



Strengthening Your Marriage

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020

CROSSPOINT AUDITORIUM | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Keys to Preserving and Strengthening Your Marriage

I. Introduction

II. The Lord must come first.

A. Make your personal walk with the Lord your highest priority. (Gal. 5:16; 1 Pe. 2:2-3; Ps. 1:1ff; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Th. 5:17; Eph. 5:15-21)

B. Remain involved in a strong church. Heb. 10:24-25 13:17 Eph. 4:11-16

III. Laziness will cause your marriage to deteriorate. (Pr. 24:30-31)

A. Do not take each other for granted.

B. Quickly and completely resolve conflicts – biblical peacemaking. (Rom. 12:18)

1. Conflict is dangerous. (Eph. 4:26-27)

2. Don't be quarrelsome – fire your inner lawyer (excusing and accusing). (Prov. 29:22, 20:3, 25:24; Js. 4:1-2, 11-12, 1:19; Eph. 4:29)

3. First, get the log out of your own eye. (Mt. 7:1-5)

4. Gently restore your spouse. (Gal. 6:1-2)

5. Forgive as you have been forgiven. (Eph. 4:31-32)

6. Get help (godly counsel) if you need it. (Phil. 4:2-3)

C. Commit to communicate.

1. Learn to listen in love. (Js. 1:19; Phil. 2:3-5; Pr. 20:5)

2. Build up with your speech. (Eph. 4:29; Pr. 16:24)

3. Learn to communicate on a deeper level.

4. Make specific plans to spend quality time together.

IV. Lies are like a deadly cancer to your relationship (Eph. 4:25)

- A. Nothing is more important in marriage than mutual trust.
- B. Lying includes exaggeration, spin (“always, never”).
- C. Why do people lie? People lie for selfish reasons. (Js. 4:1ff)
- D. Some people are so accustomed to lying that learning to be truthful is like learning to speak a new language (and to trust God). (Pr. 3:5-6)
- E. Make it safe for your spouse to honestly confess their sins and failings.

V. Lust can destroy your marriage.

- A. Be circumspect in your dealings with the opposite sex. (2 Tim. 2:22; Prov. 5:8; Js. 1:14-15)
- B. Don't be emotionally vulnerable with someone of the opposite sex. (Gen. 2:24)
- C. Don't think that it can't happen to you. (2 Sam. 11:1ff; 1 Co. 10:12)
- D. When one becomes married (or engaged) he/she commits to cut off all other romantic options until death parts them.
- E. Establish guidelines for propriety in dealing with the opposite sex. (1 Tim. 3:2, 5:2)
- F. Consider the consequences of moral failure. (Prov. 6:27-35, 7:22-27)
- G. If boundaries are crossed, quickly confess and seek accountability.

VI. Lift one another up in order to strengthen your marriage.

- A. Look for that which is affirmable. (Phil. 4:8-9)
- B. Affirmation is biblical. (Prov. 31:28-29; Rev. 2:2-6; 1 Co. 1:4-8)
- C. Affirmation glorifies God for His work in your spouse. (Col. 1:3-8; 1 Thess. 1:2-10)
- D. Affirmation is very powerful. (Prov. 16:21b)
See – Practicing Affirmation, by Sam Crabtree
<http://www.ibcd.org/resources/messages/series/spring-seminar-2014/>

VII. Love like Christ's gracious love for you is the one key to keeping your marriage strong.

A. Both the Old and New Testaments portray the Lord's relationship with us as a marriage. (Eph. 5:32; Isa. 54:5)

1. You must first know the love of Christ. (1 John 4:19; Eph. 5:1-2, 25, 32)
2. Study God's Word and meditate upon the greatness of Christ's love for you.
3. Pray the prayer which Paul prays for the Ephesians. (Eph. 3:14-19)

B. Christlike love is founded upon grace, not law. (1 Jo. 4:10-11)

1. Most human relationships are implicitly governed by law.
2. This is not how God has dealt with you. (Titus 3:5-6; Eph. 5:1-2)
3. You are the chief of sinners who has been shown great mercy. (1 Tim. 1:15)
4. Self-righteousness is delusional and destructive. (Js. 4:11-12)
5. You married a fellow sinner and should not be shocked when they sin. (Pr. 19:11)
6. As you remember God's grace to you, restore and forgive your spouse. (Gal. 6:1; 1 Jo. 1:8-9; Col. 3:12-14; Mark 6:36)
7. The kindness of God leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4)
8. Marriages fail because of a gospel-disconnect.

C. Keep fighting for love.

1. You are in a spiritual battle. (Gal. 5:17)
2. Walk by the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16-24)
3. Your spouse cannot make you fleshly. (Gal. 5:16; 1 Co. 10:13)
4. Covenant love endures. (1 Co. 13)
5. God loves us with an eternal and unchanging love. (Heb. 13:5)

D. Christ's love described. (1 Cor. 13:4-7; Phil. 2:3ff)

VIII. Concluding Summary (Ps. 103:10; 2 Co. 5:15)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important that married couples be committed to a strong church?
2. How does your personal walk with the Lord affect your marriage?
3. How can laziness cause a marriage to deteriorate?
4. Are you quarrelsome? If so, how can you change?
5. How do lies impact a marriage?
6. How can you make it easier for your spouse to be truthful?
7. What should be done to protect a marriage from sexual or emotional infidelity?
8. What biblical basis is there for affirming your spouse?
9. How can a person who tends to find fault and criticize others learn to be an affirmer?
10. How does your experience of gospel grace affect how you treat your spouse?
11. Why is it important for your marriage that you walk by the Spirit?
Can your spouse make you fleshly?

