

Built to Last!

The Greatest Risk You'll Ever Take

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 8, 2000

Genesis 3:7-10 “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they **sewed fig leaves** together and made themselves **coverings**. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was **afraid** because I was naked; and I **hid myself**.’”

Sin produced the first ungodly fear. Never before had Adam and Eve hid themselves when God came to walk in the garden. But sin had SEPARATED people from God and from each other... and it produced FEAR... alienation... brokenness.

Because of sin every human being, as a sinner, has a fear of having being exposed! ... being found out. Sin produces fear... and shame... and cover up.

John 3:20 likewise states that "everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

Fear ruins relationships

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

The Message “There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life – fear of death, fear of judgment – is one not yet fully formed in love.”

Isaiah 28:15b “...For we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.”

So how can you open up and love rather than draw back in fear? Well, you really can't do it well... and you can't do it for long without Christ in your life.

Prov. 29:25 “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

I. Your Fears Will Make You Defensive

Prov. 13:10 “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”

There are two common reactions when we're defensive:

a. **We accuse.**

b. **We excuse ourselves.**

I John 1:8 "If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth."

- What are you pretending not to know about your marriage?
- What is the problem in your marriage that you're pretending doesn't exist?
- What are you defensive about?

The tragedy is that a lot of marriages have problems that can be solved relatively quickly but pretending perpetuates problems.

James 4:6-10 "...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you..."

II. Humility in Your Marriage Will Allow You to Ask For Forgiveness

We must face our own sins in order to be freed from them. When you are afraid to admit your sins it makes you defensive... touchy... rigid. Know anyone like that?

Matt. 7:3-5 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye."

I humble myself and confess it. I admit it... first to God and then to my spouse.

James 5:16 "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed..."

"I'm sorry. I sinned against you when I _____. I was wrong. I should have _____. Will you please forgive me?"

To do this you'll have to say **"No" to Pride and Put On Humility**

I Peter 5:5-7, 10 "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand ..."

Romans 12:3, 10-11, 16 "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly... (v.10-11) Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to

one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord... (v.16) Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

Forgiveness is not simply IGNORING something sinful. It is looking the sinful offense squarely in the face and for the sake of LOVE deliberately and purposely releasing the offender from his obligation to suffer the penalty and make restitution. The forgiveness that we extend to the offender is not based then on anything they do or do not do. It's our choice for the sake of Christ and His commands to obey and forgive.

When you forgive someone or when you ask for forgiveness you are saying THREE THINGS:

1. I will not bring this up to OTHER PEOPLE ever again
2. I will not bring this up to YOU again in the future
3. I will not DWELL on it MYSELF any more

III. Christ in Your Marriage Will Enable You to Forgive Others

Make sure that you have experienced Christ's forgiveness in your own life. Experiencing Christ's forgiveness gives us the grace to forgive others.

Eph. 4:32 “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.”

Col. 3:12-13 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even **as Christ forgave you**, so you also **must do**.”

Knowing that Christ forgives and loves YOU PERSONALLY is the experience of grace you need to genuinely and deeply forgive others.

I John 4:7-8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been BORN OF GOD and KNOWS God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Your own fear will create A CRITICAL SPIRIT and NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS will dominate your relationships. In general, you will have very little patience with the weaknesses of others, especially those closest to you.

- Are you really certain Christ died for you? Has the truth gripped your heart that you have peace with God now? That He has pardoned you from all guilt of your sin and ACCEPTED you in the Beloved?



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MARRIAGE HOMEWORK

If you are married, I want you to plan a quiet dinner alone this week with just your mate. In preparation for this meeting each of you should individually write out your answers to the questions below. After dinner, set aside time to discuss your answers. Be ready to come together to talk about it, not to beat each other up, or to fix blame but grow your marriage for God's glory. Come together in a spirit of reconciliation and teamwork of "Let's make this thing work!" Out of obedience to God tell the truth but don't exaggerate (Eph. 4:15).

1. In specific terms, what do you expect out of marriage?
2. In specific terms, list 10 things you have done to make your marriage a success.
3. In specific terms, list 10 ways you have been at fault in your marriage.
4. In specific terms, list 10 ways you may change to make your marriage a better marriage.
5. In specific terms, write out what you would ask Jesus Christ to change about your marriage if you were assured He would work a miracle and do it.
6. Honestly evaluate the changes you would like to see in your mate. Are they really important? Do you have biblical grounds for desiring these changes? Are they for the good of your mate or just because you want them? Are you really concerned about your mate or just having your own way and making it easy on yourself?
7. Consider Philippians 2:3, 4 and Ephesians 4:1-3 and write out 10 specific ways in which you may demonstrate to your mate that you think he/she is really important and that you are sincerely interested in the things that interest him/her.

