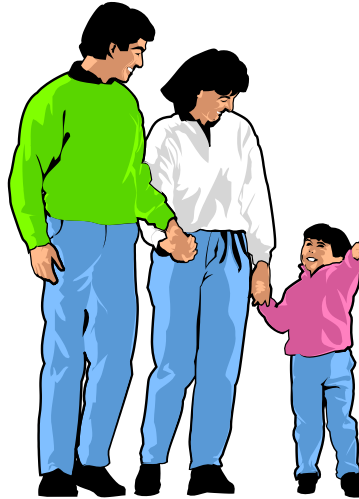


GOD'S WISDOM FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOME

Enriching Values & Strengthening Relationships



Presented by Brent Hunter

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Brent Hunter served as an Associate Professor of Communications and Marriage and Family at Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida from 1978-1997, and from 1997 until October 2004 served as the college's Director of Development. Brent worked for twenty-one years as the evangelist for the North Street church in Tampa, did four years of evangelistic work for the Oldham Woods congregation in La Grange, Kentucky, labored three years for the Johnson Ave congregation in El Cajon, CA, and has been working full time for the Kirkland church of Christ since September 2013. Brent combines a high level of training as a minister, counselor, and teacher. Since the early nineties, he has directed his efforts on marriage and family enrichment with a focus towards *preventing problems*. He believes that couples who commit themselves to God and to each other, and who are willing to learn to better communicate their love, can experience the fulfillment and intimacy that God intended. Successful parenting is also based upon an understanding and proper application of Biblical concepts. Brent also holds meetings on the following topics: Personal Evangelism 101, True Spirituality, Restoring the Spirit of New Testament Christianity, The Life of Christ, and Glory Days—studies from the book of Joshua. Brent has two children, Amy and Allison, and six grandchildren and has been happily married to his wife Gail since 1978.

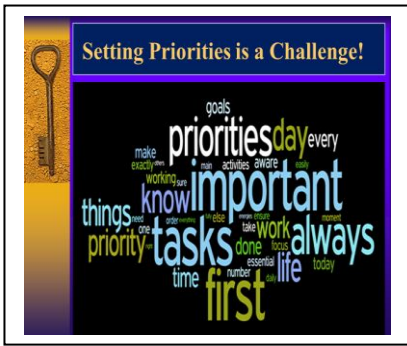
October 15-17 • Friday - Sunday

Tyngsboro church of Christ

27 Old Tyng Road
Tyngsboro, Massachusetts 01879 USA

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Setting Priorities

Finding Balance in Life

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Sunday Morning Oct 15, 2021
Scripture reading: Phil 1:14-18

Speaker: Brent Hunter
Time: 7:00 p.m.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION:

- A. To change one's life, one must change one's p_____.
- B. We are all "Christian juggler's" with lots of responsibilities.

I. THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITY IS GOD AND THE KINGDOM.

- A. Commitment to His Word (Jn 6:35, Lk 4:4).
- B. Commitment to prayer (I Thess 5:17).
- C. Commitment to our e_____ and physical health (I Tim 4:8).

II. IF MARRIED, TIME WITH ONE'S PARTNER COMES NEXT.

- A. There is a real danger of growing apart once the children arrive.
- B. Be careful not to be "too much mother and not enough w_____."

III. ONCE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN COME, THEY ARE NEXT.

- A. "A child left to himself will grow up to bring shame to his mother" (Prov 29:15).
- B. The older women are to teach the younger how to love their husbands and their c_____." (Titus 2:4-5).

IV. IF ONE IS THE BREADWINNER, TIME MUST BE SPENT HERE.

- A. "He that is diligent in his b_____ will stand before kings" (Prov 22:29).
- B. "Work heartily as unto the L_____." (Col 3:23).

V. MINISTRY TO OTHERS—BEING A GOOD PUBLIC SERVANT IS #5.

- A. Jesus set the pace and instructed us to follow His example.
- B. "Do good unto *all men*, especially those of the household of faith" (Gal 6:10).

Are you keeping your priorities straight?

SCRAMBLED ANSWERS:

