

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." – **Psalm 119:105**

Feb 28

2010

Idols of Gold

George Slover

"To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; they prostrate themselves, yes, they worship. They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; from its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble." (**Isaiah 46:5-7**)

In my daily reading, I came across this passage, and I could not help but think of the Olympics. An athlete will devote several years to training; some will even go deep in debt or give up their nationality so they can have a performance that lasts less than two minutes. If they are lucky, they will win a medal, which means they will get to stand on the victory podium for a few more minutes. Some may even receive millions of dollars in endorsements – yet they are still unfulfilled. If you don't believe me, ask Ohno, the Olympic speed skating star.

Isaiah says: *"they take their gold and silver, make a god out of it, and carry it on their shoulder – yet it cannot save them out of trouble."* Such is the nature of worthless idols – money, pleasure, sports, education, etc. All may be worthwhile pursuits, but only if they are kept in perspective.

Isaiah teaches there is more to life than pursuing empty treasure that cannot save. The true meaning of life begins and ends with the living God. *"Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'"* (**Isaiah 46:9-10**). Only Jehovah can save: *"Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness: I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel My glory"* (**Isaiah 46:12-13**).

Another thought occurred to me. What if the people of God were even half as passionate and committed to the cause of Christ as these athletes? We would be known as the *"sect everywhere spoken against"* (**Acts 28:22**), we would be charged with filling the cities and villages of the World with the doctrine of Christ (**Acts 5:28**) – and God would be glorified!

Resolving Interpersonal Conflict

The #1 Skill Necessary for a Happy Marriage

Part 1 of 3 by Brent Hunter

Have you heard the quip, “If a man says he has never had an argument with his wife, he is apt to lie about other things too?” Most long term married couples chuckle at the remark because they have learned from experience that in any healthy marriage, where there is growth and good communication, disagreements are inevitable. In fact, this is true of any good interpersonal relationship.

Science tells us that whenever you have motion, you must have friction, and the more motion present the more friction will inevitably result! Likewise, the more growth or motion in a marriage, the more “friction” will result. Hopefully, Christian couples can allow God’s principles to guide honest dialogue so that our words serve as a sort of “heavenly sand paper” to smooth over our rough edges and help us be better and more sensitive and understanding husbands and wives (**I Peter 3:7**).

Research has established that both happy and unhappy couples argue. The key is that happy couples view “*fight*s” not as tragedies, but as *opportunities* to *increase understanding*. They have learned the interpersonal skill of being able to discuss differences without getting personal or hitting below the belt. As Paul put it, they are able to “*be angry and sin not*” (**Eph 4:26**)! Believe it or not, a good argument can actually become a *window to intimacy*! Unfortunately, unhappy couples tend to take things too personally and do and say things that harm mutual respect. They argue in a way that affects the way they feel about each other. They lash out and get back at their spouse with hurtful words and wound the very person that, ironically, they had previously made a commitment to protect in their wedding vows!

Frankly, venting personal frustrations through lips which have learned how to do so constructively can serve a wonderful purpose. Yes, skill and self-control can turn potentially destructive squabbles into “*fair fights*” which solve problems and yield positive results. Not having a set of rules that you both agree to follow can cause one or both parties to go into withdrawal and clam up! This is deadly. The number one predictor of divorce is not how much the parties argue, but AVOIDANCE of conflict and emotional WITHDRAWAL. No wonder Paul commands God’s children to “*speak the truth in love*” (**Eph 4:15**). The walls we erect between ourselves through unresolved conflict are the real enemies in our marriages, and if left unchecked, destroy passion and closeness! Remember, the real key is developing an atmosphere of trust and feeling SAFE with our soul mate, so that we can be ourselves, express how we feel, knowing that we won’t be laughed at or be embarrassed. No wonder **Prov 31:11** in describing the worthy woman says: “*The heart of her husband trusts in her.*”

So, instead of being frightened by differences and even occasional hostility in a marriage, we must remember they are a natural and almost universal phenomenon. And since it is inevitable, it is critical every couple understand this fact upfront, and agree on a set of rules to help them resolve their differences in an “agreeable” fashion. In short, one of the keys to a successful marriage is not so much finding the right person, *but learning to fight well with the person you have found!*

News and Notes

Our series with Brent Hunter on *Home Improvement* runs March 10-14 (see related article in bulletin). A meal list is posted above the table in the foyer. Flyers are on the table. Please distribute them to others.

Members:

- * Ken Berry is home after heart surgery and is doing well.
- * Saundra Boyd is home after colon surgery and is slowly doing better.
- * Cotton Reed is still having trouble breathing.
- * Ame White **has a doctor's visit Tuesday in an effort to identify the cause of** some of her health issues.

Friends and Family:

- * Bruce Diamond, friend of John Moore, finished his chemo but is still not doing well.
- * Benny Gore, **Ame White's brother, has taken a turn for the worse after his** recent stroke.
- * Mike Read, **Cotton and Nancy's son, is on crutches and doing better after his** broken hip.

Absent: None known.

New Reports: None known.

After decades of marriage counseling, I am convinced that learning and following these "SEVEN RULES OF FIGHTING FAIR" can be extremely useful in keeping the communication lines open and learning this all important coping skill of successfully resolving interpersonal conflict. After all, marriages are made in heaven, but so are thunder and lightning storms! Make these seven rules a part of you, put them up on the refrigerator, practice them until they become second nature. I am convinced they will serve as a blessing to your family as you deal with the "storms" of disagreements that come into every marriage at times. We will list the seven rules in Part 2 and 3 of this short series of articles. Stay tuned!



*"It is good for me that I was afflicted,
that I may learn Your statutes."*

Psalm 119:71