

Course II/Unit#3: Marriage Counseling
Lecture #8
Conflict Resolution in Marriage

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Lecture Outline

- What is conflict resolution
- Common marriage conflicts
- Causes of marriage conflicts
- Conflict resolution Tips
- Bible verses

What is Conflict Resolution?

- Conflict is everywhere – in home, workplace, church and community.
- Our response could make or break the relationship.
- Skill and practical tools for resolving conflict are important.

Conflict resolution

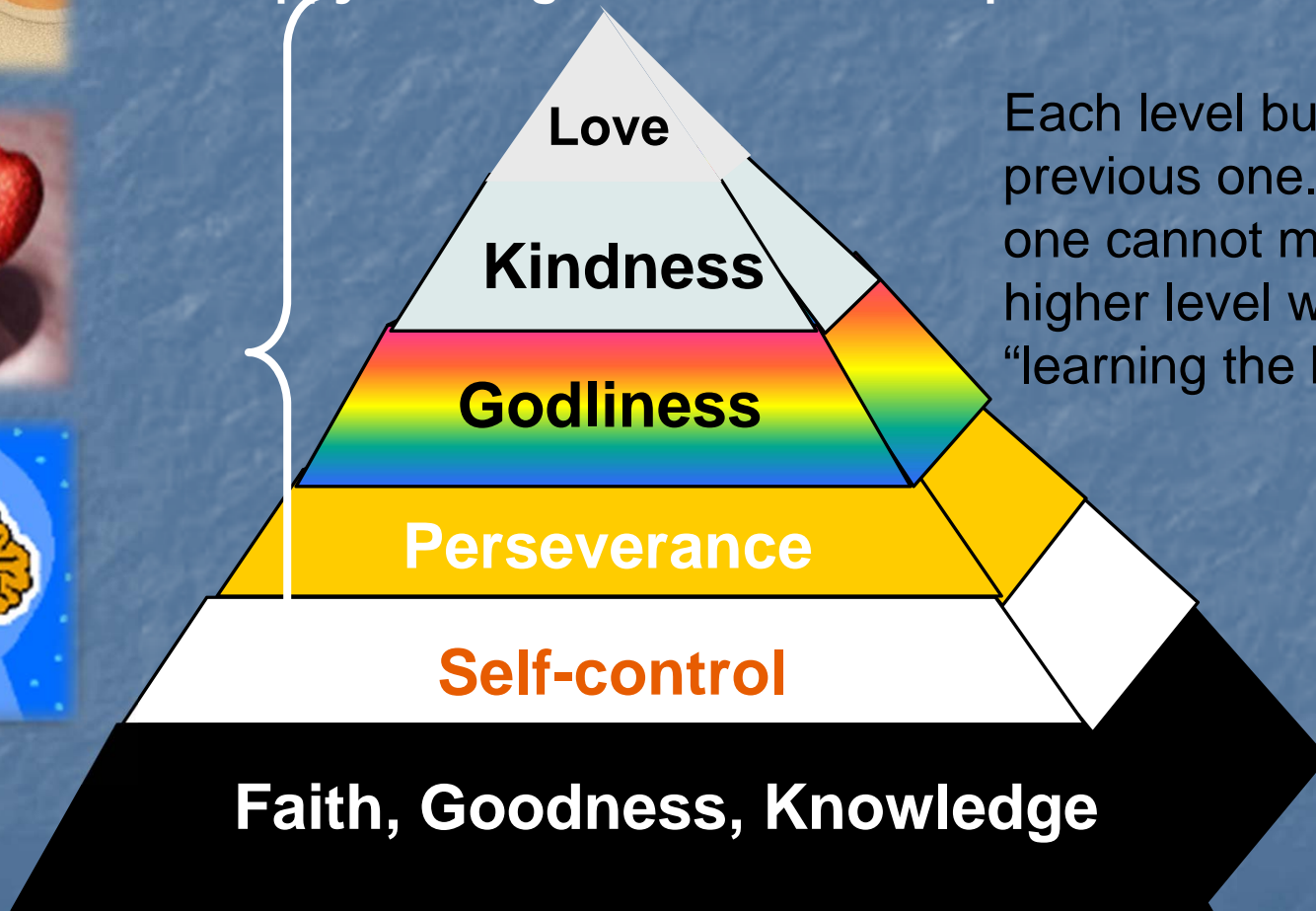
- God created us for relationship.
- The methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a conflict.
- Do not let unresolved conflict rob you of the joy that healthy relationships can bring.
- Apply biblical principles to marriage relationships.
- "go and be reconciled" (Matthew 4:24 NIV) to your brother, sister, friend, and family members.



