

Summary

What if the greatest threat to our closest relationships is not conflict itself, but the way we handle it? This session takes an honest, unfiltered look at the patterns that quietly erode marriages and families over time, from the trap of comparison to the slow poison of silence and avoidance. We explore three deceptively simple practices, stopping before we react, looking our loved ones in the eye, and truly listening, that can redirect the entire course of a relationship. The session draws on the biblical call to confess our faults to one another, reminding us that vulnerability and authenticity are not weaknesses but the very foundations of genuine connection. We are challenged to stop measuring ourselves against others and instead measure who we are today against who we used to be. The spiritual insight here is profound: real growth in our relationships mirrors real growth in our faith. Both require honesty, humility, and the willingness to change.

Chapters

Chapter 1: The Danger of Comparison and the Power of Authenticity

0:00 - 3:23

We are warned against comparing ourselves or our spouses to others, and encouraged to be real with one another so that genuine friendship and support can take root.

Chapter 2: Navigating In-Laws, Affection, and Family Differences

3:23 - 11:28

Differences in family backgrounds, especially around affection and in-law relationships, can create unexpected tension in marriage, but those differences can be overcome with patience and love.

Chapter 3: Stop, Look, and Listen: The Three Keys to Communication

11:28 - 23:08

Three simple but powerful practices -- stopping before we speak, looking our spouse in the eye, and truly listening -- can transform the way we communicate at home.

Chapter 4: Finances, Bragging, and Learning to Agree to Disagree

23:08 - 41:13

Financial transparency, genuine praise, and the willingness to agree to disagree are practical tools that reduce conflict and build a stronger partnership in marriage.

Chapter 5: Communicating Love: Cards, Needs, and Making Each Other Feel Known

41:13 - 53:31

We cannot expect our spouses to meet our needs if we never tell them what those needs are, and small, consistent acts of expressed love can carry people through even their darkest moments.

Title: Stop, Look, and Listen: Building Real Communication and Connection in Marriage and Family

Sermon Summary: This message, delivered by a pastor's wife with candid honesty and personal experience, focuses on the practical and spiritual foundations of healthy marriages and family relationships. Drawing from decades of ministry life, personal struggles, and hard-won wisdom, the speaker challenges women to abandon comparison, pretense, and destructive communication habits in favor of authenticity, intentional listening, and sacrificial love. The sermon emphasizes that real change is possible at any point in a marriage or family, that God is meant to be the foundation of the home, and that loving people well, whether a spouse, children, grandchildren, or those outside the home, is both a calling and a daily choice.

Key Points:

- Comparing yourself to others is destructive; the only healthy comparison is between who you used to be and who you are now
- Vulnerability and authenticity create genuine connection; facades prevent real relationships from forming
- Confiding in someone who has personally experienced what you are going through is far more valuable than advice from someone who has not
- The three foundational practices for better marital communication are to stop before reacting, look your spouse in the eye, and truly listen before responding
- Men and women are wired differently in how they express and receive affection, and those differences can be bridged with patience and intentional effort
- Provoking children to anger is a biblical warning that has real consequences; giving children a voice in a structured, respectful family meeting produces healing and trust
- Saying no to outside demands is necessary to protect the people who matter most inside the home
- Finances are a leading source of marital conflict; transparency, shared responsibility, and honest communication are essential
- Bragging on your spouse and children, even when their efforts fall short of your standard, produces more growth than criticism ever will
- Arguing, whining, and ignoring are all ineffective communication strategies; learning to agree to disagree brings lasting peace
- Telling your spouse specifically what makes you feel loved removes guesswork and opens the door for them to bless you
- Cards, letters, and small acts of remembrance carry enormous emotional weight and can serve as a genuine ministry to hurting people
- Children are perceptive prayer warriors who benefit from being included in the spiritual life of the home in age-appropriate ways

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 6:4, which warns fathers not to provoke their children to anger, a passage the speaker references as a turning point in how she approached discipline and communication with her daughters

- Philippians 4:13, which states that a believer can do all things through Christ, cited in the context of breaking old habits of withholding affection and learning new ways of relating
- James 5:16, which calls believers to confess their faults to one another, referenced in the context of the risk and reward of being vulnerable with trusted people

Stories:

- The speaker describes her father-in-law, Brother Caldwell, who was raised without physical affection and initially recoiled when she hugged and kissed him on the forehead; through persistent, loving repetition she broke through his reserve, and before he died he was signing birthday cards with expressions of love and embracing family members warmly
- She recounts her husband Dean overhearing her complain on the phone that he had not gotten her a birthday card, after which he rushed to a small country store, grabbed the only card available without reading it, and presented it to her as though it had been sitting out for a long time; the card turned out to be a wedding anniversary card featuring a couple with martini glasses
- She tells the story of her daughter Talisa, around age five, making her bed imperfectly and beaming with pride, only to be heartbroken when she caught her mother sneaking back in to straighten it; the speaker says she never repeated that mistake and applies the same principle to her husband
- She describes a pivotal family meeting her husband called during a season of rebellion with their older daughter, in which each family member was given space to speak without interruption; hearing her daughter say she had been treated unfairly was painful but transformative, and those regular family meetings became a source of healing
- Talisa, as a young girl, called her father at the church and asked to make an appointment with him because she rarely saw him; Dean wept for weeks and the family began restructuring their priorities as a result
- The speaker recounts sending cards every two weeks to a woman named Debbie who was battling cancer; at Debbie's funeral, her mother told the speaker that those cards arrived at Debbie's lowest moments during chemotherapy and meant everything to her
- She tells the story of her granddaughter Arlie, at around age three, asking for a moment before prayer, closing her eyes, and praying quietly in what her mother recognized as praying in the Spirit; the speaker received a video of this and accepted it as genuine movement of the Holy Spirit through a child
- She describes cooking her first meal for Dean after they married, frying three chicken breasts, only to have him ask where the rest of the chicken was, having grown up in a home where his mother went out, caught a live chicken, and prepared the whole bird herself

Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Referenced

Philippians 4:13

The speaker directly quotes "I can do all things" in the context of saying people can change ingrained habits and behaviors, such as showing affection.