Lord
emotional
business
priorities
wife
children

SETTING PRIORITIES AND LIVING THE BALANCED LIFE

INTRODUCTION

- A Regardless of how long you have been a Christian, I believe achieving proper balance is the most difficult on-going challenge. G. K. Chesterton was right when he said: “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it’s been found difficult and therefore rarely tried.”
- B Jesus dealt with this question of “conflicting loyalties” in Lk. 20:22-26.
1. He made it clear it was not an “either/or” proposition, but one that fits together like a series of concentric circles. (Rm. 13:7)
 2. Ideally, God is the outer circle and everything else is in concert with His will. When this happens, our lives are in harmony.
- B. How is one to allot their time? When is “enough enough” in one area, because now it is time to move on to something else that is also important that demands my attention?
1. In reality we are all *Christian jugglers*, trying to balance all of these different responsibilities and obligations. Most of us are stressed with too many balls up in the air.
 2. We need to make sure that God and our families are in their proper place.
 3. We need to recognize that everything we do has an “opportunity cost.” Because we choose to do one thing, that automatically eliminates the opportunity to do everything else we might have done with that time.
 4. The tough choices are between “good, better, and best” and not just “bad and good.”
- C. As we struggle with priorities we often have to fight against the pressure of “the tyranny of the trivial” that erodes away at our time and energies.
1. We need to make sure we do not neglect the essential things (like prayer, Bible study and loving our spouse) because we are so busy doing the important things (paying our bills, cleaning the house, being a responsible employee, etc).
 2. Imagine you suddenly find out that in 15 minutes, a nuclear missile will land and kill you and everything within a 150 mile radius. What would your first thought be?
 - a) Oh no, I forgot to edge the grass or pay my bills? Hardly.
 - b) You’ll be concerned about family, brethren, loved ones and if you have any sense at all, your own soul and whether or not you are ready to meet your maker.
 3. Crisis tends to help us put things into focus as to what really matters. My plea is this: **DON’T WAIT FOR A CRISIS, OR UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE to put first things first!**
- D. We must establish some basic priorities that will serve as a framework to aid in our struggle and help us not to “major in minors – or minor in majors.”
1. “The main thing is to make sure that the main thing is the main thing!”
 2. Peter Drucker: “The key is not doing things right, but making sure you are doing the right things!”
 3. Steven Covey: “We need to make sure we do not spend our lives climbing the ladder of success only to wake up one day and find we are leaning against the wrong wall.”

THESIS: EXAMINE THE FIVE BASIC PRIORITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

- A. Remember the five P's: We must be the best Person, Partner, Parent, Provider, Public Servant. Put this up on your mirror and do a "priority check regularly."
- B. Being a priority does not necessarily mean you spend more time proportionally on one than the other. (You may spend eight hours sleeping and one hour eating, but that does not mean one is eight times more important than the other.)

I. PUTTING GOD AND THE KINGDOM FIRST (PERSON) (MT. 6:33)

- A. Need to spend time in the word regularly. (Jn. 6:35) Are we as diligent to feed our soul as our physical bodies? See Lk. 4:4, Deut. 8:3.
- B. Prayer must be a priority. True communing with God. (I Thess. 5:13)
 - 1. There is a difference between saying prayers and praying. One is throwing up phrases to a stranger and the other is talking to a beneficent father and friend.
 - 2. I believe prayer, our most powerful tool for wisdom and perfection, is miserably neglected and pitifully underdeveloped.
 - 3. If we are not willing to give God fifteen minutes a day regularly, 1/96 of a 24-hour period, we are not serious about the Lordship of Jesus.
- C. Time for our own emotional and physical health. (I Tim. 4:8)
 - 1. If we are physical and emotional wrecks we are not able to serve others.
 - 2. Our bodies are Holy Temples. We need to practice good "temple maintenance."
 - 3. We need to be good stewards of our mental capacities as well. (Matt. 25)
 - 4. "What we are at birth is God's gift to us. What we make of ourselves throughout life (the kind of person we are at death) is our gift back to God."

II. TIME WITH OUR SPOUSE (PARTNER)

- A. This the relationship out of which a healthy, growing relationship with our children grows. There is a real danger in focusing on the children and neglecting the marriage.
 - 1. Studies show: "The U-shaped curve of marital happiness." Typically the satisfaction with the marriage is high at the beginning, drops as the children come, and then begins to return once they stop demanding so much time and energy.
 - 2. A common trap of well-meaning committed women is to be *too much mother and not enough wife*. Make a conscious effort not to over-invest in the children and under-invest in the marriage!
 - 3. I love the poster of the little girl praying: "Dear God, please help Daddy and Mommy to love each other."
- B. The husband and wife have a responsibility to each other (Eph. 5) and that needs to be first priority over the children.

III. TIME WITH CHILDREN (PARENT)

- A. How tragic that our time and priorities sometimes hardly reflect that we have children. (Prov. 1:8-9)
 - 1. The battle cry today is: "You can have it all!" A lucrative successful career and a passionate marriage and close, respectful children. My answer to that is: You may be able to have it all, but not at the same time. While children are under your care you have to

make choices. This applies to the Dad too. (Titus 2:4-5)

2. I heard of a well-known gospel preacher who canceled an evangelistic tour. People were shocked. His answer: "I have a teenage son that needed me. I share the responsibility for evangelizing the world with a great many people, but I am the only one that has the responsibility to be a father to that boy."
- B. We need to keep our priorities straight and cancel whatever needs to be canceled in order to spend time with our precious children while they are young.

IV. TIME WITH OUR VOCATION (PROVIDER)

- A. It is important to be responsible here. (I Tim. 5:8)
1. Too often we allow this to take precedent over being a Christian Person, Partner, and Parent.
 - a) I fear sometimes we allow our jobs to dictate whether we worship God or not.
 - b) In the Old Testament, if you missed the appointed day of worship (the Sabbath) for working, it was a capital crime. We need to take Sunday and our responsibility to worship God on His day more seriously than we sometimes do.
- B. We have wonderful opportunities to minister to others at work. We need to do a good job (Eccl. 9:10) so we can be a good example of a Christian and use that as a springboard to reach others.

