

# Life Coach: Marriage

## Communication, Part 10

Introduction: Jesus' response to pressure serves as an example of appropriate communication skills when tension arises. As the scenes of Jesus' passion graduated from the garden to the judgment hall, Jesus maintained His grace and composure—resigned to see the conflict through to a glorious end. All joking aside, in many ways marriage is crucifixion—crucifixion to self and a determination to see the relationship through to a better tomorrow.

- I. Matthew 26: A Study of Jesus' Responses When under Pressure, Continued
  - A. The final two examples of Christ's communication when under pressure address issues of permanence in relationships. Permanence in any relationship involves both a negative and a positive aspect.
    1. Endurance—the negative aspect (26:59-68)
      - a. Both the religious leaders and the Jewish High Council had become weary of the controversies surrounding Christ. Civil and religious unrest, threatening the status quo, influenced powerful men to act decisively against Jesus.
        - 1) In order to maintain a semblance of justice, the authorities had to find witnesses against Jesus. The Bible specifically labels them "false witnesses," indicating the inability of the leaders to find genuine charges to bring against Jesus (59-61)
        - 2) It is not uncommon in the heat of the moment for spouses to make false accusations or to hold false assumptions about one another.
        - 3) Falsehood always exacerbates a situation and blurs genuine issues. It is, however, a part of the human condition and married couples must understand how to deal with inaccuracies should they arise in disagreements.
          - a. Never call your spouse a "liar."
          - b. Assume he/she has misinterpreted the issue or situation.
          - c. Seek to clarify the facts without getting on the defensive and thus creating another issue.
      - b. Elements of Endurance
        - 1) Overriding Commitment—Jesus was committed to the outcome of the mock trial and did not attempt to escape its consequences—the crucifixion.
          - a. In marriage, couples must maintain an overriding commitment to the relationship *regardless of the outcome of the disagreement.*

- b. Disagreements can only be fully resolved in an atmosphere of commitment. When uncertainty concerning the relationship exists, spouses withhold information that can lead to resolution.
  - 2) Patience—at no time during His mock trial did Jesus exhibit impatience with the process. Disagreements in marriage require patience with the process.
  - 3) Resilience—Jesus did not collapse under the pressure of the moment. Sometimes a partner uses mental duress or short-circuiting as a tool of manipulation to defer the discussion—thus “winning” by default.
- 2. Hope—the positive aspect (26:69-75)
  - a. The final scene of Matthew 26 describes Peter’s previously predicted denial of Jesus. Peter’s denial of Christ unfolded just as Jesus had said, and the failure broke Peter’s heart.
  - b. Heartbreak is a part of every significant, close human relationship; and marriage is no exception. When couples say “I do,” they’re pledging themselves to each other “for better and for worse.”
  - c. Having predicted Peter’s failure, Jesus also predicted outcome—reconciliation (26:31-32).
  - d. Note the elements of hope in Jesus prediction of the outcome (32):
    - 1) “But after”—arguments don’t go on forever. There is always an “after,” and it is goal of any discussion to reach the “after” in a mutually satisfying way. Don’t forget: after the argument is over, you’re going to have to live with that person.
    - 2) “I am risen again”—Jesus had explained the crucifixion to the disciples (26:1-2), but they likely remained in a state of denial. What’s important to note is that Jesus did not leave them without hope in the most dire of circumstances. He declared that they would get through the dark night of crucifixion to awake to the glory of resurrection. Every crucified moment in marriage should look forward with certainty to a happy resurrection.
    - 3) “I will go before you”—through all of the heartache and disappointment of the present circumstances, Jesus promised He would again accompany His disciples in a renewed relationship.
      - a. No hint of abandonment—only assurance of hope
      - b. Deeper understanding would result—The disciples came to fully understand the person and work of Christ.
      - c. Vibrancy would return—their walk with Christ would not be a mere existence; rather it became the most powerful driving force of their lives.