

Growing in Love: The Three C's of Marriage Leaving & Cleaving

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Growing in Love: The Three C's of Marriage

- Leaving and **C**leaving
- Transforming **C**onflict into Closeness
- **C**onnecting Well

Key Points!

Listening
versus
Agreeing

1. Listening isn't the same thing as agreeing.
2. To listen is to love.
3. Listening to your spouse's perspective IS necessary!!
4. Agreement between your perspectives may or may not occur.
5. You can find ways to effectively manage your differences!!

LEAVING & **C**LEAVING

Topics to be Covered

1. Leaving and Cleaving
2. Decision Making as a Couple
3. Family of Origin and Generational Cycles
4. Understanding Triangles
5. Family Types
6. Roles and Responsibilities in Marriage

LEAVING & CLEAVING

How is it that two to become one?

God's Original Design

Genesis 2:24-25

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Definition of "Leave"

- Hebrew word **azab** OT:5800 has numerous meanings depending on how it is used.
- These include "to leave, forsake, abandon, leave behind, be left over, let go."
- In *Genesis 2:24* it means "to depart from something," or "to leave."

Adapted from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

What Helps Appropriate "Leaving"

- Parents who respect the couple's need to "chart their own course."
- Parents who "nudge" each of their children "out of the nest"
- Couples who turn toward each other first when making decisions.
- Couples who respect their parents and family heritage.
- In some cases, physical distance.

What Hinders Appropriate "Leaving"

- One or both individuals in a couple maintain a mindset of singleness.
- "Hovering" or intrusive parents.
- Emotionally dependent relationship between parent and child.
- Allegiance to friends over coupleship.
- "Family dynasties"
- Significant financial entanglement with parents and/or family businesses.

Leaving: What it is and Isn't

"Leaving" means:

- Each spouse's primary devotion and responsibility must be to their spouse.
- Family influence must become secondary.
- They create a "new normal."
- Couple decisions will sometimes be different from their families.

"Leaving" does not mean:

- That their families are not important or should be avoided.
- That parental support and advice should be shunned.
- The new couple has to figure everything out on their own without support.

Common Couple-Family Hurdles

- Holidays
- Time together vs. alone
- Family vacations
- Money/Lifestyle
- Balancing time between the husband and wife's families

Definition of "Cleave"

- Hebrew word "dabaq"OT:1692, "to cling, cleave, keep close."
- Used in modern Hebrew in the sense of "to stick to, adhere to,"
- **dabaq** yields the noun form for "glue" and also the more abstract ideas of "loyalty, devotion."
- This reflects the basic meaning of objects/person's being joined to another.

Adapted from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

God's Intent for us to "Stick Together"!

- **Ephesians 5:30-32** "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be **joined [NT:4347]** unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
- Greek word for Join/Cleave
 - **1. kollao** (kolla/w, NT:2853), "to glue or cement together," then, generally, "to unite, to join firmly," is used in the passive voice signifying "to join oneself to, to be joined to,"
 - **2. proskollao** (proskolla/w, NT:4347), "to stick to," a strengthened form of No. 1, with **pros**

Adapted from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

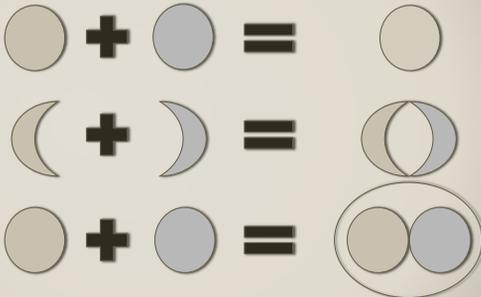
Areas of Couple Cleaving

- **Socially** – We share life experiences
- **Emotionally** – We share our feelings
- **Intellectually** – We share our thoughts and ideas
- **Spiritually** – We share and connect over spiritual beliefs
- **Physically** – We share our bodies in physical intimacy
- **Our marriage; our family** – Together we create a new, unique marriage and family unit

Results of Cleaving Well: Interwoven Lives

- Couple connection with a strong sense of "We"
- Physical and emotional safety
- Love and commitment
- Friendship
- Shared Biblical values that impact each other and the world around you
- A generational legacy of blessing

Two Become One: Which One?



Couple Exercise: Helping the Glue to Stick!

- Take 5 minutes to discuss:
 - Each of you list three things that help you feel close as a couple.
 - Each of you list three things that can hinder you from feeling close to each other.
 - Share your answers with your spouse.



