

# Grace Bible Church 09 Marriage Seminar

## Session #3 – Study Your Spouse’s Language

Dr. Willard Harley in his book *Fall in Love Stay in Love* writes, “Marriage is one of the few conditions in life that bring out the pure Giver and Taker in each of us.”

He goes on to write, “If spouses are to meet each other’s needs, they must do for each other what they don’t necessarily appreciate themselves.”

In order to unconditionally love and respect our spouse we need to study their language. Pride always perceives things from my own perspective. Empathy brings understanding.

Jean Miller, “Mutual empathy is the great unsung human gift.”

In 1975 Dr. James Dobson wrote a book entitled *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*. Most wives and husbands have that same unsaid thought.

Dr. Parrott, “Research has shown that 90 percent of our struggles in marriage would be resolved if we did nothing more than see the problem from our partner’s perspective.”

### Play jacket Fireproof DVD – Session #4 “Studying Your Spouse”

#### **A wife feels loved and honored through closeness.**

This was God’s original design for marriage.

Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

The word “joined” means to cling to, to hold on to.

1 Peter 3:7, “Husbands, likewise, dwelt with them with understanding...”

This involves both physical and emotional closeness. A husband needs to make it a priority to spend time with his wife. Spend time telling her about your day. Ask her about her day. Share the events of your life with her.

Song of Solomon 8:5-6, “The Shulamite TO HER BELOVED. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm”.

#### **A husband feels loved and respected through friendship.**

Men enjoy the recreational companionship with their wives. Men appreciate the shoulder to shoulder friendship of their wives. Women share experiences by talking about them. Men share experiences by doing them. Men enjoy the physical presence of their wives. They don’t have to talk with them to enjoy being with them.

Psalms 128:3, “Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table.”

#### **A wife feels loved and honored by conversation.**

A wife needs to connect with her husband through conversation.

Song of Solomon 2:14, “Let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

She freely shares her thoughts and feelings with him. She needs her husband to share his thoughts and feelings with her.

Proverbs 27:19, "As in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man."

A wife needs for her husband to share what is in his heart. A husband needs to recognize that when his wife is asking him questions she is not interrogating him. She is attempting to connect with him, to share his life. A husband must make a conscious decision not to tune out his wife or close himself off to her. The wife needs to realize that this is not a natural thing for most husbands to do.

### **A husband feels loved and respected by admiration.**

Women need love, men need respect. Men have a sensitive pride.

Proverbs 29:23, "A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor."

If a husband senses a critical spirit in his wife he will close down emotionally. The virtuous woman pictured in scripture understands this.

Proverbs 31:26, "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness."

The wise wife will express admiration in the areas that she would like to see change in her husband. A husband is more influenced to change by the spirit of his wife than by her words.

Both husband and wife need to heed the words of the Apostle Paul.

Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

### **A wife feels loved and honored through affection.**

For many wives affection is the essential cement of their relationship. To a wife affection is the expression of her husband's love for her. There is tremendous power in the human touch.

1 Corinthians 7:1-3, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband."

A wife desires affection without sexual intentions.

Dr. Harley, "When acts commonly associated with affection, such as hugging or kissing, have a sexual motive, the message changes to what the giver wants for him or her rather than a commitment to care for the other spouse."

### **A husband feels loved and respected through physical intimacy.**

Proverbs 5:18-19, "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love."

Dr. Eggerichs, "Just as he should minister to your spirit to have access to your body, so, too, you should minister to his body if you want to gain access to his spirit."

A wife's emotional need is for affection and openness. When she does not receive that from her husband she feels unloved. In the same way when a husband's need for

physical intimacy is not met he feels disrespected by his wife. Lack of affection leads to alienation which results in lack of physical intimacy which leads to emotional withdrawal. The result is that neither spouse's needs are being met. Instead of an environment of mutual affection there is one of mutual alienation.

## **Each interprets love and respect through each one's individual language.**

The needs that we have shared are a sampling of how husbands and wives give and receive love and respect. In many ways they are exact opposites. Surely God has done this for a purpose. His plan for marital oneness involves unconditional love from the husband and unconditional respect from the wife.

## **The key is the word unconditional.**

The husband does not require his wife's respect before he will give her his love. The wife does not require her husband's love before she will give him her love. We are all sinners and we will fail each other on a regular basis. No husband can love unconditionally all the time. No wife can respect unconditionally all the time. Many Christian marriages are on a downward spiral because each spouse is waiting for the other one to make the first move.

## **The Chinese puzzle illustration**

### **Who should make the first move?**

Ideally the answer should be that both husband and wife are consistently moving towards each other. In reality it is usually the more spiritually mature spouse who will seek to love and respect unconditionally.

Gary Smalley, "The strongest person always initiates peace."

Christ tells us how to deal with relational differences. The following is the marital paraphrase.

Matthew 7:3-5, "And why do you look at the speck in your spouse's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your spouse, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your spouse's eye."

## **My impaired vision affects how I see myself, how I see my spouse, and how I respond to my spouse.**

I need to first recognize how I am failing to understand my spouse's language and how I am failing to respond to them in their own language. I can correct this by making an appointment with the Great Physician. I must ask the Lord to reveal to me where I need to change. I need to apply the biblical remedy of confession and repentance. Then I need to take my medicine. It won't be pleasant at first but in time it will bring healing and relief.

Gary Chapman, “Whenever a relationship breaks down, two people are a part of the breakdown. Granted one may bear more of the responsibility than the other, but either can move to restore it. They must both deal with their own wrong, and, indeed, they can only deal with their own wrong. As you see your wrong confess it, accept God’s forgiveness, and ask His Spirit to control you. People do not “make us miserable”. We chose to be miserable. The immediate emotion that arises after the action of your partner may be automatic and beyond your control, but what you do with that emotion is your decision.”

## **Unconditional love and unconditional respect are acts of endless forgiveness.**

Parrott, “The failure to give or receive forgiveness probably accounts for nearly every marriage that does not endure. How can two people who have so much opportunity to step on each other’s toes survive without saying, “I’m sorry”?”

When a woman says “I’m sorry” she sees as increasing her love. When a man says “I’m sorry” he sees it as a decrease in respect. Both husband and wife need to ask for and give forgiveness on a regular basis.

Colossians 3:13-15, “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

Ruth Graham, “A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.”

**Play envelope Fireproof DVD – Session #5 “Forgiveness”**