

Living Waters Chapel
1900 Jay St., Lebanon, PA 17046

~ *SERMON NOTES* ~

Pastor D. Dean Cover
August 3, 2008

SERMON SERIES: *“Maintaining Your Marriage So You Never Need A Miracle” – Part 4*

SERMON TITLE: *“Rules of Engagement: How to Fight Fair in Marriage”*

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 17:1; Ephesians 4:25-31

THEME: Learning how to handle conflict in marriage.

INTRODUCTION: No one begins their marriage planning for it to fail. No one starts their marriage expecting it to be a disaster. But for some couples, their whole marriage is one disaster after the other. You might have dreamed of a marriage in which you would grow close and become best friends, but instead of growing closer together, you’ve grown apart. Here’s a truth about marriage that we don’t often think about. Marriage doesn’t solve problems, it uncovers them.

I. RECOGNIZE ALL MARRIAGES HAVE CONFLICTS

- A. Three stages to every marriage:
 - 1. The Honeymoon
 - 2. The Crash
 - 3. The Commitment
- B. Proverbs 14:4
- C. **PRINCIPLE:** This is not a “Burger-King” universe where you get it your way all the time!
- D. A conflict free marriage is an oxymoron. Marriages without some conflict are not healthy marriages. So let’s make it clear that conflict in marriage is normal.

II. THE AREAS OF CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE

- A. The most obvious area of conflict comes from our differences as men and women.

- B. Making a marriage work is a difficult challenge but it is achievable. Robert Keeler explains, “Marriage is like twirling a baton, turning handsprings, or eating with chopsticks: it looks easy until you try it.”
- C. Three principles for men when it comes to the unique needs your wife has:
 - 1. Show your love sacrificially (Ephesians 5:25)
 - 2. Show your love affectionately (1 Peter 3:7)
 - 3. Say it verbally (Ephesians 4:29)
- D. Three principles for women when it comes to your husband.
 - 1. First and most important, respect your husband (Ephesians 5:33)
 - 2. Be attractive in a modest way (1 Timothy 2:9)
 - 3. Be his partner and best friend (Genesis 2:18)
- E. The second area of conflict is in the area of finances. (Philippians 4:11; I Timothy 6:8; and Hebrews 13:5)

III. RESPONDING TO CONFLICT

- A. Do not react (Romans 12:17: “Do not mistreat someone just because they have mistreated you.”(TEV))
- B. The “Seek to serve, not to be served” Principle (Matthew 20:28; Romans 15:2-3; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4-5)

IV. THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- A. Identify the problem
- B. Talk about the problem
- C. Forgive one another if needed

CONCLUSION: God’s desire is very clear: “...and the two shall become one flesh.” The real meaning of this phrase is more than physical unity. It means there’s a change of focus. It means a change to the point of dreaming together, planning together, celebrating the joys and the struggles of life together. Our responsibility is to

maintain our marriage so we are never in need of a miracle for it to survive.