We must communicate so we get rid of problems. So we get

rid of all our problems and then we stop communicating? Communication is *essential* for other reasons! It is this: We've talked about oneness. I take that as a thesis—that the blueprint of marriage is that these two people should be one as *God* is one. I have not yet defined oneness. That is not some mysterious romantic little ideal that Hatch talks about. It is something very *real*.

Let me give you an illustration. I have a lot of students in most of my classes. And I see them just like I'm seeing you out there. I try to read your responses, you know, and I, sometimes I can't quite grab it. And boy, they sit in my classes and sometimes I don't know what's going on. And they tell me later, "God is moving." And that's great and I count on that. But I don't *touch* them. Occasionally a student will come in. I remember this one fellow. I used to watch him in class. I tried to figure him out. I couldn't read him. Sometimes I'd say, "Well man, he's sitting there, but it doesn't seem he's working with me."

And so he came in and he said, "Mr. Hatch, can I talk to you?" "Yes." And he sat down and he began to talk. And he told me he was going home. And he began to tell me about his father, and the way his father treated him. The way his father cut him down and the way his father did this and the father wouldn't do this. And the father cut him down and, "I've got to go back, Mr. Hatch. How can I handle it?"

As well as I remember I told him about my relationship with *my* father. What had happened, and what God had done for me. And we talked. And I shared with him what I thought God wanted for him. And then we prayed.

And this happens every time, every time like that, every time that happens this is the result. I see that student on the campus the next day. There's something different. When I saw that guy on the campus the next day, I'll tell you the truth. I looked at him, and I had a feeling that he's one of my boys. And I went up to him. You know, I had a strange feeling. I wanted to give him some money. That's strange.

See, he'd been in my class. He was a senior! Now, he'd been there for at least two or three years. I had never, *never* wanted to give him any money before. And now I wanted to give him some *money*! And I asked him, I said, "Are you going home?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Do you have enough money to get home?" He said, "Yeah." "You sure?" I really wanted him to say "no" so I could give him some money!

Do you know what has happened? He and I have *touch*ed in soul. And do you know what happens when two people *touch* in soul? They become what? One. *That* is what oneness is. It's not mysterious. Don't go out and say, "Hatch taught about something that is—." It is a very real experience when two people *touch each other*, as the Scripture says about David and Jonathan. What does it say in that beautiful figurative expression? Their souls were what? *Knit together*.

Now the modern psychologists—*some* of them that are not hung up on other things—they talk about it, and they say it's actually a *fusion* of soul. That's what we've been talking about—that husband and wife should become *one*. Tell me. What happened that that student and I became one? Why did we become one and never became one in class? Because for the first time, he and I *communicated*. Do you hear what I'm saying? Communication is important because it is the only God-given channel whereby two people can become one. It is the actual means whereby two persons actually become one.

In the continuing process of communication, *two souls touch*. And the *more* they touch, the *more* they communicate, the *deeper* their communication, the more *quality* communication there is, you know what happens? *The more one they become*. Without communication there is no oneness. If there are no problems you *still* must communicate.

When I used to teach the anthropological approach to linguistics, anybody who will study language will find that language has a two-fold function. And one of them, I used to call it "communication and then communion." It is God's *beautiful* gift whereby human beings cannot only communicate verbally, but can commune and thus become one. And when it happens in a small group it will be the same thing. When it

happens in a church, that church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, will become one. That's the importance of communication.

Alright, quickly, let's move on. What *is* this that is so important which I must *do* if we become one? Let me give you a couple of definitions of communication. Webster, my good friend Webster says, "Communication is to impart by means of words." Am I communicating? I am *imparting* by means of words. One Christian writer says, "Communication is sharing information." And so your husband comes home and he asks you, "How did things go?" And what do you do? You share information. "The washing machine broke down, the stove blew out and this child broke his leg." And you share information. "How did your day go?" "Oh it went fine." That's sharing information.

Involved in both of those definitions, communication is essentially what? Talking. Now let me ask you a question. Can you talk and *not* communicate? You see that's what so often takes place. We talk, talk, talk, but there is *no* communication because as somebody has called it, "It's the dialog of the *deaf*." I mean both are talking but what? Nobody is—. Well, *that's* not even the whole thing.

Let me ask you the other side. Can you communicate without talking? Those authorities in this say 70 percent of marital communication is non-verbal. And they've watched couples. And one study took couples that had *good* relationships and they made video tapes of how they responded. And boy, the body cues, the way they communicated. It's just entirely different, the way they look, the way they touch, that's the way they do . . . . And then they took some couples, you know, they were on the verge of divorce and they made some video tapes of them and boy, the body language was loud and clear. I want to know what communication is. *It is not just talking.*

Alright, let's turn then to our model and I want to suggest for you again, the greatest authority in communication is . . . . I know nothing about the theory of communication, but if you want to get to the *absolute* authority in communication, you go to your great model, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Down here He said, "Now, let's make them, husband and wife, in our image." And we have the capability of communicating because God *first* was a communicator!

