

Marriage and Family Study  
Heritage Christian Fellowship  
12.14.11

- I. Maintenance list for keeping your marriage a priority
- II. Communication gaps
- III. Grievances

**Introduction:** Commitment is something that every one is familiar with because every one is committed to something whether it is for a short period of time or for an extended period of time. Commitment is part of the fabric of every individual's life. Some one may say "I am not committed to anything" but upon careful examination of the individual's life one would soon discover that there is a commitment in fact.

**Question:** What does commitment have to do with the topics at hand?

**Answer:** Everything

**Presupposition:**

- I. If you are not committed to maintaining your marriage in its proper Biblical priority and other relationships for that matter things will began to deteriorate.
- II. If you don't work on closing the gap in your communicating with those you are in relationship with things will began to deteriorate.
- III. If you don't correct grievances things will began to deteriorate.

**I. Maintenance list for keeping your marriage a priority.**

1. Divorce is not an option.
2. Learn how to communicate effectively.
3. Keep dating.
4. Value each other above ALL others.
5. Honor and respect each other.
6. Establish and maintain a lifestyle of forgiveness and repentance.
7. Don't let the children come between you.
8. Don't let any one or anything come between you.
9. Make time for each other daily.
10. Appreciate the differences in each other.
11. Read & study the Scripture together.
12. Pray together daily.
13. Worship together.
14. Serve together.

**II. Close all communication gaps.**

We must constantly be working at arriving at a common meaning in conveying our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, hopes, expectations, and any thing else that is necessary in the growth and development of the relationship.

Men and women have a tendency to misunderstand and miscommunicate because of their unique way of thinking, responding, and style of communication.

Several years ago one of my mentors, now with the Lord, George Sanchez shared this study with me. It was conducted by a linguist, whose name and date of the study has

since been lost, but we want to share it with you. It is a generalization of the differences between the genders but significant enough to be shared because we have seen this happen not only in our own relationship but in many, many other's lives.

The study also discovered that the average American marriage spends only four (4) minutes a day in meaningful conversation and the average American parent spends only forty-five (45) seconds a day in meaningful conversation with his/her child. This doesn't mean that you only talk 4 minutes or 45 seconds to those in your family, but the focus here is on the word MEANINGFUL.

Here are the difference and the categories.

**MEN:**

1. Regarding questions-information, beyond that it represents meddling
2. Verbal encouragement (response) - usually misunderstood as agreement (uh huh, yes, hum). Men may not respond verbally.
3. Negative side comments- sarcasm, cynicism, derogatory remarks, this is a usual form of conversation.
4. Facts- the use I or me most of the time.
5. Discussing problems- gives solutions, fixes the problem. Barges in with a plan of attack.
6. Ironing out conflict- it's not working if we have to keep talking about it. Continuous talk about the same problem upsets some if not all men. Solve it and move on.
7. Deciding what's important- decide, solve and move on.

**WOMEN:**

1. Regarding questions- asking questions is a way to maintain conversation and intimacy. "If I don't ask, he/she will think I don't care"
2. Verbal encouragement (response) - uses hum, uh-huh, yes
3. Negative side comments- an attack on who ever is being spoken about.
4. Facts- uses us and we, not I or me as often as men.
5. Discussing problems- wants a sympathetic ear. Don't try to fix the problem, just listen.
6. Ironing out conflict- it is working as long as we talk about it. Keep talking to maintain intimacy.
7. Deciding what's important- share stories and offer reassurance.

**Solution:** Time, understanding, knowledge, investment, and love.

Replace our subjective preference and propensities with God's objective principles.

**Scriptures:** I Cor. 13, Phil 2, Prov.18:1-2, Amos 3:3

### **III. Grievances**

As Suzy and I have listened to hundreds of couples present to us their problems we have noticed that there was a repetition of grievances, some overlapped but others were specific to men and women. As we considered these grievances we realized that

each and every one could be corrected by applying the principles of Scripture. What follows are some of grievances and what we have determined they are directly related to.

**WOMEN:**

1. Want deeper communication on: marriage, personal relationship with each other, ideas, children, and goals. (Communication)
2. Want to be #1 in husband's life, honored above all, friends, children, and extended family.
3. "All he wants is sex". I want and need him to help me through the day, to be caring, concerned, attentive, sensitive, engaging, present, and involved. (Intimacy)
4. When he gets home from work, he's too tired to go anywhere or do any thing. (Priority)
5. He doesn't take spiritual leadership or pray with me. (Leadership)
6. He isn't concerned with his own spiritual growth or Bible study. (Sanctification or Spirituality)
7. He doesn't take time with the children. (Family, priority)
8. He leaves decisions to me but when I make them, they're wrong. (Leadership)
9. He doesn't keep up with the maintenance of the house or repairs, or lawns. (Priority)
10. He doesn't date me anymore, our life is boring. (Intimacy)
11. He doesn't take me seriously, laughs at me. (Leadership, intimacy)

**MEN:**

1. She seems more concerned with the kids and others needs than me. (Priority)
2. Affection is limited, what was once desirable is gone, no more closeness. (Intimacy)
3. She makes decisions with out consulting or considering me. (Lack of inclusion, discouragement)
4. All she wants to do is go, go, go and spend, spend. (Intimacy, selfishness)
5. Too controlling with the money. (Communication, priority, intimacy)
6. She accuses me of looking at other women with impure thoughts. (Trust, lack of intimacy, communication)
7. She's too busy to come to bed with me at bed time or doesn't want to. (Avoidance, communication, intimacy, priority)
8. She is unorganized and unprepared when I get home from work. (Priority)
9. She nags, corrects, criticizes, and compares me with others. (Lack of contentment, communication, intimacy, priority)
10. "It's never enough, no matter what I do. (Priority)
11. She is always late. (Communication, priority, intimacy)

**Solution:** Establish and maintain the list in number I. Commit to living out your personal responsibilities as assigned by God.

**Scripture:** Gen. 2:24-25, Eph. 5, I Peter 3:1-7

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HOMEWORK

1. Review the maintenance list for keeping your marriage a priority making note of any thing that is missing from your marriage and work on including any or all of the items.
2. Commit to the establishing and maintenance of clear and Biblical communication.
3. Examine your heart in light of the grievances presented, or any that your have registered with your spouse that were not listed, to see what you may be contributing to any conflict that are being experienced in your marriage. (Matt.7:1-5)
4. Commit to being responsible in living out your God ordained and assigned responsibilities, in humility, love and devotion, remembering the operable phrases.  
**MEN:** *"as Christ". Eph.5:25 (NKJV)*  
**WOMEN:** *"as to the Lord". Eph.5:22 (NKJV)*