

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

Session IV— How To Fight and Win

Scripture: Ephesians 4:25, 15, 29

I. All marriages have conflict.

A. Your goal should not be to do away with conflict but to be careful to work on the problem and not the person.

B. Try to look at conflict as the door to INTIMACY.

II. The proper way to fight and win in a marriage is to be able to attack the PROBLEM and not the PERSON.

Here are several things to consider which could help you successfully win a fight with your companion the right way.

1. You must understand the difference between a PROBLEM and a FACT OF LIFE.

* Fat, skinny, worrisome, or worry free. Some things cannot change.

* My wife does most of my worrying for me.

* A problem is something I can do something about.

* A fact of life is something I can do nothing about.

2. You must be SPECIFIC concerning the issue at hand.

If you are not specific you will become HISTORICAL.

It is kind of like the fellow who went to the marriage counselor with his wife and said, "Every time my wife and I argue, she becomes HISTORICAL.

The marriage counselor said, "I think you mean hysterical."

"No, I mean HISTORICAL. When we argue she tells me everything I have ever done wrong."

3. You must never COMPARE.

Never compare your mate with someone else's mate. Why can't you be like Bill's wife?

That is really bad. Don't be stupid.

Fight fair and never compare.

4. You must not EMOTIONALLY block communication.

Here are four communication stoppers.

- a. SCREAMERS - Someone who yells during an argument.
- b. STREAMERS - Someone who cries during an argument.
- c. STEAMERS - Someone who pouts during an argument.
- d. SCHEMER - Someone who manipulates during an argument.

5. You must never CONDEMN.

Do not use words like you should, you must, you ought, it's all your fault.

In an argument, if you start with you, it is probably a bad start.

Don't use an accusing word but be more neutral by saying, it seems to me like.

6. You must always AVOID LABELS.

Whenever you label a mate negatively it is always destructive.

What are some very bad labels?

Did you hear about the husband that asked his wife how could someone so beautiful be so stupid? She said, "God made me beautiful so you would marry me and made me stupid so I could marry you."

7. You should AVOID ABSOLUTES.

You should "never" use words like never or always.

Ex. You never take out the trash.

You never help around the house.

8. You must never COMMAND.

Do not try to end an argument by force.

Treat your mate like an adult.

9. You must agree on the TIMING of the argument.

You should delay an argument:

- a. When other PEOPLE are around.
- b. Before an important MEETING.
- c. If there is too much ANGER.

10. You must never CHALLENGE.

Do not threaten your mate if things are not working.

There are basically three common words or ways people are threatened in a marriage:

- a. By money - I will spend it all or not give you any.
- b. By sex.
- c. By divorce.

11. You must clear the air as soon as POSSIBLE.

12. You must never CONDESCEND.

Do not belittle or ridicule your mate.

Do not play psychologist.

Don't tell your mate why you know what their problem is.

13. You must not OVER REACT to conflict.

Why drop a bomb when a slingshot will do?

14. You must position things in life POSITIVELY.

When you handle yourself use your HEAD.

When you handle others use your HEART.

15. You must never CONTRADICT.

Wait your turn in the discussion.

Do not interrupt.

16. You must not try to analyze your mate's MOTIVES.

Motives are very subjective; criticize the action and not the person.

17. You must never CONFUSE.

Do not bring in an unrelated subject or an issue.

Too often when we are losing we bring in an unrelated subject.

We try to pull things out of the past to help win in the present.

18. You must love your spouse more than your OPINION.

Some issues really do not matter.

If a man loves his opinion better than his spouse, then he will defend his opinions and lose the relationship with his wife.

19. You should follow the 101% principle.

Find the 1% you agree on and give it 100% of your effort.

20. You must show that you UNDERSTAND the other person's position.

Repeat or rephrase the other person's position.

21. You must ENCOURAGE a response.

22. You must be committed to HONESTY and mutual RESPECT.

Honesty will allow the relationship to GROW.

Respect will allow the relationship to LAST.

23. You must check your own ATTITUDE.

It is not what happens to me but what happens in me that counts. (John Maxwell)

24. You must provide an ESCAPE HATCH for your spouse.

Give your spouse an out of the fight.

Follow the golden rule... "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

25. You must ADMIT IT when you are wrong.

Say, "I AM SORRY".

STOP THE FIGHT BEFORE IT GETS GOING.

26. You must CLEAN UP THE MESS.

This calls for listening, kindness, and forgiveness.

You should never withhold your love from your spouse.

Bury the past.

27. You must welcome each CONFLICT and make it a GROWING process in your life.

CONCLUSION

Winning a fight against your companion can result in a failed relationship.

Winning a fight by overcoming a problem can result in a strengthened relationship.