V. MINISTRY TO OTHERS (PUBLIC SERVANT)

- A. Do you want to do something for Jesus? Do for others! (Mt. 25:40; Jn. 13)
- B. We are to love and serve others, but first we are to help God's family. (Gal. 6:10)
- C. Obviously, we need to make it a priority to teach others the gospel. (Mk. 16:16)

CONCLUSION:

- A. The key is to remain balanced and not allow ourselves to become "a freak."
1. Yes we need to study and pray, but on the other hand, there comes a time when we need to get off our knees, and our nose out of the book, and get busy about our Father's business.
 2. On the other hand, one can spend so much time ministering to others that we neglect our own personal growth and study. Either extreme is wrong.
- B. This issue demands constant reassessment.
- C. Wallace Hamilton tells the story of his son playing with an old phonograph and he and another boy punching a hole several inches off center and it creating a terrible sound (great dissonance). He motioned for them to stop. They put it back on center, put the needle down and it produced beautiful harmonious music.
1. Likewise, if our lives are not centered properly, our lives meet with the same difficulty. A life not centered on God will be filled with disharmony.
 2. When our heart and life are centered on God, then we produce beautiful, harmonious music!
- D. We must put God and the family in its proper place and make sure it has proper priority. If that is not right, that must become your number one priority.
- E. I suggest in order to remind each other that your parting admonition become not "take it easy" or "don't work too hard" – but "keep your priorities straight!"

WORK SHEET ON PRIORITIES

How can I achieve proper balance?
Where does my marriage fit in with everything else in my life?

Place the following five areas (A-E) in what you believe to be their proper order of importance (1-5). Be able to explain and defend your answer with scripture.

- _____ A. Job, profession, making a living
- _____ B. Children (parenting)
- _____ C. Personal Relationship with God
- _____ D. My Spouse (Marriage)
- _____ E. Ministry to others (Teaching and Service)

THINK OF THE 5 P'S:

I must first be the best P _____ I can be, then the best P _____, then the best P _____, then the best P _____, then P _____.

Consider placing the "5-P's" on a card on your mirror as a constant reminder.

How might our marriage (spouse) actually become too important? Is that possible?

Consider I Tim 2: 11-15 and try to consider this passage as you answer. Come up with at least two Biblical examples and one modern day example of how a love/marriage relationship proved to be out of balance and actually a form of idolatry.

A. Two Bible Examples:

a. _____

b. _____

B. Modern Day Example:

What are the most likely areas in the top five priorities that can cause a marriage to suffer because it is not given proper priority? Discuss some of pitfalls that are especially common among well-meaning and devote men and women?

- A. What is a common problem among godly mothers?
- B. What is a common problem among ambitious men?
- C. What is a common problem/challenge for preachers?
- D. How can the above missed priorities be avoided?

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see as the greatest cause of regret in later life?
2. What do you think your spouse would say if asked: "Aside from God, where do I fit in your list of priorities?"
3. Given the importance of priorities, what problems naturally arise if married to a non-Christian or an un-committed one?
- 4.

CHALLENGE: Make a habit to make one of your common parting admonitions: "See you later, remember to keep your priorities straight!" (Heb 10:24)



Rx for the B.E.S.T. Marriage

God's medicine for marital enrichment

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Friday night Oct 15, 2021
Scripture reading: Rm 12:14-19, I Cor 8:1b

Speaker: Brent Hunter
Time: 7:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTION:

- A. 75% of long-term married couples say they are in a r_____.
prescription to keep that "loving feeling."
A **B.E.S.T.** marriage is on that involves blessing, edification,
sharing, and lots of touching!

I. A GREAT MARRIAGE BEGINS WITH MUTUAL BLESSING.

- A. Blessings = Speaking well to or about each other.
B. "Bless those who c_____ you" (Luke 6:28-29).

II. THE BEST MARRIAGES FOCUS ON EDIFICATION.

- A. Edification = To **b**_____ up (I Cor 8:1b).
B. Root word = "A hearth, or fireplace."
C. "Eagerly pursue what makes for harmony and the e_____ of one another." (Rm 14:19).
D. "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" (I Thess 5:11).

III. THE BEST MARRIAGES FOCUS ON SHARING!

- A. It is a willingness to blend your **w**_____ with him or hers.
B. Both must **c**_____ from the heart.
C. The families that **p**_____ together, stay together.
D. "Let there be spaces in your togetherness."

IV. THE BEST MARRIAGES ALLOCATE TIME FOR TOUCHING.

- A. "The children were brought to Jesus that he might lay His hands on them and pray" (Matt 19:13).
B. "Jesus put forth His hand and **t**_____ (the leper)" (Matt 8:2-3).
C. "Be kindly **a**_____ on to the other" (Rm 12:10).
D. Regular touching provides a good emotional climate of warmth, love and affection."
E. The sexual need is important, but a healthy marriage consists of lots of *non-sexual touching*.

