

## TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

### Session I — Becoming the Irresistible Partner

#### INTRODUCTION

To begin, I want everyone to kiss your companion right now! This will let me know who you are married to and how close you are. May help me know who needs help the most.

I do not need to remind you that our society is filled with troubled marriages and they are not all outside the church. I understand that the percentages of divorce are actually as high in the church as the secular world or even higher.

The thing I want to remind you is that marriage is very close to the heart of God. It is so close that He identifies it with the unconditional love that Christ has for the Church in Ephesians 5:21-33.

Tonight, we want to begin this Marriage Enrichment Seminar by establishing God's design for us as couples and understand what the fall of man did to corrupt God's plan. And then to show how God is able to help us overcome our relational failures and succeed in becoming the **IRRESISTIBLE PARTNER**.

#### I. God Designed Us For Intimacy.

Marital researcher John Gottman has made it very clear that successful couples are those who are in touch with each other's emotional worlds. Successful couples are close couples.

- \* We are hardwired for intimacy.
- \* There is too much wrong advice coming from the secular mind set.
- \* If we understood this and really believed this then we would be able to spend more productive time on growing relationship and less time on salvaging failures.
- \* That is what these Marriage Enrichment Seminars are all about – taking what is good and making it better. The ones who really need to be here are not here.

#### A. God Made Us To Be Relational.

- \* We are relational by nature.

1. Gen. 2:18, "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone.'"

- \* At this point, God was preparing to make an help-meet fit for man.
- \* Marriage was created to reflect God's image.

2. We must understand God is a social being, and created humans to be social as well. Ex. The Trinity, created angels.

## B. God Made Marriage Sacred.

- \* Marriage is sacred ground for couples.
- \* Gen. 2:24-25 - God ordained it and He loves it.
- \* God is the author and requires three steps for marriage to be precisely what He intended for it to be.

Three steps God requires of us so we can experience a sacred marriage. We are to:

1. Leave — “I leave all others and choose you alone.” This leaving is for life, not just to get married. You are never to pair off with another person of the opposite sex.

Ex. Two couples in Indiana paired off to go get a video and the other pair stayed home with the children.

Men — never counsel a woman alone.

This leaving involves the rest of your life.

2. Cleave — This involves a permanent bond that cannot or should not be torn apart.

- \* This cleaving should be like epoxy glue where things don't come apart.
- \* You are now one.

3. Weave — This is the reality of the couple becoming one.

- \* This is the sacred fruit of Total Commitment.
- \* The idea of dedication is included in this step.
- \* As a result of this there is no need to be ashamed or experience fear.

## C. God's Word Teaches Us A Proper Foundation for Marriage.

1. Matthew 19:3-9 - Here Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees concerning divorce. He made it clear divorce was never a part of God's plan. But the bill of divorcement Moses gave them was because of the hardness of their hearts.

2. I Corinthians 7 - May it be understood that from this passage marriage is God's chosen vehicle for the expression and joy of sex.

\* To truly experience intimacy and be that irresistible partner, God's creation of sex has to be a part of your life.

\* It is right here many couples get in trouble because they do not understand the right approach and consequently they end up ruining and destroying the marriage.

80% of the people who separate, divorce.

The reason is the devil tries to get them to believe that their marriage cannot be salvaged.

And that is a lie because by God's grace the marriage can be redeemed.

3. Ephesians 5:21-33 - Here God's intent for marriage is to mirror the relationship of Christ and the Church.

- \* Submission and headship are the two basic roles to be considered.
- \* The primary teaching is husbands love your wives.

4. I Peter 3:7-10 - Peter emphasizes the importance of healthy communication.

- \* Husbands give honor to your wife.
- \* Never return evil for evil. (This is easier to say than to do.)

Preacher friend of mine who thinks Dobson has done more to hurt the family when it comes to dedication to service in the church told me he told his wife if she ever struck him first all the rules would change concerning him hitting a woman.

5. Song of Solomon - This story dramatizes the beauty of love between a man and a woman.

- \* God is big on love and the bonding that comes through relationships.
- \* God knows and we should know that how love goes so goes everything else in our lives.

God designed us for intimacy, but. . .

## II. Man's Fall Into Sin Caused Marital Failure.

A. Marriage 101 - Because of sin, man's heart has pulled away from God and other relationships and it is getting worse.

1. There is a lot of brokenness and failure in marriages today.
2. Nearly 50% of today's marriages end up in divorce.
3. The rate goes higher when you count those who separate and never come back to the marriage but don't divorce – possibly 66-67%.
4. Most of us here probably know little of the profound sorrow that can be found behind closed doors.

Ex. Spitting, sleeping on the couch, asking to make love, getting scratched on the face.

5. We would be shocked to find out that even some of God's chosen servants struggle with bad marriages.

Warn the young people to be careful!!!

