

Married lesson – **HUMILITY in MARRIAGE**

Marriage was designed by God and when we follow his plans marriage is simply as good as it gets in this world. Nothing destroys marriage quicker than pride. Pride is the chief cause of decline of number of husbands and wives. In those cases in which there is no divorce pride is the chief cause of unhappiness.

Because we spend more time in marriage than in any relationship we face the most temptation to be prideful in this particular relationship. If we want to work on our pride home is a good place to start. For the way we are at home is the way we really are. Both spouses can usually recognize the pride in the other. There is no marital challenge that can be overcome when humility resides in the hearts of husband and wife.

Ephesians 4: 2-3 “Be completely humble and gentle: be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Earth’s greatest blessings comes to the husbands and wives who show humility first to God and to one another. No matter how many years we are married to each other pride could come in between husband and wife and divide. As we become more and more aware of our pride we can do two things to overcome.

1. Stop and pray (i.e. humble ourselves before God - together)
2. Confess our sin and forgive one another (i.e. humble ourselves before each other).

In Christ we are already unified but pride keeps us from experiencing that which God has already given. Humility allows the Spirit to bring us together. When pride dies the Spirit can bring his life giving power.

Now we will see 7 principles for practicing humility in marriage.

1. Listen carefully when your spouse gives you input.

When you get input, sure you will get tempted to be prideful (and start thinking about all his or her flaws that you know well), but fight the temptation. Be disciplined in your response.

Yes, your partner can be wrong about you, but in most cases, no one knows you as well as your spouse, and there is likely to be some [if not a great deal of] truth in the input he or she is giving you.

2. Stop keeping score and being competitive.

We need to realize that in a marriage when one person wins, the marriage loses. So, do you really want to win? Don’t keep up with how often he or she did something. “Love keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Cor 13:5). Score keeping comes from a competitive spirit and that spirit is born of pride. In couples whose marriage is hurting one or both has a list of things, sometimes written or more often just in their heads and hearts that prove how bad the other person is. When you finish tearing down your marriage partner, what materials do you have left with which to build a strong marriage? For building a strong marriage it takes two people who feel loved and respected.

3. Welcome and seek input from outside marriage.

Following a thoroughly Biblical plan, every married couple should have other Christians in their lives who can give them wise counsel and encouragement. We all need this. Marriage counseling is not just for those considering divorce. In some cases husbands who are Christians forbid their wives to get help from outside the marriage. This is rooted completely in pride, and husbands are in sin and they will never give their wives a

sense of being safe in their marriages (which is so important for women) until they humble out and welcome the input that is needed.

One important point to be considered, when those helping you do give biblical input, do what they say and do it urgently. Don't argue with them or defend yourself and make excuses. Just humbly receive the Word and put into practice. In fact do more than what they ask of you. Your marriage is worth it!

4. Pray Daily Together:

Jesus teaches us to pray "Give us today our daily bread ". Sounds like he expected daily prayers. If a man and a woman in their marriage humble themselves before God every day and extol his "hallowed" name and ask that their physical , emotional and spiritual needs be met ,their marriage will stay far away from trouble. They will have normal bumps, but there will be spiritual atmosphere in that marriage that enables all conflicts to be resolved.

5. Apologize quickly and confess thoroughly:

The fact is that we are sinful creatures and we are frequently under pressure and we mess up. We cannot totally eradicate sin. But what we can do is learn to recognize your sin and apologize for it quickly. It is hard to say "I am sorry, I have sinned against you "but as we practice to do it, it has a healing effect. It requires humility to say, "I am being prideful," but that humility dramatically changes the atmosphere and leads reconciliation. Start saying this immediately every time you need to do so. (You will have lot of opportunities)

6. Forgive completely:

The loop has not been closed, and the transaction has not been completed until the person sinned against you says "I forgive you ". Asking for forgiveness is not easy it requires humility – but so does giving it. The spouse who needs to forgive must stand at the foot of the cross and realize how much he or she has been forgiven, and then offer that same mercy to the other.

7. Practice Humility:

Even if your spouse does not do it. Some of you married to one who is not a Christian, others of you married to Christians who are not living with you in either case the rule is same. You do what is right. You live humbly before God and humbly before your spouse. Practice all the above principles. Get as much input as you can about how to handle your side of the marriage. If your spouse does not want to pray with you, pray by yourself for your marriage and for your partner. This is the approach Peter is calling for when he writes to women whose husbands are not Christians:

1 peter 3: 1 -4. This is just another passage reminding us of the power of humility.

In conclusion, when a marriage is not going well, when there is no unity, when there is hurt and disappointment, be assured that there is lack of humility. That lack of humility may start out in one and usually spreads to the other, but nothing will really get better until pride dies and nothing causes it to flourish like humility.

Extract from 'The prideful soul's guide to humility

By Thomas Jones & Michael Fontenot