

Marriage Matters—Session 8

A biblical study guided by Winston Smith's book, *Marriage Matters*

Key Ideas from Last Lesson

- Dishonesty may mean we are trusting ourselves rather than God.
- Honest communication does not mean saying the first thing that comes to mind. The goal is always to speak the truth in love with the purpose of building up the other.
- Honesty that builds relationship affirms God's love for spouses, is based on the careful understanding of them, and is sensitive to the timing of our words.

Conflicts Are Often Battles for Things We Want

What is the basic question that we as human beings try to answer when in conflict?

The Nature of Conflict

Read: Ephesians 6:10-18. James 4:1-2a. Matthews 7:1-5.

1. What is the source of our quarrels and conflicts?
2. Against who or what do we struggle?
3. According to Ephesians 6 what should be our protection?
4. If quarrels, as James says, come from the desires within us, where should we begin to bring a positive outcome out of conflict?
5. What keeps us from first examining our own hearts?
6. What could help you in the midst of conflicts to be ready and willing to first “take the plank out of your own eye”?

How Do We Examine Our Own Hearts?

1. Back to Jack and Michelle: What do you think are the real issues that drive their conflict?
2. How could Michelle have rephrased her complaints to Jack?
3. What could be some wrong motives for being willing to examine your heart first?
4. When we think of conflict, we sometimes think in terms of a winner and a loser, a stronger and a weaker. How is godly conflict different?
5. How do you think being the first to ask God and your spouse for forgiveness might change a marriage conflict? What are some reasons we might be unwilling to do that?

A Biblical Approach to Conflict

Three ways we handle conflict: _____, we _____, or we

_____.

Read the Scripture verses in the left column and in the right column make a note of how those verses say that conflict should be handled:

Scripture	How to Handle Conflict
Proverbs 17:14	
Proverbs 20:3	
Leviticus 19:17-18	
Matthew 18:15-16	
Romans 12:18	
James 3:17-8	
Hebrews 12:14	

Everything in the right column can be grouped into three categories: _____,

_____, or _____.

The Key: Love Is More Than Right and Wrong

1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

1. What do you think the apostle Paul was trying to teach the Corinthians when he wrote “knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (v1)?
2. According to Paul, what is the correct answer to whether Christians could eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols?
3. What is the condition Paul places on this “right” to eat the meat?
4. Which approach to handling conflict should you use?