DECISION MAKING AS A COUPLE

A framework for thinking through decisions

Preferences



- **Working Definition:** Personal Opinions, Decisions, and Choices
- **Examples:** your favorite food, color, or way to relax are all preferences. Two individuals may agree or disagree about each other's preferences, but neither is wrong.
- **When Differences Occur:** Agree to disagree

House Rules



- **Working Definition:** Rules of conduct established by families or groups of closely-related people
- **Examples:** How to educate children; curfew times for teens, family traditions.
- **When Differences Occur:** Live according to your conscience before God AND respect that others may choose differently

Organizational Norms

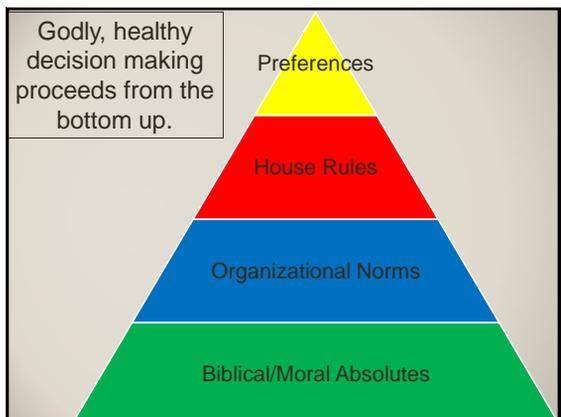


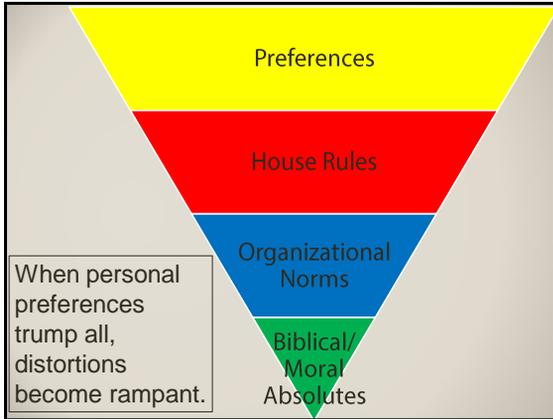
- **Working Definition:** Standards of conduct, behavior, dress, and participation/non-participation in activities established by businesses, churches, and social/service organizations.
- **Examples:** Policies, practices, and procedures put in place by an organization. This level is where many church customs, traditions, and practices are found.
- **When Difference Occur:** Respect authority and be submissive

Biblical/Moral Absolutes



- **Working Definition:** God's moral law that is explicitly stated in the Bible as either command or principle. True for all people, in all places, at all times.
- **Example:** *Exodus 20:14, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"* is a biblical absolute. Adultery is sin in God's eyes – period.
- **When Differences Occur:** Don't compromise





Take-Away Points: Decision Making

- **Communicate:** Couples need to work together to define their house rules. Be aware that these may change over time.
- **Encourage:** Husbands and wives should encourage each other to make decisions in a bottom-up manner.
- **Challenge:** Spouses should challenge each other if there are times that the other makes decisions based on inappropriate assumptions (e.g., treats a Biblical Absolute as if it were a Preference).

GENERATIONAL CYCLES & INHERITANCE

What will you pass on?

Families

- The family we grew up in greatly shapes our perception of what a husband, wife, marriage, etc. should or shouldn't be.
- Some of the main emotional tasks of marriage have to do with family backgrounds:
 - Become your own family unit.
 - Deal with differences and integrate your backgrounds
 - Appropriately "leave" each spouse's family of origin.
 - Integrate the strengths from their families of origin.
 - Reduce the effects of weaknesses from their families of origin.

Baggage

Every Family Has Some! 😊

Generational Cycles in the Bible

Exodus 34:6-7

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

The Two Batons



The Two Batons

- **Premise #1:** You received a “baton” of sorts from the family you grew up in.
- **Premise #2:** You will pass on a “baton” to those that come after you.
- **Question:** What type of baton will you pass along?
- **Remember:** Faithfulness to Christ is the #1 characteristic

Couple Exercise: Two Batons

1. What where you handed? Include both Pros and Cons.
 - Pros:
 - Cons:
2. What do you want to make sure gets passed on?
 -
3. What do you want to make sure doesn't get passed on?
 -
4. Identify two action items to make sure of #2 and #3?
 -
 -

One of Satan's Greatest Deceptions

Inspiring you to have good intentions for your marriage and family all the while encouraging you to live in a manner that actually prevents those intentions from becoming reality.

There's More to an Inheritance Than Money!

- Most parents think about the financial inheritance they would like to pass on to their children.
- Unfortunately, significantly fewer are intentional about the emotional, social, and spiritual inheritance they pass on.
 - **Luke 12:15** “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

Biblical Principles

- **Proverbs 15:16-17**, “Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”
- **Proverbs 19**, “Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.”
- **Proverbs 28:6**, “Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.”
- **Ecclesiastes 4:6**, “Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.”

