



COMMUNITY OF FAITH

MAKING MARRIAGE WORK CONFLICT AND MARRIAGE

Marriage is the most challenging relationship you will ever have.

We truly do not know how selfish we are until we get married.

Incompatibility is a given.

“It takes between nine and fourteen years for a couple to become not entirely unselfish but rather less selfish and begin to shift from “me” to “we”. One of the best ways we can start making that shift is to focus on serving one another.” – Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*

Marriage is a constant death and resurrection – dying to my selfishness and coming to life as I look out for the best interests of my spouse.

Marriage puts pressure on you to become more than you thought you could be.

“God, who is at work within you, will give you the will and the power to achieve his purpose.”
Philippians 2:13

“...I am with you; that is all you need. My power shows up best in weak people.”
2 Corinthians 12:9

Lessons in love didn't start in marriage. They started in infancy and lasted all the years we lived with our parents.

When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.” 1 Corinthians 13:11

Crucial Question:

Can you recall being comforted as a child after a time of emotional distress?

How was conflict handled in your family?

When conflict ruptures a relationship, repairing it brings relief.

Being fully known and understood requires that we say aloud to someone else what is going on within our souls.

Were you taught to identify and express those feelings?

The ability to console and bring relief to your spouse when he or she is upset and agitated is foundational to a close, emotional bond.

“When marriages fail, it is not increasing conflict that is the cause. It is decreasing affection and emotional responsiveness.” – Ted Huston, UT

God allows the pain so we will get unstuck, so we will grow.

Childhood Strategies:

1. Find the Bad Guy
2. Protest and Withdraw
3. Freeze and Flee

“So confess your offenses to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed.” James 5:16

Adult Strategy:

1. The hurt partner needs to speak his or her pain as openly and simply as possible.

You probably saw _____ but what I really felt was _____.

2. The listening partner stays emotionally present and acknowledges the wounded partner's pain and his or her part in it.
3. Injuring partners now take ownership of how they inflicted this injury on their loved one and express regret and remorse. This cannot take the form of an impersonal or defensive apology.
4. Injured partners identify what they need right now to bring closure to the trauma.

2 Questions:

- *What Am I Most Afraid Of?*
- *What do I need most from you?*

“Oh, love me – and right now! – hold me tight! Just the way you promised. Now comfort me so I can live, really live, your revelation is the tune I dance to.” Psalm 119:76-77

This trusting, this Leaning into one another is what allows emotional connection to happen. Leaning allows you to take the weight off your old protections. It allows you to let go of the tightness or rigidity of the old rules or the old story.

Learning to lean is like learning to float.