

Removing Fear from Marriage

GETTING HEALTHY P 10

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Background: God designed a perfect marriage for Adam and Eve (Gen. 2) but their disobedience to God damaged their relationship permanently.

Fear is the root of most marriage problems.

3 WAYS FEAR WRECKS A MARRIAGE

1. WHEN WE FEAR OUR FAULTS WE BECOME DEFENSIVE (vs. 11-13) *"And God said, 'Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' and the man said, 'The woman you put here with me...'"*

- We never change until the fear is exceeded by pain and we finally say, "OK, I don't care what I'm afraid of I'm going to change."
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2. WHEN WE FEAR OUR FEELINGS WE BECOME DISTANT. (vs. 7)

Men, particularly, withdraw when confronted with emotion.

Every woman wants affection. If she can't get affection she will settle for the substitute of attention. If she cannot get positive attention, she'll get negative attention!

- The most common complaint I hear in marriage counseling is "My husband never talks to me!"

John Power wrote a book Why Am I afraid To Tell You Who I Am? The answer is I'm afraid to tell you who I am because who I am is all I've got.

Feelings That Frighten Us:

* **Hurt feelings frighten us.** We don't like to admit that we're vulnerable.

* **Negative feelings frighten us.** Have you noticed we have a tendency to deny when we are angry? "I am not angry! I am not raising my voice!"

* **Sexual feelings frighten us.** Notice Adam and Eve's initial reaction when fear entered their relationship. v. 7 *"Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."*

Compare 3:7, the verse we just read, with 2:25 when things were going great, before fear entered the situation. *"The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame."*

Look at the difference. Before fear entered the relationship they were totally unconscious of themselves. They were focusing completely on each other. They were not inhibited. Fear always inhibits. They were not uptight, they were not nervous, they were not under tension, they were not under stress. They were naked and they were enjoying each other.

But the moment fear entered their relationship they got dressed, they put on clothes, they became very self-conscious.

3. WHEN WE FEAR FOR OUR FREEDOM WE BECOME DEMANDING. (vs 16)

v. 15-19 in this story describes the results of the fall, when sin entered the world and it damaged Adam and Eve's perfect relationship. One tragic affect of sin in relationships and it is a struggle for domination. v. 16 *"God says to Eve, 'Your desire literally, your dependency will be for your husband and he will rule over you.'" Rule?*

When you boil it down, the issue is summed up in one word -- control. Who is going to control the marriage? And it's a power struggle. You have two very insecure and frightened people both demanding their rights...

A tip to make your marriage better: Stop focusing on your own rights. When we continually focus on our rights in marriage, it forces us to live in a continual state of anger. You're always angry that your rights are not being met. The fact is, when you got married you gave up some rights. Both of you did. The secret of a good marriage is both of you are yielding your rights to each other.

HOW TO FACE YOUR FEARS

1. Be honest with yourself. Be specific about it. How are you contributing to the problem?

Proverbs 28:13 *"You can't solve a problem until first you admit it."* That's why honesty is the foundation. 1 John 1:8 *"If we say we have not sinned we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."* Prov. 11:2

2. Be honest with God. 1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* "Confession" in the Greek is "to speak the same." Confession means to agree with God, "You're right, God. That is wrong!..." Psalm 19:12

3. Be honest with your spouse. Be honest about your faults, "I admit it." James 5:16

Isn't it amazing that the thing we desire most -- intimacy -- is what we're frightened of the most. It won't get any better until you face it.