Social, Emotional, and Relational Inheritance

- Emotional Intelligence
 - Words of Blessing
 - Memories of Time Together
 - Social Skills
 - Service Orientation Versus Self-Focus
 - Biblical Worldview
- Recommended Resource:
- [The Blessing](#) by Gary Smalley and John Trent

One of the Best Things You Can Do For Your Family

- We want to encourage you to be intentional and planful about establishing your will/estate plans.
- We have seen too many families blown apart because of hurt caused by wills/estates.
- A very high percentage of these cases could have been **prevented** by parents who openly communicated their well-laid out plans to their children.
- Does your will/estate plan read like a Christian testimony?
- Recommended Resource:
 - [Splitting Heirs: Giving Your Money and Things to Your Children Without Ruining Their Lives](#) by Ron Blue

Six Words

- If you could only have six words that could describe your life, what would they be?
- Think of the life of Solomon in the Bible and what his six words could have been:
 - As a result of the wisdom of Solomon: "Fear God and keep His commandments."
 - As a result of the foolishness of Solomon: "I should have listened to God."
- Are you living in a way that exemplifies the traits that you would like to have remembered?

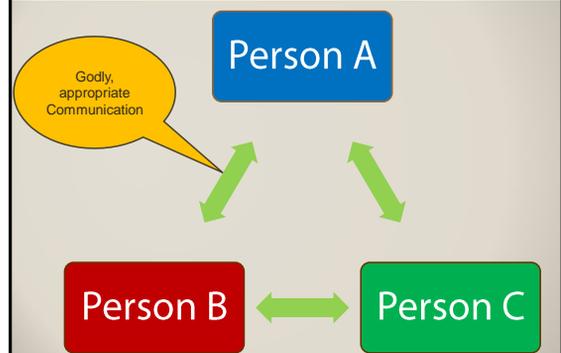
Six Words from Solomon - Our Daily Bread 1-29-2011

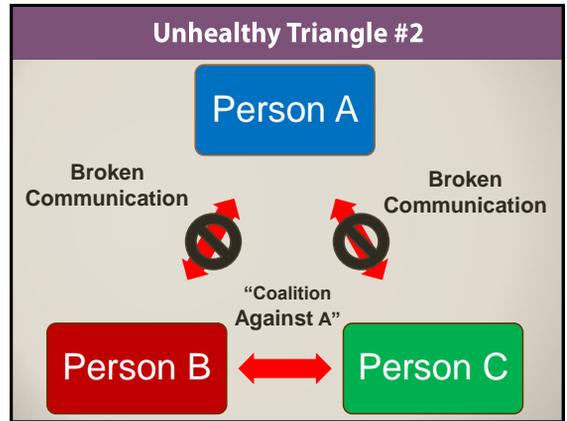
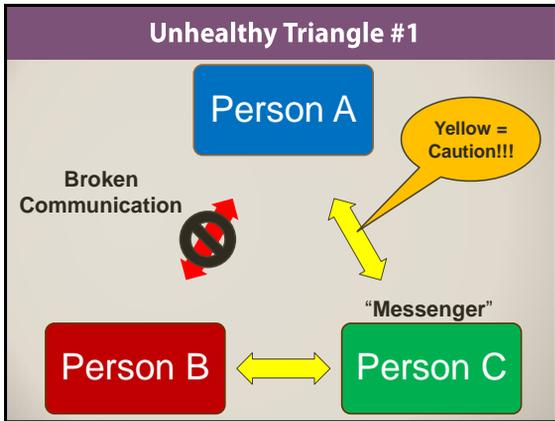
UNDERSTANDING TRIANGLES

Biblical Principles

- Relationship rules from the Scripture are simple, but often not easy.
 - **Ephesians 4:25** "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."
 - **Ephesians 4:29** "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
- Relationships of all types, but especially family relationships, are susceptible to unhealthy communication patterns called triangles.

Healthy Communication Loop





FAMILY TYPES

Closeness and Structure in Family Systems

Range of Emotional Connection in Families

Enmeshed Families	Disengaged Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotionally overconnected Extreme closeness where independence is considered disloyal Poor or diffuse personal boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of bonding Emotional closeness is avoided Know very little about each other's lives

- ### Healthy Families: Attached
- Connected individuals.
 - Secure emotional attachment among family members.
 - Family members seek out and show interest in each others' lives.
 - Care, concern, and affection is expressed.
 - Family members are encouraged to be independent.
 - Clear emotional and relationship boundaries.

The Range of Family Structures

Rigid Family Systems	Chaotic Family Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very clear authority structure, but leadership is not approachable • Unbending • Strong criticism or personal attacks for not meeting expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear authority structure • Rules change, if set, change frequently • Few consequences for violations

Healthy Families: Adaptable

- Consistency with flexibility
- Realization that different situations require different solutions
- Clear leadership structure in the home
- Willingness to share leadership and seek family consensus when appropriate
- Expectations communicated clearly
- Consequences given consistently and fairly
- Leadership seems approachable

Families Where Grace is in Place

C.U.R.S.E.

