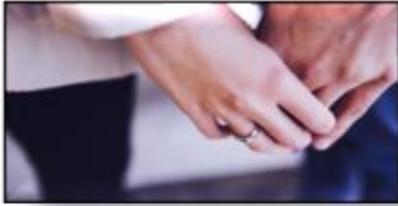


Marriage is Partnership, Not A Competition

October 2, 2017



Lord Jesus, please teach us to cooperate in our marriages and not be a stumbling block.

Well, dear Heartdwellers, I wanted to carry this theme forward from the last message and share the insights Ezekiel and I have had about one another in our 25 years of marriage. And it wasn't easy in the beginning, I'll tell you that. It was rough!

It's not important who is right and who is wrong; it's not important who had God's will and who missed it. What is important is to never break the bond of charity and authentic humility allows for mistakes in us and in our spouse and in others. Knowing yourself thoroughly in God's mirror brings authentic humility. When you have this, you don't need to outdo your spouse—you only need to listen—and listen well. To love and help the situation come around to God's will without injuring the other person or making them feel like you've got it... and they missed it.

Do you want to destroy your marriage? It's not hard at all. You are always right; the other person is always blowing it. You hear from God, they don't. You bring up all the errors of your spouse from the past in an argument to disqualify their input and position. You have no faults and therefore anything you say goes and what they say is useless—because they are the flawed partner, not you.

And this is really difficult for women sometimes, because we have more time to pray and we can be more sensitive to the Lord, so to speak. And maybe be a little closer to understanding what He wants done in a particular situation.

However. The man has been established as the head of the family, and he may not be as prayerful and spiritual as you are. But he is the headship, appointed by God.

And because of that, Holy Spirit works through him differently. He tends to know what is right, because he has to lead in the marriage. And if there's an issue, then you need to talk it out.

One of you HAS to be Jesus to make it work. One of you HAS to lay down and allow the other person to make mistakes without ever using it against them. One of you HAS to stand down if an argument erupts. One of you HAS to listen like Jesus listens. One of you HAS to confess your error and errors of the past. One of you HAS to opt out when things are too hot to discuss, not with threats of doing something stupid, but a simple confession, "I'm not good company right now, I'm going to take a walk." Then you go and pray for God to show you where YOU are wrong and he/she is right. And when you return, you humbly apologize for your mistake and being stubborn and deaf to what he was trying to say.

If the partner is not in the flesh, Holy Spirit conviction will fall on them as well, and they will have a confession to make to you when you return.

If either one of you is being obstinate, prayer and time can open up the conversation again for a resolution. A simple, "Honey, I need to seek the Lord on this, I need time to process it. Let's put it aside right now and go on. You know the devils are trying to divide us and steal our joy. Let's unite against them and pray our way through this. We can talk when we're ready. I love you. I'm sorry for my part and all I want is to be reconciled to you. And be obedient to the Lord."

Saying "I'm sorry. What I said and did was wrong." can turn your spouse into a marshmallow in seconds. Especially if you mean it. If you can't say that in all honesty, you can at least confess that you got upset and you're sorry for making them upset.

You see, the enemy's goal is to get you to stop listening and rise up to defend yourself. No matter what your spouse says, you have a rebuttal—so you stop communicating and get caught in a war zone. Attacking your own flesh, weakening your own flesh, disabling your own flesh, because you are too proud to admit your part. This is exactly what Satan wants. Your husband is, your wife is your own flesh!

Dear ones, humility is not taught. Humble confession is not taught, nor is it modeled by example. Everything hinges on self-righteousness and you, being in the flesh, proving your own spouse wrong.

You don't have to be a part of this worldly lie. The Lord Jesus has told me many times, "I'm sorry I hurt you." This was not because He did something wrong! No, it is because He was sorry the truth had to come out and it was painful for me to bear.

So, IT NEVER HURTS TO SAY I'M SORRY. There is always something you can be sorry for. There is always something you can say you regret doing and ask forgiveness for. 'Confess your sins one to another' puts your spouse on your side, where he belongs, where she belongs.

"Honey, I have a weakness here, I have sinned. Please pray for me and help me see when I'm close to an occasion of sin. I need your help, I need your love, I need your prayers."

This humble confession puts them in a place where defensiveness is no longer needed. You are making them your helper, which is who they were meant to be. It's almost like saying, "I am wrong all the time, I always make mistakes, please help me overcome my flesh."

How can anyone argue with that? You become little, needy and non-threatening. This draws out the need for your spouse to cover and protect you, build you up—not tear you down with more accusations. And most of all encourage you to get up after a fall—not beat you over it.

If you do this consistently, all self-defense mechanisms will melt away. It's just the two of you, united against Satan. But if you try to be superior, Satan gets his way: you against each other. Then you both lose.

Guys, we have to be smarter than the enemy. You have to look out for your spouse's buttons. Key words, times of the day when he's exhausted or it's been a stressful day. Situations from the past that caused hurt and defeat in their lives before. Then not only can we communicate without raising their hackles, they begin to see you as an asset to help them overcome the enemy. You are no longer the object of their control and criticism. No, you are now their protection, comfort, understanding and loving wife/husband.

When we make it safe for our spouse to be wrong, then your marriage is going to begin to heal and grow into something that fulfills God's purpose: "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helpmate."

Marriage is a sacrament; a sacrament is a help to Heaven. It is a spiritual partnership to help one another be ready for Heaven. Marriage is a holy bond, meant also to bring forth holy children. What your children see and hear in your home is what they will reproduce in the world. We have a solemn responsibility to teach our children relationship skills, especially humility, willingness to be wrong, prayer and submission to God. Devotion to do good to our spouse, even when they don't deserve it. Overcoming hate with love, yielding when it does not lead to sin.

I like what Mother Theresa said: "Love 'till it hurts."

As they watch us do these things there is an imprint and they will look for a mate who can do the same thing so they, too, can have a good and holy marriage.

"It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helpmate." Genesis 2:18