

CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE

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I. THE REALITY OF CONFLICT

R.C. SPROUL - "Even the best marriages have problems. Often the difference between a healthy marriage and a defective one is not the number and severity of problems encountered, but in the way problems are dealt with."

JAY ADAMS - "The Christian approach is to solve all problems not just solve some problems or solve them part way. Romans 5:20 tells us about the fullness of God's grace: But where sin abounded, grace far more abounded. That assurance means that when Christ meets sin, He more than meets the need. It is not His concern to patch things up or even to turn back the clock. He wants to turn a bad thing into a great one! And He will settle for nothing less."

WHY CONFLICT COMES

1 Corinthians 7:28 Yet those who marry will face many troubles in this life.

Troubles That Will Test Marriages

A. Sin

DAVE HARVEY (When Sinners Say I Do, 46) – "Sin creates war – war with God, war with others and war within yourself."

JAY ADAMS - "The pressures of marriage likewise have a way of bringing out defects. You can't place two sinners - even redeemed ones - under the same roof, at close range, day after day without such pressures. And they are often great enough to expose problems not previously apparent. No two sinners are fundamentally compatible."

Many sins can impact a marriage but few will impact it more than **Selfishness...**

1. Defined

2. A universal sin – Isaiah 53:6

3. A subtle sin

4. A dangerous sin – James 3:16

5. A marriage killer – Genesis 2:24

JAY ADAMS - "Perhaps the central pattern in all marital problems is self-centeredness...That self-centeredness is destructive to marriage goes without saying. When two parties come together who want what they want and expect others to give it to them, you have all of the ingredients for trouble. The essence of married love, to which each party pledges himself or herself, is to put the other first. That is the opposite of self-centeredness...Because the vows and subsequent challenges of marriage so clearly demand a renunciation of self in order to put another human being first, marriage counters self-centeredness more than any other human institution. No wonder sinners have so much difficulty in marriage: Its very design - that of living for someone else to make him or her happy and meet his or her need for companionship - is contrary to sinful human nature."

B. Differences

“When the differences between a man and woman are misunderstood and unappreciated, it spells marital disaster.”

1. General differences between men and women

2. Specific differences between you and your spouse

- background
- temperament (the way we are wired)
- gifting
- preference

3. Unresolved hurt and/or unforgiveness

- withdraw
- attack
- forgive

II. HOW TO AVOID CONFLICT

A. How Not To

B. Preventive Measures

1. The glory of God – Ephesians 5:31-32

WAYNE GRUDEM - "Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and His church.... This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not just hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly think that 'Christ and the church' might be a good teaching illustration.... Paul say that when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God's great purposes in marriage: to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!

DOUGLAS WILSON - "The reason we are miserable in our marriages is because we have idolized them. But the glory of God is more important than our domestic happiness.

2. Regular, honest communication – Amos 3:3

WAYNE MACK - "When people have communicated effectively, they are mutually strengthened, encouraged and enriched. That is the standard by which we must evaluate our marital and family communication. Does it foster harmony, unity and emotional closeness? Does it draw people together? Do we experience not just physical closeness but emotional closeness?"

2. Realistic expectations – Psalm 103:13-16

3. Deal with little things

4. Pursue spiritual growth

5. Take care of your responsibilities