

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

How To Understand My Mate

SCRIPTURE: I Peter 3:1-7; Romans 12:10

INTRODUCTION

I heard a very unique story recently about a British couple who had a very romantic courtship, a glorious wedding day, and a very unforgettable wedding reception. It is supposed to be a true story.

It was unforgettable because they held it on a yacht in the Carribean. But it was unforgettable for another reason as well.

In making arrangements for the reception menu aboard this chartered yacht, the couple told the head chef on that yacht that they wanted to treat their guests to the finest wines and champagnes and then for the dining pleasure of their guests prawns. Mountains and mountains of the finest prawns that money could buy.

Now prawns are baby shrimp. You are supposed to poke your neighbor and say, "I knew that."

The chef who was already struggling a little bit with this couple's British accent, looked back at their request rather quizzically to which these British love birds replied, "We don't care how much it cost. And we don't care what you have to go through to get them. We just want mountains and mountains of prawns."

Well, the big day came. The guests all arrived at the marina and this was a big social event. They all greeted the bride and the groom and they boarded the boat and the champagne and the wine began to flow.

After they left the harbour and had cruised out in the waters for a time, the groom and a few of his male friends went to the food serving area just to peak at the white linen tablecloths, and the ice sculpture, and the flowers, and right there they saw these huge barrel sized silver serving containers concealing their upcoming culinary delight.

And to just show off a little bit this groom took a couple of these buddies and he said, "Watch what we are going to have to eat." Upon saying that he flipped open the lids to two of these big silver serving containers and there they were. . . PRUNES. Mountains and mountains of PRUNES.

The chef had gotten a little confused. They flipped more lids and more lids and that's all there was for dinner, PRUNES.

The couple telling this story to the person I heard it from laughed and laughed and then they started making jokes about how their wedding had gotten off to a running start; how they had a moving reception.

1. This story is a prime example of how marriage plans can be made perfectly but after awhile your prawns can turn to prunes and it just was not what you expected.

2. This lesson is not for knights in bright shiny armor, but for all of us; just plain and common couples.

3. When I used to be dumb, I made statements like, "How can I understand my wife when she cannot understand herself?"

Now that I am older and much wiser, I realize how dumb that statement really is.

4. We have been married over 26 years and I can honestly say I am beginning to understand my wife and it does so much to help make a better relationship.

5. Now on the heels of that statement I must speak for my wife and say she is having a harder time understanding me.

Some of my tastes are changing. She cannot understand why I would like a '55 or '57 chevy. And so on. The funny this is I don't either.

6. God made marriage relationships with such a mystique about it that if it is not searched out and uncovered, the closeness that God desired for us will never truly be enjoyed.

7. I want to begin this lesson by saying, "You can understand you mate."

On the heels of that statement, I must quickly add that it takes time, energy, and effort on your part to gain that knowledge.

But when you do, the reward for the effort is so overwhelming that it takes the marriage relationship to a much higher level.

8. There are certain prerequisites before you can arrive at this level.

The first one is:

I. We Must Understand That Men and Women are Different.

A. Men are not better than women. Women are not better than men.

How many agree with that statement? How many think you are better? WHY?

B. We are both different, yet both are needed to complete the marriage unity.

We think so differently. Bought a house for retirement and my wife wants to know how are we going to pay for it?

Too often we do not understand each other of the importance of each other because we fail to follow the Biblical principle that enables us to understand each other.

How many here tonight have had unmet expectations? (I ask this because I want us to look at the heart of our problems.)

What were they? Hopes were dashed.

[] Well, marriage is one of the only major arenas of life that routinely sets a high level of expectation for people to hang their hopes on.

Then at the same time marriage can be one of the saddest places for people to have heartaches, disappointments and dashed hopes.

[] Look at the way the whole marriage process begins through courtship and you can see why it does not help each other in understanding each other.

Courtship/dating.

C. What is the definition of a marriage:

Marriage is two imperfect people entering into a committed relationship, diligently pursuing intimacy under the loving rule of God.

[] Men and women are different. God made it that way. Don't try to change it. Work with it. Compliment it. It is the best combination that could ever be created.

When I consider the question HOW TO UNDERSTAND MY MATE I must recognize that:

II. We Must Understand That The Problem Is Probably Not Your Mate.

Let me ask you a very important question: IF THE PROBLEM IS PROBABLY NOT MY MATE, THEN WHO DO YOU THINK MAY BE THE PROBLEM? IT MAY BE YOU!

Let's not become BUCK PASSERS.

Did you hear about the sign on one of the desks, "The buck doesn't even slow down here?"

What are some specific problems that can hinder companions from understanding each other?

1. For some reason we may lack trust in our relationship. This is foundational.

What have I done to destroy the trust in my relationship?

Example: Flirtatious behavior

If trust is a problem, then we need to find out why and begin to rebuild the trust factor.

2. When there are problems are we more concerned about fixing the blame on our mate rather than fixing the problem?

For example: _____

3. Another problem is we do not allow each mate the right of veto power in the major decisions of the family.

For example: Dinner location, buying a car, house colors.

