

The following sample pages are extracted and condensed from the workbook. This section in the workbook is 14 pages.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Many elements go into making a healthy and godly relationship. One's personal faith in Jesus Christ and wholehearted reception of grace and redemption is the foundation for our relationships—first as brother and sister in the Lord and then as husband and wife in the Lord. This means you have the same spiritual “language”, which is the prerequisite for communication and a godly relationship. Our common faith gives us that essential spiritual relational and language basis. The issue then becomes communicating within the common language of faith as brother and sister and as husband and wife.

Just as blood carries nutrients to the cells and carries oxygen to the brain, so does communication and understanding carry all the elements of health to every fiber of your relationship. Perhaps you have heard that statement so often it has become monotonous. Yet, a major—perhaps the foremost—complaint from spouses is the lack of communication.

Communication goes on all the time whether you, as a couple, consciously attempt it or not. For example, a message is being sent when a husband gives his wife of thirty years a look that says “You're still the only one”. On the other hand, he sends a different message when he ignores his wife's desire for attention in favor of watching TV. He's saying you're not important to me right now. Wives can convey very powerful positive or negative messages in non-verbal ways. With just a look from across a corporate event, a woman can tell her husband he is more man than all the rest put together. Conversely, disrespect and disdain for one's husband can be said with a mere facial expression. Non-verbal communications say a lot. In fact, various sources say that words make up as little as seven to ten percent of communication while tone of voice and body language make up a much greater percentage. Verbal or otherwise, whether we know it or not, we are constantly communicating with each other. The only question is “What's the message?”

In order to have a healthy relationship, communication has to be effective. It's easy to understand someone when the talk is external. “Bring me the bucket of red paint that is next to the ladder.” is a very specific message. However, “That door is going to fall off its hinges one of these days.” or “Maybe you should think about wearing a different dress.” are statements without a clear message and are subject to the recipient's interpretation. Thus, effective communication means understanding a message in the context in which it was meant.

Men and women communicate differently. There are many resources available to help you learn about these differences. In order to have a good relationship, you will want to understand your different modes of communication and make adjustments for these differences. Otherwise, like the title of a 2003 movie, your relationship will be *Lost in Translation*. The following section is a survey to see how you are doing in the communication department.

**COMMUNICATION INVENTORY**

On a scale of 1-5, rate yourself on (or your level of agreement with) the following statements. Then rate your fiancé(e) or what you think is his/her level of agreement with the statements.

1 = Very poor    2 = Poor    3 = So so    4 = Good    5 = Excellent

Examples:

#1 *Rate the quality of your communication and your fiancé(e)'s.*  
Rate the communication between both of you and then what you think your fiancé(e)'s rating would be.

#3 *I listen to other people and sincerely seek to understand what they mean.*  
Rate how well you do this and then how well your fiancé(e) does this.

	You	Your fiancé(e)
1. Rate the quality of your communication and your fiancé(e)'s. ....	_____	_____
2. Rate the quantity of your communication and your fiancé(e)'s. ....	_____	_____
3. I listen to other people and sincerely seek to understand what they mean. ....	_____	_____
4. I refrain from predicting what the other person is going to say. ....	_____	_____
5. I do not interrupt when another person is talking. ....	_____	_____
6. I generally think the best about a person's motives. ....	_____	_____
7. I am generally cynical. I think the worst about a person's motives. ....	_____	_____
8. I generally think the best about people. ....	_____	_____
9. I pay attention when someone is speaking; I don't let my mind wander.	_____	_____
10. When confronted about a character trait, I don't withdraw or get defensive.	_____	_____
11. I joyfully accept correction or reproof that is given in genuine concern. ....	_____	_____
12. I humbly correct people. I seek their well-being and not my own rightness. ...	_____	_____
13. When we disagree, I first seek to understand my fiancé(e)'s point of view. ....	_____	_____
14. When my fiancé(e) and I differ in spiritual matters, I am generally right. ....	_____	_____
15. I think my fiancé(e) is more spiritual than I am. ....	_____	_____
16. I think my fiancé(e)'s opinions are generally better than mine are. ....	_____	_____
17. I gossip or talk negatively about people behind their back. ....	_____	_____
18. I use anger as a means to control and dominate. ....	_____	_____
19. I use tears, crying, or depression as a means to control and dominate.	_____	_____
20. I seek to uplift my fiancé(e) in everything I say and do. ....	_____	_____

	<u>You</u>	<u>Your fiancé(e)</u>
21. I pray a blessing on my fiancé(e) daily. ....	_____	_____
22. I seek to protect my fiancé(e) when he or she is wounded or vulnerable. ....	_____	_____
23. I verbally give appreciation, admiration, and respect to my fiancé(e) .....	_____	_____
24. I verbally say, “I love you” often to my fiancé(e) and mean it wholeheartedly. ....	_____	_____
25. I speak respectfully and admiringly of my fiancé(e) to others. ....	_____	_____
26. When he/she is clearly wrong, I confront my fiancé(e) firmly yet gently. ....	_____	_____
27. I say what I think others want to hear. I’m a people pleaser. ....	_____	_____
28. I have difficulty saying the words, “I love you”. ....	_____	_____
29. I like witty sarcasm and/or little put-downs. I think they are fun and cute.	_____	_____
30. I communicate respect to my fiancé(e) often and in various ways. ....	_____	_____
31. I like hearing the words, “I love you”. ....	_____	_____
32. I share things spoken to me in confidence. ....	_____	_____
33. I share things about others that put them in an unfavorable light. ....	_____	_____
34. I don’t use the time someone is speaking to prepare my rebuttal. I am more interested in hearing what they think than countering with my opinion. ....	_____	_____
35. I often say in a non-verbal way, “I love you” via eye contact, helping, thoughtful consideration, gifts, etc. ....	_____	_____
36. While another person is explaining, I do not rush ahead and mentally form my reply. ....	_____	_____
37. I refrain from apologizing too quickly as a means to divert attention from my issues or to stop conversation, which is a form of manipulation. ....	_____	_____
38. I withhold my thoughts, opinions, corrections, etc. for fear of rejection, disapproval, or conflict. (5 would mean you always withhold) .....	_____	_____