Men & Women Breakouts

SEPARATE NOTES PROVIDED
FOR MEN & WOMEN

Solving Marriage Problems: Conflict Resolution and Communication

Introduction

Conflict Resolution: Pull the Weeds (See *The Peacemaker*, by Ken Sande)

Rom. 12:18

I. First, Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye. Mt. 7:1-5

A. Focus Upon Your Duties, Rather than Your Rights: Expectations!

B. Seek Forgiveness Where You Have Wronged Your Spouse. (Mt. 5:23-24, 7:3-5; Prov. 28:13)

1. Address everyone involved.
2. Avoid if, but, and maybe.
3. Admit Specifically Where You Were Wrong.
4. Acknowledge the hurt.
5. Accept the consequences.
6. Alter your behavior.
7. Ask for Forgiveness.

II. Lovingly restore (correct) your spouse. (Gal. 6:1-2; Mt. 7:5, 18:15-20; Rom. 15:14)

A. Overlook Minor Offenses. (I Pet. 4:8; Pr. 19:11)

B. Talk in Private.

C. Take One or Two Others Along.

D. Tell it to the Church.

E. Treat him as an Unbeliever.

III. Grant Forgiveness When You Have Been Wronged. (Mt. 6:14, 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32)

A. Forgive as God has forgiven You: Freely and Unconditionally.

B. The Four Promises of Forgiveness.

1. I will not think about this incident. (I Cor. 13:5; Jer. 31:34)
2. I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
3. I will not talk to others about this incident.
4. I will not allow this incident to stand between us or to hinder our relationship.

IV. Keep Short Accounts.

- A. Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Your Anger. (Eph. 4:26-27)
- B. Beware of Letting a Root of Bitterness Spring Up! (Eph. 4:30)

V. Learn to Control Anger. (Pr. 29:11, 20, 22, 25:28, 15:1; Rom. 12:17-21; Eph. 4:31-32)

- A. Neither Vent Your Anger, nor Bottle it Up. Attack the Problem instead of People.
- B. Learn Self Control. The legitimate use of "time-outs". (Pr. 17:14, 25:28)
- C. Understand the Difference Between Righteous and Unrighteous Anger. (Eph. 4:26)
- D. Deal with the Heart of Your Anger. (I Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 12:17-21, 14:19)

Keys to Communication - plant the flowers

I. The Goal of Communication: Love. (Phil. 2:1-5; Rom. 15:2)

II. Learn to Listen in Love. (James 1:19)

- A. God Listens to You. (Isa. 59:1)
- B. Are You More Concerned About Being Heard, or Hearing? (Phil. 2:1-5; I Pet. 3:7)
- C. Develop Good Listening Skills. (I Cor. 13:4-7)
- D. Learn to Draw Your Spouse Out. (Pr. 20:5)

III. Learn to Speak in Love.

- A. God's Ideal for Marriage is Intimacy and Openness. (Gen. 2:25)
- B. Is Total Honesty Always Called For? (Pr. 18:2, 10:19; Eph. 4:29)
- C. Learn to Communicate on a Deeper Level.
- D. Use Your Speech to Built Up. (Eph. 4:29, 5:19; Pr. 16:21, 24, 10:11, 21, 31:26; Phil. 4:8)
- E. Do You Know What Style of Communication Best Reaches to Your Spouse?
- F. Timing Can be Important. (Pr. 25:11, 27:14, 15:23)

IV. Communication Killers. Circuit Jammers (Wayne Mack).

- A. Lies. (Mt. 5:33-36; Eph. 4:25)
- B. Busyness and Distractions.
- C. Self Centered Conversation:, interrupting, monopolizing, hasty speech, unnecessary correction, boasting. (Pr. 18:13, 18:2, 10:18, 20:20, 27:2; Js. 1:19; Ecc. 5:2)

D. Destructive “Unsafe” Speech.

1. Angry Cruel hurtful words. (Mt. 5:21-22; Pr. 10:11, 12:18, 15:1, 28,16:21, 23-24; Js. 3:5-8; Eph. 4:29, 31)
2. Bullying, threatening and manipulating.
3. Nagging, negativity, grumbling, and public criticism. (I Pet. 3:1-2; Pr. 25:24)

E. Harmful Body Language and other Non-verbal Communication. (Pr. 6:12-15, 10:10, 16:30)

F. Refusal to Communicate.

G. Bitterness and Dwelling on the Past. (I Co. 13:5)

Practical Ways to Build Up Your Communication

I. Set Regular Times in Which You Will Give Undivided Attention to Each Other.

- A. Daily Debriefing.
- B. Bi-weekly Date.
- C. Semi-Annual Get Away.

II. Worship Together.

III. A Communication Exercise.

- A. First the Husband Explains the Wife’s Point of View. ”
- B. Then the Wife Explains the Husband’s Point of View. (Same rules)
- C. Then the Wife Responds to the Husband.
- D. Then the Husband Respond’s to the Wife.

IV. Set Goals Together.

V. Have Fun Together.

VI. The Same Principles of Communication and Conflict Resolution Apply in Other Relationships: i.e. Children.

VII. Communication homework exercises.