

Destructive Husbands and Wives

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

- I. Destructive Husbands and Wives
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 1. All of us as humans have pain from our past. We have faults and have made mistakes. Even when we mean well, we can deeply hurt each other in marriage.
 2. What makes destructive behavior even more dangerous is when we justify our destructive behavior with excuses, or completely deny it, or refuse to deal with it. *“This is just the way I am. Deal with it!”*
 3. 86% of divorces are for non-severe circumstances. Half of all marriages end in divorce and are destroyed from within often because we don’t know how to deal with our destructive behavior.
 - B. The Four Reasons We Become Destructive
 - #1 **Ignorance** – We don’t know any better. (Hos. 4:6a)
 - a. Nobody enters a marriage wanting a divorce. Most just don’t know how to sustain a healthy marriage.
 - Continue to learn.
 - b. Successful people don’t hide their weaknesses, they admit them. (2 Cor. 12:8-9 NLT)
 - #2 **Past Hurts** – We all have pain from our past that shapes us. Parental hurts, romantic hurts and life hurts are especially damaging.
 - a. Be honest about your hurts. Bring everything into the light.
 - b. Admit your issues. Focus on yourself and take responsibility for your faults.
 - c. Forgive those who have hurt you. (Luke 6:28)
 - #3 **Bad Friends and Negative Influences** – Your friends predict your future. (1 Cor. 15:33 NIV)
 - a. Adultery, divorce and destructive behavior run in groups.
 - b. Church is not a place for perfect people without issues. Church should be a place where people are dealing with their issues.

- #4 **Defensiveness** – Giving your spouse the freedom to complain will diffuse defensiveness.
- a. When we are defensive, we don't allow our spouse to process issues and problems with us.
 - b. It's easier to blame your spouse than admit that some of the problem may be you.

C. The Four Main Destructive Behaviors in Marriage

- #1 **Criticism** – It's the number one predictor of divorce. (Prov. 18:20-22)
- a. Critical words will kill the life of your marriage!
 - b. Complaining (“*I feel...*”) vs. Criticism (“*You did...*”)
 - c. How to deal with criticism:
 - Follow the 10 to 1 rule. “*I will praise you 10 times for every time I complain. I will never become critical.*”
 - “*I will take responsibility to build your self-esteem. I take responsibility for my language and will never blame you or anyone else for it.*”
- #2 **Control and Dominance** – Satisfaction in marriage drops when there is control and dominance.
- a. God created marriage as an equal partnership and that's how it works best.
 - b. How to deal with control and dominance:
 - Make all decisions together. Never make your spouse pay a price for disagreeing. Ask for their input.
 - If you are dominant, sit down. If you are more passive, stand up.
- #3 **Checking Out** – Marriage is a lifelong covenant. (Heb. 13:5b) “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Leaving is physical; forsaking is emotional.
- a. How to deal with checking out:
 - Commit to never leaving or turning your heart away.
 - Make marriage your number one priority.
- #4 **Cruelty and Abuse** – We all suffer in marriage to some extent because of each other.

- a. Suffering means discomfort, but abuse means damage with intent.
- b. How to deal with abusive behavior:
 - Stand up and don't allow it. The first time you are a victim, the second time, you are a volunteer.
 - Seek help immediately from your church, a professional Christian counselor and stable friends and family.
 - If necessary, temporarily separate and communicate your desire for reconciliation if your spouse gets help and demonstrates change.