

MARRIAGE SYLLABUS

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Dear Friend,

No one sees marriage as more important than God does. After all, He is the one who created marriage! It was not man's idea it was God's masterpiece. Marriage is so important to God that the Bible both opens and closes with a wedding. In the opening chapters of the book of Genesis we have the very first wedding as God Himself officiates the wedding of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Then, in the closing chapters of the book of Revelation we see the final wedding – the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as Christ is united to His church for all of eternity.

Whether you are engaged, newly married, or have been married for a long time, you can benefit by strengthening the Biblical foundation of your marriage. That is what this seminar is all about – reinforcing what the Bible says about the vital aspects of a healthy and successful marriage. Over the course of these four sessions we will walk through together what the Bible says about these crucial areas:

Session 1: Love
Session 2: Marriage Roles
Session 3: Communication and Conflict
Session 4: Temperaments and Acceptance

A few of the sessions have with them a pre-assignment. Though these are not vital to understanding the concepts we will discover, they are fun and will create some great communication between you and your fiancé or spouse. As we go through these sessions, please know that I will be praying for you! If you have any questions along the way, feel free to email me at folkslisten@miefree.org.

Pastor Scott

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SESSION THREE

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Two Keys in Communication

A. Keep all lines of communication open

1. Each person to each person
2. Each person to God

B. Know the three components of communication

1. Content (your words) = 7%
2. Tone (your voice) = 38%
3. Nonverbal (your actions) 55%

Five Levels of Communication

Level 1: CLICHÉ CONVERSATION

- a. No personal sharing
- b. Each person remains behind their own safe defenses
- c. Example: Hi! How are you? Did you see the game last night?

Level 2: REPORTING FACTS

- a. Just facts - no personal information
- b. No feelings expressed about the facts
- c. Example: Michigan lost!

Level 3: MY IDEAS AND JUDGMENTS

- a. Begins to share ideas and decisions
- b. Cautious! Will retreat if rejected
- c. Example: I'm glad Michigan lost!

Level 4: MY FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

- a. Shares feelings about him or herself
- b. Real communication is now starting to happen
- c. Example: I'm glad Michigan lost because I do not like Michigan!

Level 5: COMPLETE COMMUNICATION

- a. Absolute openness and honesty
- b. Involves risk of rejection
- c. Example: And besides Michigan played Ohio State and I love Ohio State

Five Possible Messages in Communication

1. What you mean to say
2. What you actually say
3. What the other person hears you say
4. What the other person thinks he hears you say
5. What the other person says about what you have said

What Creates Communication

1. Honesty (Proverbs 19:5; 26:28)
2. Trust (Proverbs 25:9-10)
3. Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
4. Complete acceptance (Romans 15:7)
5. Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-22, 1 Peter 4:8; Colossians 3:13)

Keys to Effective Listening

1. Establish eye contact and a posture that indicates your mate has your interest
2. Pay attention to non-verbal cues
3. Hear the other person's meanings and feelings and reflect them back
 - a. **Wife:** "My mother is just impossible"
 - b. **Reflective Listening:** "It sounds like your mom has been giving you a hard time about something"
4. Use open responses
 - a. **Wife:** "My mother is just impossible"
 - b. **Closed response:** "How many times have I told you to put your foot down and not let her interfere?"
 - c. **Open response:** "Your mother must have done something to really upset you"
5. Allow the other person to resolve the problem

Five Types of Differences

1. **TASTE** (food, music, dress, etc.)
2. **HABITS** (where do you squeeze the toothpaste; how do you unroll the toilet paper; do you sleep with the window open or closed; do you shower at night or in the morning; do you drink from a glass or the bottle, etc.)
3. **VALUES** (priorities, etc.)
4. **THINKING** (how one mentally solves problems, etc.)
5. **TEMPERAMENT** (optimist vs. pessimist, etc.)

Exercises

1. List a difference that you and your fiancé have in ***TASTE***
2. List a difference that you and your fiancé have in ***HABITS***
3. List a difference that you and your fiancé have in ***VALUES***
4. List a difference that you and your fiancé have in ***THINKING***
5. List a difference that you and your fiancé have in ***TEMPERAMENT***

Handling Differences

1. **AWARENESS**: Be aware of your differences
2. **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**: Acknowledge that you have differences
3. **ACCEPTANCE**: Accept reality as it is
4. **ADAPTATION**: Begin to adapt to your differences
5. **APPRECIATION**: See your differences as opportunities for enrichment

Resolving Conflicts

1. Resolution of a conflict requires a ***commitment*** to ***listen***
 - a. Focus on the message content not the method of delivery
 - b. Focus on the meaning not the words
 - c. Focus on the valid points not the inaccurate accusations
 - d. Focus on the questions not the indictments
 - e. Focus on the understanding not the judgment
2. Resolution of the conflict requires ***loving confrontation***
 - a. Check your motive
 - b. Check your attitude
 - c. Check your circumstances
 - d. Check the pressures your mate is under
 - e. Check your willingness to accept confrontation yourself
 - f. Check your focus
 - 1) *One issue not many issues*
 - 2) *The problem not the person*
 - 3) *The behavior not the character*
 - 4) *The specifics not generalizations*
 - 5) *“I” statements not “You” statements*
 - 6) *Observation of facts not motives*
 - 7) *Mutual understanding not winning or losing*
3. Resolution of conflict requires a ***willingness*** to ***forgive***
4. Resolution of conflict requires a ***willingness*** to ***come to a point of action***
 - a. Agree on an action point or resolution
 - b. Agree to disagree agreeably
 - c. Agree to reschedule the conflict

Pre-Assignment for Session Four

Write the letter that describes how you feel about the following. If you are married or engaged do this separately and then compare your answers together

L = Luxury

D = Desirable

U = Useful

N = Necessity

| Item: | Corresponding Letter |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Life Insurance | _____ |
| A Color TV | _____ |
| New Furniture | _____ |
| A Will | _____ |
| A Stereo | _____ |
| A Car | _____ |
| A Second Car | _____ |
| Owning your own Home | _____ |
| Tithing | _____ |
| Owning Stock | _____ |
| Pets | _____ |
| Vacation once a Year | _____ |
| Retirement Plan | _____ |
| Credit Cards | _____ |
| Going Out Once a Week | _____ |
| Life Insurance on Husband | _____ |
| Life Insurance on Wife | _____ |
| Hobbies | _____ |
| Medical Insurance | _____ |
| New Clothes in Current Fashion | _____ |
| Snack Food | _____ |