

Communication in Marriage

This . . .



or this!



What Is the Goal of Good Communication?

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 17:3

Goal: **to Know** and **to Be Known**

What Allows Us to Be Known?

No Fear, No Shame, No Condemnation!

Adam and his wife were both naked,
and they felt no shame.

Genesis 2:25



After the Honeymoon Stage . . .

Differences that were attractive and cute may begin to be annoying and cause frustrations. The key is continuing to learn about each other, value the differences, and delight in our spouse for the person God has made them and how He continues to mold them.

Why We Need Grace, Truth, and Help Communicating

- After the Honeymoon Stage we begin to see the imperfections in our spouse
- Differences in values, expectations, priorities, family traditions
- Personality differences
- Disagreements on household chores
- Financial struggles, job losses

Without Grace, Truth, and Wisdom, we do damage!



After We've Been Married a Few Years . . .

We Still Need Grace, Truth, and Help Communicating

- Children – change of focus
- Disagreements on how to discipline the kids
- Our bodies change
- Possible different life goals
- Dealing with spouse's in-laws and other family members



By Middle Age and Decades of Marriage . . .

We Still (??!!) Need Grace, Truth, and Help Communicating

- Teenagers!
- Health challenges
- Our bodies change again
- Older parents' health (sandwich generation)
- Dealing with children's spouses and their in-laws
- Adjusting to retirement



May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

Proverbs 5:18-19

OK. We see the challenges.
What's the solution?

*We're not talking about learning techniques just for resolving conflicts or avoiding becoming just roommates. We're talking about communicating to **KNOW** and **TREASURE** each other.*

Two foundational principles:

- (1) As Christians, we come from a safe place of safety and security based on grace and truth. We dare to be known!**
- (2) We believe that God has created us individually, so we desire to know one another deeply and we value and delight in the differences. And we treat each other with grace and truth.**

Jesus is calling us to a unity with him and with each other. Good communication is key to unity in marriage, and can carry over to effective communication everywhere else.

May the God who gives **endurance and encouragement** give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that **with one mind and one voice** you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

Marriage is a great place to learn how to achieve unity in the face of differences! What are some differences that lead to poor communications?

- Men and Women are different
- Come from different family traditions and values
- Different personal experiences and hurts
- Personality differences
- Sin – Communication Killers!

Dating and Honeymoon Period



We loved spending time together and talking.

Then Along Came the **Communication Killers**

- Failure to Listen
- Defensive Listening
- Disrespect and Dismissiveness
- Cutting, Critical Remarks
- Hinting
- Clamming Up
- Blowing Up
- Grumbling, Griping, and Complaining
- Lying
- Distracted/Distractions

