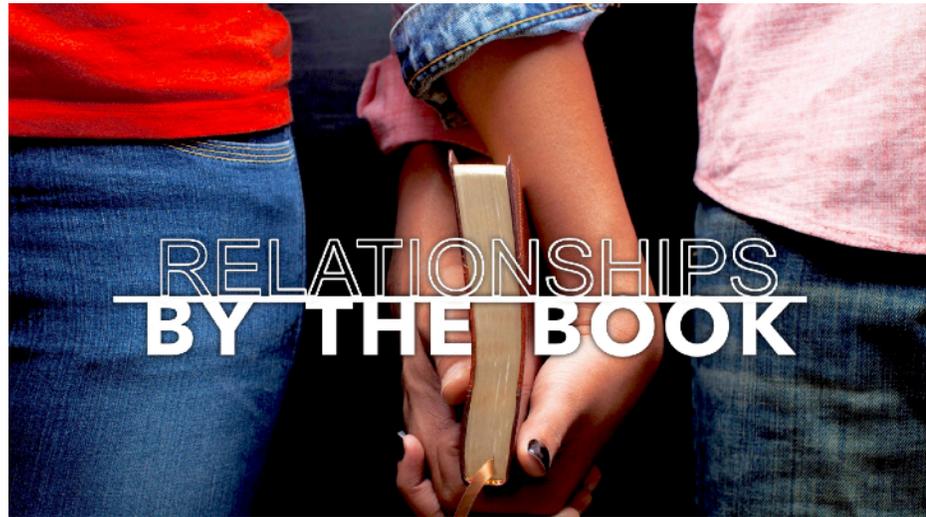


Worth Fight For

Ephesians 4:25-32



Opening Story...

Two Strong-Willed People. Two Sinners saved by Grace. Two completely different personalities. Two opposite musical tastes. What does all of that add up to? One match made in heaven. But that doesn't mean we don't have conflict in our marriage. What it means, is that we have *something worth fighting for.*

Opposites do **attract**. But they also **attack** sometimes too!

Every marriage relationship has its share of fireworks and friction for 2 main reasons:

1) We're all human. We're all sinful - and marriage is one sinner who marries another sinner.

2) Not only are we human, but we have different temperaments as male and female.

Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus!

We sometimes fight as couples. Even Good Christian couples fight.

Diane Sollee from the ***Coalition for Marriage and Family*** noted that, "*What makes the difference is not the absence of conflict, but the ability or inability to manage the conflict.*"

"Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional." Max Lucado

So how do we deal with conflict? How do we work to *attract* one another instead of *attack* each other?

Turn with me to **Ephesians 4:25-32**.

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

In fact, psychologist Steven Stosny says, "*Most marriages end in a whimper, not a bang. The final rupture is not caused by too much anger or abuse. Rather, most marriages die a slow, agonizing death from too little compassion.*"

1) "Be kind and tenderhearted, Think of when you were dating.

Suppose you called that person and told them your dog died. If your date said, "*Well, wippeedoo... just get another one. Call me when you get over it*" - Would you have fallen in love with that person? Chances are, you fell in love with someone who cared about how you felt, especially when you felt bad.

Most of your arguments have nothing to do with what you're fighting about. **We argue over feelings more than facts.** When there's conflict it's because somebody in the relationship feels *unloved* or *disrespected*.

The only problem, is that the ***Ultimate Fighting Champion*** in a marriage is always the loser.

2) ***"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths..."***

Whenever you attack the **person** rather than the **problem**, you're creating a bigger problem. You're using *hurtful*, instead of *helpful* words.

Proverbs 12:18 says, "*There's one who speaks like the piercings of a sword but the tongue of the wise promotes health.*"

Attack the issue not each other. As long as your blaming each other you are not fixing the problem.

You don't have to raise your voice to get your point across. Paul says, '*The tongue of the wise promotes health.*' Have you ever noticed that a wise person never yells? When you lower your voice, people listen.

Proverbs 15:1, "*A Soft answer turns away wrath, and harsh words stir up anger.*"

Be tenderhearted, and speak kind words and see how it *attracts* the other person.

3) ***"Be angry without sinning" (v26)*** This is a commandment.

Unresolved anger is a relationship killer.

James 1:19 - "*My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.*"

Anger is a human emotion. It's not that *anger* is bad. It's how you express it that can lead to sin. Because sin always leads to what? "*Death.*"

The Bible says that '*Sin always results in death*'. Anger puts to death - *joy*. It's the death of *peace*, the death of *friendship*. And it kills *trust*. A lot of good things die from the sin of anger.

Gary Smalley put it this way, "*When we bury anger inside of us, it's always buried alive.*"

If you give Satan a foothold, he will make it a stronghold.

Have you opened a door to the Devil in your marriage? You can shut that door today, by putting away anger and choosing to attract instead of attack the one you love.

4) "Put off falsehood and speak truthfully" (v25).

Honesty and communication is essential in any relationship that is healthy, most especially in a marriage relationship.

People like to say that the conflict is between good and evil. The real conflict is between truth and lies. Don Miguel Ruiz

A healthy relationship needs trust to thrive, and telling the truth is what builds trust. After one person lies to their partner, their partner may forgive them. However, there will always be lingering thoughts and feelings of doubt.

"Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair."

Remember:

"You can't have a relationship without fights.

But you can make your relationship worth the fight."

If you will stop *attacking* and instead, start *attracting* your spouse.