****Ephesians 6:4 (or Colossians 3:21)****

The speaker references a verse about provoking children to anger, noting that Dean showed it to her during a difficult season with their daughter. Both passages carry this instruction to fathers not to provoke their children to wrath.

****James 5:16****

The speaker references the biblical instruction that believers are to confess their faults to one another, noting that vulnerability can be risky when confidence is broken.

Implied or Alluded To Without Direct Citation

****Genesis 2:24****

The sermon's broader discussion of marriage, leaving family of origin, and the complications of in-law relationships aligns with the foundational marriage passage about a man leaving his father and mother.

****Proverbs 31:10-31****

The themes of a capable, nurturing wife managing the household, finances, and family life run throughout the talk.

****Romans 12:10****

The emphasis on showing affection and honoring one another within family and church community reflects this passage.

****1 Corinthians 13:4-7****

The repeated call to love people unconditionally, brag on them, and serve them selflessly aligns with the love chapter's description of patient, kind, enduring love.

Transcript

looking good, and yours hadn't even had her hair combed.

You know, and you start comparing yourself, and that is the worst thing that we can do.

I read a deal that said, never compare yourself to anyone but the person you used to be.

And I thought, wow, I wrote that in my Bible.

Quit comparing yourself to anybody else.

Remember what you used to be and who you are now.

That's the comparison you need to make.

Because I don't care how much they put on, a lot of people think a preacher you know oh man if i was married to him you know because they're so spiritual that's not true either he's you know you've heard he's just as human as anybody and and i think sometimes that's why uh a people fall in the ministry is because women look at the preacher and think, oh man, I wish my husband was like Kim.

Or they look at some movie star woman and say, I wish my wife looked like that.

That's all a facade.

No one knows what really goes on behind closed doors.

You always need to remember that.

And everybody needs somebody to talk to.

And I was saying last night, I was saying how I love y'all's churches come together like this and do things because I know these two preachers wives need each other.

Those two pastors need each other.

And, you know.

I've had breast cancer twice, and people could come up to me and say, oh, honey, I know what you're feeling.

If they hadn't had cancer, they didn't know.

Right.

And I counsel a lot of women now that have had cancer because I know how they feel.

I know the fearfulness of that.

I know the nightmares.

I know what it is to... see my own funeral when I'd lay down that night and think, what's my girls gonna do without me?

I mean, I've felt all those things.

But somebody else can say, I know how you feel, but they don't until you've been there.

And when you've had marital problems, people can advise you.

And just like Dean said, those dear talkers, uh-uh.

He got burned quick because you need to talk to someone who's been there.

You don't want to talk to somebody who's never had kids and ask them how to raise kids.

You don't need to talk to somebody that's filed bankruptcy and ask them. how do you save money you need to find someone and we don't know what another person's gone through and so when we start being real with each other people open up and sometimes talk and then you find a friend

But always keep it.

When somebody confides in you, keep it.

That's the thing.

I think, you know, the scripture says that we're to confess our faults one to another.

But through the years, you've probably confessed to someone who told somebody else who told somebody else.

And you got burned.

And that makes us scared, too.

And so I think things like this is important to get together because you find out, gosh, they're just like I am.

They've been through this, and we need to do that.

All right.

We're going to talk.

Well, we'll read you a funny.

I was going to read this to the men, but anybody in here ever had in-law problems?

Well, now, I have to tell you, this is the truth, because I said we've got to be honest with each other.

I had one of the best mother-in-laws in the world.

My mom was a Christian.

My dad was the alcoholic all my life until the last few years he got saved.

So I was in a home that was divided.

There was a lot of fighting going on and a lot of problems because my mom put up with stuff that I wouldn't put up with from my dad.

And Dean was raised in a Christian home.

And so my mom was a wonderful Christian, but my mother-in-law, I admired her so much.

First of all, that she lived with her husband because he was such a cut up and everything.

But she was the real deal.

But we've counseled many, many people. that have had in-law problems.

And it's probably one of the hardest things I think that, especially when couples get married, that's probably one of the first things they get hit with is in-law problems.

Because husbands will say, my mom's the best cook in the world.

Here you are trying to learn how to cook.

And he's comparing everything you cook to mama's cooking.

And that'll make you resent her and she didn't even do nothing wrong.

In the same way with my girls, I stress to them, don't compare your husbands to your daddy.

Because he was such a good daddy.

He was such a good father to them.

And they were loved and...

He could fix anything.

If something tore up, well, when they got married, their little honeys couldn't fix nothing.

And they'd say, I'll call dad.

Well, then that hurt their feelings.

And so in-law trouble starts a lot of times. not meaning to, so we had to be real careful.

But my mother-in-law was wonderful.

My father-in-law, they never showed emotion.

