

The Lakeview Lamp

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

Mar 7

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Resolving Interpersonal Conflict

The #1 Skill Necessary for a Happy Marriage

Part 2 of 3 by Brent Hunter

It is the positives that initially draw us together in a marriage. The positive things are what make us “attractive” to each other. However, it is the negatives, and how we handle them, or mishandle them, that determine whether we will remain happily married or eventually divorce. Consequently, having some guidelines or rules to follow is critical in making sure a couple stays in touch with each others feeling and remains close throughout their married life.

Regardless of how long you have been married, these simple seven rules will help to keep disagreements in check and will avoid the bitterness and resentment that often result when arguments go awry.

Rule #1 – DO YOUR THING TO COOL OFF! (Eph 4:26; Prov 29:8, 30:33, 17:27)

Never be ashamed of anger – it is natural, and not sinful. The only thing you need to regret is handling it badly. Since you are literally in a state of **intoxication** when your “fuse is lit,” it is important *to reduce the emotional state before* a discussion begins. Solomon said: “*There is more hope for a fool than a man of quick temper*” (Prov 29:20), and “*A wrathful man stirreth up contention*” (Prov 15:18).

Remember, **IF YOU ARGUE WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY, YOU'RE APT TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE!** So, do whatever it takes to cool off **FIRST!** Engage in some physical activity, go for a walk, (not a drive!), take a hot bath. And most importantly – **pray!** It calms your spirit so you can see the situation more clearly. It enables you to see yourself as God sees you! Afterwards, you may just decide to forget the whole thing (Prov 17:9, 19:11)!

However, if this a serious offense, and comes up frequently, and your spouse needs to understand how upsetting this is to you, then proceed to Rule #2!

Rule #2 – ARGUE WITH THE RIGHT PERSON (Prov 3:30, 25:9)

Remember to express your frustration or anger toward the person you are really angry with and **not some innocent party**. Solomon said: “*Strive not with a man without cause, if he has done thee no harm*” (Prov 3:30).

Why would someone take out frustrations on an innocent party? This is often done simply to avoid confrontation with whom we are really upset! Sadly, it is analogous to getting mad at the dog and kicking the cat! I heard of

one woman at work who at 5:00 p.m. announced to her co-workers that she had a terrible day, and could not wait to go home and spank her kids! Most are not as obvious or honest about their tendency to “dump” on third parties when upset, but most of us do find ourselves doing this at times. Indeed, not expressing anger with your spouse directly will often cause you to lash out at a nearby easy target – innocent children! One danger sign is when you find your anger is disproportionate to the actual offense. This sort of overreaction should serve as a signal to back up and reevaluate. Take a sort of “journey within.” Why am I so angry? Am I really upset with them or is it someone else?

Remember, **dumping is cruel**. It allows you to **escape** the real person or issue, and **resolves nothing**. Be aware of why you are reacting the way you do. It is important to have the courage to “*speak the truth in love*” to the **right party** (Eph 4:15).

Rule #3--ARGUE ABOUT THE RIGHT THING (Prov 15:7, 28).

Many arguments are fought about the **wrong subjects**. For example a husband may criticize his wife’s housekeeping when the real issue is a lack of intimacy in the relationship. So again, be **in touch with your own feelings** and ask, “*Am I really angry because of this or is it something else?*”

People often avoid the real issues because of the risk involved. Perhaps there’s a fear of being embarrassed, laughed at, or rejected. Be careful to not abuse the other’s feelings but instead love and trust each other enough to allow for openness and transparency.

Rules 4-7 will be covered in the next article.

Looking Good

Al Diestelkamp

Some time ago, a Saturday morning was dedicated to washing the windows (inside and out) at our house. They needed washing, and the next afternoon we were to have many people at our house for a social gathering. After that job was completed I proceeded to scrape and paint the trim around the doors of our otherwise maintenance-free exterior.

As I was finishing up the painting, and noticing how nice it looked in contrast to the peeling paint, I realized that visitors would not likely take note of the effort. No one would comment about how sparkling clean the windows were, nor how freshly white the trim appeared. However, had we not cleaned the windows, or had I not painted the trim, some might have noticed that these jobs hadn’t been done.

News and Notes

Our series with Brent Hunter on *Home Improvement* begins this week, 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 had a problem with fluid buildup but is doing better.
- * Vickie Berry plan to go back to work this week.
- * Sandra Boyd is slowly doing better and may be here tonight.
- * Ame White was put on a pill for her liver.

Friends and Family:

- * Charles Hampton, friend of John Moore IV, suffered a severed vertebrae in an automobile accident
- * Mike Read, **Cotton and Nancy's son, continues to go down from his cancer.**

Absent: Chris Gertsch (Dresden).

New Reports: Gary Hunt (NY), Chad Lynn (WV).

Our lives are much like that. Few will notice when we do what is right, but many will notice when we do wrong. In reality, this should not upset us. Our purpose in doing what is right should be to please God. It should never be for our own glory.

Doing right is our duty, and Jesus said, *“When you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’”* (Lk. 17:10).



“The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.” – Psalm 119:72