Before He even made the heavens and the earth and these men down here, do you think They ever communicated with each other? Would you think? Or would you think They'd just sit? I would think so, though I can't find anything in the Scripture except one little hint. I'll give it to you.

I wish I was sure of this. But I read in John 1:1, "In the beginning," before there was any earth, before there was any *anything*, in the beginning, way back then "was the Word," the Son—talking about Jesus Christ—"In the beginning He *was*." And it says this, "In the beginning" not only He *was*, but "He was *with* God."

Do you know what that word "with" says? It's not the normal word that is used in the New Testament when He says two people, where He went down the road *with* somebody. This is a different word, and it seems to imply this: That in the beginning He *was*, and the word is "*toward*" God. Now I don't want to press that, but it's not just being "with." It kind of looks like They were maybe face-to-face. Now that's not much, but this I know: that They must have communicated deeply, one with another. I am talking as a foolish man; I don't know.

But this I *know*. Has this God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has He ever communicated with us? Yes or no? You better watch *how* He communicates. And you better watch *what* He does when He communicates. And from that, I would like to deduce a definition of marital communication.

Psalms 19 says, "The heavens declare the wonder of God." Look at those mountains! Look at the stars, look at the—!" The heavens declare how wonderful *God* is. Night unto night, day unto day, Their message comes through. But, it says this: "There is no speech; Their language is not heard." What kind of communication is that? That is non-verbal communication. And God has surrounded us with non-verbal communication all over the place, and God is the absolute authority in non-verbal communication. You can

touch anything God has ever made—including the human body—and you know what it'll do. It will be a non-verbal communication of the *wonder* of your God!

He communicates non-verbally. Does He communicate verbally? Has God ever spoken? “God, having spoken in times past, has in these last days *spoken*.” God has *spoken*. God has spoken! When He speaks is He just trying to communicate information? No. Let me give you the essence. Psalm 48 says something like this: *God* has made Himself *known* in this place. John 14 says something like this: “If you love me you will keep My commandments and if you thus walk with Me, I will manifest Myself to you.”

What is *God* concerned about communicating? And from this I would like to suggest a definition of marital communication. What does *God* do? Is He just trying to communicate information? *That is part of it*. But in the process of communicating non-verbally and this verbal material, His *great* desire is that He might, as the paraphrase of John 14, above *everything* else, He wants to do this: *He wants to disclose Himself to you*. That's what it's all about. And that is the *essence* of life! This is life that you—what? *Know Him*.

Through His non-verbal communication, through His verbal communication, and especially through His Son, He wants to disclose Himself to you.

May I take that as a definition of communication? Let me give it to you this way: Marital communication is the mutual sharing of yourselves with each other. It will come sometimes *non-verbally*. It will come sometimes *verbally*. She shares herself and you share yourself in such a way that there is a mutual understanding. You see that? It's *amazing* what God has done when He communicates to us. One reason He does it nonverbally is so you can understand. And then He comes and He speaks in our language. And then He became one of us. And Jesus Christ said, “Those who have seen me have seen the Father.” And as you mutually share yourselves with each other so that there is *mutual* understanding, that will result in oneness! *That's* what I think of as marital communication. And in the process of that, two persons touch, and increasingly become *one soul*. They even say after so many years they begin to *look* alike. They don't really *look* alike. I hope my wife doesn't begin to look like me! But what actually happens probably, you get *so* close and *so* much one, you begin to act alike and then it almost looks like you *look* alike!

Alright, now in the last part of our time tonight let me touch where the rubber hits the road. When God comes and He wants to show Himself to people, does He show Himself to *everybody*? There's one passage in the Old Testament where it says God is a God that *hides* Himself. He does not communicate with everybody, but I'll tell you this: He is anxious to show Himself *wherever* He can find a human being who will meet *certain simple conditions*.

I want to apply it to you and to me. There are certain conditions that this one must meet, and this one must meet. And if you meet those few conditions, whatever they are, then communication can take place. But I'll guarantee you, if you *don't* meet those conditions, you can talk until you are blue in the face, but there *won't* be communication.

Turn with me quickly to 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 11, and then we'll jump into chapter 7, verse 2. Now here is the situation apparently in 2 Corinthians. Paul is having a little difficulty with the Christians at Corinth and as we would say the communication lines have been broken, and Paul writes to try to renew spiritual fellowship and communication. Now watch what he says in verse 11. And he sets before them two basic conditions. He simply says, “I am meeting these conditions, but if I understand it, you are not.” They must be mutually meeting these two conditions. Now watch what they are.