Like, they never hugged or, Dean wasn't raised in a home where there was, you know, hugging and affection showed.

I, on the other hand, was from a family of 11 kids.

There's five girls, six boys.

My dad wasn't affectionate, but my mama was.

And so my brothers, every time I seen them, I hugged them.

You know, they were all older than me.

My mom had kids when her kids had kids.

She was 40 when she had me and 43 when she had my little brother.

I had a sister and two brothers old enough to be my parents.

And so we were very affectionate.

And when we got married, jealousy set in with Dean because

I was so affectionate to my family, you know, and I would ignore him a little bit when I'd get with them, you know.

And he'd say, why do you hug your brothers?

Why do you kiss your brothers on the face?

And I said, because I love them.

And he said, well, I like my brothers, but I don't hug them.

Because they did not hug because they hadn't been taught to do that.

And so when we went, we got married two months, three weeks after we met.

I had never met his parents.

They lived across the state of Arkansas, and he didn't visit them very much.

So I started sending them cards, introducing myself.

I'd never met them before.

I told them about the wedding.

I wanted them to come and everything.

I met them one week before we married.

Thank you.

And that was because Dean was 20 years old, and then you had to have your parent's signature.

You had to be 21 to get married, and we had to have blood work.

And so we went down to where his mom and dad pastored to meet them.

You talk about, now that was a shocker, you know, because I knew they was looking me over, and I was sure looking them over.

And we got there, and they didn't hug or show any affection or anything.

I just walked up on the porch and hugged his mom, and it was like hugging a statue.

But because she didn't hug, she didn't, you know, and so I thought immediately, man, we got to change this.

I got to get these people to hugging because that's the way I was raised and I like it.

And so it took that weekend we was there, their church gave us a shower, Dean preached for them.

When we got ready to leave on Monday,

I just went around and started hugging everybody.

And I walked over to Brother Caldwell, which I called him Brother and Sister Caldwell because they were preachers.

I went over to Brother Caldwell and I hugged him and I kissed him on the forehead.

He liked to fight.

He turned red as a beet in the face, and he looked at me like, she touched me.

And I thought, oh boy, now I found your place.

Every time I seen him, every time, I hugged him and I kissed him on the forehead.

I did it every time.

I thought, I'll break him.

And I did.

And when we had our first daughter, she was the first grandchild,

And she won his heart.

Before Brother Caldwell died, every birthday they got a card.

Papaw loves you.

And he always hugged and kissed us when we left.

And I hear people all the time say, well, I just wasn't raised that way.

I wasn't raised that way.

I can't do that.

You can do anything.

The Bible says I can do all things.

And you're a new creature.

And Dean was not taught to show affection.

And so I kind of smothered him a little bit at first.

And then he thought I was crazy.

Now when he leaves, he hugs my sisters every time.

And the one thing that I knew God had changed him.

When I had Talisa, I brought her home from the hospital.

I laid her in the little bassinet.

And I remember the first thing Dean done, he went over and he knelt down beside the bassinet and he got her little old hand in his.

And I heard him say, I promise you, you'll never go to bed one night without me telling you I love you. and even when she got married and moved away 800 miles by then we got cell phones he called her every night and said I love you and I saw him totally change his way of thinking you know and I we can change anything and I think a lot of people think well I

He don't show affection, she don't.

There's ways to break them, and they don't even know it.

Brother Caldwell never knew what hit him.

But that kiss began to change things.

But I want to read you this funny.

This is about in-laws, wife versus the husband.

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word to each other because they'd had a big fight earlier, and neither one wanted to concede their position.

So as they passed the barnyard of mules and goats and pigs, the husband looked over at the wife sarcastically and said, hmm, some of your relatives?

She said, yup, that's my in-laws.

I wanted to bring that to the meeting.

We are so different.

Dean said that this morning.

And isn't it funny when he told that about the clothes?

I'm not kidding.

Men don't smell their clothes and put them on.

Or mine does.

Mine's always done that.

I'm not that bad about public opinion.

The older I get, the less I care.

But we do.

We care.

We care more than I think most men.

You find some men are always together, but most of the time they're not.

But I'm going to give you three things that I want you to start doing in your marriage.

Three simple things when you see your husband.

Say y'all had a fight or just say y'all...

Been real busy and you hadn't got to be together and you get a chance to have a little time together.

I want you to stop.

I want you to look at him eye to eye.

Look at him.

Look him straight in the eye.

And then I want you to listen.

Now that one's the hard one for me.

I like to voice my opinion.

And, you know, I used to be real red-headed.

My mom was red-headed.

My grandma was red-headed.

And I get so mad because people say, oh, you're red-headed.

I bet you got a temper.

No, we got a temper because you just said that.

It has nothing to do with the color of my hair.

But people make you have a temper when they say that to you.

You know, I'd rather be dead than red on my head.

You know, stuff like that.

And so I always, you know, I did have a temper.

And when we first married, I mean, that was a real problem for me.

Dean's the kind, he's easy going.

When he's got something to say, he just says it right to your face.

He just says it and he's over it.

But you know me, I like to hold on to it.

And when we got married, that was a real problem.

That's where we were so different.

Because when I told you what I thought, then I wanted you to suffer for it.

You know?

Because, I mean, there were so many of us kids, and that's how we did.

You know, we were all emotional.

We were much more emotional than they were.

And so, you know, a lot of times when you first get married and you've got those two personalities.

So I would just... you know, fly off the handle and then I would, I pout.

