

CONFLICT DISCIPLESHIP

WE NEED TO TALK

BELONGS TO:

Zaibeh Torres

A BIBLICAL COMMUNICATION JOURNAL FOR WHEN
DEFENSIVENESS IS LOUD BUT LOVE IS LOUDER



INTRODUCTION

Why We Need to Talk “We need to talk.”

Few sentences create more tension than that one.
Sometimes it means disappointment.
Sometimes it means hurt.
Sometimes it means, “I don’t feel heard anymore.”

But often, what it really means is this:
We are arguing, but we are not understanding.
We are speaking, but we are not listening.
We are defending, but we are not connecting.

This journal was created for the season in a relationship where
defensiveness has grown louder than love.
When voices rise, hearts close.
When tone sharpens, tenderness disappears.
When emotions flood, wisdom leaves the room.

Scripture tells us in Book of James 1:19 to be “quick to listen,
slow to speak, and slow to anger.”

Yet in moments of hurt, we often do the opposite.
We become:
Quick to speak.
Quick to defend.
Quick to assume.
Slow to listen.



This journal is an invitation to slow down.

Writing does something powerful that arguing cannot. It removes tone. It removes interruption. It gives space for thought. It allows conviction. It creates room for the Holy Spirit.

In Book of Ephesians 4:29 we are instructed:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

The goal of communication is not to win. The goal is to **edify** — to build up.

If your relationship matters more than being right, this journal is for you.

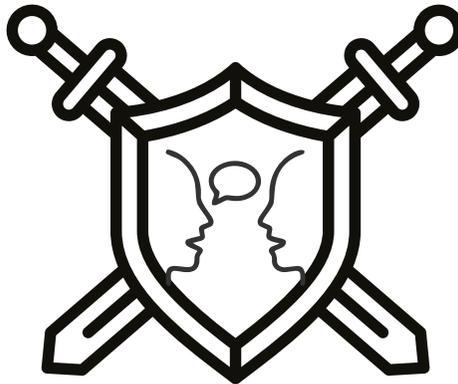
If you are tired of going in circles, this journal is for you. If you love each other but keep hurting each other, this journal is for you.

- This is not about suppressing feelings.
- This is not about pretending everything is fine.
- This is not about silencing pain.
- This is about learning to speak from a healed place instead of a triggered one.
- This is about choosing understanding over assumption.

This is about remembering:

- You are not enemies.
- You are not opponents.
- You are not competitors.
- You are on the same team

Defensiveness is often protection – but protection can become a wall. And walls keep out the very people *we say we love*.



In Book of Proverbs 15:1 we are reminded:

“A gentle answer turns away wrath.”

Gentleness is not weakness.

It is strength under control.

This journal is a tool – not a replacement for prayer, counsel, or accountability – but a structured pathway toward healthier communication.

Each time you write, you are practicing:

- Self-awareness
- Emotional responsibility
- Biblical restraint
- Humility
- Grace

Before you begin, pause and pray.

Ask God to soften your heart.

Because sometimes the breakthrough you are asking for in
them
starts with surrender in you.

RELATIONAL COVENANT

Before we begin using this journal, we choose to enter into a covenant of communication.

- We understand that vulnerability is sacred.
- We understand that words carry power.
- We understand that trust is built slowly and broken quickly.

By signing below, we agree to the following:

We Commit To:

- I will pray before I write.
- I will not weaponize what is shared in vulnerability.
- I will not mock, belittle, or shame.
- I will assume good intent unless clearly proven otherwise.
- I will speak about my feelings, not attack your character.
- I will respond to understand, not to win.
- I will take responsibility where conviction reveals I am wrong.
- I will not bring up past issues that have already been resolved.
- I will pause if I am too angry to respond in love.

We understand that according to First Corinthians 13:5, love “keeps no record of wrongs.”

Today, we choose love over ego.

We choose restoration over retaliation.

We choose edification over accusation.

Signed:

_____ Date: _____
_____ Date: _____



LESSON 1

Defensiveness Is Protection – Not Always Truth

Defensiveness is often misunderstood.

It feels like strength.

It feels like self-protection.

It feels justified.

But defensiveness is usually fear in armor.

When someone says, “That hurt me,”

and we immediately respond with,

“Well, you hurt me too,”

we are not communicating – we are shielding.

Defensiveness says:

- “I refuse to be the villain.”
- “I cannot tolerate being wrong.”
- “If I admit fault, I lose power.”

But humility is not loss. It is maturity.

In Book of James 4:6 we are reminded that God gives grace
to the humble.

Defensiveness blocks grace.

When we defend too quickly, we miss understanding.



Ask yourself:

- What am I trying to protect right now?
- Is it my heart – or my pride?
- Am I responding to what was said, or to what I feared was meant?

Conviction is
uncomfortable, but it is
holy.

Growth requires the ability to hear:

“That hurt me,”

without collapsing into shame
or exploding into accusation.

Defensiveness builds walls.

Humility builds bridges.





LESSON 2

The Goal Is Edification, Not Domination
In arguments, many people subconsciously shift into
debate mode.

