

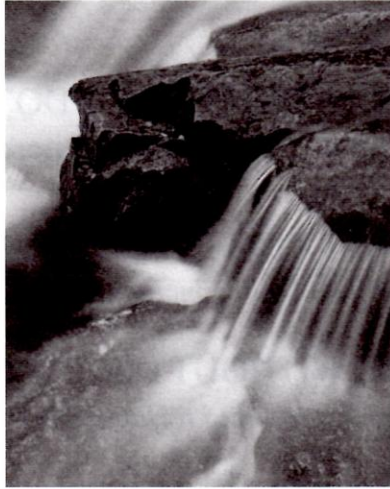
**BRINGING
PEACE & HARMONY
— TO THE —
BLENDED FAMILY**

*WHERE EVERYBODY
FEELS AT HOME*

DR. KEVIN LEMAN

WORKBOOK

W O R K B O O K



BRINGING PEACE & HARMONY TO THE BLENDED FAMILY

WHERE EVERYBODY FEELS AT HOME

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Lesson 5

SAME LANGUAGE— DIFFERENT DIALECT

How to Communicate so Both Spouses Will Listen and Keep on Loving!

SCRIPTURE

*The Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ...So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.
--Genesis 2:18, 21-22*

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Learn why and how husbands and wives communicate differently**
 - A. God made us _____.
 - B. Gender wars today do not support mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21).
 - C. Men and women view life differently.
 - D. Women use 3.5 times as many words than men do.
- II. The three most critical needs of a husband**
 - A. Sexual fulfillment
 - B. Respect
 - C. To feel _____
- III. The three most critical needs of a wife**
 - A. Affection
 - B. Honesty and openness
 - C. _____ to the blended family

IV. Tips for improving communication between spouses

A. Husbands

1. Ask for her opinion.
2. Become _____ and conversational.
3. Commit to listening to her.
4. Discover her _____ language.
 - a. Physical touch
 - b. Quality time
 - c. Acts of service
 - d. Words of affirmation
 - e. Gifts

B. Wives

1. Assertively participate in your sex life.
2. Be interested in your husband.
3. Be aggressive.
4. Develop your _____.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Most people agree that men and women are as different as night and day! Jot down some ways you and your spouse are different. Be as specific as possible. For example, instead of saying your spouse loves sports; say your spouse loves football. Instead of saying your spouse likes to spend time alone, say your spouse likes to spend time alone writing in a journal or reading recipe books. Remember, we are not trying to resolve your differences; we are just trying to identify them. Share one of your major differences with the group.

I like...	My spouse likes...

2. Circle one of your differences that you think has the greatest potential for causing problems in your marriage. Discuss reasons why you think this difference might pose a problem. Write your personal reason below.

3. As you read Ben and Tamara's story, think of ways they could appreciate their differences. *Tamara enjoys waking up slowly. She doesn't like to talk and tends to be grumpy until she's finished her second cup of coffee—no decaf either. Ben, on the other hand, is the classic morning person who springs into action before the alarm goes off.* As a group, consider ways this couple can allow for each other's differences. Make some notes below.

4. We are reminded that just as men and women are made differently, husbands and wives communicate differently. Think about various past and present means of communication. Decide which one best describes how you communicate with your spouse and why. For example, you may say you communicate with email because it is short, to the point and in print, if you need to review the message. Others may use smoke signals, because every time they send a message the wind blows and the message is misunderstood. Fill in your answers below. Consider sharing with the group how you communicate.

I probably communicate with my	My spouse probably communicates
spouse more using _____	more using _____
because _____	because _____
_____	_____

5. It is estimated that women use 3.5 times as many words as men do. If you are a woman, turn to two or three other women in your group and discuss ways you can improve communication with your spouse based on this knowledge. If you are a man, turn to two or three other men and discuss ways you can improve communication with your spouse based on the knowledge that they use more words than men. Share your answers with the group and make some notes.

6. Dr. Leman has suggested other reasons why couples don't communicate. Place a question mark to the left of those statements you think may be true about you.

Place an exclamation mark to the left of those statements you know are true about you.

Ignorance – don't know how

Fear – afraid to tell each other the truth

Difficult—too hard to be open and honest

Discouragement – just so discouraged

Inattention – really don't see/hear the opportunity to communicate

7. Follow the same instructions for your spouse, except place your question marks or exclamation marks to the right of the statements. Share your perceptions with your spouse during the week. Compare your answers and talk about the differences. Write your observations below.

8. Love languages are also evidence that we communicate differently—we tell each other how much we love each other in different ways. Circle the love language your spouse prefers. List ways you could “speak” in his or her love language. You may get general ideas from the other suggestions for improving communication between spouses in your outline. For example, if your spouse’s love language is physical touch, you may need to be more assertive in your sex life. Be specific with your ideas and share with the group when appropriate. Be sensitive to your spouse—some ideas need to be shared in private.

Physical touch

Quality time

Acts of service

Words of affirmation

Gifts

9. Recall the events that led up to Adam and Eve’s sinning in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Discuss the following: How did the serpent plant doubt in Eve’s mind? Do you think Eve understood what God said concerning the tree from which she was forbidden to eat? Write ways you think Satan can place doubt or confusion in your mind or heart that prevents you from effectively communicating with your spouse. Take notes below.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

10. If your spouse is participating in the study, compare your answers in number 1. Identify ways you can appreciate your differences.

11. Review your problem area differences in number 2. Try to develop some warning signals that may alert both you and your spouse that a problem might escalate. Think of ways, maybe even humorous ones, you can agree to intervene in situations to keep communication open and constructive.

Remember, James 3 describes the tongue as a strong, potentially dangerous little member of the physical body. It's like a bulldozer. It can build up, and it can tear down. Maybe you need to forgive one another for things you have said or done. Maybe you need to quit blaming each other for not being able to read each other's minds. James described the tongue as being like the rudder on a ship that can cause the ship to change directions.

Where is your blended ship headed? Is it being steered by a runaway tongue that can steer you into dangerous, stormy seas? Are you pouting because you don't like how the captain speaks to you, but the captain has no clue what is wrong except that you aren't really acting like a member of the crew? Ask God to help you discover ways to communicate effectively with your spouse and allow Christ to guide your home into safe, calm waters.

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

--Genesis 2:23-24