That's what, you might as well call it what it was, you pout, I pouted.

Made me feel so good for just a little while, you know.

But Dean would get over it.

And then I got to realizing, you know, he don't have any stomach trouble.

He's no anxiety.

He's just, there gotta be something to what he's doing.

And so I recognized some of his traits, but I learned if I would just stop, look at him and listen.

A lot of times I jumped in on it before I knew all the facts.

I immediately began to give my side of the story before I heard the story.

And a lot of times that's where problems start and build up.

Communication is one of the worst things in a marriage if you don't have it.

And be real.

Lord have mercy.

There's so many people that put on a facade.

There's so much false in this world.

From the media to people.

Just be real.

But stop, look, and listen.

Those are the three things.

Stop before you speak.

Just stop.

Just for a minute.

Just stop.

Take a deep breath.

Look your spouse in the face.

I don't like it when I'm talking to somebody, when I see them still looking around like they're looking for somebody else or they're looking at the watch.

When I talk to them, I just want them to, people want to know they matter.

And I think a lot of times, the people we love the most, we don't let them know they matter the most.

Have you done that with your kids?

I've regretted so many times when I realized I should have stopped and spent some time with my girls when I was busy taking care of everybody else.

There's been times I did stuff for other people when I should have done it for Dean.

And we've all done that.

You can't go back, but you can start today.

That's the difference.

People say, well, it's been this way so long, but it don't have to be anymore.

That's where we got to realize, I think that's the thing the devil uses against us in our marriage, in our child raising, in our walk with God.

Well, it's always been this way, but it don't have to be.

Today's the day to change some things.

Today's the day you put the people who matter the most first.

I look at Tara, my youngest daughter has one child, she's seven, Arlie, tail walker, she's something else.

Only grandchild I got.

I love the way Tara will have housework to do, they gotta go somewhere that night, they're music pastors in Russellville.

But Arlie'll say, mom,

Will you color with me?

And she'll stop.

Whatever she's doing, and she'll say, sure, that's color.

My son-in-law Rob will come in from work, and I know he's been running ragged.

And one of my favorite pictures Tara took of him, I really used to love to lay on the floor on her belly, and she'd put her arms up like this, and then she'd color.

And she's got a picture of them face to face, and Rob's on the floor like this, and they're colored. those things children never forget things we do for people that we love they never forget but you can't go back and people live with regret and wishing but we don't have to live like that we can go forward and change things so stop look take the time to listen

When you take the time to listen to what's being said, to look at the circumstances of why this conversation is being said, and put it all together, you will have a clearer understanding.

And I think that's where the enemy steals from us.

Because we don't give it time.

And time is one quality we all have the same amount of.

It's just how you use it.

So communication, commitment is the things that we're talking about.

I want to talk to you just a little bit about the things, and I want your input.

If I ask somebody, what's the one thing probably that you have more problems over in your home than anything?

What would it be?

Somebody speak up and tell me.

What's the one thing you probably have more disagreements about in your marriage?

Communication.

I think that's the worst for all of us.

It always has been for Dean and I because he's, being in ministry, he's pulled, he belongs to everybody else.

I have to share him with lots of people.

And you think, well, people ask me, well, y'all are on the field now and you're out there in that trailer.

What do y'all do all day?

My husband, can be gone three days and go home and look at his email and he'll have 300 messages.

Bible questions.

Someone needing counseling.

An obligation on some committee or something.

We all have crazy busy lives and it doesn't matter if you're married to a preacher.

It doesn't matter your occupation.

So many young women today have to work.

They've got a full-time job plus a full-time job at home when they come home of their family, and time is the one commodity we've all got the same amount of, it's just how we divide it up.

And how many through the years has learned to say no?

That was one word I had a hard time learning, saying no to everybody else.

I didn't have trouble saying no to them.

I said no to my girls.

But if I could change sometimes,

I just said no to somebody else.

So you can't go back and do it, but you can start today.

Everybody say no.

No.

Say it like you mean it.

No.

No.

No, no, I can't.

I'm sorry, I can't.

We worry so much about making sure everybody's pleased with us.

First of all, we better be worried about being pleased by God.

But the next person's your husband and then your kids and then everybody else.

But saying no is a hard thing to do.

But if you realize you have the same amount of time, you still got a voice to say no. and listen to what's going on.

My daughter, my oldest daughter that Dean talked about in the rebellion, my thing with her was I provoked her.

Have you ever provoked your kids?

You know there's a scripture in the Bible about that.

Provoke not your children to anger.

I didn't know that was in the Bible, but Dean showed it to me.

When we was going through the rebellion, I had most of the discipline because he was building houses and pastoring a lot of people.

And so when I'd find out something, and believe me, people will call and tell you what your kid's doing.

I had all these phone ministries that would call me and say something about my girl.

And you know what I'd done as soon as she walked in the door?

Okay, Talisa, I heard so-and-so.

And then one day she looked at me and she said, what about me?

Can I get my side of the story?

Oh, my word.

That tore me up.

And Dean was so busy.

But one day he was at the church, and we'd never had a secretary at the church until the last building.

And the lady in the church started doing it part-time.

We were just moving into the new building, and she hollered at Dean, and she said, Brother Coley, you've got a call.

Can you take it?

And he said, sure, and he went in there.

She said, it's Talisa.

Well, he thought something was wrong.

And he got on the phone and he said, hey, babe, what are you doing?

And she said, dad, can I make an appointment with you?

He said, well, honey, you don't have to make an appointment with me.