Satan's Schemes



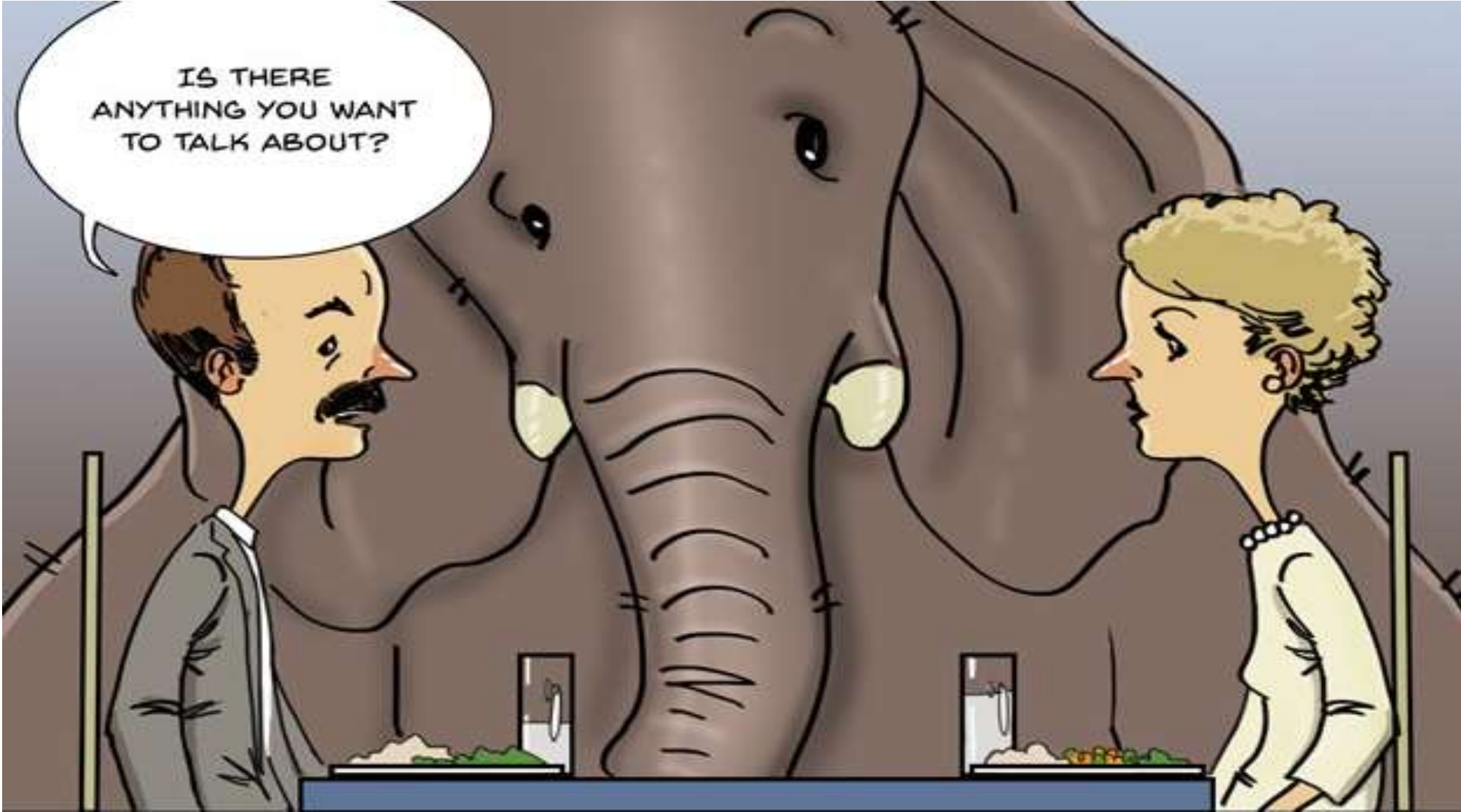
When we are afraid to deal with the TRUTH, we are in trouble!



