

## **MARRIAGE — PART 2**

### **“WHEN TWO BECOME ONE... AND STILL DON’T AGREE”**

*Fighting for Your Marriage Instead of Fighting Each Other*

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## **OPENING — TWO BECOME ONE**

Last time we talked about the biblical roles of a husband and wife.

We talked about sacrificial love.

- Servant leadership.
- Respect.
- Partnership.
- Submission to Christ.

But today we want to talk about:

**What happens when two imperfect people actually try to live this out?**

Because Scripture says:

**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24 NKJV**

**Two become one—but they are still two.**

- Two personalities.
- Two backgrounds.
- Two ways of communicating.
- Two sets of expectations.
- Two ways of handling money.
- Two ways of parenting.
- Two ways of dealing with stress.

And sometimes...

**two people absolutely convinced they are right.**

So today isn't really about **how to avoid conflict**.

Conflict is going to happen.

The question is:

# **HOW DO WE FIGHT FOR OUR MARRIAGE INSTEAD OF FIGHTING EACH OTHER?**

## **1. WHAT ARE WE ACTUALLY FIGHTING ABOUT?**

**“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?”— James 4:1 NKJV**

Sometimes what starts the argument isn't actually what the argument is about.

- The dishes.
- The money.
- The kids.
- The schedule.
- The phone.
- The tone of voice.
- Coming home late.
- Something wasn't done.
- But underneath the argument may actually be:

**“I don't feel heard.”**

**“I don't feel appreciated.”**

**“I don't feel respected.”**

**“I don't feel important to you.”**

**“I feel like I'm carrying this alone.”**

**Sometimes the argument you're having isn't the argument you're actually having.**

## **MARK TO CHRISTY:**

**When we have disagreed over the years, what have you learned is usually underneath our disagreements?**

## **CHRISTY TO MARK:**

**What have you learned about what I actually need from you when I'm upset?**

## **TOGETHER:**

Before responding to **what your spouse said**, sometimes you need to ask:

**“What is my spouse really trying to tell me?”**

## **2. DO I WANT TO WIN—OR DO I WANT TO UNDERSTAND?**

This may be one of the biggest problems in marriage.

When conflict begins, we stop listening to understand...

**and start listening to respond.**

While they're talking, we're already building our defense.

But Scripture says:

**“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”— James 1:19 NKJV**

Notice the order:

**QUICK TO LISTEN. SLOW TO SPEAK. SLOW TO ANGER.**

We often reverse it.

- Quick to speak.
- Quick to anger.
- Slow to listen.

**You can win the argument and lose intimacy.**

## **CHRISTY TO MARK:**

**What did you have to learn about listening to me instead of immediately trying to fix the problem?**

## **MARK TO CHRISTY:**

**What have you learned about how I process disagreements differently than you do?**

Sometimes the most loving thing you can say isn't:

**“Here's what you need to do.”**

It's:

**“Help me understand.”**

## **3. WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE HURT EACH OTHER?**

If you're married long enough...

**you are going to hurt each other.**

Sometimes intentionally.

Usually unintentionally.

But it's going to happen.

Scripture says:

**“Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”**

— Ephesians 4:26 NKJV

And then:

**“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” — Ephesians 4:31–32 NKJV**

Marriage requires something incredibly difficult:

**THE ABILITY TO SAY, “I WAS WRONG.”**

Not:

**“I’m sorry you got upset.”**

Not:

**“I’m sorry, but you...”**

Not:

**“Well, if you hadn’t...”**

But:

**“I was wrong.”**

**“I hurt you.”**

**“Will you forgive me?”**

And then forgiveness requires something from the other person too.

**You cannot keep collecting ammunition from arguments you've supposedly forgiven.**

**MARK TO CHRISTY:**

**What have I had to learn about apologizing to you?**

**CHRISTY TO MARK:**

**What have you learned about forgiveness in marriage?**

Forgiveness doesn't mean the hurt wasn't real.

It means:

**I'm refusing to allow yesterday's wound to control tomorrow's marriage.**

## **4. AM I LOVING MY SPOUSE THE WAY THEY NEED TO BE LOVED?**

Paul writes:

**“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”— Ephesians 5:33 NKJV**

This was part of what we talked about last time.

But here's where it becomes practical.

**Love isn't merely giving what comes naturally to me.**

**Love learns you.**

Sometimes we're working really hard at loving our spouse...

but we're loving them the way **WE** want to be loved.

Your spouse may need:

- Affection.
- Conversation.
- Encouragement.
- Sexual intimacy.
- Quality time.
- Help.
- Security.
- Respect.
- Reassurance.
- Attention.