4. We keep secrets from our mates and fail to give them full disclosure.

For example: Your marriage is in trouble if you are keeping secrets from each other. _____

5. We fail to share in the responsibilities of the home. Who should do what?

Ex. What are some responsibilities of the home that could be shared? _____

6. We fail to have a good system to resolve our family conflicts which are inevitable.

For example: _____

7. We fail to help our companion grow or blossom in their area of giftedness.

For example: _____

8. We are unwilling to take the responsibility for the mistakes of our companion (our partner).

A wife spending money like it is growing on trees. Don't blame them, understand them. Why?

For example: _____

9. We fail to make our relationship with our partner our number one priority.

For example: _____

We do this in dating but not in marriage! WHY?

III. We Can Understand Our Mate If We Will Implement Some Very Important Biblical Principles.

Scripture: I Peter 3:1-7; Romans 12:10

Principle #1 - Wives joyfully accept the authority of your husbands. Vs. 1

1. This passage emphasizes this even if the husband is unsaved. Why? So your Christ-like conduct will win him to Christ.

2. Why should you submit to your husband? Because of his God given role as being the head of the home.

3. He is the head of the wife but not superior to her. He plays a different role in the home.

4. Your submission to your husband is like the submission of the church to the leadership of Christ.

5. There are definite times when the husband must submit to the needs of his wife like Christ is the Savior of the body.

6. But your strongest concern should be your inward beauty.

Principle #2 - Husbands willfully honor your wives. Vs. 7

1. Honoring is an attitude.

Often our attitude needs changing, but you are the one that has to change it.

2. Husbands must be considerate and respectful of their wives if they expect to have their prayers answered.

You cannot treat your wife disrespectfully and expect God to answer your prayers.

3. Husbands treat your wives with understanding. Respect her and give high priority to her well-being.

4. Husbands and wives are equal partners.

Principle #3 - Both of you love each other with genuine affection. Romans 12:10

a. Love each other with genuine affection.

How do you love each other with genuine affection?

b. Take delight in honoring each other.

Allow me to share with you some of the common dishonoring acts in a home. Remember honoring is an attitude. These will go a long way in keeping a couple from understanding each other:

1. You ignore or degrade your mate's opinions, advice, or beliefs.

2. You disregard your mate's or children's effort of trying to communicate with you by burying yourself in you newspaper or whatever else you are trying to do.

3. You create jokes about your mate's weak areas or shortcomings.

4. You treat your in-laws or other relatives as not important in your planning or communication.

5. You ignore or will not express appreciation for any kind deeds done for you. Don't take each other for granted.

6. You continue to practice distasteful habits in front of your family even after they have expressed a desire for you to quit.

7. You practice overcommitting yourself to other projects or people and demonstrate that everything outside the home seems more important than those inside the home.

8. You and your mate experience power struggles that leaves on of you feeling that you are the child and is being controlled by the other.

9. You are unwilling to admit that you are wrong and will not ask for forgiveness.

10. You make regular verbal attacks on your mate. You are critical, judgmental, and a giver of uncaring lectures.

There are many more Biblical principles to follow that will help you understand your companion. Here are thirty additional principles you must consider following. If you will follow them I truly believe you will really advance in understanding your companion.

1. Love one another. - I John 15:12
2. Do not pass judgement on one another. - Romans 5:8
3. We are to be members of one another. - Romans 12:5
4. We are to be devoted to one another. - Romans 12:10
5. We are to honor one another. - Romans 12:10
6. We are to live in harmony with one another. Romans 12:16
7. We are to build up one another. - Romans 14:19
8. We are to be like minded toward one another. - Romans 15:5
9. We are to accept one another. - Romans 15:7
10. We are to care for one another. - I Corinthians 12:25
11. We are to serve one another in love. - Galatians 5:13
12. We are not to destroy or hurt one another. - Galatians 5:26
13. We are not to provoke envy in one another. - Galatians 5:26
14. We are to bear one another's burdens. - Galatians 6:2
15. We are to be kind to one another. - Ephesians 4:32
16. We are to forgive one another. - Ephesians 4:32
17. We are to submit to one another. - Ephesians 5:21
18. We are not to lie to one another. - Colossians 3:9
19. We are to bear one another's burden. - Colossians 3:13

20. We are to abound in love toward one another. - I Thess. 3:12
21. We are to comfort one another. - I Thess. 4:18
22. We are not to hate one another. - Titus 3:3
23. We are to urge, admonish, or encourage one another. - Hebrews 3:13
24. We are to stir up one another to love and good deeds. - Hebrews 10:24
25. We are not to speak evil of one another. - James 4:11
26. We are not to bear grudges against one another. - James 5:9
27. We are to confess our faults to one another. - James 5:16
28. We are to pray for one another. - James 5:16
29. We are to greet one another with a kiss or mutual affection. - I Peter 5:14
30. We are to fellowship one with another. - I John 1:7

CONCLUSION

It is easy to say I can't understand but it is better and right to say I will use God's plan to understand my mate.

Prayer of commitment to God's principles.

Let's go to our homes tonight and open our hearts to each other and seek to improve our understanding of each other.