Honeymoon's Over



The Problem: Not Dealing with Differences, Problems, and Sin



we have truces

denial

ignorance

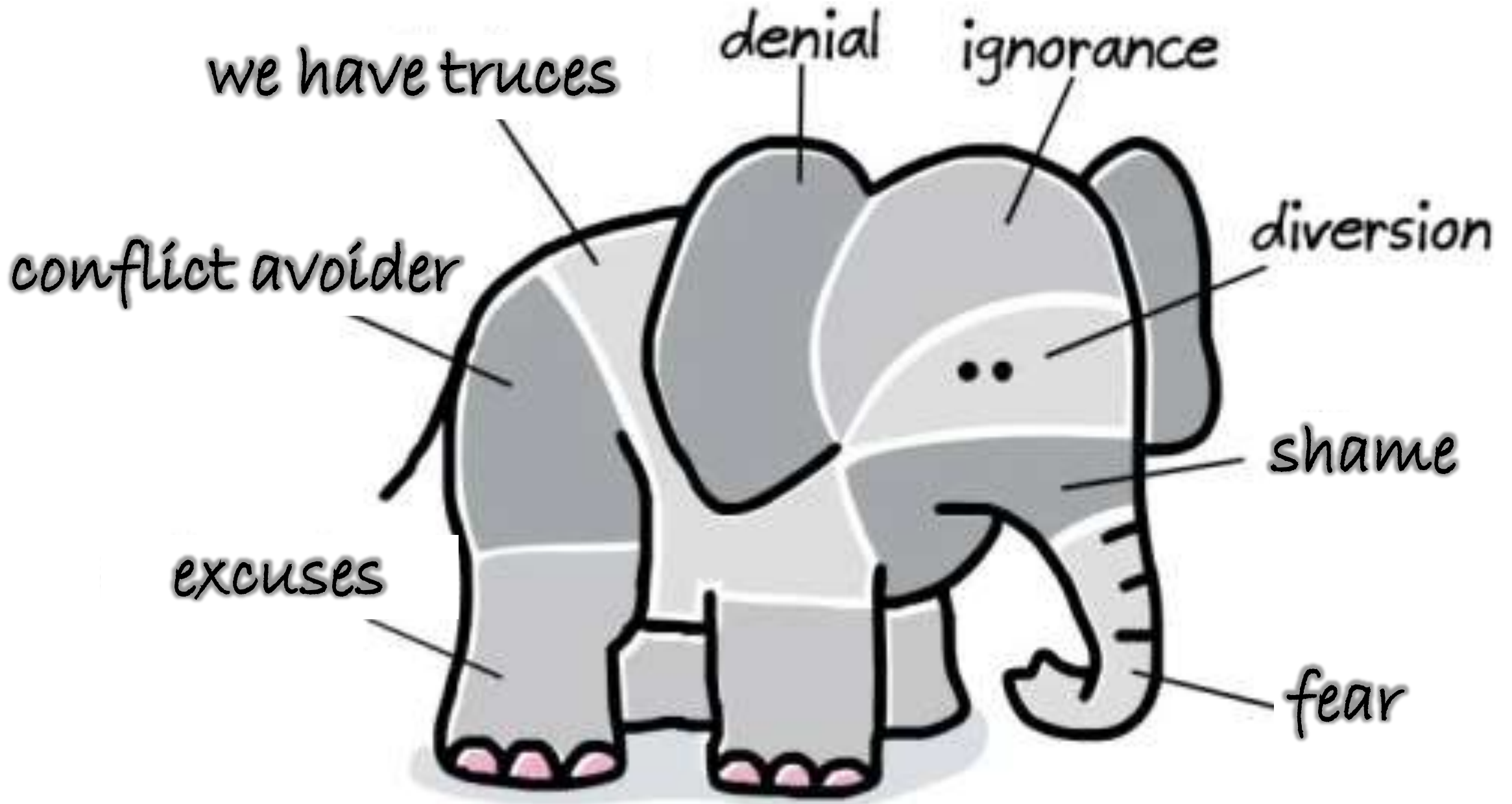
conflict avoider

diversion

shame

excuses

fear



The Key: Grace and Truth

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

John 1:14

the World

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for **fear** that their deeds will be exposed.

Christians

But **whoever lives by the truth comes into the light**, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John 3:19-21

Things that keep us from bringing things into the light?

- Pride
- Wanting to justify yourself
- Past hurts when you were vulnerable
- Feeling hopeless, that it won't do any good
- Fear of being rejected
- Fear that it won't go well
- Fear that it will only make things worse

Grace (Forgiveness) Overcomes Fear

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18

Grace involves . . .

- Forgiving – even before seeing repentance
- Loving the sinful and the undeserving
- Working for the good of the other
- Keeping the focus on loving the other
- Active listening, not interrupting
- Responding, not reacting

Grace creates a safe environment for change.

Truth involves . . .

- Truth about what's going on in yourself
- Truth about what's going on in your marriage
- Truth about what's going on in your family
- Applying scripture and Jesus' example

Bring the whole truth into the light!

“I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”

Matthew 18:19-20

It starts with praying together and asking God to help you to change.

Where Do We Start?

By involving God, and Overcoming our Pride

- Pray often together with humble, faithful hearts.
- Not just serious talks, but also have some fun times (dates).
- Have regular times to talk about “us.”
- Start by first praying, inviting Jesus into the talk.
- Perhaps ask, “What one thing would you like to see me change?”
- Be self-controlled as you respond. Do not “react”!
- Call on the Holy Spirit to overcome your sinful reactions.
- Desire to understand what your spouse is asking and feeling.
- Share what you are working on with other disciples.
- Have regular times to get with another disciple couple.

So . . . What If Talking with My Spouse Doesn't Go Well?

- Don't give up.
- Express your love and commitment.
- Express your hope.
- Don't force instant resolution.
- Suggest that both of you pray about it for a day and reconvene.
- Get with another couple to help.

Sometimes you still don't see eye-to-eye.

What to do (sigh)?

Get another Christian couple's perspective!

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Share with the group your top communication killer?**
- 2. Share with the group the communication builder you have decided to focus on?**
- 3. How well do you do on day-to-day “coffee-cup communication”?**
- 4. Do you regularly get with another couple and talk about the areas that each of you are working on? If not, do you know of other couples who you would trust to do this with?**