I'm your daddy.

She said, but daddy, when I get up of a morning, you're gone.

And a lot of times when me and sis go to bed, you're gone.

That man cried for three weeks.

He did.

I caught him crying so many times.

He said, my Lord, what have I done?

And that's when we started changing things.

We started letting God be God in the house, but we also started checking ourselves out.

And I want to give you a little tidbit, not just for marriage, but for your children.

How many's got kids still at home?

Nowadays we help with grandkids a lot too, but let me tell you something to do.

Have a family meeting.

When we started changing things at home about the kids about the rebellion and stuff.

Dean said, we're gonna have a family meeting Monday night.

Don't plan nothing.

Everybody's gonna come.

And that's when he showed me the scripture on provoking your kids.

He said, he told me before they got in from school, he said, now Peggy, we're gonna have this meeting.

We're gonna all sit here in the living room and we're gonna ask the kids, what is it? that you're dealing with, what are we doing right or are we doing something wrong?

Is there something we can do different?

And he said, you ain't gonna like what they say, probably.

Now, not my little one.

She never was a menace problem.

She never caused any, she's never gave us any, but the older one was the one that we knew was gonna be dealing with more.

And he said, no matter what she says, don't provoke her. let her speak because we're each going to say something i said okay i can do that i forgot i was redheaded just for a minute i went blind so we sat down all four of us and dean asked him talisa started talking and the moment she started in about mama

He said, I'm not speaking to you.

As a pastor, I'm speaking to you.

Sit down.

My fault.

I'm going to tell you a little secret.

I'm going to tell you a little secret.

As a husband, sometimes Dean will tell me something to help me.

And I think, well, I'll have to listen to him.

My mama.

But when he speaks to me as a man of God, I'm scared of him.

And I think that's why God needs to be God in the home.

You don't have to be married to a preacher, but if your husband's the spiritual leader of the home, listen.

Show that respect.

So he told me, he said, sit down.

So I did.

Boy, I was gritting my teeth.

It was the hardest thing I've ever done to hear my daughter say what she said. about me being unfair.

But you know what?

It slapped me right in the face.

Because I knew I'd been unfair.

And then he asked Tara.

He said, Tara, what's your problem?

Is there anything you need to say?

She said, oh, no, I'm happy.

Talisa looked at her and said, you're so stupid.

That's why, you know, you've got a chance to spill your guts and you're gonna say nothing.

And now they're so close, the sisters are.

And then Dean told them, he said, we have rules and regulations in this house and I know some of them you don't think is fair.

Because the Deacons kids get to do it.

Kids at school get to do it, but we tell you, you can't.

He said, but I'm going to tell you, the bug don't stop here.

It stops with God.

And I'm going to raise you according to what the Word of God says, as I believe it, as I see it.

And that's why sometimes when we say no,

And after that, every time that he had to tell them no, he explained to them what the scripture said and why.

I thought, well, why didn't I think about it?

Because they accepted it so much better.

But we had that meeting.

We all said what we need to say, and we prayed together.

And we started doing that every couple of months.

We had a family night.

I'll tell you, it's one of the best things you'll ever do.

If you keep your grandkids...

Do it.

I sit Arlie down sometimes and I say, Arlie, how's things going?

Are you okay?

She's seven years old.

That kid's smart.

I want her to know she's got a place that she can go talk.

And they've seen us.

The real deal is Arlie's heard us fight.

She's heard us argue.

You know, I hear some people say, oh, I've never let my children hear us say a word against each other.

Come on.

They know it ain't heaven on earth in that house.

Dean, when we first got married, I'd answer the phone.

Me and him would just be fussing and fighting, you know.

And I'd say, blah, blah, blah, you know.

And the phone would ring, and I'd say, hello.

And he'd say, you're such a hypocrite.

He told me that after I hung up.

He said, you're such a hypocrite.

And I said, why would you say that?

He said, you're just chewing me out, and you answer the phone and say, hello.

I said, I'm not mad at them.

I'm mad at you.

But we need to be real.

And you know, through the years, there was a lot of things my kids, I didn't tell them if there was an issue at the church or if there was a problem with the family.

But I learned my kids were smart and they were prayer warriors.

And they feel that stress.

If you're under stress, they feel that stress.

And so we started telling them, there's an issue we need y'all to pray with us about.

And we didn't go into detail.

But we let them know that they were such a vital part of that family.

You know, they were us.

They were part of us.

And they need to be.

You don't have to tell them everything, but you do need to let them know that you trust them to pray.

You depend on them to pray.

I got so blessed when Tara Ehrlich was not even three years old.

We were in service and one Sunday and there was a lady, there was a message in tongues.

This lady gave a powerful message in tongues and then gave the interpretation.

So my little granddaughter heard that.

She knows what that is.

And so one night, Tara done a video of her and sent it to us.

It was off in Revival.

And she said she has this little chair that looks like a cow.

It's in the shape of a little cow and you can sit in it.

And so every night before bed, she'd put her in that, at the foot of the bed, and she'd read her scriptures and pray with her before she went to sleep.

And so she said, I'm going to go ahead and lay down.

I'm going to read you some scriptures.

And some people might say, well, you're making light of the Holy Spirit.

No.

I believe the Holy Spirit can move through children.

Absolutely.

Arlie was laying at the foot of the bed and Tara said, Arlie, are you ready to pray?

And Arlie said, y'all give me a minute.

And she closed her little eyes and she done this little bit of, I felt it was praying in the spirit.

