

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Marriage: Duel or Duet

**SERMON REFERENCE:** James 1:19

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1493

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Lord Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."
  - i) John 7:37
  - ii) The only people who go away unsatisfied from that living water are those who are filled with the stagnate water of self-love.
  - iii) If we seek the Lord Jesus, then we can find Him.
- b) In James, there is a formula to change a marriage from a duel to a duet.
  - i) James 1:19, if properly understood, will transform a marriage.
- c) It is common to duel (debate) with your mate.
  - i) Almost all people who are married sometimes get into a debate.
    - (1) Sometimes people stay in one.
      - (a) One might think that they were married by the Secretary of War rather than by the Justice of the Peace.
    - ii) The most important thing is not whether or not we have confrontations, but how we handle those confrontations.
- d) James 1:19
  - i) James was saying the following:
    - (1) Tune in.
      - (a) Be swift to hear.
    - (2) Tone down.
      - (a) Be slow to speak.
    - (3) Sweeten up.
      - (a) Be slow to wrath.
- e) In today's message, we will look at these three areas from James 1:19 in greater detail.

2) TUNE IN (JAMES 1:19)

- a) This is talking about the awesome power of the listening ear.
- b) Proverbs 18:3
  - i) The Bible says that it is a shame and a folly to a person who speaks before he listens.
- c) All good marriage communication, or communication anywhere else, begins with listening.
- d) Psychologists tell us that we only catch about 20% of what we hear.
- e) Many times, what we hear is not clear; it is garbled.
  - i) When someone has finished speaking, we really don't even know what they have said.
    - (1) We have to listen carefully.
- f) Learn to love your mate with your ears and with your eyes.
  - i) There is verbal communication.
  - ii) There is visual communication.
- g) Tune in.
  - i) Begin to listen.

- 3) TONE DOWN (JAMES 3:5-8)
  - a) We need to learn something of the awesome power of the tongue.
    - i) James 3:5
      - (1) The torched tongue
        - (a) We can burn down our marriage with our tongue.
    - ii) James 3:6-8
      - (1) The tiger tongue
        - (a) We can shred and claw with our mouth.
        - (b) We used to say that sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me.
          - (i) That is absurd and silly.
        - (c) Our tongue can be like a vicious beast.
    - iii) James 3:8
      - (1) The tetanus tongue
        - (a) It poisons love.
  - b) There are seven deadly games that people play with their tongue:
    - i) 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.
        - (a) For example, "You always," or "You never."
          - (i) We are almost always wrong when we use the word "always."
          - (b) Instead, begin with, "I feel this way," or "I think this."
    - ii) Don't play the professor.
      - (1) This is when we talk down to the other person.
        - (a) 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.
    - iii) Don't play the psychologist.
      - (1) Don't sit around and try to analyze your mate.
        - (a) "Let me tell you why you said that."
        - (b) "Let me tell you why you think that way."
          - (i) We shouldn't do this because we don't know, and they probably don't know either.
      - (2) 1 Corinthians 4:3-5
      - (3) Don't assign motives to your partner's heart.
    - iv) 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.

- (a) They change the subject to something that happened at some other time.
  - (i) Stick to the subject.
- v) Don't play the dictator.
  - (1) They use force in the marriage.
  - (2) They may use verbal force.
    - (a) Beware of ultimatums in marriage.
    - (b) Keep your words warm and sweet; you may have to eat them.
    - (c) Worse than an ultimatum is a veiled threat.
      - (i) "If you do that again, then wait and see what happens."
        - 1. They don't say what will happen; they leave it up to the imagination.
  - (3) The dictator is the person who changes the marriage relationship from "I do" to "You had better."
    - (a) They try to force their way.
  - (4) Clubs that the dictator uses include the following:
    - (a) The physical
      - (i) These are the men who strike their wives.
        - 1. There are very few people as low as a man who would physically strike his wife.
      - (ii) Sometimes wives physically beat up their husbands.
        - 1. They are physically stronger.
    - (b) The neurotic invalid
      - (i) This dictator does not use brute force.
      - (ii) Some people just get sick; they become invalids.
        - 1. But they are not really sick.
        - 2. This is not referring to those who are truly sick.
    - (c) There are those who withhold money or affection in order to have their way.
    - (d) The martyr
      - (i) This person sulks and pouts.
  - (5) Dictatorship in marriage is cruel.
    - (a) It leads to frustration.
    - (b) It says to the partner, "I can do a better job with your life than you can."
    - (c) It robs the other person of self-esteem.
- vi) 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.
    - (a) Don't compare your mate with someone else's mate.
      - (i) Perhaps if you were married to the person with whom you are comparing, you might have a different story.
    - (b) Don't compare your partner to their mother or father.

