

HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICTS

James 1:19-20

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) There are many differences between men and women.
 - i) We are wired differently physically, emotionally and psychologically.
 - ii) We are also different as individuals.
 - (1) We have different temperaments.
 - (2) We come from different family backgrounds.
 - (3) We have different traditions, thoughts and habits.
- b) The real issue is not if we are going to get into conflicts, but how we settle them.
 - i) Rather than being married by the Justice of the Peace, some couples seem to have been married by the Secretary of War.
- c) We need to learn how to handle conflicts, how to fight fair and how to deal with anger.

2) WE NEED TO TUNE IN (James 1:19-20)

- a) We need to be quick to listen.
 - i) We need to learn what the other person is saying.
- b) There are many reasons why we need to obey God's Word and be swift to hear.
 - i) When we listen, we encourage the other person to talk.
 - ii) It also helps us to understand.
 - (1) We cannot understand someone we are not listening to.
 - (2) When you understand your spouse, it will bring you closer together.
 - iii) It will help to achieve intimacy.
- c) There are also many reasons why we do not listen.
 - i) We are very defensive.
 - (1) Because of our ego, we do not want to hear; we do not want anyone telling us anything.
 - ii) We assume we already know what the other person is going to say.
 - iii) While the other person is talking, we're thinking about what we are going to say next and how we are going to answer them.
- d) How do we need to listen?
 - i) By observation.
 - (1) Listen not merely with your ears but also with your eyes.
 - (a) Look your spouse in the face, even if you're in an argument.
 - (b) If you are not looking at him or her, then he or she may assume that you are not listening or interested.
 - (c) When we watch someone, we can read their body language and facial expressions.
 - (d) Look into the other person's eyes.
 - (i) It has been said that the eyes are the mirror to the soul.
 - (ii) You can see joy, fear, anger and confusion.
 - ii) With concentration.
 - (1) Listen with your mind.
 - (2) Focus on what the other person is saying.

- (3) If we are egocentric or pre-occupied, we will not concentrate on what the other person is saying.
- iii) With consideration.
 - (1) Think about what your mate is saying.
 - (a) Consider the words your mate uses and the meaning behind those particular words.
 - (2) Do not jump to conclusions.
 - (a) Sometimes your spouse will use words he or she didn't really mean and communication becomes twisted.
 - (3) Listen to what your spouse means; absorb the feelings.
- iv) With clarification.
 - (1) Think it through until you get it straight.

3) WE NEED TO TONE DOWN (James 1:19)

- a) We need to be slow to speak.
 - i) Words will get us into trouble.
 - ii) Proverbs 10:19
 - iii) Proverbs 17:27
 - iv) Proverbs 21:23
 - v) Ecclesiastes 5:3
 - (1) Speech is silver, but silence is golden.
 - (2) When we are talking, we cannot be listening; and when we are not listening, then we are not learning.
- b) 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
 - i) This passage shows us how we should speak when we do speak.
- c) These are some destructive games that husbands and wives sometimes play:
 - i) The judge
 - (1) We want to be the judge, jury and executioner.
 - (2) We play the blame game and blame our mate.
 - (a) Adam blamed Eve in the Garden of Eden.
 - (i) Genesis 3:12
 - (3) Rather than saying, "You always" or "You never," we should say, "I feel" or "It seems to me."
 - (4) Playing the judge is not kind.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - ii) The professor
 - (1) The professor always acts superior and talks down to the other person.
 - (2) The professor's conversations are filled with criticisms and put-downs.
 - (3) When you talk down to someone, you are attacking their self-worth, and they will become defensive.
 - (4) You cannot play the professor and be full of love.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - iii) The psychologist
 - (1) The psychologist assumes that he or she understands everything about the other individual.
 - (a) "Let me tell you why you said that..."
 - (2) We are not to assign motives to another person; only God can do that.

- iv) The historian
 - (1) We are not supposed to keep a record of wrongs.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:5
 - v) The dictator
 - (1) This individual wants to rule by a show of force.
 - (2) Never make ultimatums to your spouse.
 - (3) Never make veiled threats.
 - (4) A dictator may try to coerce another individual:
 - (a) By physical coercion; physical abuse.
 - (b) Men may withhold money in order to be the dictator in the family.
 - (c) One spouse may withhold affection.
 - (d) Sometimes the martyr will sulk.
 - (5) Playing the dictator is absolutely cruel, and you are saying to the other person, "I can do a better job with your life than you can."
 - vi) The critic
 - (1) The critic compares his or her mate with other people.
 - (2) But the Bible says that love does not behave unseemly.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 13:5
 - vii) The preacher
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 13:6
 - (2) Love does not use the Bible as a club.
 - d) We are to guard our tongue, listen carefully and speak wisely.
- 4) WE NEED TO LIGHTEN UP (James 1:19)
- a) We are to be slow to wrath.
 - i) Do not get upset so easily.
 - ii) Be slow to take offense and get angry.
 - b) James 1:19 does not tell us to never get angry.
 - i) Ephesians 4:26
 - (1) Jesus was angry but never sinned.
 - ii) Mark 3:5
 - c) How can we be angry and sin not?
 - i) Be angry for the right reason.
 - (1) Jesus was angry at sin.
 - (2) The way to be angry and to not sin is to be angry only at sin.
 - ii) Be angry at the right things.
 - (1) Be angry at the sin, not the sinner.
 - iii) Be angry in the right way.
 - (1) Let your anger move you to do something about a situation that is wrong.
 - d) We are not to have an uncontrolled temper.
 - i) A person who has an uncontrolled temper is very foolish.
 - (1) Ecclesiastes 7:9
 - ii) Someone who has an uncontrolled temper has a very weak character.
 - (1) Proverbs 16:32
 - iii) An uncontrolled temper will lead to sin in your marriage and professional life.
 - (1) Proverbs 29:22
 - e) If you have an angry mate:

- i) Do not practice avoidance.
 - (1) Do not suppress or ignore the situation.
- ii) Do not practice appeasement.
 - (1) It is a very unhealthy marriage when one mate, in order to have peace, always gives in.
 - (2) A marriage is in trouble when one mate seems to dominate or always gets his or her way.
- iii) Do not practice aggression.
 - (1) Do not give anger for anger.
 - (2) Speak the truth in love, never sarcastically.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) If you have an argument:
 - i) Have it at the right time.
 - (1) Most arguments occur just before we eat, when blood sugar is lower.
 - (2) Many arguments occur on the way to an event.
 - ii) Have it in the right tone.
 - (1) Keep your words soft and sweet.
 - iii) Have it on the right turf.
 - (1) Don't discuss problems with your mate when other people are around.
- b) Three things to remember:
 - i) Practice accommodation.
 - (1) Accommodate yourself to the other person.
 - (a) This is not compromise.
 - (2) Learn something about his sport or her hobby.
 - ii) Practice acceptance.
 - (1) Do not try to change your mate.
 - iii) Practice adjustment.
 - (1) Be willing to change.
 - (2) If one spouse wants to go to bed earlier, go to bed earlier.
- c) Everyone needs three homes:
 - i) A family home
 - ii) A church home
 - iii) A heavenly home
 - (1) Jesus Christ is the key to all three homes.
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31