

## Training Your Mouth for Marriage

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Why do we talk to each other the way we do? Proverbs 16:24 says pleasant words are like honey, and yet many of the ways we speak to each other are far from sweet.

Why is communication between spouses so hard?

Here are four reasons:

The first reason is sin. Deuteronomy 5:9 says God punishes the children for the sins of their fathers to the third and fourth generations. In other words, the most abusive people, statistically speaking, are those who have been abused. It's like we've been trained to do it by our upbringing.

How do you break this cycle of sin? First, you need to recognize it. Then ask God for forgiveness.

Next, you need to forgive your parents or grandparents or the previous generations who have passed along that iniquity to you.

This is very important because when you break the cycle for you, you are also breaking it for your children and their children.

Dysfunctional communication can also result from unhealed hurts in our lives. Many of the emotional wounds I've inflicted on Karen came out of my own woundedness, like a lion who lashes out in anger and confusion because he has a thorn in his paw.

In these situations, we need to remember that Jesus is a healer—but he only heals in the light. We need to bring these wounds out of the darkness and into the light of Christ. We need to come to Him and say, "Lord, I am hurt and I forgive the person who hurt me." Because forgiveness, again, is key.

Many of these wounds can be deep and painful, and let's be honest—they may require some Christian counseling or discussions with a pastor before you are able to move past them. It's not easy.

But you need to begin the process. Otherwise, out of your own hurt, you will continue to inflict wounds on people you love.

A third reason we don't communicate well with our spouses is insecurity. We are all insecure. I don't think there's a human alive who isn't insecure about something.

The way I used to deal with my pain and insecurity was to throw out my chest and be aggressive and overly confident toward Karen. I was very provocative toward her and toward anyone in my life who got close to me.

Before I could improve the way I communicated with Karen, I had to let go of my human insecurities and find my security in God. He loves me with an everlasting love despite my weaknesses and flaws.

A final reason is pride—an inflated sense of self. For the prideful, everything centers around us. The home, our relationship...it's all about me. Because pride will not admit weakness, it will not talk openly about problems. It will not admit dependence on God or anyone else.

As long as we are operating out of pride and self-interest, it will be difficult for us to communicate with our spouses in a healthy way. But the Apostle Paul writes that our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). We should be humble. Pride says "I am the most important person in this relationship." Humility says, "You are more important than me."

To improve the way you communicate with your spouse, look hard at your own life. Break the bonds of generational sin. Seek healing for your wounds. Let go of your insecurities, and work toward operating out of a position of humility instead of pride.