



MARRIAGE MATTERS

SESSION 2 – CONFLICT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
James 4:1 - 3

Which is your default approach in conflict – Appear, Ignore, or Win?

How does your spouse see you?

What hidden desires are being expressed in your approach?

How else do these hidden desires express themselves?

Can you see these desires potentially driving more than one area of conflict in your marriage?

How can your spouse help you uncover your hidden desires?

Can you identify a recent conflict in your marriage?

What hidden desires were fuelling it?

How might the conflict have proceeded differently if you'd been able to acknowledge what you really desired?

Three Possible Approaches to Conflict

Give Way. *Sometimes it's right to give way because we've realised the plank in our own eye, or for the sake of our spouse. Jesus gave up his rights (Philippians 2) and his life for us.*

Wait. *The Lord is patient with us, and slow to get angry (Psalm 103:8). He doesn't confront us with our sin every time we stumble. Perhaps your spouse is very aware of their sin and they don't actually need you to point out every single instance of their failing!*

Confront. *Since we know that sin is the real enemy, and not our spouse, you will know that it's possible to confront sin while still loving your spouse. In Matthew 7, Jesus shows sin must be dealt with, though in the right, non-hypocritical way.*

What do you need to consider to decide which approach is appropriate in any given conflict situation?

Can you think of some recent occasions on which it would have been appropriate to Give Way, or Wait rather than Confront?

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Do you ever assume the worst in order to protect yourself from surprises? How does this impact the conflict in your marriage? What impact does it have on your spouse?

What sorts of things stop you from seeing your own self-centredness?

How can you be praying for your spouse regarding their desires and motivations?