



Health Check: Week 2 "Marriage & Relational Health"

- Pastors Jeremy & Holly Bates -

Sermon Notes: February 12, 2023

Text: Colossians 3:12-17

Introduction

Change before you have to. No one likes change, especially when it is about curbing our attitudes and habits. It's far easier to stay in the same patterns than to find the motivation to change. Why is it that we often coast in familiarity until crisis arises before we look deeper and take action in our lives? This week we're checking the health gauges on marriage & relationships!

"Before marrying someone, listen long and hard to the way they chew because that's the soundtrack to the rest of your life!"

All relationships hold the potential for degrees of conflict. Stress & times of crisis amplify what is already present and expose deeper issues that need care.

The solution in healthy relationships is rarely found in creating distance:

- Instead of pulling away, you need to close the gap
- Instead of distancing yourself, you need to get closer
- Instead of checking out, check in

The first issue God addressed for humanity wasn't; sin, it was solitude - Genesis 2:18,24

Marriage is God's idea. It's meant to be an encouragement and a blessing - a source of help, not a battle ground or source of frustration and hurt.

4 Keys to Experiencing a healthy, vibrant and flourishing marriage or relationship:

Key #1: Work on You - v12-14

- In order to be healthy in a relationship you need to be healthy as an individual, hurting people hurt people
- Marriage is a mirror that reveals what is already present
- You can't find your purpose or core identity in any relationship, that can only come from God

Key #2: Maintain a Foundation of Trust & Transparency - v13

- We need relationship - the things we can compromise or justify on our own can't be hidden when we invite someone close
- Confession & exposure brings healing & wholeness - James 5:16
- *"Trust needs to be built before Transparency can be had."*
- Your response when people reveal their struggle can either slow down or pause the freedom and healing in their life or accelerate the freedom God has for them.





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Sermon Notes Continued....

Key #3: Create an Atmosphere of Peace - v15

- You can't bring peace into your relationship if you don't have peace in your heart
- Isaiah 26:3
- There's a difference between "keeping the peace" & "peace making" - don't settle for avoiding confrontation or sweeping anything under the rug, it only delays dealing with issues that will compound and become more damaging with time. Deal with issues as they come.

Three Strategies that Contribute to an Atmosphere of Peace

1) Admit your mistakes and say "I'm sorry"

- "A good marriage is the union of two good forgivers." Ruth Bell Graham

2) Face issues together

- Score keeping doesn't work when you're on the same team!

3) Fight Fair

- Healthy couples don't avoid conflict, they handle conflict in healthy ways.
- Don't: Avoid destructive patterns that include: accusing "you always..." statements, belittling, interrupting or ignoring, all which lead to frustration and make it impossible to have a productive conversation or make peace
- Do: Be in the moment, not bringing up the past or multiple topics at once
- Do: Talk about how it makes you feel instead of being accusatory
- Don't: No name calling, it is disrespectful and shuts down communication
- Don't: Always running to family & friends can lead to them holding 3rd party offense even after you and your spouse have made up

Key #4: Have a Mission in Mind - v17

- The purpose of marriage isn't solely your happiness and security, but to represent Jesus to the world through your marriage and ultimately all your relationships.

Marriage & Relationship Health Checkup Questions:

- Am I making room for God to transform me individually, so that I am whole and bring health to my relationships?
- Am I being transparent in my relationships? Is there anything that I am hiding that needs exposure?
- Am I pursuing peace in my relationships, or do I have destructive patterns?
- Do I have a clear mission in mind for my life and my relationships?



Life Group Discussion

Warm-Up:

Whether you are married, hoping to get married, happily single or single again, relationships hold the potential to be sources of blessing as well as conflict. We'll leave the tense, potentially hurtful stuff alone for now - tell about one of your more silly arguments where you can look back, laugh and say "*that was so dumb, why were we even fighting about that?!*"

Study & Discussion:

1) What resonated with you from the sermon? What challenged or surprised you? What questions do you have?

2) We all have tendencies that we naturally seem inclined to throughout most of our lives. When it comes to conflict or potentially difficult conversations, has your tendency been more towards leaning in or avoidance? If you've learned to adapt your natural tendency, how did you do it?

3) Read Colossians 3:12-17

4) Relationships can be a true source of accountability. As we invite people closer to us, they see all our flaws, shortcomings, messes and blind spots. How have you benefited and grown from allowing people into your life to see and challenge you?

5) Pastor Jer said there's a difference between "*peace keeping*" & "*peace making*". Do you agree? What are the pros and cons of each and are there appropriate times for both?

6) Review the "*3 Strategies that Contribute to an Atmosphere of Peace*" on the previous page. What tips or practices have you established in your relationship that helps in these areas?

HOMEWORK: That's right...it's time for some personal reflection, unless you want to share your deepest pondering with the whole group! Take some time to consider the questions on the "Marriage & Relationship Health Checkup" in the box on the previous page.



PRAYER: