

**First, Total Depravity**

- 1) 1 Tim. 1:15—*“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*
  - a) Before Conversion Paul == Really, Really Bad → I Was Worst → Except == Present Tense
  - b) Lived In Constant Awareness of How Unworthy of Salvation He Is
  - c) If God Withdraws Grace For One Minute → Hearts Slide Like Gravity Into Darkness
  - d) Perhaps Not Worst == But How Bad is Bad...
- 2) Jer. 17:9—*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”*
- 3) Is. 64:6—*“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”*
- 4) You Are A Very Great Sinner → In Constant & Desperate Need of God’s Unconditional Grace
- 5) Usually Willing To Admit It To God → Prostrate Selves → Woe Is Me == Undone
  - a) But Minute Our Spouses Try To Tell Us Same Thing → We Explode In Self-Defense
- 6) How Would Your Marriage Change == If Believed == *“I am my biggest marital problem”*
  - a) We’re Both Sin Against Each Other == Self-Rtness Short-Circuits Possibility of Real Reconciliation
- 7) In Any Conflict → My Main Job == Search My Own Heart Before God == Seek Humility
  - a) Repent & Deal With God → So Free & Humble to Deal W/ Spouse
- 8) You & Me Against My Sin → Me and You Against Your Sin → Stop Resisting Each Other

**Second, Sanctification**

- 1) Thomas—*“What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?”*
- 2) We Want Happy More Than Holy → God Wants Us Happy Thru Holiness → Not Instead of
  - a) To Be Happy == Often Bypass The Hard—Humbling—Surgical Work Necessary
  - b) Jump Ship → They Are One Needs To Change → They Won’t → To Be Happy == Get Out
  - c) But In Getting Out → You By-Pass Work God Intends In You →
  - d) Gold Must Go Thru Extreme Heat of Fire → Impurities In Heart of Metal To Be Released
  - e) Must Go In Fire → Must Melt → Must Be Undone → Broken == To Become Pure
- 3) God Has Given You Partner You Need To Really Change
  - a) Harvey—*“Your spouse was a strategic choice made by a wise and loving God. Selected by him, for you, from the beginning of the world, your spouse is an essential part of God’s rescue mission for your life...if we’re wisely honest we will realize that God is behind it all.”*
  - b) We Want To See Our Partner As Problem → If Only They Would...
  - c) We Assume Answer == Their Need To Change
  - d) Often Truth == Partners Weaknesses & Failures == Reveal Our Sin & Need For Spiritual Growth
  - e) Huge Part of Answer To Our Problem → What Person Do I Need To Become To Love Them
  - f) In What Way Do I Need To Die To Myself → Be Humbled—Gentled—Surrender My Way
- 4) Often Our Resistance To Our Spouse == Our Refusal To Change → To Submit To God’s Work

**Third, Short Accounts**

- 1) Deal W/ It → Get Help If You Need It → But Deal W/ It == Do Not Let It Fester → Sun Go Down
- 2) Eph. 4:26—*“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”*
- 3) Matt. 5:23-24—*“If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”*
- 4) Matt. 18:15-16—*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”*
- 5) Speaking Truth In Love

- 6) Getting Help Sooner Rather Than Later → Too Often Couples Wait For Years
  - a) IF Not Working For One of You → Not Working
  - b) Too Often One Spouse Begg To Get Help → Other Refuses

#### **Fourth, Don't Trust Yourself**

- 1) Harvey—*"It is very important in our Christian lives to be suspicious of any claims to righteousness we bring to our relationship with God... True humility is living confident in Christ's righteousness, and suspicious of our own."*
- 2) Our Hearts Have a Permanent Tendency To Oppose God → To Oppose Spiritual Truth & Life
  - a) Rom 7:18—*"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."*
  - b) Rom. 7:23—*"I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members."*
  - c) Gal 5:17—*"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."*
- 3) Sin By Its Very Nature → Blinds Us To Its Presence == You Are Worse Than You Like To Think
- 4) Believe W/ All Your Heart == You Have Blind Spots → Flesh
- 5) Believe In Logs In Your Own Eye → When Trying To Point Out & Judge Your Partners Sin
- 6) One of Greatest Enemies of Marriage == Self-Righteousness → Sense I'm Right
- 7) Live In Daily Deep Awareness of Own Sinfulness → Your Constant Need of His Grace

#### **Fifth, Stop Being Defensive**

- 1) Quick & Easy W/ List of Faults—Failures—Sins In Partner → But As Soon As Word Comes Back
  - a) Play Down → Change Subjects → Turn On The Attack → Withdraw & Hide
  - b) Truth == Struggle To Have Courage To Face Selves → To Hear Criticism == Crushes Us
  - c) Only Way Can Do This == Live Great Confidence In Christ → Justification By Grace
  - d) Learn == Not Take Self Too Seriously
- 2) Crave Spiritual Growth & Godliness → You Have To Want To Grow → Want To Be Like Christ
  - a) Humble Selves → To Hear What Don't Want To Hear
  - b) Believe Doctrine of Total Depravity → Heart Deceitful == Don't Dare Criticize Or Rebuke Me
- 3) Love The Truth == Even When It Hurts
  - a) Faithful Wounds of Friend
  - b) Not Attacking You → Not Trying To Hurt You → Not Just Being Mean ==
  - c) Telling Something You Desperately Need To Hear
- 4) If Want To Grow → Want To Hear What Spouse Trying To Tell You
  - a) Ask For It == Listen W/ Out Arguing → Agree To Think & Pray → Ask Others In Your Life
- 5) Use Anger & Withdrawal To Protect Our Idolatries → Need To Win → To Be Right
  - a) Protect Fragile Sense of Self Rightness →

#### **Finally, Living Out The Gospel**

- 1) Seeking To Apply First In Relation To God → Against You Alone Have I Sinned, O Lord
- 2) Need Clear → Defined → Specific
  - a) Confession → Name What You Did → How You Hurt Them
  - b) Repentance → Articulate Determination To Change → Be Different → Invite Help
  - c) Forgiveness
    - i) Ask For Forgiveness
    - ii) Be Quick To Forgive Genuine Repentance