

Journey Enews

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Making Lists by Bobby Duncan

My wife loves making shopping lists for grocery shopping. It's the way her mother and grandmother did it, I think. When I need something and want my wife to pick it up, she wants me to put it on the list. If I forget to put it on the list, don't blame her when she brings home grocery bags and my item is nowhere to be found.

Just saying, it is best to know standard protocol with the ladies in the room. If you want their help bringing home your favorite snack item—my advice—put it on the list.

As a local church minister I've apply this rule to all my pre-marital counseling. One of the first exercises I give engaged couples wanting to be married is the (TIL) Truthing In Love list. I explain to the couple growing a healthy marriage relationship requires open communication. Most engaged couples believe they are excellent communicators already.

I provide them with an exercise which will test their skills to listen and share positive words on a deeper level. Often our standard communication with people may appear shallow or full of trickery. I refer to this Bible passage to encourage their better communication effort. "Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church." Ephesians 5:15 NLT

Next, I ask the couple in love to make A TRUTHING IN LOVE LIST. On a sheet of paper provided, list 30 sentences from the sentence starter—I APPRECIATE AND VALUE YOU FOR—then record the 30 specific completed sentences. Interestingly, most every couple feels confident, even eager to begin the assignment.

What has been my experience doing this pre-marital counseling with couples from everywhere, people often are over-confident in their ability to communicate clearly on a deeper level. Almost, everyone comes up with 8-10 complete, unique, and distinct sentences describing our appreciation & value of our desired, forever relationship. What next can we say?

It becomes a bit of a battle to think more deeply after about 10-15 sentences. We can all identify our spouse to be a great cook making great meals and keeping a tidy house. But what else besides premier housekeeping skills, being the chief chef in the kitchen; what else do we value and appreciate. This is where we have to work out—WHY we love the other person—and communicate clearly more words describing our deepest love.

The more I think about making lists for engaged couples—things we need, value, and hope for in a forever marriage relationship—here's an idea. What if we did this same exercise for God? You know, journaling/speaking our feelings about our ultimate relationship with God. It's pretty easy to tell others (And God) Why being in a relationship with God, through Jesus is vital—Hell is hot and heaven is not. Beyond the obvious, though. It's a blessing to enjoy. Just list the everyday sort of things which occur making our God relationship on earth very special.

This week make your list. Write down as many sentences as possible—telling God—I appreciate and value You... completing the sentence as many times as you can. Then share the sentences with God verbally. Here's an example from David in the Psalms to get you started.

"I love You, O LORD, my strength." Psalm 18:1 NASB

Go God. Put it on your list.

