**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Marriage: Duel or Duet |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | James 1:19 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1493 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. The Lord Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.”
      1. John 7:37
      2. The only people who go away unsatisfied from that living water are those who are filled with the stagnate water of self-love.
      3. If we seek the Lord Jesus, then we can find Him.
   2. In James, there is a formula to change a marriage from a duel to a duet.
      1. James 1:19, if properly understood, will transform a marriage.
   3. It is common to duel (debate) with your mate.
      1. Almost all people who are married sometimes get into a debate.
         1. Sometimes people stay in one.
            1. One might think that they were married by the Secretary of War rather than by the Justice of the Peace.
      2. The most important thing is not whether or not we have confrontations, but how we handle those confrontations.
   4. James 1:19
      1. James was saying the following:
         1. Tune in.
            1. Be swift to hear.
         2. Tone down.
            1. Be slow to speak.
         3. Sweeten up.
            1. Be slow to wrath.
   5. In today’s message, we will look at these three areas from James 1:19 in greater detail.
2. tune in (james 1:19)
   1. This is talking about the awesome power of the listening ear.
   2. Proverbs 18:3
      1. The Bible says that it is a shame and a folly to a person who speaks before he listens.
   3. All good marriage communication, or communication anywhere else, begins with listening.
   4. Psychologists tell us that we only catch about 20% of what we hear.
   5. Many times, what we hear is not clear; it is garbled.
      1. When someone has finished speaking, we really don’t even know what they have said.
         1. We have to listen carefully.
   6. Learn to love your mate with your ears and with your eyes.
      1. There is verbal communication.
      2. There is visual communication.
   7. Tune in.
      1. Begin to listen.
3. tone down (james 3:5-8)
   1. We need to learn something of the awesome power of the tongue.
      1. James 3:5
         1. The torched tongue
            1. We can burn down our marriage with our tongue.
      2. James 3:6-8
         1. The tiger tongue
            1. We can shred and claw with our mouth.
            2. We used to say that sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

That is absurd and silly.

* + - * 1. Our tongue can be like a vicious beast.
    1. James 3:8
       1. The tetanus tongue
          1. It poisons love.
  1. There are seven deadly games that people play with their tongue:
     1. Don’t play the judge.
        1. One partner assigns himself or herself the duty of being a judge.
        2. As the judge, we blame and condemn our partner.
        3. Never say to your partner, “It is all your fault. You should be ashamed.”
        4. Don’t start a sentence with “you” in an argument.
           1. For example, “You always,” or “You never.”

We are almost always wrong when we use the word “always.”

* + - * 1. Instead, begin with, “I feel this way,” or “I think this.”
    1. Don’t play the professor.
       1. This is when we talk down to the other person.
          1. We act superior.
       2. The marriage is full of constant put-downs and belittling.
       3. When we attack our partner’s self-worth, our partner will get defensive.
    2. Don’t play the psychologist.
       1. Don’t sit around and try to analyze your mate.
          1. “Let me tell you why you said that.”
          2. “Let me tell you why you think that way.”

We shouldn’t do this because we don’t know, and they probably don’t know either.

* + - 1. 1 Corinthians 4:3-5
      2. Don’t assign motives to your partner’s heart.
    1. Don’t play the historian.
       1. The historian corrects the details of every story that their partner tells.
       2. Don’t contradict or correct your mate unless it is necessary.
       3. Some people play the historian when they are losing an argument.
          1. They change the subject to something that happened at some other time.

Stick to the subject.

* + 1. Don’t play the dictator.
       1. They use force in the marriage.
       2. They may use verbal force.
          1. Beware of ultimatums in marriage.
          2. Keep your words warm and sweet; you may have to eat them.
          3. Worse than an ultimatum is a veiled threat.

“If you do that again, then wait and see what happens.”

They don’t say what will happen; they leave it up to the imagination.

* + - 1. The dictator is the person who changes the marriage relationship from “I do” to “You had better.”
         1. They try to force their way.
      2. Clubs that the dictator uses include the following:
         1. The physical

These are the men who strike their wives.

There are very few people as low as a man who would physically strike his wife.

Sometimes wives physically beat up their husbands.

They are physically stronger.

* + - * 1. The neurotic invalid

This dictator does not use brute force.

Some people just get sick; they become invalids.

But they are not really sick.

This is not referring to those who are truly sick.

* + - * 1. There are those who withhold money or affection in order to have their way.
        2. The martyr

This person sulks and pouts.

* + - 1. Dictatorship in marriage is cruel.
         1. It leads to frustration.
         2. It says to the partner, “I can do a better job with your life than you can.”
         3. It robs the other person of self-esteem.
    1. Don’t play the critic.
       1. Don’t condemn your partner.
       2. Don’t criticize your partner.
       3. Above all, don’t compare your partner.
          1. Don’t compare your mate with someone else’s mate.

Perhaps if you were married to the person with whom you are comparing, you might have a different story.