Biblical View on Marriage

(2 Peter 1:5)

Happy Marriage = True Love + Spiritual Thinking



Each level builds on the previous one. Thus, one cannot move to a higher level without first "learning the bases".



Direction



Purity



Relation **Ship**

Conflicts in Marriage



**People Use Preventive
Medicine for Everything
Why not for Healthy
marriage ?**

Covenant Between Israel and Yahweh

Covenant Between Wife and Husband

1. No other Gods

1. Exclusive loyalty to my spouse

2. No graven image

2. Truthfulness and faithfulness

3. Not taking the Lord's name in vain

3. Honoring my spouse in public and private

4. Remembering the Sabbath day

4. Giving my spouse time and rest

5. Honoring father and mother

5. Rightly relating to parents and parents-in-law

Covenant Between Israel and Yahweh

6. No murder

7. No adultery

8. No stealing

9. No false testimony

10. No coveting

Covenant Between Wife and Husband

6. Freedom from hatred, destructive anger and uncontrolled emotions

7. Sexual faithfulness; controlled appetites

8. Joint ownership of property with the gift of privacy

9. Truthful communication

10. Contentment: freedom from demands

**UNITY does not demand UNIFORMITY
No Relationship gets FIXED without
HUMILITY**

**Ruth Graham was once asked
“Have you ever contemplated divorce”?
She answered,
“Divorce? – NO, Murder? – YES”**

Marriage Conflict Cause & Effect



In marriage conflicts arise due to many reasons. However, it is a normal and natural process in the development of a relationship.

Assessing the Presence of Conflict

- Do the spouses **accuse** each other?
- Do they **provoke** each other?
- Do they turn **bitter** out of irritation?
- Do they become **anxious**?
- How long does it take to 'make up'?
- How have they **reconciled** in the past?

Major Causes of Marriage Conflicts

- Temperament
- Background
- Money Management
- Spiritual Status
- Selfishness

Cause # 1

■ Temperament

- One may be active and aggressive
- while the other more sensitive and emotional
- men tend to be more utilitarian, looking for durability, serviceability, and performance;
- women tend to value the aesthetic factors, like color and design.
- Thus the nature of two people determines the relationship between them.

Cause # 2

■ Background –

- One may come from a happy, organized, and disciplined home. The other may not.
- One may come from a family where communication with one another was easy. The partner may be from a family where they never shared their feelings and activities together with one another.

Cause # 3

- **Money Management** – becomes another cause of conflict in many marriages.
 - Very seldom do people see money or its management exactly in the same way.
 - One may like to spend it on a certain thing that the other may consider as unnecessary or wasteful.
 - One may be keen on 'saving money' while the other may feel 'money is for spending'

Cause # 4

■ **Spiritual Status –**

- One may find it easier to trust God in everything like a little child, while the other may find it difficult to cast all cares upon the lord.
- One may be weak in controlling one's temper and tongue.
- One may like to reason out things, which the other may see plainly and accept things as they are.

Cause # 5

■ **Selfishness** –

- All human personality is rooted in deep self-centeredness.
- Being centered in self interest, one is concerned with 'getting' instead of 'giving'. As soon as the 'getting' stops, 'love' ceases.
- Selfishness makes love turn sour, whenever it is not returned in the expected way.
- Conflicts arise when genuine self giving love is absent.

10 Things that Spark Marital Discord

- ❑ Lack of Communication
- ❑ Lack of Respect for each other
- ❑ Not Listening to the Spouse
- ❑ Lack of (Sexual) Intimacy
- ❑ Always wants to be Mr. or Mrs. Right
- ❑ Not Walking the Talk
- ❑ Hurtful Teasing
- ❑ Lack of Honesty in Relationship
- ❑ Annoying, Nagging, Selfish, Greedy...
- ❑ Flaring Tempers

Road to Disaster!!

- Broken promises
- Extramarital affairs
- Unfulfilled fantasies
- Anxiety, depression
- Unresolved conflicts
- Verbal & physical abuse
- Child Abuse
- Lack of trust / Paranoia



- **Often Resulting in Separation / Divorce**

Conflict Resolution

“Fighting the Good Fight”

✓ If you're happy and you know it,.....

✓ If you're angry and you know it,.....

✓ if you're hurting and you know it,.....

- Show it

-How?

Four Guidelines for Good Fights

- Be honest and willing to admit that YOU may be at FAULT
- Never TRY to HURT (You will do enough of that without trying!!)
- When the DESIRE to HURT arrives, Take a TIMEOUT
- ALWAYS be willing to FORGIVE



Communication Styles

- Cliché – Greetings and Responses only
- Fact – Objective discussion of facts only
- Opinion – Sharing ideas and opinions (positive and negative)
- Emotional – hopes, fears, dislikes, stresses etc.
- No Barrier – Sharing the heart as a way of life; personal truthfulness
 - This is the style that is most preferable for a 'good fight'

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- Minor problem changes to Major if NOT addressed properly and in a timely manner
 - Communication is KEY
 - Conflicts are opportunities of Growth
 - Deal with them Openly, Honestly, Lovingly
 - Confess and Commit to CHANGE

Commonly Heard Statements

- He/She is the cause of ALL problems
- Our love for each other is GONE
- We don't TALK anymore
- He/She expects me to do EVERYTHING
- He/She makes ALL the DECISIONS
- I didn't know I married his/her family too
- We can't AGREE on FINANCES
- Sex Life? What Sex Life?



Other 'Mis-Communications'

- "You ALWAYS forget to take out garbage"
- "You're NEVER ready on time"
- "Why don't you EVER listen to me"
- "You Wouldn't UNDERSTAND any way"
- "I should've FIGURED that you would mess it up"
- "You are just LIKE your MOTHER"
- "REMEMBER what you did last time"

Husbands

- Some of these statements describe the way they react
 - "I give in. I'd rather give up than fight"
 - "I flee the scene, hoping the problem will take care of itself"
 - "I assert my authority to gain control of the situation and get my way"
- When he gives in, flees, or fights over differences, he will never experience the satisfaction that comes with effective conflict resolution.

Wives

- When wives disagree with their husbands about something, some of these responses best describe their approach to the situation.
 - “I try to get the upper hand through manipulation or hiding the facts”
 - “I challenge my husband—especially when I think I know better”
 - “I pretty much do as he says; things seem to go more smoothly that way”

Conflict Resolution

“Keeping the Faith”

Good fight Leading to Improved Faith in Each Other

- Ignore distractions - Focus on resolving only the problem at hand. Avoid raising side issues.
- Guard the tongue - Avoid ridiculing and name-calling.
- Hold the history - "You always", "why can't you ever", and "you never" are examples of history.
- Touch - Hold hands. This position softens the heart and makes us feel vulnerable to each other.
- Stay in there - Finish the fight. [Don't go to bed with unresolved anger.](#)
- Be open to compromise. **You can walk hand-in-hand without always seeing eye-to-eye.**

In Other Words

- **Get on the same side of the fence.** Rather than attempting to resolve an issue "my way" or "your way," work toward a solution that represents "our way."
- **Try to identify the core issue.** Arguments often arise because of events or issues that disguise the real problem.
- **Don't be a mind reader.** Discuss beliefs and expectations openly.
- **Avoid character assassination.** As you work to resolve conflict, it's okay to talk about circumstances and behavior.
- **Never forget that your relationship with your spouse is far more important than "winning" an argument or "being right."**
- **Remember that love keeps no record of wrongs.** Be quick to forgive, quick to admit your own mistakes, and quick to move on from the conflict.