The goal becomes:

- Prove my point.
- Win the exchange.
- Expose the flaw.
- Secure the upper hand.

But Scripture defines communication differently.
In First Thessalonians 5:11 we are told to “encourage one
another and build each other up.”

Edification means:

To strengthen.

To fortify.

To construct – not demolish.

Ask yourself before responding:

- Will this build them up?
- Or tear them down?
- Will this strengthen trust?
- Or damage safety?

Winning an argument but weakening the relationship is not
victory.

You cannot build intimacy while tearing at identity.



Correcting someone harshly may feel justified – but correction without gentleness often produces shame, not growth.

Remember:
You are not fighting against each other.
You are fighting for the relationship.



breath

♡ LESSON 3

Speak to the Wound, Not the Weapon

Most arguments are not about what they appear to be about.
The surface issue might be:

- Tone.
- Time.
- Forgotten tasks.
- Disrespect.
- Distance.

But underneath is usually a wound.

For example:

“I’m upset you didn’t call.”

May really mean:

“I felt forgotten.”

“You never listen.”

May really mean:

“I don’t feel valued.”

When we speak from the wound, we invite empathy.
When we speak from the weapon, we invite defense.



In Book of Proverbs 18:13 we are warned that answering before listening brings folly and shame.

Listening includes listening beneath the words.

Before you write, ask yourself:

- What am I really feeling?
- What fear is underneath this?
- What need is not being met?

Then communicate that. Instead of:
“You don’t care about me.”

Try:

“When you didn’t respond, I felt unimportant. I need reassurance that I matter to you.”

Vulnerability disarms defensiveness.

Clarity invites compassion.

Healing begins when we stop fighting over the weapon and start tending to the wound.



EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY PAGES

Instead of Saying “You Always...”
Try identifying the real emotion:

- Hurt
- Embarrassed
- Dismissed
- Ignored
- Powerless
- Unseen
- Lonely
- Betrayed
- Anxious
- Insecure
- Overwhelmed
- Unappreciated
- Ashamed
- Unsupported
- Misunderstood
- Disconnected

“  RESET PAGE 135 found in the back of this journal. When Emotions Are Too High and you need to Pause, Breath, and Pray. Take 24 hours to reflect then come back. ”

“  IMPORTANT: When Safety Is a Concern page 140 ”

The real emotion underneath my anger is:

The deeper need connected to that emotion is:



Topic: _____

Date Started: _____

Before you begin:

Pray separately.

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Before writing, pause and pray:

“Holy Spirit, guard my words and purify my motives.”

1. What happened?

(Describe the situation without exaggeration or accusation.)

2. How did it make me feel?

(Use feeling words. Avoid “you always” or “you never.”)

I felt:

- Hurt
- Rejected
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Explain:

3. What story did I tell myself?

(What did I assume this meant about me or about you?)

4.What am I afraid of underneath this?

5. What do I need from you?
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Before writing, pause and breathe.

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Invite God Into the Repair

Pray together.

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Father,

We repent for speaking from hurt instead of love.

We ask You to heal what was exposed.

Teach us to be quick to listen and slow to anger.

Guard our words.

Strengthen our unity.

Remove pride and replace it with humility.

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In Jesus' name,

Amen.

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RESTORATION PAGE

Building Forward

Answer together (you may write side by side)

1. What did we learn about each other?
2. What trigger was exposed?
3. What boundary or agreement would help next time?
4. What will we do differently moving forward?

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5. What do I need from you?
(Be specific and realistic.)

Closing Statement:

I am not against you. I am for us.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

WRITER B RESPONSE PAGE

I Am Listening

Before responding, pause and pray:

“Lord, help me hear beyond my defensiveness.”

1. What I hear you saying is:

2. I did not realize you felt:

3. My intention in that moment was:

WRITER B RESPONSE PAGE

I Am Listening

Before responding, pause and pray:

“Lord, help me hear beyond my defensiveness.”

1. What I hear you saying is:

2. I did not realize you felt:

3. My intention in that moment was:

4. I take responsibility for:
(Be honest. Even small ownership matters.)

5. What I need you to understand is:
(Share without attacking.)

Closing Statement:

I care about your heart, even when we misunderstand each other.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

WRITER A FOLLOW-UP PAGE

After Reading Your Response
Before writing, pause and breathe.

1. What felt comforting in your response?

2. Where did I feel defensive again?

3. Did I misunderstand anything?

4. Is there anything I need to clarify calmly?

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PRAYER PAGE

Invite God Into the Repair

Pray together.

You may use this template or write your own.

Father,

We repent for speaking from hurt instead of love.

We ask You to heal what was exposed.

Teach us to be quick to listen and slow to anger.

Guard our words.

Strengthen our unity.

Remove pride and replace it with humility.

Restore what frustration tried to divide.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Signatures: _____ & _____

Date Completed: _____



Topic: _____

Date Started: _____

Before you begin:

Pray separately.

Do not write while emotionally flooded.
Do not interrupt the process once it begins.