6. Bottom line - Divorce does happen.

B. The Blame Game started a long time ago.

1. Genesis 3:8-19 - Selfishness started way back in the Garden of Eden.

2. Adam blamed Eve to God.

3. Marriages in trouble almost always look out for self before they do their companion. That is probably why they are in trouble.

4. Before marriage, we look to put our partner first, but after marriage the tendency is to look out for look.

C. What are some of the everyday pressures that work to destroy love and sometimes ends in divorce?

1. List of circumstances that can make marriages go bad:

a. Working long hours

b. Extensive travel

c. Priority juggle between family and career

d. Satan's stronger force to destroy marriages than ever before.

e. Struggles on marriages from the work place

f. Secular changes in community values

g. Struggles to make ends meet financially - stay out of debt

h. More career moves

i. Unemployment

j. Child care issues

k. \_\_\_\_\_

l. \_\_\_\_\_

m. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The pressure of unchanging and unresolved stress.

\* I am sure all of us have daily hassles that pile up without a break.

\* Unless this stress can be controlled or handled effectively, it will rip at our relationships.

\* Demands of our jobs, death, health problems.

3. Assaults of Satan.

\* Satan hates godly marriages and works overtime to sift evil into our relationships.

4. Unrealistic expectations.

\* Somewhere after the marriage our expectations shift to our own personal satisfaction.

5. Runaway, happily-ever-after fantasies.

\* Do you have someone else you enjoy seeing or miss them when they are not around?

6. Deep hurts to each other.

7. Unchanged bad habits that we learned from our past.

8. The fallacy of speedy, microwave restoration of problems.

\* Making up for our mistakes or bad behavior cannot be done overnight. It takes time to rebuild and make up.

D. Look at the results of this kind of behavior.

1. We allow secrets to get lodged deep in our hearts.

\* We allow ourselves to accept the fact that we are no longer happy in this marriage.

2. We develop a divided heart. James 1:8

\* Our loyalty gets divided from God and then our companion.

3. We develop a “Desperado” complex.

\* We conclude this love is not for me.

4. Then we are confronted with the struggle between Discontent versus Desire.

5. Finally, there comes a mode of drifting.

\* This is often a very subtle and unintentional severing of emotional ties.

\* Badgering from our companion can cause this when we are not meeting their needs.

Proverbs 15:13 - When our spirits are broken, we are in serious trouble.

E. How can you detect when this process is happening in your marriage?

1. You find yourself distancing yourself from your partner.

\* When someone hurts you, you often move to protect yourself. Control that movement to include the protection of your companion.

2. Your crowded schedule leaves no room for your companion.

3. You do not take the time to talk or share what is going on in your life with your partner.

4. You do not show any kind of affection.

F. Here are four major marital warning signs that researcher John Gottman considers very significant.

1. Criticism

2. Contempt - criticizing to hurt someone

3. Defensiveness - won't let the person into their life.

4. Stonewalling - this is where you shut the person out of your life for good.

\* Let me remind you something about relational pain and that is relational pain is the most difficult of all pains.

A friend shared in brokenness because his wife divorced him and took him to the cleaners, "If only I could see the end of this situation."

### III. How Can We Become The Irresistible Partner?

A. Start with God - Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

\* You have to make a firm choice that no matter what has happened in the past, by God's help you are going to go and do whatever it takes to be the right kind of partner.

B. Recognize your personal spiritual task to be reconciled to God and to one another. Proverbs 19:21 - God's counsel is the best you can get.

\* God understands betrayal.

\* Our prayer should be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart... Psalm 139:23-24

We must call upon God for forgiveness and cleansing.

C. Commit to saying no to whatever has caused the conflicts or difficulties. What is it that bothers you?

D. Begin developing an empathetic heart for your companion.

\* This calls for moving from stonewalling perceptions to empathy for the person hurting.

\* There should be a responding from both companions out of brokenness.

Instead of saying I am convinced that he/she is wrong, now it should be considered that maybe we both have failed in this relationship.

E. Begin creating a zone of safety, so you can begin reconstructing your marital relationship.

\* Remember Genesis 2:24

1. By God's grace get control of a hurtful tongue.

2. Seek reconciliation daily for your partner.

3. Maintain an atmosphere of safety in the home.

4. Reconstruction must happen one day at a time.

Willa Carter said, "Where there is great love, there are always miracles."

Nothing says it clearer than I Corinthians 13:13, "The greatest of these is love."

## CONCLUSION

I believe God desires for us to be naked and unashamed with each other once again so that we can be like Adam when he first saw Eve and said, "WOW!"

May our prayer be that God will restore the WOW in our relationships so that each of us will be irresistible to each other and attracted to no one else.

Tonight, I want to ask you a question. "Are you willing to do everything in your power to work on becoming the irresistible partner?"