What is Needed

- A sense of fairness
- Putting marriage first
- Willingness to forgive
- Ability to listen
- Respect for one another
- Awareness of when to apologize

SECURITY and Honor are the primary components of the success of a marriage

- **Do I feel safe with him/her?**
- **How will he/she feel or react when I share some of my secrets or some of my needs?**
- **The more intimate the relationship is, the safer you feel.**
- **See the value of your mate through honor by action. Become a student of your mate. Know each other's needs, likes and dislikes well.**

Discern the Phases of Marriage

- Infatuation – Everything is bright and sunny
- Post Rapture – Soon after infatuation, the plane will land somewhere. This is where realities of life set in
- Discovery – The post rapture stage leads you to a discovery stage where the actual meaning of saying 'I love you' is revealed through actions. How 'safe' am I is gauged really well at this stage
- Connection – Once the intimacy and security is cultivated, honor marks the connection stage.

In Other Words

- **Romance** – Strong and Positive Feelings. Accept Each Other
- **Reality** – Glow Subsides, Enabling Each to see the Mate's Faults; Critical
- **Resignation or Reconstruction** – Coolness turning to Resentment; Either of two will happen
 - Resign stating that it is over
 - Begin Reconstruction

Make 5 Promises to Each Other.....

- Confirm your beliefs to God's truths
- Be filled with God – Make Him the center piece
- Find God's best in every trial – stop the blame game
- Serve each other all your living days
- Communicate with Love



Avoid 4 Marriage Killers

- Withdrawal – ‘end of discussion’
- Escalation – ‘communication = debates/fights’
- Belittling – ‘that’s the dumbest thing’
- False Beliefs – ‘she is telling them everything I say to her’

Conflict Resolution

"Finishing the Course"

Counseling to Resolve Conflicts

- Help spouses to be '**oriented to problem**' than to 'who is at fault'
- Begin with situational problems and work towards personality issues
- Give the spouses tasks at which they can be successful
- Evaluate the spiritual condition of the spouses
- Review complaints against each other
- Help spouses trace present feelings to early origins

Christian Conflict Resolution Approach

- Define the problem and stick to the issue.
- Pursue purity of heart.
- Plan a time for the discussion.
- Affirm the Relationship.
- Listen carefully.
- Forgive.

Help Spouses Understand Each Other

- How are the differences causing tension? What can be done to relieve the tension?
- Are similarities causing tension? What can be done about it?
- What are the strong and weak areas of each other? What can one do to help strengthen the other

Lasting Marriage – God's Way

ABC'S FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE:

- **ATTITUDE** before and during marriage
- **BUILDING** the foundation on God's word
- **COMMITMENT** to God and His Word

GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

- **Leave, Cleave, Become one**

Marital Bliss -God's Way

- Higher levels of overall commitment to your spouse in all aspects.
- Communicating openly.
- Less frequent Negative Interaction
 - The biggest discriminator between couples who were satisfied and those who were not was negative interaction – Take a break!!!
- Possess Christ like character and attitude
 - Husband loves unconditionally – Jesus gave his life.
 - Wife submits to husband – As church submits to Christ

The hallmark of both actions is LOVE

Marital Bliss God's Way

- **Express** love clearly and often.
- **Listen** carefully to what your spouse has to say.
- **Spend** time with your spouse engaging in activities he/she **likes**.
- Be **supportive** of what interests him/her.
- Be **courteous** and **respectful** to your spouse and his/her friends.
- **Help** your spouse build self-esteem by facilitating mastering of some skills; self-esteem is earned, not given.
- **Have** meals together – Dining tables can be the best place for open communication

Conflict Resolution- Bible Verses

- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).
- Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:4-5)

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