

Pause

Interrupt speech or action briefly



The book of Proverbs is about Godly wisdom; the reverence for the Lord, the importance of prudence and moderation and holding on to Godly values and moral behavior. There is a lot wisdom about considering what we are doing and saying. In one example, Proverbs 17:27 states: “The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.” James 1:19-20 echoes this thought; “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...” Yet, so often husbands and wives let words fly without regard to how or even who they will hurt. Too often the words are *meant* to hurt. Friends, *that* is sin!

We do not see the word “pause” in the Bible, but the concept is seen throughout Scripture as a theme of reflection, seeking God and living as Jesus lived; how He would say only those things that would build others up. We see this idea in the command of a Sabbath - a day of rest to focus on the Lord our God. Pausing, *interrupting our speech or action briefly*, could positively change our marriage dramatically. Taking a deep breath in a conversation rather than just reacting to what was said will improve our marriage, and it will also give us a moment to respond God’s way rather than reacting in a negative way.

Pastor and author James Richards wrote that people often use the phrase; *practice makes perfect*, but he stated that *practice doesn’t make perfect, practice makes permanent*. Too many of us have practiced *reacting* to situations we encounter until it has become a part of our life. We don’t pause or reflect or seek the Lord, we just react and far too often that reaction is something negative. Carmen and I have actually had people tell us that certain negative behavior is just who they are. That is an excuse. An excuse not to trust God and do the work to change that negative behavior. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to “trust in the Lord with all your ways and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.” Philippians 4 tells us that we can do *all* things through Christ.

Changing an entrenched behavior is not easy, but I can tell you from experience, it is possible. Please practice pausing before you respond; make the effort to move on from those ugly hurtful words to responding to your spouse, your children, all those you come in contact with, in ways that demonstrate your love for Jesus. Practice a quick *pause* before saying anything in an energized situation. When you blow it, apologize and keep trying - practice until it becomes a part of who you are in Christ.

Helpful Resources:

Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com - The Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook is a great resource to help you and your spouse develop healthy practices in your marriage.