CONCLUSION:

Follow the **B.E.S.T.** formula. It is God's will and it **w**_____!

NOTES

SCRAMBLED ANSWERS:

edification pray
curse touched
affectionate build up
rut works
will
communicate

PRESCRIPTION FOR THE B.E.S.T. MARRIAGE

Presented by Brent Hunter

Intro.

- A. A recent poll found that 62% of married couples reported their marriages less than desirable. Seventy five percent reported they thought their marriage was in a rut.
- B. It appears that the Righteous Brothers song “You’ve Lost That Loving Feeling” has unfortunately, become the theme song for too many marriages.
- C. What is the prescription necessary to cure the ailments that plague so many marriages? I believe it is simple and four fold in nature. **If you want the B.E.S.T. marriage each of these important medicines must be applied:**

1. Blessing
2. Edifying
3. Sharing
4. Touching

Ingredient #1: BLESSING.

- A. Blessing (Gk. Eulogia) is actually a combination of two Greek words:
1. Eu = well and Logos = word.
 2. Literally means **“speaking well to or about another.”**
- B. Jesus modeled this for us.
1. “When He was reviled, He did not revile in return” (I Peter 2:23) but instead prayed that the Father would bless and forgive them!
 2. He commanded: **“Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you”** (Lk 6:28-29).
- C. The Apostles modeled this for us. **“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed; we entreat”** (I Cor 4:12-13). See also Rm 12:17.
- D. Marriage is to be a blessing. The Key is: **Bless and be a Blessing!**
1. The worthy woman will “open her mouth with wisdom and the law of kindness is on her tongue” (Prov 31:27) even when she is upset with her husband or feels provoked.
 2. The Godly man will have the same attitude. “What is desirable in a man is his kindness” (Prov 19:22).
 3. Important principle: **Respond to a curse with a blessing** (Rm 12:14)! Must not “bless our Lord and Father, and with the same tongue curse men” (See James 3:9-11).
- D. How can we and do we most effectively bless others?
1. By the words we speak (Prov. 25:11).
 2. By learning when to be silent (Prov 11:12-13).
- E. Three ways to bless:
1. By being kind, not as a duty but as a “gift of blessing.”
 2. By expressing appreciation. Notice the good and express verbally your thankfulness.
 3. By calling God’s favor upon him/her in prayer. How much do you pray for and with your partner?
- F. Summary: Bless your marriage through good words, kind actions, thankful appreciation, and intercessory prayer. A good place to begin is with Num 6:24-27, the priestly benediction.

II. Ingredient #2: EDIFICATION

- A. Literally = “To build up.” Be each others cheerleader!
- B. Elizabeth Barrett Browning spoke to this in her love poem, “Let Me Count The Ways.”
 - 1. She said the more she loved, the bigger person she became.
 - 2. “Make my love larger to enlarge my worth.” This is the beauty of edification, it enlarges our hearts!
- C. Root word for edification: “A hearth or fireplace.”
 - 1. To the ancients the hearth was the center of activity in the home and brought forth warmth and light, togetherness and physical sustenance.
 - 2. What the hearth was to the physical body, the marriage relationship should be for the soul!
- D. Three golden strands of edification which are interwoven together:
 - 1. Personal encouragement
 - 2. Inner strength
 - 3. Peace and harmony (I Peter 3:9-12).
- E. Bible is filled with admonitions concerning edifying one another:
 - 1. “Eagerly pursue what makes for harmony and the edification of one another” (Rm 14:19).
 - 2. “Make it a practice to please your neighbor for his good, to edify and strengthen him” (Rm 15:2).
 - 3. “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up” (I Thess 5:11).
 - 4. “Love builds up (edifies)” (I Cor 8:1)!
- F. How does the husband edify?
 - 1. Husbands should nourish emotionally by giving sincere praise. He should “nourish and cherish” his wife (Eph 5).
 - 2. Be genuine. Provide specific and generous compliments.
 - 3. Practice the Phil 4:8 process with your wife.
 - 4. Before you speak? Will this build up? Encourage? Make for peace?
- G. How does the wife edify?
 - 1. By being responsive, especially with her eyes and smile.
 - 2. Showing respect (Eph 5:33). She is the beneficiary when she does this well and enhances his sense of manhood.

III. Ingredient #3: SHARING

- A. In order to have unity, oneness, and intimacy in marriage as outlined in Gen 2:24-25 one must learn to share!
 - 1. Sharing involves a willingness to blend your will with the will of your mate.
 - 2. True love is not so much looking into each other’s eyes as much as learning to look in the same direction! So look for mutual goals!
- D. “An intimate long term marriage is not the involuntary result of fleeting emotion but the creation of time and will.” Dr. WH Auden.
 - 1. Intimacy begins when two people deliberately share the same world, time, interests, activities, feelings, thoughts, goals, ideals.
 - 2. “Both must communicate experiences, dreams, fears, and secrets.” Dr. Ed Wheat.
- E. When was the last time as a couple you shared a laugh and really had fun? Went on a date? Prayed together?
- F. Good marriages maintain some individuality. Allow “spaces in your togetherness,” but at the same time truly share your lives together!

