

I. The Battle for Oneness

- ◆ Intimacy in a relationship takes **time!**
Establish regular times for connecting — at least 15 minutes per day, a date once a week (by yourselves to have fun), and a yearly get-away by yourself.
- ◆ A key to intimacy is spending time sharing your desires, dreams, deepest thoughts and emotions. Nothing can take the place of time spent together connecting on a very personal level.

II. Know the Enemy

A. Your spouse is not your enemy; Satan is!

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

- ◆ You and your spouse wear the same uniform. The enemy seeks to confuse you and deceive you — to divide and conquer. Satan wants to destroy your mind and your marriage.
- ◆ Because your marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, Satan can discredit God and steal His glory by destroying your marriage.

B. Emotions can be Deceiving

- ◆ Emotions are given by God to enrich our lives. Emotions are highly unreliable as a guide for making decisions. *In your anger do not sin, Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.* Ephesians 4:26
- ◆ All emotions are valid but **many emotions are untrustworthy as an indicator of right or wrong.**
My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20
But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Colossians 3:8

III. Learn the Strategy

- ◆ One of the greatest defenses is a strong offense. Being proactive and strengthening your communication skills and intimacy are the best weapons against the attacks.
- ◆ Seek to strengthen your marriage against weak spots. Recognize what your weak spots are. Learn new ways of communicating or resolving conflict if conflict is a continual problem in your marriage. Don't keep doing the same old thing and expecting different results.
- ◆ Recognize which issues **repeatedly** bring divisiveness

and seek solutions for those issues, even if it means getting outside help.

- ◆ Know what means love and respect to your spouse.
Be a student of your mate!
Give in the way that is meaningful to your spouse; don't give assume that the same expressions of love or respect that are meaningful to you will be just as meaningful to your spouse.
- ◆ Expect skirmishes! Everyone has disagreements. It is the way that you handle them that is critical.

IV. Rules of Engagement

- ◆ Establish "rules" for arguments. Discuss possible ways that will help you resolve an argument. There are some basics that are helpful for everyone:
 1. Time-out — everyone needs the opportunity to call a time-out. The time-out isn't a tool to avoid the discussion. Whoever calls the time-out needs to designate the time that the couple can continue the discussion after the emotions are lower.
 2. Stay current, don't bring up the past, speak the truth in love. *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it **keeps no record of wrongs.** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
 3. Use principles from Talking Points lessons .

V. Exploring the Options

Many people get stuck in a conflict because they can't see any other choices but mine and his. There are steps to help to resolve the conflict:

- ◆ Problem Discussion:
Brainstorming possible solutions (there are no bad ideas)
- ◆ Discuss strengths and weaknesses of each idea. Research may help. **Prayer is a necessity.**
- ◆ Arrive at solution TOGETHER. If there is not a solution that both can agree on, go back to brainstorming.

VI. Victory at all Cost!

- ◆ Never say the "D" word! **Divorce is not an option.**
- ◆ If you are unable to find a solution, **seek wise counsel**, outside your family and friends.