

MARRIAGE IS NOT FOR WIMPS

**MARITAL COMMUNICATION
CLASS**

SESSION 2

“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”

- C.S. Lewis

John 15:5

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive.

- C. S. Lewis

Two Key Concepts

1. **Team** – We must view our marriages with a team mentality
2. **Safety** – Anything can be said in the context of a safe environment

Table Talk Time

1. Did you do the homework questions? What insights did you gain from the questions?
2. Did you have an opportunity to practice the Speaker/Listener Technique? How did it go? What was the most difficult part of this technique? Where did you get tripped up?
3. Were you a “weni” this week? What was the scenario? What was your spouse’s response? Did it get resolved?

Filters & Miscommunication

Filters & Miscommunication

- The Myth:
 - When we speak, we are clear, obvious and easily understood.
- The Reality:
 - People take our messages and run them through perception filters and as a result they do not hear us as we intend for them to. We need to make allowances for these miscommunications.

Types of Filters

- Inattention
- Emotional States
- Beliefs & Expectations
- Differences in Style
- Self-protection

Inattention

- When people are distracted or uninterested they simply do not get the message.
 - **Wives** - Have you ever tried talking to your husband during the final round of The Masters?
 - **Husbands** - Have you ever tried talking to your wife while she's cooking dinner & has a screaming toddler hanging on her leg?

Emotional States

- When someone is in heightened emotional state it is easy can misconstrue what is being said.
 - Example 1 - Have you ever been dumped? How'd that conversation go?
 - Example 2 - Have you ever tried to talk to someone who just went through a traumatic experience?

Beliefs & Expectations

- Confirmation Bias - Refers to a type of selective thinking whereby one tends to notice and to look for what confirms one's beliefs, and to ignore, not look for, or undervalue the relevance of what contradicts one's beliefs.
 - Example - if you believe that during a full moon there is an increase in admissions to the emergency room where you work, you will take notice of admissions during a full moon, but be inattentive to the moon when admissions occur during other nights of the month.
 - Example - Pre-rinsing dishes & leaving drawers open

Beliefs & Expectations

- Error of Attribution - People tend to have a default assumption that what a person does is based more on what "kind" of person he or she is, rather than the social and environmental forces at work on that person.
 - Example - Your spouse struggles with being on time. When she is late you blame it on her poor planning (i.e. she's a poor planner). When you are late you blame it on the fact that your boss pulled you into a meeting (i.e. it's a circumstance issue, not a character issue)

Differences in Style

- Some of us are loud, outspoken and aggressive. Others are introverted, introspective and timid.
- Some of us are wordy & can't get to the point while others of us are cut & dry and lack tact.

Self-protection

- When someone covers up their real concerns and feelings out of fear of rejection. They will communicate in such a way to protect us from getting hurt or rejected.
 - You say, “I’m going to go to the movies. Want to come?” instead of saying, “I’d really like for you to come with me to the movies.”
 - You say, “Tonight was fun” instead of saying, “I really enjoyed getting to spend some time with you tonight.”

Self-protection

- Find some time to sit down & discuss these two questions:
 - What is it about me that makes you want to self-protect?
 - What is it about you that makes you want to self-protect?

Dealing with Filters

- Assume filters are there
 - You are NOT totally rational
 - You ARE affected by your emotional state
 - You ARE affected by your past experience
- Accept the fact that your memory is not perfect

Dealing with Filters

- Announce filters when you know they are there

Table Talk

- How have filters caused problems in your marriage?
- Do you have a “default” filter that you most often find yourself using?
- Talk about your communication style & how it can help or hinder good communication?
- How has the filter of self-protection played into your communication?

Expectations

Thesis Statement - Expectations

Perhaps the single biggest cause of conflicts & disappointment can be attributed to unmet expectations.

