



**SPRINGCREEK
CHURCH**

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FIGHTING: The Enemies of Intimacy

Marriage Tune-Up | Part 3
Senior Pastor Keith Stewart
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Conflict is the price you pay for intimacy. There is simply no other way of achieving it. In the same way that the absence of conflict is not a healthy relational sign, neither is conflict that rages out of control. The key to a lasting, loving relationship is to learn to resolve conflict appropriately. Join us Sunday as we learn God's way of building greater intimacy in marriage.

...those who marry will face many troubles in life.
1 Corinthians 7.28



"These experiments demonstrated something astonishing: couples who stayed together fought as frequently, and over precisely the same things, as did couples who split up. Experiment after experiment showed this, until we couldn't avoid it. We all have irreconcilable differences. Every couple has them. Those who have successful marriages simply have learned ways of talking about their problems."

- Diane Sollee, Smart Marriage

Conflict is the price you pay for intimacy

Real harmony never comes earlier than 10 or 15 years into the relationship.

Work at getting along with each other. Hebrews 12:14a

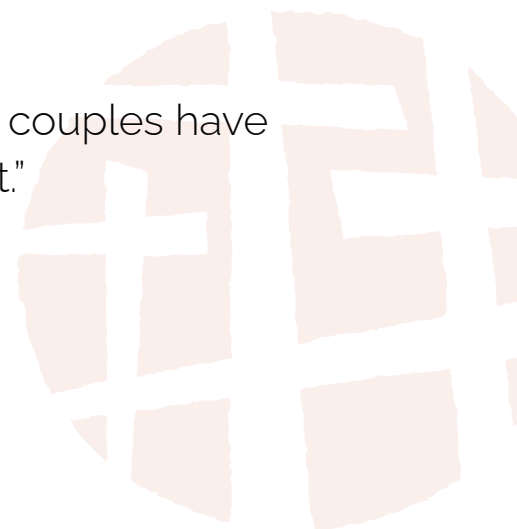
"...a lack of arguing indicates a lack of truthfulness and emotional intimacy." – Dr. Monica O'Neal

"My goodness, no! If we did, there would be no need for one of us." – Ruth Graham

"Divorce? No. Murder? Yes!" – Ruth Graham

"Conflict is a normal part of marriage, but most couples have not been taught a healthy pattern of handling it."

- H. Norman Wright, Marriage Counseling



1. THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

The First Horseman: Criticism

"We complain about actions. We criticize people."

– John Gottman

The Second Horseman: Contempt

"Contempt is so lethal to love that it ought to be outlawed."

– John Gottman

"[Healthy couples don't] explode, hit below the belt, or use arguing as a tool to gain power in the relationship."

– Dr. Monica O'Neal

"93% of couples who fight dirty will be divorced in ten years."

– The University of Utah

"...when a spouse - particularly the wife - rolls her eyes while the other is talking, the marital EXIT sign is blinking fiercely."

– John Gottman

The Third Horseman: Defensiveness

"Don't find fault, find a remedy." – Henry Ford

The Fourth Horseman: Stonewalling



Non-talking is not the absence of communication. Instead, it's a powerful form of negative communication. It communicates contempt, disapproval and distance.

2. FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT: Solve your solvable problems

Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better. Ephesians 4.23

"Fighting is as intrinsic to marriage as sex. And the goal for both activities is to do them well."

– Doctors Les and Leslie Parrott, *The Good Fight*

❑ Soften Startup

"...the person who says 'we' the most during an argument suggests the best solutions."

–Association of Psychological Science

"The goal in marriage is not to think alike but to think together."

– Robert C. Dodds

According to studies done by Kenyon College, tests have shown that when someone is shouted at, they can't help but shout back.



