



No Regrets Men's Conference

February 6th, 2016

Discussion Questions

Rooted in Your Marriage

Steve and Colleen Sonderman

Steve and Colleen have been married for 32 years and they shared with us their life experience. They allowed us to see that a marriage is always a work-in-progress. Perfection is never achieved and therefore a husband and wife need to apply expectations to each other that allow one another to occasionally fail in that relationship.

Steve and Colleen's story exemplifies this process. Because love is in the relationship, forgiveness is freely available. They will learn from their experience and move on to an even more intimate relationship. Note that in the previous sentence, the future tense is used for the verb. The marriage relationship is a continually growing relationship. In order to help us in our growing relationship with our wives, Steve and Colleen have given us seven key points for consideration and we are going to explore them in light of our own marriages. The points are:

- a. The well-being of the relationship is more important than the present comfort level.
- b. Our past affects our presence.
- c. We all speak different love languages.
- d. Quantity time together is more important than quality time.
- e. Decrease criticism and increase encouragement.
- f. Learn how to talk in an emotional level.
- g. There is a direct relationship between the strength of your marriage and the health of your relationship with God.

1. Colleen indicated that truth-telling is more important than peace-keeping and that the truth should be spoken in a loving way. The questions are: Do you take time during the day (usually the end of the day) to allow your wife to speak truth to you? What is your response when you hear those words? If your response is negative, how do you expect her to learn how to speak truth in a loving way? Is your response so negative that she would rather say nothing (keep the peace) then tell the truth?

2. Steve indicated that his childhood experiences left him with significant insecurities with regard to performance. This insecurity created a work-a-holic mentality that greatly affected his marriage. Almost all men, if we are brutally honest, suffer from some form of insecurity. The questions are: What form of insecurity is affecting your relationship with your wife? Is this the truth you are hearing from your wife and for which you react so negatively? If you heard this truth from other men in a men's group, who struggle with the same kind of issues, would you react negatively to them?

3. Colleen indicated that Gary Chapman's book, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* was beneficial to their marriage. Colleen suggested that you and your wife read it together in order to get to know each other better.

4. Steve described the importance of quantity time versus quality time. He used the example of financial compounding to illustrate that the more time you invest in your marriage, the greater the rewards. Steve and Colleen set aside time to talk daily, date weekly, and retreat yearly. How often do the two of you get away from your kids? Are the kids more important to you than your marriage? Is the money you save more important than the quality of your marriage?



No Regrets Men's Conference

February 6th, 2016

Discussion Questions

5. Colleen described that there were times in which she did not speak the truth in love. She would compare Steve to other men in a negative way. Criticism when done inappropriately can be like a sucker punch, which takes a person down just as surely as the literal punch itself. Think of a time when you expressed inappropriate criticism against your wife and then ask yourself, how could I have made that same point, but done it by expressing words of encouragement instead?

6. Steve described his inability to speak in words that would describe how he felt at any particular point in time. He needed flash cards of those words in order to share his innermost feelings with Colleen. We tend not to want to show vulnerability, which severely limits a marital relationship. We equate strength with stoicism, much of which we learn from our society. The question is: Will you go to the internet or a dictionary and write down 20 words on flash cards that describe emotions and then use them as you open yourself up with your wife? You might even consider asking your wife to help you make the cards. If you are a part of a men's group, consider doing this project together.

7. Colleen indicated how easy it is for Christians to compartmentalize their faith. We express it and live it on Sunday, but when we are at home and no one is around to see us, that faith is not always observed. Christian marriages have a similar divorce rate to secular marriages. Colleen asks us to "stop doing God and start being with God". The question is: Will you set aside 15 minutes every morning to read God's word and talk with him before you start your day? If you set the example, maybe your wife will do the same.