Expectations

“Expectations are profoundly powerful, as they reflect what we long for and how we wish things would be. When they are fulfilled, they are a tree of life. But when what we expect does not happen, the hope deferred makes our hearts sick. To a large degree, we are disappointed or satisfied in life based on how well what is happening matches what we expect... Therefore, expectations play a crucial role in determining our level of satisfaction in marriage...Expectations affect everything. “

- Scott Stanley, Daniel Trathen, Savanna McCain & Milt Bryan,
A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for your Marriage

Expectations

Expectation is the root of all heartache.

- William Shakespeare

Blessed is he who expects nothing for he shall
never be disappointed.

- Alexander Pope, 1727

Expectations

- Expectations are beliefs about the way things will be or should be - including about behaviors, roles, life and death, relationships, and so forth.
- Expectations that are not met lead to feelings of sadness, disappointment, frustration, and anger.

Everyday Expectations

- How you want to be greeted when you walk in the door after work?
- What time your spouse should be home each night?
- Who drives the car when you go out?
- Who changes diapers?
- How will you spend Thanksgiving?
- Where will you spend Christmas?
- Who manages the checkbook?

Origins of Expectations

- Family of Origin
 - This is really critical in helping us understand our expectations.
 - Our family experiences laid down a ton of patterns – good and bad – that became the models for how we think things should or will be.

Origins of Expectations

- Previous Relationships
 - We have also developed expectations from the other important relationships in our life such as previous dating relationships or marriages.

Origins of Expectations

- Cultural Influences & Backgrounds
 - A variety of powerful cultural factors can influence our expectations: books, television, movies and so forth.
 - How many of us buy into the lie that Hollywood presents regarding relationships, sex & marriage?
- Did you grow up in the same culture as your spouse?

Origins of Expectations

- Core Beliefs (Religious, Spiritual & Otherwise)
 - We all have key beliefs about life, God, and how it all fits together. These beliefs make up your core belief system. Your core belief system affects your expectations.
 - Don't be misled into thinking that just because you both have a Christian background that you automatically see spiritual issues similarly.

Three Kinds of Expectations

- Unaware

- Referring to expectations that are unaware to the speaker
- Have you ever been upset but didn't know why? You may have an expectation that you were unaware of.

Three Kinds of Expectations

- Unspoken

- Our spouse can't read our mind
- Your spouse cannot do anything about something he or she doesn't know about.

Three Kinds of Expectations

- Unreasonable

- You may be aware of it & you may have expressed it but that doesn't mean is reasonable

- Men - How often would you like to have sex?
 - Women - How many hours would you like to engage in deep conversation?



**Unaware
Unreasonable
Unspoken**

**In the expectation
storm**

**Aware
Reasonable
Spoken**

In the clear

Expectations – Moving Toward Oneness

- Be self-aware
 - If you find yourself upset ask this question, **“What was I expecting to happen?”**
 - This may help reveal an expectation that you were unaware you had.

Expectations – Moving Toward Oneness

- Be clear
 - Talk to your spouse about your expectations
 - Are you taking a trip to see the in-laws? Then ask about what your spouse expects of you.
 - Are you gearing up for a big event? Then sit down with your spouse and talk about what each of you expects.

Expectations – Moving Toward Oneness

- Be reasonable
 - We all have unrealistic expectations.
 - What we want may not be what's going to occur.

Speaker / Listener Technique (Continued)

The Way I See It #280

“You can learn a lot more from listening than you can from talking. Find someone with whom you don't agree in the slightest and ask them to explain themselves at length. Then take a seat, shut your mouth, and don't argue back. It's physically impossible to listen with your mouth open.”

-- John Moe

Radio host and author of *Conservatize Me*

Table Talk Time - Expectations & Speaker / Listener Technique

Using the speaker / listener technique answer one or more of these questions:

1. What were / are some of the unrealistic expectations you brought into marriage?
2. What expectations about marriage (unrealistic or realistic) did you get from your family of origin?
3. “Perhaps the single biggest cause of conflicts & disappointment can be attributed to unmet expectations.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?