She done this little

And then this little sound, it was the most beautiful sound I ever heard.

And her mama looked at her and she said, Arlene, what are you doing?

She said, praying in the spirit.

Did I believe that's real?

You bet I did.

So I'm going to tell you, that kid can pray.

And she's got a memory like her papa.

Thank God.

She can quote scripture.

So, you know, we need our kids to know that we believe in them.

There's nobody I'd rather have praying than my kids.

But let them be a vital part of the home.

And now if you're getting to do grandkids the same thing.

So,

Those three things, stop looking at this, and when you communicate with each other, don't demand, ask.

I asked an older preacher's wife many years ago, because I wasn't raised in a preacher's home, I didn't know how to be a preacher's wife, and I drove Dean crazy.

Dean, what am I supposed to do?

What am I supposed to do?

And he said, be yourself.

But this older preacher's wife, I really admired her.

She had been in ministry probably then 45 years.

And I said, Sister Ballard, tell me how to be with people.

Tell me how to...

I want them to like me, but I want a good relationship with them.

She said, babe, listen to me.

She said, don't ever tell people what to do.

Love them into doing it.

Love people into doing it.

Make them feel needed, that you want them.

Love them.

Don't ever tell people what to do.

And I thought, well, Lord, if that worked for church people, that'd work for Dean.

And I've learned through the years

I can ask Dean something to do, but if I tell him to do it, I don't know why men don't like to be told what to do, but they don't.

Listen, they don't like you telling them.

But if you make them think it's their ideal, they'll do it.

It's the funniest thing and they don't even know we're doing it.

I had several women tell me that.

Always make them feel like it's their ideal.

So if there's something that needs to be done, I'll kind of start talking about it.

I say, what do you think about that?

He said, you know, I think if we did so and so, I said, oh, that's a good idea.

And it will be no time he does it.

And he thought it was his idea.

But I helped him.

So don't demand, ask.

Same way with the kids.

I've learned.

But they feel like you need them and you need their help.

It's amazing what they'll do.

I was really impressed.

I asked my sister last night about her kids and she told me they're so good to help me.

And your youngest one, what's her name?

I loved her last night.

Little thing was going around and she's picking up plates and asking, could she get them something?

And I thought, she saw mama do that.

She saw how mama worked.

They watch us.

Oh, they watch us.

Kids will tell you who has the worst temper in our house because they saw me do it.

They see and they listen and they hear.

So what's another thing that you deal with besides communication?

What's one thing you have problems with?

What about finances?

Nobody wants to say that, but that's real.

Finances.

I always stress to ladies, don't hide stuff.

I've saw couples where one person I think in every marriage is a better manager than the other one.

Who's the best manager in your marriage?

Are the women?

Okay, which one's the men?

There are men who are much better managers, and you let them do it.

Dean done a seminar one day for some young preachers.

Dean was talking about handling the checkbook and all that kind of stuff.

If this person's better, your wife's better, let her do that.

If you're better than that, don't go out and buy a house or go buy a car and not discuss it.

But there's just some things.

You know what you can afford and what you can't.

And this young preacher come up and he told Dean, he said, Brother Dean, I'm not paying my house.

And I'm a preacher.

Dean said, well, what makes you think you're not the head of the house?

He said, I don't have the checkbook.

Dean said, I don't either.

Because I pay all the bills.

I do the taxes.

I do it all.

And I told him here a while back, I said, I'm going to die someday.

You're going to learn to do this.

He knows how.

Because I still do this, and we've been married 50 years.

I have a little old deal every month that I cut off the back of my checks, and I have a monthly little... of what's due when.

So I'll always remember not to not, because one time I forgot to send our tithes in to the district.

You know, we're supposed to send a percentage in.

You know how bad that looks on the preacher?

He didn't send his tithes in.

So I do this little deal every month, and I tell a lot of couples, make you a budget if you have to, but there's ways that you can do things.

But he told that little preacher, he said, I don't keep the checkbook.

He said, my wife is much better than that, at that than I am.

But I remember after being married about four years, Dean for some reason picked up the checkbook to do something and he saw this check to Walmart and this check to the grocery store and he said, what did you buy at Walmart that cost that much?

And I said, well, you know, you go in there and buy toiletries and you buy laundry detergent and you buy different stuff.

I said, dang, that costs a lot, a lot more than you think.

He said, well, I think you're just spending too much.

I said, here, you take it.

He kept it two weeks.

And he said, take it back.

Because he realized.

And, you know, so sometimes you need to give them a chance. to see what it's really like or at least sit down and talk about it.

But I have seen couples, I know one incident we had a couple we counseled with that she was spending money and she kept it hid.

And that will lead to destruction.

Because it'll come out.

It'll come out.

And so finances is probably one of the big problems we have in counseling.

Because one feels like the other one is taking over.

And I think both couples need to know how to do things.

Because we had a couple in our church that the man abruptly died.

And the wife had never even wrote a check.

She was totally lost.

She didn't know how to do anything.

And if you've got kids that can step in and help, that's great.

But a lot of times you don't.

So share the load.

Share the load.

And never hide stuff.

Never hide anything.

If there's a financial deal, talk it out.

Always talk it out.

I've learned that through the years.

Dean quickly gave it back to me.

In communication, I want you to realize that men are takers and women are givers.

That's the way it is in most cases.

And the reason I say that is because we nurture.

Mothers nurture.

Very few women you're going to find in your life that doesn't nurture.