1. What must be avoided at all cost is separation.
2. “Two ships passing in the night” is a recipe for disaster.
3. Sharing involves these four areas:
 - a. **Common ground** – things you share now.
 - b. **Separate ground** – separate interests. Can you bridge this gap?
 - c. **New ground for one** – can one party develop enthusiasm for their partner’s interest?
 - d. **New ground for both** – what new absorbing interests can you both develop together as you grow. Be creative!

IV. Ingredient #4: TOUCHING.

- A. The importance of the caring touch of another human being is often ignored.
- B. Biblical examples of touching:
 1. Jesus laid his hands on the children that came to Him (Matt 19: 13-15).
 2. Jesus “put forth His hand and touched” a leper (Matt 8:2-3)!
 3. Brethren are to be “kindly affectionate one to the other” (Rm 12:10).
- C. Benefits of touching:
 1. Learning to touch each other joyfully in non-sexual ways is absolutely essential to build emotional intimacy.
 2. Touching a woman affectionately kindles a flame in her heart and establishes a good emotional climate of warmth and love in the home.”
 3. A tender touch says: “I care.”
 4. A UCLA study found touch blesses us by:
 - a. Raising the hemoglobin in our blood and thereby increasing the body’s ability to heal.
 - b. Lowering blood pressure
 - c. Increasing our life span and energy level.
 - d. Making people more positive about life!
 5. Most couples need eight to ten meaningful touches a day.
 6. Are you providing and receiving the touch you both need in your marriage?

Conclusion:

- A. Put these four ingredients into your marriage and you will find your marriage will not fall into a rut but will thrive and fulfill your heart’s desire!
- B. The key is to follow God’s prescription and trust the great physician through out the process.

Some People Just Can't Take Criticism!

How to Give and Receive Criticism

Is Criticism a Bane or Blessing?

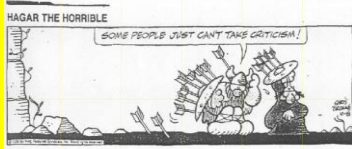
INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Saturday afternoon Oct 16, 2021

Scripture reading: Rom 15:14

Speaker: Brent Hunter

Time: 3:00 p.m.



INTRODUCTION:

- A. Does criticism have to be a bane? It can be a **b**_____.
a_____ one another (Rm 15:14).

I. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- A. He that harkens unto counsel is wise (Prov.12:15).
B. "Speak the truth in **l**_____ (Eph 4:15).
C. The problem is not criticism but destructive criticism!

II. HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVELY.

- A. Consider the feelings of the other person. Ask **p**_____
B. Don't give an overdose (Prov 17:9)!
1. Overdosing kills the motivation to change.
2. **Suggestion:** Limit yourself to only one criticism a week.
C. Go on a 24-hour criticism **f**_____
D. **Ask for it** periodically.
E. Always couple criticism with sincere **c**_____.

III. HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVELY.

- A. Let your first words be "thank you" (I Thess 5:18).
B. Always ask: What can I **l**_____? & take positive action!

IV. WHAT ABOUT THINGS THAT WON'T CHANGE?

- A. Remember: "Love covers a multitude of sins" (I Pet 4:8).
B. Say the *serenity prayer*.

CONCLUSION:

- A. It is to his glory to pass over a sin and seeks love (Prov 18:11).
B. Criticism can be a *blessing and not a bane!*

NOTES:

SCRAMBLED ANSWERS:

fast
love
permission
learn
blessing
admonish
compliments

HOW TO GIVE AND RECEIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Introduction

- A. "First behold the beam in *your* eye..." Matt 7:1-5
- B. However, one is not to deal with oneself alone.
 - 1. "Faithful are the *wounds* of a friend." Prov 27:6
 - 2. "*Admonish* one another." Rom 15:14
 - 3. "*Silence may be golden but sometimes it is just plain yellow!*"
 - 4. The old adage, "If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all," is not true. Sometimes it takes courage to warn or to instruct a person so s/he is built up spiritually. It may be what is sorely needed.

I. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Prov 12:1 "He that *hates reproof* is **stupid!**"
- B. Prov 12:15 "He that *hearketh unto counsel* is wise."
- C. Prov 3:11 "Don't *refuse criticism.*"
- D. Prov 13:18 "If you refuse criticism, you will end in *disgrace.*"
- E. Prov 25:12 "He wears a badge of honor who *accepts reproof.*"
- F. Eph 4:15 "Speak the *truth in love.*"

**ALL OF US ARE IMPERFECT & NEED HELP!
THIS IS TRUE OF EVERY RELATIONSHIP.**
We all have room to grow!

- 1. Husbands & wives, parents & children, etc. need help from one another. We tend to shun it, but we need it!
- 2. Have you ever tried to proofread your own work?
- 3. We all need help from others who periodically shed light on our blind spots.
Prov 16:2 *Self-deception* is the worst kind.

The problem is not criticism--but ***destructive*** criticism. Too often we don't know how to do it right so we avoid it all together.