**LET'S
TALK IT
OUT**

WRITER A PAGE

I Am Sharing My Heart

Before writing, pause and pray:

“Holy Spirit, guard my words and purify my motives.”

1. What happened?

(Describe the situation without exaggeration or accusation.)

2. How did it make me feel?

(Use feeling words. Avoid “you always” or “you never.”)

I felt:

- Hurt
- Rejected
- Overlooked
- Disrespected
- Afraid
- Unimportant
- Other: _____

Explain:

3. What story did I tell myself?

(What did I assume this meant about me or about you?)

4.What am I afraid of underneath this?

5. What do I need from you?
(Be specific and realistic.)

Closing Statement:

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3. Did I misunderstand anything?

4. Is there anything I need to clarify calmly?

Signature: _____

Date: _____

RESTORATION PAGE

Building Forward

Answer together (you may write side by side)

1. What did we learn about each other?
2. What trigger was exposed?
3. What boundary or agreement would help next time?
4. What will we do differently moving forward?

PRAYER PAGE

Invite God Into the Repair

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We ask You to heal what was exposed.

Teach us to be quick to listen and slow to anger.

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In Jesus' name,

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Signatures: _____ & _____

Date Completed: _____



RESET PAGE (Use When Needed)

When Emotions Are Too High

If either person feels overwhelmed:

- We will pause for 24 hours.
- We will not discuss this verbally during the pause.
- We will pray individually.
- We will return to the journal calmly.

Reflection:

Right now I am feeling:

What I need before continuing:

ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK PAGE



Are We Growing?

Answer honestly.

- Are arguments decreasing?
- Are we interrupting less?
- Are we listening more?
- Is trust increasing?
- Do we feel safer being honest?

What growth do we see?

Where do we still struggle?



FINAL REFLECTION SECTION

Looking Back
What changed in our communication?

What did God reveal in me?

What habits must we continue?

Final Prayer of Gratitude



WHEN YOU CANNOT FIND RESOLUTION



Inviting Wise Counsel

There may be times when you complete the writing process and still feel stuck.



You may both be trying.

You may both be praying.

You may both desire peace.

Yet resolution feels out of reach.

In those moments, Scripture gives us direction.

In Gospel of Matthew 18:15–16, Jesus outlines a process for conflict:

First, go directly to your brother or sister.

If they do not listen, take one or two others along.

This principle protects relationships from isolation and pride.

Seeking help is not failure.

It is humility.

In Book of Proverbs 11:14 we are reminded:

“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”

If you cannot reach resolution together, consider inviting:

A mature believer you both respect. A pastor or church leader.

A trusted mentor. A trained Christian mediator

The goal is not to gang up on one person. The goal is clarity, accountability, and healing.

The body of Christ is called to unity.

In Book of Ephesians 4:3 we are instructed to be:

“Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Unity does not mean uniformity.

Unity does not mean avoidance.

Unity means we value reconciliation enough to pursue help when needed.

When Professional Counseling Is Needed

If arguments escalate in intensity, frequency, or emotional damage, it may be time to seek professional Christian counseling.

Counseling is not a sign that your relationship is broken beyond repair. It is a sign that you are committed to growth.

A trained Christian counselor can:

Help identify unhealthy communication cycles

Expose unresolved trauma triggers

Provide structured conflict tools

Offer biblical and psychological insight

Sometimes patterns are too deep to untangle alone.

And that is okay.

God uses community.

God uses wisdom.

God uses trained helpers.





IMPORTANT: When Safety Is a Concern

This journal is designed to restore healthy relationships.

It is not designed to enable abuse.

If the situation includes:

- Physical violence
- Threats of harm
- Coercion
- Intimidation

Ongoing emotional or psychological abuse

Manipulation disguised as repentance

Pause.

Put proper boundaries in place immediately.

Scripture calls us to peace, but never to tolerate harm.

In Second Timothy 1:7 we are reminded that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

Love does not require enduring violence.

Unity does not require enduring danger.

Forgiveness does not require proximity.

If you are in a violent or unsafe situation:

- Prioritize physical safety.
- Remove yourself if necessary.
- Seek pastoral counsel and professional support.
- Contact appropriate local authorities if harm is present or imminent.

Boundaries are not bitterness. They are wisdom.

Reconciliation is possible only where repentance and safety exist.

This guide is for relationships where both parties are willing to grow.

It is not a tool to silence victims or keep abusers comfortable.

Final Encouragement

The body of Christ is called to reflect Christ.

In Book of Colossians 3:13–14 we are told to:

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Harmony is not accidental. It is cultivated.

If you need help cultivating it, seek it.

Healing is not weakness. It is obedience.

If this journal has helped restore communication, soften hearts, or bring healing to your relationship, I would love to stay connected with you. Visit zaibeltorres.com to subscribe for additional biblical resources, studies, and tools to strengthen your relationships. And if God has worked in your story through this guide, I would be honored to hear your testimony. You can email me at torreszaibel@gmail.com and share how He is moving in your home. Your story may encourage someone else to believe that restoration is possible.