* + - * 1. Don’t compare your partner to their mother or father.
      1. Never criticize something over which the other person has no control, such as their parents, physical traits, or attributes.
    1. Don’t play the preacher.
       1. This is perhaps the most insidious of all.
       2. We assume a sort of holier-than-thou attitude.
       3. We become his or her conscience.
       4. We try to be the Holy Spirit.
       5. Sometimes the Bible is used as a club to beat our partner with.
          1. This is destructive in marriage relationships.
          2. Build your life on the Word of God.

But don’t lecture with a holier-than-thou attitude.

* + - 1. Ruth Graham said that it is a wife’s job to love her husband; it is God’s job to make him good.

1. sweeten up (james 1:19)
   1. We are to be slow to wrath.
      1. We are to resolve our hearts, not dissolve our homes.
   2. Three things not to do if you are having a conflict:
      1. Don’t practice avoidance.
         1. This is where we retreat and avoid confrontation.
         2. We have the idea that it will go away.
         3. We retreat for several reasons:
            1. We fear the anger of our partner.

So, we just close up.

* + - * 1. We may be afraid if we don’t retreat, our marriage will be broken.
        2. We are afraid that if we get into an argument or a discussion, then we might have to admit something about ourselves.

We might have to see where we really are wrong.

* + - 1. Unresolved conflict is not resolved by retreating; it only gets worse.
         1. We may repress it, but our stomachs will keep score.
      2. The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.
         1. Proverbs 27:6
         2. Love your mate enough to confront.
    1. Don’t practice appeasement.
       1. Some don’t avoid; they just appease.
       2. One person always seems to dominate and get his or her way; the other person appeases and gives ground.
       3. To compromise is one thing (that is where both give), but to appease is something else.
          1. Sometimes we appease and call it compromise.
       4. Many times in a marriage, one person just simply gives.
          1. But constant appeasement does not solve the problem.
       5. The person who appeases internalizes the conflict.
          1. When their spouse gets violent, they get silent and internalize it.

They just give way and give way.

It becomes in their heart like smoldering rags.

They may burn out, or they may break out and burn the house down.

* + - 1. An appeaser is given to self-pity.
         1. They have a martyr complex.

They feel trapped because they know they will never win.

* + - 1. While the marriage may stay together, they get an emotional divorce.
    1. Don’t practice aggression.
       1. You must face your partner, but the Bibles says speak the truth in love.
          1. Ephesians 4:15
          2. Sarcasm is never in order.
       2. There are few problems that a husband and wife cannot solve if they will attack the problem rather than one another.
       3. Choose the right time when you confront.
          1. Don’t avoid an argument; avoid it at certain times.

Avoid it right before dinner when your blood sugar is low.

Psychologists tell us that most family arguments begin just before mealtime.

* + - 1. Choose the right tone when you confront.
         1. The Bible says that a soft answer turns away wrath.

Proverbs 15:1

* + - 1. Choose the right turf when you confront.
         1. The person who is the appeaser, or who does retreat, will sometimes come out of their shell when company is around.

They will criticize their partner when other friends are around.

They have a secret desire to hurt or embarrass their partner.

They feel that they can do it there because they have him trapped, and he cannot react.

It is a cheap shot.

* 1. Three things to do when you have a conflict:
     1. Learn to practice accommodation.
        1. We need to learn to say, “I will change.”
        2. Many times, you want to change your partner, but you are to change yourself.
           1. You have desires for your partner but goals for yourself.
        3. You can change your partner by changing you because now he has to react to someone different because you have changed.
        4. How accommodation works:
           1. Suppose a wife says that she and her husband don’t spend enough time together.
           2. She might learn a sport that he loves, and they could play that sport together.

And so, she accommodates herself.

She gets what she wants (time with him), but she has accommodated or changed herself.

* + - 1. All of us can accommodate our partner to some degree.
    1. Practice acceptance.
       1. Accept that he or she may never change.
       2. There are certain things that we have to accept about others.
          1. They are different from us.

They may not be wrong, and you may not be wrong.

People come from different backgrounds and have different ways of doing things.

* + - 1. Accept how the other person is.
    1. Practice adjustment.
       1. We both change.
       2. For example, if the husband likes to stay up late and the wife likes to go to bed early, then they adjust.
          1. The husband goes to bed a little earlier, and the wife goes to bed a little later.

Rather than having a war where both lose, they have a compromise where both gain a little.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. Peter Marshall stated the following about the marriage relationship:
      1. When rightly understood and properly appreciated, is the most delightful, as well as the most sacred and solemn of all human relations.
      2. It is the clasping of hands, the blending of lives, and the union of hearts that two may walk together bearing life’s burdens, discharging its duties, and sharing its joys and sorrows.
      3. In our day, it is by many lightly regarded and by many lightly discarded.
      4. But marriage will ever remain in the sight of God an eternal union made possible only by the gift of love which God alone can bestow.
   2. Marriages are kept alive by God’s grace.
   3. Psalm 127:1
   4. In order to have a right relationship with your mate, you must first have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
   5. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   6. 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.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16