

WHEN MARRIAGE AND MERCY COLLIDE

The Power of the Gospel in Marriage

Doing Surgery - part 1

The Neglected Practice of Loving Correction

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Nov. 15, 2009

Two Steps for Biblical Correction

I. Invite and Pursue Correction from Your Spouse – Don't Wait for Them to Come to You!

“I have a theory: Behind virtually every case of marital dissatisfaction lies unrepented sin. *Couples don't fall out of love so much as they fall out of repentance.* Sin, wrong attitudes, and personal failures that are not dealt with slowly erode the relationship... All of us enter marriage with sinful attitudes. When these attitudes surface the temptation will be to hide them or even run to another relationship where the attitudes won't be so well known. But Christian marriage presumes a certain degree of self-disclosure. When I gave my hand in marriage, I committed to allow myself to be known by Lisa. And that means she'll see me as I am - with my faults, my prejudices, my fears, and my weaknesses. The reality can be terrifying to contemplate... In fact I wouldn't be surprised if many marriages end in divorce largely because one or both partners are running from their own revealed weaknesses as much as they are running from something they can't tolerate in their spouse.” *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas, p. 96 & 97

A. You'll Have to Swallow Your Pride

“It is a good sign of real, God-produced humility when we are no longer shocked by the corrections of others, nor by the resistance within... We know what we are, and we have no hope of becoming any better except through the mercy of God. The reproofs of others, harsh and unfeeling as they may be, seem to be less than we really deserve. If we find ourselves rebelling and getting irritable, we should understand that this irritability under correction is worse than all other faults put together... If we have inner resentment at being corrected that just shows how deeply correction is needed. In fact, the sting of correction wouldn't be felt at all if the old self were dead. So the more correction hurts, the more we see how necessary it is.” *Let Go*, Fenelon, p. 49

The Bible expects that admonition and correction will be a regular part of your marriage relationship.

Men – God calls our wives to rebuke us. They’re not being sinful... disrespectful... or unsubmitive when they do that.

Ladies – God calls your husbands to admonish and correct you. That's not being unloving. It doesn't violate the 'nourish' and 'cherish' part of Eph. Ch. 5.

B. You'll Have to Accept a Less than Perfect Approach or Presentation

Don't try to pick apart what they're trying to tell you just because they don't get it exactly right.

“Don't be put off when a friend's observations may not be 100 percent accurate. I've found that there's truth to be gleaned at times even from an enemy's critique. Humility doesn't demand mathematical precision from another's input; humility postures itself to receive God's grace from any avenue possible.” *Humility: True Greatness*, C.J. Mahaney, p. 134

Proverbs 12:1 "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."

On a regular basis you should PRACTICE SAYING to your spouse: "How am I doing in our marriage? Is there anything you've been wanting to tell me?"

C. You'll Have to be Convinced that God Does Use Other Sinners to Speak to Us

So many married couples have a 'Contract of Silence' - "I won't talk to you about your sin, and you don't dare talk to me about mine." It's absolutely UNBIBLICAL.

Hebrews 3:12-13 "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

"The Hebrews 3:12 passage clearly teaches that personal insight is the product of community. I need you in order to really see and know myself. Otherwise, I will listen to my own arguments, believe my own lies, and buy into my own delusions. My self-perception is as accurate as a carnival mirror... we need the thankful humility of approachability. We need to forsake defensiveness, be thankful that God has surrounded us with help, and be ready to receive it - every day!" *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp, p. 54

In fact... you should be willing to say to your spouse every day, "I don't need **New**... I need **True**... and I need it from **You!**"

Proverbs 9:8 "... rebuke a wise man and he will love you."

Proverbs 27:5-6 "Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Homework –

Guys - present your wife with a gift in the form of a question. Sit down with her in some pleasant environment - free from distractions and with plenty of time for an unhurried conversation.

Then ask her, "**What are three areas of character in which you would most like to see me grow by the grace of God?**"

Then listen very closely... and very patiently. Take notes. And don't interrupt... don't defend... don't argue. Just listen.

Dave Harvey "You need your wife like you need no one else, because she sees you like no one else. Admit that you are undoubtedly blind to some of your sin and receive her insights with gratitude."

Ladies – then pick another occasion for you to do the same with your husband.

For Personal Reflection

- Are you running from your own weaknesses or have you put out the ‘Welcome’ mat for your spouse to speak to you?
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- How consistently and aggressively do you PURSUE and INVITE correction in your life – starting with your spouse?
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- Would your spouse and others say that you’re APPROACHABLE... that you’re EASY to entreat?
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- Do you wake up every day with the attitude that you're a person in desperate need of help from others around you – starting with your spouse?
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- Do you have the THANKFUL HUMILITY of APPROACHABILITY?
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- How well do you receive correction... rebuke... exhortation... from others around you?
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- Do you listen to your spouse? Or do you shut them down with intimidation or anger or tears or pouting?
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- Are you willing to hear something about yourself that's not flattering? And are you willing to hear it from your spouse?
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- Can your spouse correct you or is that absolutely off limits? Would you just fly into a rage?
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