



Marriage - Session 2 - Conflict

Last week recap:

Foundation for a biblical marriage:

- *One Christian man and one Christian woman*
 - *Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:1-2, John 13:1-17, John 13:34-35*
 - *Ephesians 5:22-33*
- *Men*
 - *Ask your wife to tell you what makes her feel the most loved by you. What can you sacrifice to serve your wife? What is the most difficult thing about leading in your home? What would help you be the leader that you are called to be?*
- *Women*
 - *Ask your husband to tell you what makes him feel the most loved by you. What can you sacrifice to serve your husband? Why can it be difficult to submit to your husband? How can you see submission as a positive responsibility God has given to you?*

Opening Questions

- **Do you think conflict in marriage is common?**
- **Do people have more or less conflict in their marriages the older they get?**
- **What are the biggest causes for conflict in marriage?**
- **Is it better to deal with conflict in marriage in front of your kids or behind closed doors?**
- **Where did you learn how to handle conflict?**



THE FOUR HORSEMEN

AND HOW TO STOP THEM WITH THEIR ANTIDOTES

CRITICISM

Verbally attacking personality or character.



GENTLE START UP

Talk about your feelings using "I" statements and express a positive need.



CONTEMPT

Attacking sense of self with an intent to insult or abuse.



BUILD CULTURE OF APPRECIATION

Remind yourself of your partner's positive qualities and find gratitude for positive actions.



DEFENSIVENESS

Victimizing yourself to ward off a perceived attack and reverse the blame.



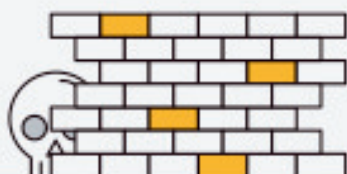
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Accept your partner's perspective and offer an apology for any wrongdoing.



STONEWALLING

Withdrawing to avoid conflict and convey disapproval, distance, and separation.



PHYSIOLOGICAL SELF-SOOTHING

Take a break and spend that time doing something soothing and distracting.



The Gottman Institute

Criticism - blaming a problem on a personality flaw of your partner. You are stupid. You're an idiot. You are ridiculous. (A way to attack your partner) "This place is such a mess... Why are you such a slob?"

Contempt - an escalation of criticism suggesting you are superior to your partner on some dimension. (A way to attack your partner) "You're such a loser. Why did I ever marry you?"

Defensiveness - the natural response to someone attacking you. A counter attack to what they said about you.

Stonewalling - withdrawing to get avoid the conflict. Silent treatment.

VS

Gentle Start Up - Feeling, situation, positive need. "I'm feeling frustrated about having to cook dinner every night. Would you please take me out to dinner tonight?"

Build Culture of Appreciation - "I am so thankful that you take pride in decorating our home. It is so cozy." "Thank you for working so hard and sacrificing for our family."

Take Responsibility - Look for your portion of what is contributing to this conflict and be quick to apologize.

Physiological Self-Soothing - intentionally get your mind off the conflict so you can calm down and so you can think clearly with less emotion.

James 1:2-4 *Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.*