WE MUST BUILD UP & NOT TEAR DOWN!

II. HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVELY

- A. Choose your setting carefully -- timing is everything!

1. Do so after a meal and not when you're hungry.
Ex. Esther gave two banquets *before* she approached the king.
Afterwards, she got what she desired.
2. Criticize in **private** -- praise in **public**!
3. Consider the *feelings* of the other person.
 - a. How do you find out when it is okay?
 - b. *Ask!* "Honey, do you mind me sharing a constructive suggestion with you tonight?" S/he will either say "yes" or "no." If "no", usually curiosity will cause your spouse to ask about it later. Then s/he will be mentally prepared and less defensive. Doesn't that make sense?
4. Most people want to be helped and desire honesty in the relationship if they are just approached in the right way.
5. However, "*A man convinced of his will is of the same opinion still!*"

**DON'T SHARE UNTIL YOU ARE
SURE THE OTHER PARTY IS *EMOTIONALLY* READY ...**

B. Don't give an overdose!

1. One common failure is to pour it on! ("...And another thing, and another thing, etc.")
2. Hagar the Horrible gets permission and then says, "Better sit down and get comfortable."
3. Most don't realize how critical they have become...*LISTEN* to yourself. (Prov 17:9)

WARNING:

OVERDOSING KILLS THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE!

SUGGESTION:

ONLY ONE CRITICISM A WEEK!!!

(That ought to be enough --- that's 52 a year!)

GO ON A 24-HOUR CRITICISM FAST!

(See attached handout)

4. Here is a challenge: Make it easy! **Ask for it** periodically.

C. Couple criticism with compliments

1. Notice the ratio: 3 compliments to 1 criticism (John's example in Rev 2:1-4)
2. "*The bitter pill of criticism can be swallowed much easier if first sugar-coated with the medicine of sincere praise.*"
3. Mary Poppins says: "*Just a spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down!*"

III. HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM *CONSTRUCTIVELY*

- A. Recognize the hand of GOD! Rom 8:28 (GOD wants to use this for my good.)
- B. Let your first words be "**Thank you!**" I Thess 5:18 "*In everything give thanks.*"
Three reasons:
 - 1. He said it to your face -- not behind your back.
 - 2. If it is true, you need to change and now you can grow.
 - 3. If it is false, it gives you opportunity to correct the misunderstanding.
- C. **Always ask:**

What can I learn from criticism?

Not all are valid. But we can still learn something from all kinds of criticism.

- 1. Then **take action** if possible. You can't do what everyone says!
Ex. My daughter wanted me to triple her allowance--not a good idea.
- 2. Work with the reasonable requests for small things as much as possible.
- D. Never give the same criticism two weeks in a row. Give the other party at least a month before you bring up the same thing again.

IV. WHAT ABOUT THE THINGS THAT WON'T CHANGE?

- A. "Love *covers* a multitude of sins." I Peter 4:8

LOVE ACCEPTS MANY IMPERFECTIONS!

Some things you will need to **accept**...

- 1. Otherwise, anger turns inward and becomes *bitterness and depression*.
- 2. Say the **Serenity Prayer!**

*"God grant me the serenity to **accept** the things I cannot change, the **courage** to change the things I can, and the **wisdom** to know the difference!"*

- 3. "*It is to His glory to pass over a transgression and seek love.*" Prov 18:11

THE CONCLUSION:

**Don't mind criticism...If it is not true, disregard it.
If it is unfair, keep from irritation.If it is ignorant, smile.
If it is justified, learn from it!**

TAKE THE "CRITICISM PLEDGE" & TRY A UNIQUE FAST

We live in a negative world! We are all bombarded with criticism constantly. **Why not allow your home to be a refuge from criticism?** Think of your mate as a haven, a peaceful retreat, the ever-quiet eye of the hurricane.

Research has found that the **significant decreasing of criticism and negative comments** from our family relationships is **even more important** than learning to express love positively. Small wonder Paul stresses we are to **dwell on the positive!** "*Whatsoever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, dwell on these things*" Phil 4:8. One of the reasons this is so important is that it takes a great many positive strokes to make up for even one critical comment. So, **keep criticisms to a minimum and express them only if you feel it is really necessary.** "*Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath*" Jas 1:19.

Try promising your mate you will *never say a critical word* about him or her, make him\her *the brunt of jokes, nor in any way speak unkindly* of the other or *betray your relationship, and ask your partner to do the same!*

Think about it... What confidence it gives a woman to know that when other men are making fun of their wives or complaining about their weaknesses like their cooking, homemaking, lovemaking, shortcomings, and faults, **her name is safe.** And likewise, when women get together and begin to belittle their husbands, what security it gives a man to know that **his name will not be mentioned.** Oh, it is not because there are no faults; faults are self-evident. **It isn't because it wouldn't be justified.** Speaking no ill of each other is simply...

BECAUSE OF YOUR LOYALTY TO ONE ANOTHER!