- (4) Never criticize something over which the other person has no control, such as their parents, physical traits, or attributes.
- vii) 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.
    - (a) This is destructive in marriage relationships.
    - (b) Build your life on the Word of God.
      - (i) But don't lecture with a holier-than-thou attitude.
  - (6) Ruth Graham said that it is a wife's job to love her husband; it is God's job to make him good.
- 4) SWEETEN UP (JAMES 1:19)
  - a) We are to be slow to wrath.
    - i) We are to resolve our hearts, not dissolve our homes.
  - b) Three things not to do if you are having a conflict:
    - i) 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:
        - (a) We fear the anger of our partner.
          - (i) So, we just close up.
        - (b) We may be afraid if we don't retreat, our marriage will be broken.
        - (c) We are afraid that if we get into an argument or a discussion, then we might have to admit something about ourselves.
          - (i) We might have to see where we really are wrong.
      - (4) Unresolved conflict is not resolved by retreating; it only gets worse.
        - (a) We may repress it, but our stomachs will keep score.
      - (5) The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.
        - (a) Proverbs 27:6
        - (b) Love your mate enough to confront.
    - ii) 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.
        - (a) Sometimes we appease and call it compromise.
      - (4) Many times in a marriage, one person just simply gives.
        - (a) But constant appeasement does not solve the problem.
      - (5) The person who appeases internalizes the conflict.
        - (a) When their spouse gets violent, they get silent and internalize it.

- (i) They just give way and give way.
  - 1. It becomes in their heart like smoldering rags.
    - a. They may burn out, or they may break out and burn the house down.
- (6) An appeaser is given to self-pity.
  - (a) They have a martyr complex.
    - (i) They feel trapped because they know they will never win.
- (7) While the marriage may stay together, they get an emotional divorce.
- iii) Don't practice aggression.
  - (1) You must face your partner, but the Bible says speak the truth in love.
    - (a) Ephesians 4:15
    - (b) 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.
    - (a) Don't avoid an argument; avoid it at certain times.
      - (i) Avoid it right before dinner when your blood sugar is low.
        - 1. Psychologists tell us that most family arguments begin just before mealtime.
  - (4) Choose the right tone when you confront.
    - (a) The Bible says that a soft answer turns away wrath.
      - (i) Proverbs 15:1
  - (5) Choose the right turf when you confront.
    - (a) The person who is the appeaser, or who does retreat, will sometimes come out of their shell when company is around.
      - (i) They will criticize their partner when other friends are around.
      - (ii) They have a secret desire to hurt or embarrass their partner.
      - (iii) They feel that they can do it there because they have him trapped, and he cannot react.
        - 1. It is a cheap shot.
- c) Three things to do when you have a conflict:
  - i) 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.
      - (a) 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:
      - (a) Suppose a wife says that she and her husband don't spend enough time together.
      - (b) She might learn a sport that he loves, and they could play that sport together.
        - (i) And so, she accommodates herself.

1. She gets what she wants (time with him), but she has accommodated or changed herself.
  - (5) All of us can accommodate our partner to some degree.
- ii) Practice acceptance.
  - (1) Accept that he or she may never change.
  - (2) There are certain things that we have to accept about others.
    - (a) They are different from us.
      - (i) They may not be wrong, and you may not be wrong.
      - (ii) People come from different backgrounds and have different ways of doing things.
    - (3) Accept how the other person is.
- iii) 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.
    - (a) The husband goes to bed a little earlier, and the wife goes to bed a little later.
      - (i) Rather than having a war where both lose, they have a compromise where both gain a little.

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Peter Marshall stated the following about the marriage relationship:
  - i) When rightly understood and properly appreciated, is the most delightful, as well as the most sacred and solemn of all human relations.
  - ii) 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.
  - iii) In our day, it is by many lightly regarded and by many lightly discarded.
  - iv) 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.
- b) Marriages are kept alive by God's grace.
- c) Psalm 127:1
- d) In order to have a right relationship with your mate, you must first have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) 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
  - v) John 3:16