And marriage requires learning:

**“What makes YOU feel loved?”**

**“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”  
— Ephesians 5:25 NKJV**

Christlike love isn't centered on:

**“What am I getting?”**

It asks:

**“What can I give?”**

**MARK TO CHRISTY:**

**What makes you feel most loved by me?**

**CHRISTY TO MARK:**

**What makes you feel most loved and respected by me?**

**BOTH:**

One of the greatest gifts you can give your spouse is becoming a lifelong student of them.

Because people change.

Seasons change.

Needs change.

**Never stop learning the person you married.**

## **5. WHO IS THE ENEMY IN YOUR MARRIAGE?**

This may be the most important thing we say today:

**YOUR SPOUSE IS NOT YOUR ENEMY.**

Paul says:

**“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”— Ephesians 6:12 NKJV**

Something happens during conflict.

We begin with:

**US AGAINST THE PROBLEM.**

But somewhere along the way it becomes:

**ME AGAINST YOU.**

And now I'm no longer trying to solve the problem.

I'm trying to defeat **you**.

I'm trying to prove **you** wrong.

I'm trying to defend **myself**.

I'm trying to win.

But if I destroy you to win the argument...

**what exactly did I win?**

Marriage requires remembering:

**IT'S NOT ME VS. YOU.**

**IT'S US VS. WHATEVER IS TRYING TO  
DIVIDE US.**

**MARK TO CHRISTY:**

**What helps us remember that we're actually on the same team when we're upset with each other?**

**CHRISTY TO MARK:**

**What have we learned about protecting our marriage instead of simply protecting ourselves?**

## **6. THE CROSS HAS TO ENTER OUR MARRIAGE**

This is where everything we talked about last time comes together.

Biblical marriage isn't ultimately about:

**Who has more power?**

**Who gets their way?**

**Who wins?**

It's about:

## **THE CROSS.**

Jesus said:

**“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” — Matthew 16:24 NKJV**

That includes marriage.

Because a healthy marriage requires two people who are learning how to die.

Not physically.

But dying to:

- **My pride.**
- **My need to win.**
- **My demand to be understood first.**
- **My right to retaliate.**
- **My insistence on always getting my way.**
- **My refusal to apologize.**
- **My need to have the last word.**

**Marriage exposes SELF.**

And maybe that's one of the reasons God can use marriage so powerfully.

Because eventually marriage confronts you with a question:

# **“DO I WANT TO BE RIGHT—or DO I WANT TO LOVE LIKE JESUS?”**

## **CHRISTY TO MARK**

**What is something marriage has taught you about yourself that you probably would not have learned on your own?**

## **MARK TO CHRISTY**

**What is something marriage has taught you about loving someone sacrificially?**

## **7. PROTECT THE “US”**

Jesus said:

**“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” — Matthew 19:6 NKJV**

There is something worth protecting here.

### **THE “US.”**

- Jobs will change.
- Money will come and go.
- Children grow up.
- Houses change.
- Bodies change.
- Seasons change.

But somewhere in all of that...**don't lose each other.**

Don't allow your marriage to become nothing more than:

- Bills.
- Kids.
- Schedules.
- Work.
- Chores.

- Responsibilities.

And two exhausted people passing each other in the hallway.

- Protect friendship.
- Protect intimacy.
- Protect conversation.
- Protect laughter.
- Protect time together.
- Protect prayer.

**Protect the “US.”**

## **QUESTIONS WE CAN TALK ABOUT TOGETHER**

**What do you do when your spouse shuts down during conflict?**

**How do you forgive something you haven't forgotten?**

**How important is physical and sexual intimacy in marriage?**

**What happens when one spouse is spiritually stronger than the other?**

**How do you handle money when you have different spending habits?**

**What do you do when your spouse isn't changing?**

**How do you keep children from becoming the center of your marriage?**

**How do you keep romance alive after years of marriage?**

**How do you disagree without disrespecting each other?**

**What has been one of the hardest seasons of our marriage—and what got us through it?**

## **CLOSING — FIGHT FOR EACH OTHER**

Marriage isn't two perfect people finding each other.

It's two imperfect people entering covenant...and continually learning how to love.

- There will be disagreements.
- There will be disappointments.
- There will be misunderstandings.
- There will be seasons when marriage feels easy...
- and seasons when it doesn't.

But remember:

### **YOUR SPOUSE IS NOT YOUR ENEMY.**

When conflict comes:

- **Turn toward each other—not away.**
- **Listen before defending.**
- **Apologize when you're wrong.**
- **Forgive when you've been hurt.**
- **Learn how your spouse needs to be loved.**

**Protect the “US.”**

And above everything:

### **KEEP JESUS IN THE CENTER.**

**“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’”— 1 Peter 4:8 NKJV**

The goal isn't: **ME winning.**

The goal isn't: **YOU winning.**

The goal is: **US WINNING.**

Because biblical marriage isn't ultimately about fighting **each other.**

## **IT'S ABOUT FIGHTING FOR EACH OTHER.**