**HOW DOES ONE OVERCOME BEING A CRITICAL PERSON?
TAKE A 24-HOUR CRITICISM FAST!**

Start by stopping! **For a period of 24 hours, refrain from criticizing yourself, the government, the food, your boss and/or co-workers, your spouse, your surroundings --- come to a complete halt for twenty-four hours!!** Watch out for back-seat driving and comments on other drivers. Phone calls are dangerous. Especially watch out when you are hungry or under any kind of time pressure! **You cannot criticize anyone for any reason unless human life is in danger. Another exception would be if you hear or see another**

person who has agreed to take the fast but is criticizing without realizing it. You may, in this case, point out kindly to him/her that s/he has done so and needs to start over, without being critical yourself for having pointed it out!

This is not as easy as it sounds. The majority of people do not succeed in their first attempt. Do not be discouraged. If you find yourself being critical, make a note of the time and **start your "fast" over again until you have gone for 24 hours** (including the time you are asleep) **without being critical at all!**

BE CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT WHAT I CALL, "Criticism of the Heart." If a critical thought enters your mind and you get rid of the thought in a moment, then it does not count and you do not have to start your 24 hours over. If, on the other hand, **you let that critical thought stay in your mind and you develop it** into a full production with quadrasonic sound and vista vision, then you must start over again.

Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't succeed in this assignment right away. This is a difficult assignment!

WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?

These are the positive objectives that I hope you will experience while doing this:

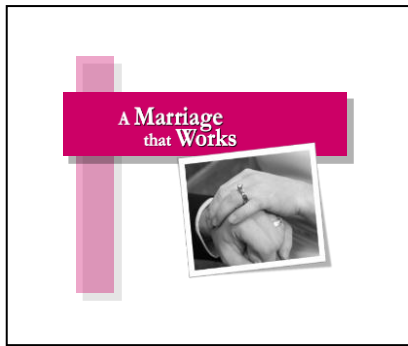
1. It will increase **your awareness** of the critical nature of our **society**.
2. It will help you to **become aware** of your **own compulsion to criticize**.
3. It will enable you to experience the **power of self-mastery**.

The answer to the question *"Why should I try to stop criticizing?"* is simply...*"So that you can lay a foundation for love and acceptance in your home instead of rejection."*

Take the pledge of **verbal loyalty to the relationship** to demonstrate your commitment to it! As a token of your willingness, stop criticizing. **Commitment and willingness are two keys to loving, lasting, emotionally-close marriages.**

I challenge newlyweds and couples who desire to enrich their marriages and to experience emotional 'remarriage' to **take the following pledge:** *"I promise, as your mate, that I will never speak ill of you to friend, family, or stranger. I will not embarrass or belittle you in front of others, nor will I be critical of you in your absence. I will not discuss our personal problems with anyone without your permission. This is my pledge to you."*

NOW LIVE IT !!!!!



A Marriage that Works (Part 1)

Keeping Love and Passion Alive

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Saturday afternoon: Part two
Scripture Reading: I Cor 13:4-8

October 16th, 2021
Speaker: Brent Hunter

Intro:

- A. The key to a successful marriage is for both parties to learn to care and protect each other in practical ways.
 1. The caring involves *meeting each other's n_____*.
 2. The protecting involves avoiding *behaviors that hurt/offend*.
- B. The handout entitled "Key concepts that make a marriage work" explains this in detail. Today, I introduce some basic principles.

I. WHAT IS LOVE, AND WHAT IS THE LOVE BANK?

- A. Love is not a **f_____**, but an act of the will and how we treat another.
 1. I Cor 13:4-8 is the Divine definition of love, and it equals 8 verbs.
 2. How you feel is determined by the love **b_____**.
- B. If there are positive exchanges it equals deposits of love units, and if there are negative exchanges it equals **w_____**.
 1. When the love bank is **full** you have **romantic love**.
 2. When the love bank is **empty** there is **no feeling**.
 3. When it is overdrawn, there is **anger and bitterness**.

II. WHAT IS THE ROMANTIC MYTH?

- A. Once you possess romantic love you can never lose it, and once you lose it, it can never be regained.
- B. This is untrue and unbiblical. It can be **r_____**! There is **HOPE**.
 1. "All things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27).
 2. Our God specializes in the resurrection of the dead, including resurrecting a love that is dead. *Romantic love can be reborn!*

III. HAPPY COUPLES LEARN TO DEVELOP THE RIGHT HABITS.

- A. We must "discipline ourselves unto godliness" (I Tim 4:7).
- B. "Make level the paths of thy feet and let all thy ways be established" (Prov 4:26).
- C. Focus on avoiding **h_____** that make withdrawals and practicing those that please the other person. This requires good communication!

Conclusion:

- A. They key is to first avoid the love busters because they are what produce walls of resentment.
- B. We will discuss love busters and what they are in Part two.

