

Progressing in Quality Marriage
Lifegroup Lesson 6/20/10

Intro: Some people (self-identified as “realistic”) tend to think that if you encourage folks to strive for relational “bliss” in their marriages that you are setting them up for failure. Others (the “idealistic”) tend to think that marriages fail or fall into mediocrity precisely because that is what the couple expects.

- Where do you tend to fall, on the more “realistic” or “idealistic” side?
- Discuss anything valid found in each view.
- Do you think there is any truth to this quote: “Marriages rarely exceed beyond one’s expectations.”
- Do you put much thought into what you are expecting from your marriage over the years to come?

Discussion:

1. [Read Ecclesiastes 5:4-6] - For those who are married, what were the words you said in your wedding vows (if you can remember)? Do you remember anything in particular that your spouse said to you in those vows? Did you make vows that, if followed, would increase the quality of your marriage as you age together?

2. [Read Song of Solomon 2:15] What have been some of the “little foxes” in your marriage that have threatened to sabotage the quality and progress of your relationship (below are some common ones)?

- How can *busyness* disrupt your marriage quality? Busyness is soul-killing, but it seems to have most families by the throat. A quality marriage will have to rebel against the demand of busyness. How can this happen?
- How can the lack of *family boundaries* disrupt a marriage? What are some healthy boundaries with regards to kids? In-laws? Extended family? People in need? Close friendships? Church? Personal recreation? Budget issues?
- What *little quirks* do you have that irritate your spouse (yes, we all have them)? How have you handled them with each other?
- What *taboo topics* exist for you (things that are just easier for ya’ll to not talk about)? Why are they taboo? What’s behind that? How could an agreement to walk into these build intimacy and quality into a marriage?
- What “*family viruses*” have you brought into your marriage from you family? Are there attitudes or habits or ways of communicating (or not communicating) that were an assumption in your parents marriage that aren’t necessarily healthy? Are there habits that run into you from your mom or dad that need to be considered and possibly changed?

3. [Read Proverbs 2:4] – Depending on where they are in their marriage, and how much advice they have sought or observed in other marriages, let your group share about each of these “seasons” of marriage and what might be important within or in preparation for each one.

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| * Courting | * Parents of teenagers |
| * Engaged | * Empty Nesters |
| * Newly wed | * Middle aged |
| * Parents of young children | * Retirement years |

Application: Set up one conversation (with your spouse, or otherwise) with the intent of coming up with one thing you can do to contribute to the progress and quality of your marriage.

End in prayer