Paul says, “Our mouth is open unto you, oh Corinthians.” There's the first one. I'll deal with that second because I think it is second in importance. Then he goes on. “Our mouth is open unto you, oh Corinthians, our heart is enlarged.” Now that to me is a poor translation; it sounds like a medical problem (laughter). I mean seriously! “Our heart is enlarged”? Well that hardly, I mean that doesn't make sense. Most other versions will translate it entirely different. Another version says this: “Our heart is *wide open unto you*.”

Read on. “Ye are not straightened in us.” The problem is not with *me*; my heart is open, my mouth is open. The problem is with *you*; your heart is not open. “Ye are not straightened in us, but ye are straightened in your own affections. Now for our recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye *also* enlarged. Let your heart be open *also* to me.” Do you see the conditions of communication? He’s got two of them.

Drop down to chapter 7, verse 2. He picks it up again. And he says, “Open your hearts to us.” Or, as the margin in my translation says, “Make room for us in your heart.” Boy, I love that. That is what Paul is saying. *My heart is open. Open your heart to us. Make room for me in your heart. Do you know what he is saying?*

The first condition of communication is *your heart must be open to each other*. Paul says, “My heart is wide open, but yours is not.” Now what he is talking about is this: He’s talking about the human soul. The heart is used in many different ways in the Bible to refer to many psychological things that go on in the inner being of a human.

Now, I will interpret this psychologically. It’s as though he says the soul operates like this. Now I’ll not give the psychological term as I understand it. But the soul—that these two souls are going to *touch* each other. He says there is something about a human being that it’s almost like a door. And if you cannot identify with this, I’m not communicating well. When this person comes, I can either open to him and receive him, or I can shut the door of my heart and reject him.

Now I might smile with a Pepsodent smile. And the scriptures I was reading in my devotions the other day, “You greet them with your mouth but your heart is like a dagger.” That’s another way of saying your heart is closed but you smile outwardly. Now Paul says this: The first condition—*my heart is wide open*. Do you know what that means? That means I accept you as you are. You can say to me, and my wife has a right to say to me, “Just as I am without one plea.” And I’ll say to her, “Come in, just like you are, because that’s the way He received me.” Open your heart to each other.

Do you remember the day you were married? Do you remember the preacher said this? “Will you receive Jane to be your lawful wedded wife?” What did you say? “Well, let me *think*.” “Will you receive?” I had one fellow say, “You bet I will!” And boy, you could just tell his heart was *wide open*! “Jane, will you receive Joe as your . . . ? *Will* you?” They all are wide open and they *receive* each other. But look. Something happens down the road and the door is shut. You can’t communicate that way.

Do you know what that is when I have shut the door of my heart toward my wife? She may never know it, but if I’ve done it, I’ve rejected her. And if I have rejected her, I have rebelled against her. That is what some call emotional divorce. I have put her out of my heart. And if I have put her out of my heart, if I have rebelled against her, and if she’s a child of God and I’m a child of God, I am at that point—listen to me—I am at that point rebelling against my God. This is a serious issue. I cannot put her out of my heart without rebelling against God. And when I open my heart to the Lord and if I’ve closed my heart to my wife, then I come to Him and you know what He’ll say? Before He will interact with me, He’ll say, “Get your heart open to your wife.”

The second condition—an open mouth. “We speak plainly,” he says to you. “Our mouth is open.” You’ve got to speak plainly. I don’t mean just enunciate, you’ve got to speak so they understand. And so many times I speak and my wife has to say, “What’d you say?” And I mumble, mumble, mumble and grumble, grumble, grumble and she doesn’t anymore know what I am saying. Speak plainly and let her know.

I want to close with one verse of Scripture. Listen. In Romans 15 Paul says, “Now may the God of grace and comfort make you of one *mind* and one *heart* that with one *mouth* you may glorify Him. Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ received you to the glory of God.” I wonder if every one of you, with me, will just say this in your heart again: “I receive my partner, just like she is, just like he is, just like we did before—I *receive her*.”

Several months ago my wife and I were married again after 36 years. There was a group in Columbia that wanted to have a couples’ class, you know. They wanted to have a renewal of their wedding vows. So we went to the church one Saturday night. They had it decorated. They had a wedding cake. And about 36 brides and 36 grooms came to the church. And we took off our rings and gave them to—. I’ve forgotten how we did

it. Anyway, and all the 36 brides were back there with roses. And all the 36 grooms were lined up in front. And then as they played “The Wedding March” all the 36 brides walked in and stood beside the 36 grooms. And as the pastor led us, we went through our vows again.

Let me ask you, will you receive her to be your partner for life? Will you open yourself to her? Will you? Will you receive him as your partner for life, just like he is? Will you? That’s the basic condition of communication. Without it there can be no *real* communication and therefore no *real* oneness.