- Accept Influence
- Make Effective Repairs
- De-escalate
- Soothing of Self and Partner
- Compromise

"69% of marriage conflicts are never solved."
– The Gottman Institute

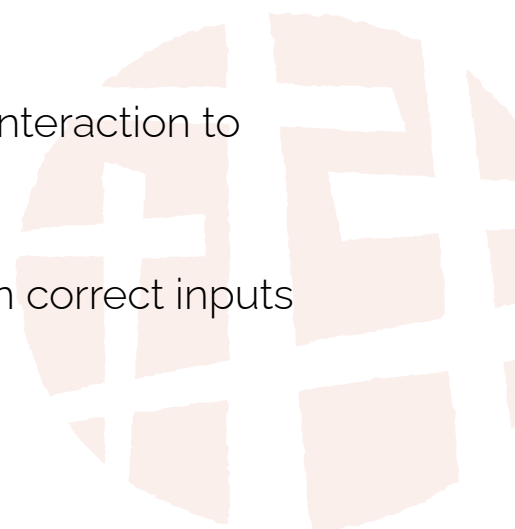
I tried to think this problem through, but it was too difficult for me until I went into your Temple... Psalm 73:16-17a

God grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change.
The courage to change the things I can. And the wisdom to know the difference.

3. THE MAGIC RATIO

You need a minimum of 5 to 1 ratio of positive interaction to negative interaction.

For every one incorrect input, it required eleven correct inputs to make things right again. - Albert Einstein



"Sometimes in counseling situations, I encounter persons who claim an absence of any kind of affectionate feelings for their mates. These people say that whatever they once felt has died and that they are left with no other alternative but to end their marriage." - Tony Campolo

1. Everyday make a new list of ten things that you would do for your spouse if you were in love.

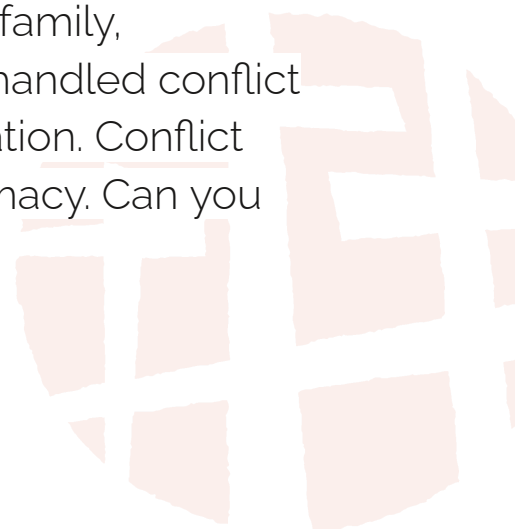
2.) Then, every day, do the ten things on the list.

- Tony Campolo

"Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor, act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love [them]." - C.S. Lewis

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Conflict is to be expected in marriage. Yet so many act as if the opposite were true. What has been your attitude toward conflict whether in your marriage, family, friendship circle, or even at work? Poorly handled conflict will always result in hurt and further alienation. Conflict handled well will lead toward deeper intimacy. Can you think of examples of both?



2. Without a doubt, John Gottman's explanation of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse as it relates to marriage is very revealing. The four horsemen are criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling. Did you see any of these characteristics in your parent's marriage? What was that like? How about your own marriage? Where has your greatest struggle been? What things can be done to interrupt this downward spiral of broken communication?
3. Take some time as an individual or group to discuss the chart "Good Fight vs Bad Fight" (*posted online with today's message notes*). Where are you strongest? Where are you weakest? What's your biggest takeaway from the chart? What steps can you make toward improvement?
4. Pastor Keith reminded us to "Complain. Don't blame." No matter how "at fault" your partner is, approaching them with criticism and accusation is not going to be productive. It's all about the approach. One of the biggest ways to take the edge off of communicating concerns is by beginning with "I" statements instead of "You" statements. When you begin with "I", you are less likely to seem critical. Recall some of your more common complaints in marriage. How can you rephrase your complaints making "I" statements instead of "you" statements?



5. The magic ratio of 5 to 1 positive to negative interactions is an absolute essential to making improvements in communication AND having a happy, healthy love life. We need to be making far more deposits into our partners "love bank" than we are making withdrawals. How would you rate yourself in this area? How would your partner rate you? What can you do this week to begin to make improvements? For those of you who make a practice of doing this regularly, what difference has it made in your marriage?