NOTES:

ANSWERS:

needs
habits
feeling
bank
withdrawals
reborn



A Marriage that Works (Part 2)

Overcoming Love Busters

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Sunday Morning: Worship Period

Scripture Reading: I Cor 13:4-8

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Speaker: Brent Hunter

Intro:

A. We established last week the principle of the **LOVE BANK**.

B. Today we will look at overcoming **Love Busters**.

I. WHAT IS A LOVE BUSTER?

A. It is a marital **h**_____ that offends and creates walls of *resentment* which creates *emotional distance*.

B. It is repeated behavior that causes the spouse to be unhappy and therefore **w**_____ love units.

II. THE SIX TYPICAL LOVE BUSTERS.

A. **A**_____ outbursts.

1. Harshness creates disrespect.

2. "He that is quick-tempered acts foolishly" (Prov 14:17).

B. **D**_____ judgments.

1. We are to judge righteous judgments (Jn 7:24).

2. Must avoid impugning motives/forcing opinions.

C. *Annoying behaviors* which irritate the other party.

D. *Selfish demands* which choke out love.

E. *Dishonesty*, which breaks down trust (Col 3:9-10).

F. **I**_____ behavior.

III. SOLUTIONS:

A. Identify the "why" and work to avoid "triggers."

B. Develop alternative behaviors. **Pray!**

Conclusion:

A. Restore an atmosphere of trust and keep walls down.

B. You can then become free to meet each other's needs.

NOTES:

ANSWERS:

Independent
Disrespectful
Angry
habit
withdraws

A Marriage that Works (Part 3)

Meeting Each Other's Needs

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Sunday worship: Part two
Scripture Reading: I Cor 13:4-8

October 17th, 2021
Speaker: Brent Hunter

Intro:

- A. In part two we established the principle of the *love busters*.
- B. In part three, we look at **making deposits and meeting needs**.
 - 1. Both need to practice the g_____ rule on a deep level.
 - 2. Remember: Needs are *gender specific*.

I. FIVE TYPICAL NEEDS OF A WOMAN.

- A. **Affection** (Rom 12:10). Not the same as sex.
- B. **Conversation** (Eph 4:29). Be quick to l_____ (Jas 1:19).
- C. **Financial support** (I Tim 5:18).
- D. **Family commitment** (Eph 6:4). H_____ = "house band."
- E. **Honesty and openness** (Prov 12:19).

II. FIVE TYPICAL NEEDS OF A MAN.

- A. **Admiration and respect** (Eph 5:33).
- B. **Sexual commitment** (I Cor 7:5).
- C. **Physical a_____** (Judges 14:1-3).
- D. **R_____ companionship** (Ecc 3:1).
- E. **Domestic support** (I Tim 5:14, Titus 2:4-5).

III. SOLUTIONS:

- A. Rate your needs and communicate them honestly.
- B. Work on becoming an e_____ at meeting your spouse's needs.

Conclusion:

- A. Jesus died on the cross. He loved and sacrificed to meet our needs.
- B. We need to follow His example and "walk in His steps" (I Peter 2:21).

NOTES:

ANSWERS:

golden
expert
Recreational
Husband
listen



THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

The Ultimate Blessing

INTERACTIVE OUTLINE

Sunday Morning Oct 17, 2021
Scripture reading: Eph 4:32

Speaker: Brent Hunter
Lord's Supper talk: 10:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION:

- A. "For thou, Lord, art good and r_____ to forgive" (Ps 86:5).
- B. The truth "sets us free" from the burden/guilt of our sin (Jn 8:32).

I. WHAT IS THE DIVINE STANDARD OF FORGIVENESS?

- A. He will "hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).
- B. He will "remove our t_____ as far as the east is from the west" (Ps 103:12).

II. WHAT ARE THE TWO DEFINITIONS OF BIBLICAL FORGIVENESS?

- A. "An attitude of heart which restores the offender to the former state."
- B. "To cease to feel r_____ against, or to seek payback."

III. FORGIVENESS IS A COMMAND, AND NOT OPTIONAL.

- A. "Forgive one another, even as Christ has forgiven you (Col 3:13).
- B. "If your brother sins, rebuke him; if he repents, forgive him (Lk 17:3).
- C. Forgiveness is c_____ on repentance (I Jn 1:9, Acts 2:38).

IV. WHAT ARE THE HORIZONTAL IMPLICATIONS OF ALL THIS?

- A. One can forgive and not forget the sin happened (Heb 8:12, Isa 43:18).
- B. We can "*distinctly remember that the sin ever happened.*"
- C. Even if someone does not show remorse, our attitude must be to hold no malice or bitterness in our hearts against them (Acts 7:60, Matt 5:44).
- D. Forgiveness is to be **un**_____ (Matt 18:21-22).
- E. If we won't forgive others, GOD won't forgive us (Matt 6:15)!
 - 1. We will receive mercy based upon how merciful we are (Matt 7:1-2).
 - 2. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt 5:7).

CONCLUSION:

- A. Our sins against one another are small in comparison to the sins we have committed against God (Matt 18:23-35).
- B. Remember the g_____ rule, how have you felt when someone has refused to forgive you (Matt 7:12)?
- C. Oh Lord, increase our faith and help us to truly forgive others, even as we have been forgiven by God!

NOTES

SCRAMBLED ANSWERS:

resentment
transgressions
conditional
unlimited
ready
golden