

## Keep Watch Over Your Words

Have you ever been in a situation where a salesperson has treated you with indifference or even outright contempt? There have been a time or two in my life when an attempt to return something as insignificant as an article of clothing has left me feeling judged and humiliated by a stranger.

Whenever I speak or teach on the dynamics of marriage, one of the most common problems I hear from couples is that they struggle to communicate effectively. They know they are doing something wrong, but they can't figure out what to do about it. One thing I know is this: most of the arguments in marriage are caused by poor communication, and could be solved if we could just figure out how to talk to each other in a healthy and productive way.

Our enemy is aware of this and works tirelessly to break down our lines of communication. Nothing adds frustration and discouragement to a marriage like poor communication. Have you ever stopped to consider how many verses in Scripture address the power of good communication? Here are just a few:

*"I have resolved that my mouth will not sin." (Psalm 17:3)*

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Proverbs 12:18)*

*"He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity." (Proverbs 21:23)*

*"Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips." (Psalm 141:3)*

If a husband and wife can be kept from communicating, their marriage gets thrown into a constant state of confusion. When we can't talk to each other, we begin to feel distant, detached, and neglected. When that happens, intimacy goes out the window. Communication is the lifeblood of a relationship. It's how two individual souls learn to become one flesh. It's how thoughts, feelings, and dreams are transferred from one person to another. Without communication, a marriage relationship becomes nothing more than a living arrangement.

Look at your own marriage. How well do you communicate with your spouse? Do you get defensive or are you open to correction? When your spouse communicates his or her needs to you, are you open to hearing them? Do you use kind and encouraging words or "reckless words" that can wound?