WORK PRIVATELY

Four Commitments

Read each commitment on your own. Consider what it would require of you, then make these commitments to your marriage. Give each one at least thirty seconds of thought before moving on.

01

SPEAK TO BUILD UP

I will intentionally choose words that are truthful, helpful, and considerate of what my spouse needs. I will make no exceptions.

02

GIVE MY ATTENTION

What thoughts and circumstances most easily distract me? I will purposefully put them aside when my spouse and I need to talk.

03

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

I will ask follow-up questions, restate what I hear, and do whatever is necessary to make sure I fully understand my spouse before preparing my response.

04

RESPOND WITH GRACE

What kinds of responses does my spouse receive best? I will carefully choose my words to resolve conflict rather than simply win the argument.

REFLECT PRIVATELY

Before We Discuss

Work on this privately and be prepared to discuss in an upcoming conversation.

BEFORE WE TALK, WHAT DO I EXPECT TO HEAR?

Try to see the conversation from your spouse's perspective. How do I think my spouse might answer these questions? What have I seen or heard that makes me think so?

FOR THE HUSBAND

1. What can I do to make it easier for my wife to share what matters to her?

2. When I have something important to share, how do I do that most effectively with my wife?

FOR THE WIFE

1. What can I do to make it easier for my husband to share what matters to him?

2. When something really matters to me, how do I best share that with my husband?

OUR COMMUNICATION CHECK-IN

Rate yourself from 1 (needs growth) to 10 (consistently strong). Compare your answers with your spouse during the conversation.

Area to Consider	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Listening to Understand	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Giving Full Attention	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Respecting Different Views	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responding Constructively	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

What is the most practical, immediate thing I can do to improve these numbers?

PRACTICE TOGETHER

The Ten-Minute Conversation

Sit down together without distractions. Share what you wrote on *Before We Discuss*. Listen without interrupting, then use the four helps below to guide your conversation.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Reflect on a recent heavy conversation with your spouse that went well, and discuss why that was the case. Next, move on to a present issue, and use the four instructions below as you work through it together.

01	**TURN** Face one another. Put phones and other distractions aside. Give visual and non-verbal attention. Communicate love and respect.
02	**HEAR** Listen for both the information and the feeling being shared. Make the primary goal complete understanding. Delay your ideas, contributions, or reactions.
03	**REFLECT** Restate back what you have heard and ask at least one follow-up question for clarification and depth. Show genuine interest in your spouse's thoughts and feelings.
04	**BUILD UP** All throughout, choose and speak words that fit the need of the moment, help build something productive, and are filled with grace. Make your responses and contribution a benefit to you both.

ENDING QUESTIONS

What is the one thing each of us can improve on that will make conversation easier between us?

What can we pray for in one another this week?

PRAY AND COMMIT

Speak to Build Up

LET YOUR WORDS GIVE GRACE TO THOSE WHO HEAR.

OUR PRAYER

Father, You are wise, patient, and generous in mercy. Thank You for the gift of marriage and for the opportunity to care for one another. Teach us to speak words that build up, to recognize the need of the moment, and to listen with humility. Help us slow down, listen fully, and ask before assuming we understand. When our words cause hurt, help us acknowledge it, ask forgiveness, and try again. May our tone, attention, and actions reinforce the love we profess. Help us reflect the grace of Jesus in our home. In Jesus' name, amen.

THIS WEEK WE WILL

- [ ] Put distractions aside before a meaningful conversation.
- [ ] Turn toward one another when we speak.
- [ ] Ask whether our words are building up and giving grace.

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF AND MY SPOUSE