We take care of the kids.

We take care of the house.

So we nurture.

Men don't always understand that.

And so sometimes they think we step over the bounds of our role.

But I love it when I see couples that the man works and the woman works and they share the other stuff at home.

Dean makes a bed, probably like a five-year-old.

But do you think I say anything?

Right.

Oh, babe, thank you for making that bed.

It looks so good.

I'll never forget Talisa, my oldest daughter.

She was five, and I went in one morning, and she had made her bed.

And, of course, on this end, it was dragging, and this end, it was that.

You could see the mattress and everything.

Right.

And she said, mama, come look.

And I went in there and I said, oh, you made the bed.

Yeah, you know, she's so happy.

Well, she went on the plate and I slipped in there and started straightening it.

And all of a sudden, I heard a little voice say, Mama.

And I turned around, and she's standing at the door looking at me.

Broke her heart.

Did I not do it good enough, Mama?

Oh, I learned a lesson that day.

I've never done that again.

I do the same thing with Dean.

He can make it a little better now, but I don't care.

You know, some days you just don't want to make the bed.

And you go in there, and he always makes this joke.

He'll say...

If this bed's going to get made, I'm going to have to make it.

I just say, shut up.

And I'm so excited that he does.

So what he said this morning about bragging, maybe they don't do it as good, the way you do it, but brag.

Brag on them.

I found out they'll do more and more and more the more you brag.

So brag on them.

Brag on the kids and brag on the grandkids and brag on that man.

Communication, we've learned a lot of methods to get to our husbands.

Number one, one of the communications we have is arguing.

How many finds out that works?

Somebodies will lose, and most of the time nobody wins in the argument.

You say things, you show yourself, and nobody wins.

Arguing just don't work. makes you feel better maybe for just a few minutes but it don't work.

Dean says sometimes we have to learn to agree to disagree.

There's things that Dean does after 50 years I can't change it.

He's gonna do it.

There's things I do that I still do it because I think it's the right way to do but we've learned to agree to disagree.

I promise you they'll save you a lot of heartache, a lot of arguments.

It's when you learn to agree to disagree.

There's just things they're going to do that you can't change.

And aren't you glad there's things that you didn't change?

You still, you know, that's what the 100% is.

I give 100%, he gives 100%.

Or we're supposed to.

We don't always, but we're supposed to.

100%.

The second one is whining.

We can whine.

Has your kids ever done that?

Don't take it on your nerves.

Whine, mama.

Five minutes, they come back and ask you again.

Mama, can I do this?

No.

Whining.

Whining don't get you nowhere either.

Makes you feel better for a little bit, but it don't get you nowhere.

Learn to agree to disagree.

So you can argue, you can whine, or you can ignore each other.

That's what I did when we got married.

Dean would say what he was going to say, and he's done.

I ignored him.

I thought, I'm going to make him feel bad.

I was the one that felt bad.

I didn't even have nobody to talk to.

That was the hardest thing for me because I liked to talk.

And so when we would have an argument and I'd think, well, I'll just ignore him.

And I would.

Well, he just went right on with his business.

Didn't even bother him.

And I thought, I'm the one in bondage because ignoring never settles anything.

And I'm going to tell you, the more you do that, the bigger it gets.

Mm-hmm.

Like he said, the misplaced furniture.

I've learned through the years that things that we don't talk out.

Dean said we don't holler and scream, we just talk loud.

But there have been times when we've talked things out that the resolve was you'll do it this way and I'll do it this way.

But it was a resolve.

And then you could kind of go back to being normal again.

But the ignoring never worked.

I tried it for a long time, but it didn't work.

And I look back now and I think, Lord, I wasted so many good times.

Dean and I, when we got married, like I told y'all, his family never showed affection.

They never celebrated birthdays either.

Dean said, my birthday's May the 17th and I might be in July and remember I had a birthday.

I'm a year older.

They didn't celebrate.

We didn't have no money.

11 kids we were very very poor but my mom would always say what kind of cake you want and she'd make us a homemade oh she could make a chocolate cake with hot fudge icing that was my most of our favorite she would always make the birthday special even though we didn't get gifts but she made us card if she couldn't buy one she'd make us card how many likes cards i love cards

You know, because sometimes when I'm mad at Dean, I can go back in a drawer that I've got his cards, and I'll read it, and I'll think, ooh, I love that man.

He wrote the card 11 years ago, but I just act like he wrote it yesterday.

I love you, Dean.

And then he comes in, and he's so shocked that I'm happy.

But I've got a whole drawer of cards that I've kept.

But we got married in May.

My birthday was in August.

And that morning I got up, he didn't give me a card and I thought, what's wrong with this man?

You know, and my mom called and she said, what didn't get you for your birthday?

And I said, nothing.

And I'm trying to talk, he's over there and

So he goes on to work and I go to work and I thought, well, he'll be there when I get home.

Well, when I got home, there was nothing there.

So I started getting stuff out to fix supper.

And my sister called and she said, well, I didn't get you for your birthday.

I said, nothing.

Well, he's come in and he's taking a shower and he's come in and sat down on the couch.

And I'm telling her, I said, I can't believe he didn't even get me a card, Becca.

What's wrong with this man?

A card, I mean, a card costs a dollar, man.

And I said, he didn't even get me a card.

Well, he heard me talking.

And he thought, a card?

Lord, I better go get cards.

So he jumps in the car, and he goes up to this little bitty store at Hector, and it's like this little Mr. Churchill's little store, and it's got one little rack of these cards, you know, probably 20 cards on there.

