

Examining Our Priorities

To develop positive communication patterns, you must make relationships a priority.



A Modern Stone-Age Family

Read the following and make up a conversation to fill in the blank prompts at the end. (Teens, consider this scenario from Pebble's viewpoint.)

Wilma was getting fed up. Every night Fred came home from a hard day at the quarry and plopped in front of the TV to watch Championship Rock-Wrestling. He barely uttered a grunt the whole evening except for the noises he made while chowing down on the brontosaurus ribs Wilma had prepared. Fred often ignored Pebbles and Dino, and he left Wilma to bear the brunt of the cave-cleaning and parenting chores. Wilma was so tired at night that she usually was asleep before Fred came to bed. Finally, Wilma was ready to explode, and one Saturday she confronted Fred:

Wilma says:

Fred Responds:

Wilma counters:

Fred says:

Share what you think they might say with the group and then discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of communications problems are Fred and Wilma experiencing?
- Have their problems affected their relationship?
- How do you think Pebbles might be reacting to this confrontation?
- What can they do to improve their relationship?



Relationships are like living things. They thrive with attention and wither when ignored. To maintain healthy relationships with others, we need to regularly examine how we spend our most precious resources - our time and energy - and determine whether we have our priorities in order. Holidays and other special occasions are good times to evaluate our priorities. If you are married, consider these questions

Your Most Precious Resources

1. What pressures in your life make it a challenge for you to devote time and energy to keeping your relationships with the people that are most important to you strong?

2. How do the following passages relate to making relationships a priority in your life?

Ephesians 5:15-16

Philippians 2:1-4

Song of Solomon 7:10-13

3. What good examples of making relationships a priority have you seen demonstrated by other people?

4. What effect would you say that priority has had on those people's relationships?

5. What have you done lately to make one of your relationships stronger?

Personalizing your Priorities

Answer questions 6, 7 and 9. After answering, share one of your answers with the group.

6. How are you doing on making your relationships with your spouse, family or best friends a priority?

7. What are some of the barriers that tend to hinder your relationships on a daily basis?

8. As you look at your normal daily schedule, what could you change - what could you spend less time doing - to make more room for your spouse, friends or family? What would be the best time of the day for you to spend time with them?

Recreation Time

9. What are some fun or creative things you've done in the past that helped strengthen your relationships? What type of effect have these things had to improve those relationships?

10. What are some other things that you might want to try, and what would it take to get you to do them?

Conserving Energy

11. What would happen if you were able to transfer the energy you normally devote to your job or schoolwork to give to your spouse, family or friends instead? What would that do to your relationship? What effect would it have on your job/schoolwork?
12. Understanding that transferring all of your energy from work like that is likely impossible, what are some ways you *could* save more energy for your relationships?



Form a circle and pass around a bowl full of pennies. Have each person take 5 pennies from the bowl. Close your eyes and listen as the leader reads each of these questions aloud. Don't answer verbally, don't peek, just toss a penny into the circle for each question that hits home with you. Try not to notice how the others around you are responding.

- Within the last month, have you ever let your day get so full that you barely had time to say "Hello" to your family, friends or spouse?
- Have you recently ignored someone - even for a minute - because of something you were watching on television?
- Within the last year, have you let work or school interrupt something you had planned to do with your family, friends or spouse?
- Within the last six months, have you let an argument, dispute or activity come between you and your family, friends or spouse?
- Have you ever let a hobby or other interest consume so much of your time that you have seriously neglected spending time with your family, friends or spouse?

Now open your eyes and see how many pennies are in the circle. Each coin represents at least one dent in somebody's relationship with others. Consider what commitment you might want to make to God regarding making your relationships more of a priority in your life.