

Working on Oneness -- Marriage Workshop



All of God's purposes in marriage:

1. Make babies! Procreation. Genesis 1:28a- *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."*
2. To make two become one. Genesis 2:24. *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*
3. To practice submission. Ephesians 5:21. *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*
4. Enjoying God through ministry. Galatians 5:13- *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, **serve** one another humbly in love. (You are hard pressed to enjoy a marriage filled with serving if you are not greatly satisfied with serving the Lord)*
5. To model the marriage of the Church to Christ. Revelation 19.

Principles for Communication and Reconciliation:

- I. "God, begin with me." **Self-evaluation.** *"The more you change, the more you become an instrument of change in the lives of others."* Howard Hendricks.
 - Philippians 3:13b-14- Honey, I am realizing that ... **Admission.**
 - Could you help me see where I need growth? **Request.**
 - How could I best serve you today? **Offering.**
- II. "God, use me in marriage." Ephesians 2:10. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which he prepared for us in advance, that we should walk in them."*
 - Love is seeking God's best for our spouse. Ephesians 5:25.
 - That is an act of the will, not a passing feeling.
 - Love is sacrificial action, not good intentions.
 - Love is given in obedience to Christ, not in response to our spouse's performance. (Withheld love, quid-pro-quo, demanding love)
 - Love is expressed verbally and with actions.

1st Workshop: Share with your spouse three phrases that thrill your heart to hear and three actions that make you feel loved or respected.

From Oneness to Isolation:

- We focus on the weakness of our spouse. We claim our own strengths.
- We change back to the world's pattern for relationship. 50/50 performance.
- We skip romance and demand satisfaction.
- We almost always believe that the spouse is the majority shareholder. (CS Lewis- Pride is the national religion of Hell)
- Our expectations change constantly. Our spouse cannot get a reading.
- We inject how we feel into how we evaluate (Love is not just a feeling).
- We build a case to justify our own behaviors.
- We shift from one pole- "oneness" to the other- isolation/selfishness.
- We start the "extra-marital" affairs to replace our sense of loss. (Activities, family, materialism, career, chemicals)
- We deceive ourselves into believing that we deserve happiness.

Workshop #2: Go through the list above and mark ones that are in highest use. Then, plan to confess one to your spouse.

Taking Positive Steps Forward: *(Taken directly from Gracetoyou)*

1. **Concentrate on your heart, not your appearance.** Your inner life is more important than your outer appearance. The writer of Proverbs said as much when he remarked, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).
2. **Concentrate on who your spouse really is, not on an ideal partner.** Your spouse, though seemingly wonderful at the altar, is not perfect. If you cling to an ideal of what you want your spouse or marriage to be like, you'll hurt your marriage. Abandon the idea of a perfect mate and marriage and begin learning to understand and love the spouse you have—as he or she is today. That is what Peter meant when he told husbands to live with their wives "with understanding" (1 Peter 3:7).
3. **Concentrate on loving your spouse, not on your compatibility.** No matter who your spouse is, you can learn to love each other. In contrast to the prevailing idea that love is something that just happens, Paul commanded husbands to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25) and wives to love their husbands (Titus 2:4). Scripture doesn't even recognize the possibility of incompatibility between two marriage partners—God simply commands both the husband and the wife to love each other.

A marriage challenge: *Pray, "God change me,"* for a solid week. Then go back to this workshop paper and start a conversation.