And I'm cooking supper, and I'm in there cooking, and he comes in, and he said, Hey, babe, are you not going to open your card?

He had signed it and stuck it up there on the box.

And I turned around and I said, I didn't see a card.

He said, it's been up there a long time, lied like a dog.

Because he had just put it up there.

Been up there a long time.

I said, oh, okay.

So I walked in there and I got the card.

And I thought, now Peggy, that was, he probably had it in his truck.

So I sat down right beside him.

I was so excited.

And I said, well, thank you.

And he had, I love you, Peggy, or something on the outside.

So I opened it up.

And it was this man and woman sitting at a bar with two martini glasses.

One in each hand.

And they're sitting there.

And you open it up and they jump out at you.

And it says, happy anniversary to a lovely couple.

And it's her birthday.

So I know he didn't read the card.

And we don't drink.

So you sinned with that, plus you got the wrong card.

And so he signed it, I love you, Dean.

And I said, you didn't even look at this card, did you?

We had a big fight over that.

And so through the years, if he thinks of it, he'll get me a card.

But I learned that's something he didn't know how to do.

He was never taught.

But one year he wrote me a letter because he forgot on Mother's Day.

That's the sweetest two-page letter. on this little, two little sheets of paper he wrote me about Mother's Day.

Wrote the sweetest thing, so I keep that close.

And when it gets on my nerves, I just get it out.

So, you know, things that don't matter to some people matter, everything does.

Keep those cards.

I love cards.

I've always loved them and I send out a lot of cards.

I had a mom that used to be a lady that was our WM leader over the district of Arkansas, Sister Hill.

She had one daughter and her husband had died when the girl was young and Debbie got cancer, her daughter.

And God prompted me to start sending her cards.

And every two weeks, I would send Debbie a card, tell her I was praying for her, loved her.

And the day after she passed, she lived about three years.

And at her funeral, one of the guys got up and said, there was two women that sent her cards.

I just want you to know you know who you are.

They meant everything.

Her mom come up to me at the funeral and hugged me and she said, Peggy, she said, you'll never know what those cards meant to Debbie.

She said she would have a chemo treatment and be so sick.

And she'd be sitting there and she said she would say, mom or her husband go out to the mailbox I got a card coming she said at her worst times those cards had come I think it's a ministry and I challenge you if you like that start thinking of some people that needs to hear they're loved because I found out through the years the more you love people the more people love you it's a wonderful circle that we live in

And then number four, do nothing.

When you're having problems.

How's that work for you?

You don't share.

You start today to be the communicator.

If you don't have good communication at home, make up your mind, I'm gonna communicate more.

I'm gonna tell that man.

And just start doing it.

You'll be surprised because if you do, they'll pick up on it.

It took Dean a while to learn how to show love, but he did.

Because I communicated to him, I said, Dean, that means a lot to me.

And when I explained to him what cards meant to me, I communicated to him.

See, a lot of times we don't tell somebody what we want.

We don't tell them what makes us feel good.

And we're cheating ourselves, plus we're cheating them out of being a blessing.

But when I told him what the cards meant to me, I started getting them.

Now, I never cared about flowers.

Some women love flowers.

I'd rather have clothes.

I'd wear them again.

I can't wear them flowers.

Amen.

When we pastored at Whitehall, all the women on Mother's Day would have a corsage, white flowers that their mom and pastor read.

And this one lady got on the name.

She said, Brother Colley, your wife never has a corsage.

Well, I don't like corsages.

Because you pin that sucker on there and it flops down.

And then you've got two big holes right here in your clothes.

So I've always told him, don't spend money on flowers.

Just give me cash.

In a card.

And so, you know, I communicated to him.

Because I wanted him to know that's what means something to me.

You know what means something to him?

Is fix his favorite meal.

When he comes in and I've got fried chicken.

Mashed potatoes.

He knows I love him because I know that's his favorite meal.

You know how I know it?

First meal I cooked, I thought all preachers like chicken.

So I got three chicken breasts at the store and I fried them up and I made biscuits, little canned biscuits, and gravy and mashed potatoes.

He come in and he sat down and he said, wow, this looks so good. wow, I didn't know you could cook like this.

I said, yeah.

And he said, I said, go ahead and pray.

So he prayed over the food and then he started eating.

He said, Peggy, can I ask you something?

I said, sure.

He said, where's the rest of the chicken? where's the rest of the chicken?

And I said, what do you mean?

And he said, when my mama cooks chicken, it had legs and wings.

It had two legs and two wings.

He said, this chicken had three breasts.

Oh, God, I thought I was going to die.

And I said, well, Dean, I bought it like this at the store.

He had never seen chicken cut up in a store.

They had chickens.

He went out, caught it, wrung its neck, and plucked it, and mama fried chicken.

No.

I bought three chicken breasts.

You eat two and I eat one.

That's plenty for anybody.

So communicate and tell them what you like.

And tell them what you don't like.

And then ask them.

Ask them, baby, what's something, let's do something and we'll do what you want to do.

They'll want to go hunting or fishing or something stupid, but do it.

Sometimes just do it for them.

Communicate.

Okay?

I think we're done.

I saw somebody poke her head in.

We got plenty left to do.

No, they're going to come in, I think.

Thank y'all.

They're going to take another little break if you need to go back to the bathroom after drinking coffee.

We're going to come back in for the last session.

I turned it up a notch.

Yeah.