- Controlling
- Unforgiving
- Reactive
- Shaming
- Ego-Driven

G.R.A.C.E.

- God-focused
- Respects differences
- Attached and affirming
- Communicates openly/healthy Conflict
- Expectations equal to potential

Adapted from Families Where Grace is in Place by Jeff VanVonderen

Six Signs of a Healthy Family

1. Husbands Who are Loving Leaders
2. Wives Who are Supportive Encouragers
3. Intimacy Between Husband and Wife
4. Parents Who Teach and Train
5. Children Who Obey and Honor Parents
6. An Attitude of Service

Adapted from Five Signs of a Loving Family by Gary Chapman

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN MARRIAGE

Equal in Value, Distinct in Role Cont'd

- Note how marriage is designed to reflect the characteristics of the Godhead.
 - Each Person of the Trinity is distinct, yet intimately connected with the other.
 - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each equal in value, yet distinct in role.
- Similarly, husbands and wives are equal in value, yet distinct in role.

Equal in Value, Distinct in Role

- God's image is revealed in **both** the husband and the wife.
 - **Genesis 1:26-27**, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
- God designed an order to be followed in marriage and family.
 - **I Corinthians 11:3**, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

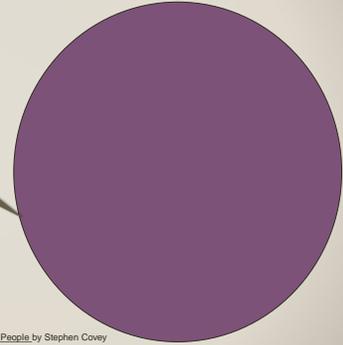
Our Stewardship

- The parts of our lives that God holds us responsible for are our stewardship.
- Knowing where our responsibility begins and ends is essential to healthy, Godly living.
- This includes knowing where, as a spouse, your responsibility begins and ends.

From *Boundaries in Marriage* by Cloud and Townsend

The Circle of Concern

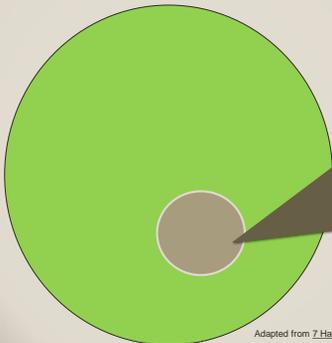
Represents 100% of the things that concern you in life



Adapted from *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey

The Circle of Influence

~10% of the Circle of Concern. It represents the portion of your concerns that you can actually do something about right now.



Adapted from *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey

Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence

- Many people spend 90% of their time in the 90% they cannot control.
 - This inevitably leads to stress, anxiety, feeling out of control, and difficulty letting go.
- The goal is to spend 90% of your time in the 10% that is within your influence.
 - The Circle of Influence represents your stewardship and what God expects you to do.

Adapted from *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey

Serenity Prayer

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference.”

Types of Couple Gender Roles

- Note that the Bible defines some specific gender roles and not others.
 - Husband: Spiritual leader, provider
 - Wife: Help-meet; primary keeper of the home
- Past the above, spouses must work together to identify where they will fall on a continuum consisting of:
 1. **Traditional Gender Roles** – husbands and wives divide their roles based on what has typically been considered male or female tasks.
 2. **Egalitarian Roles** – the husband and wife do equivalent sharing of work and family responsibilities.

Responsibilities in the Home

- Responsibilities in the home are generally based on one of the following:
 - Gender-Role Stereotypes** – “Men take care of the money.”
 - Natural Strengths** – “The spouse with the most skills at handling money will take primary responsibility.”
- We recommend using the Natural Strengths approach.
- Time is a big factor!
 - When both spouses are equally suited/interested in a tasks, then the spouse with the most time to devote to the task will often take it on.

Couple Exercise: Household Responsibilities

- Name 2 household tasks that you take care of nearly all the time.
- Name 2 household tasks that your spouse takes care of nearly all the time
- Name 2 household tasks that you and your spouse share fairly equally.
- Suggest one or more adjustments you would like to try in order to make things run more smoothly.
- Discuss with your spouse.

Spiritual Leadership

Is NOT...

- Lording over another.
- Being rigid and insensitive to the needs of others.
- Being in control of everything.
- Avoiding taking the lead or being passive.

IS...

- Self sacrificing.
- Servant leadership.
- By example.
- Being authentic and humble.
- In accordance with Scripture.

Range of Approaches to Husband-Wife Roles

HUSBANDS

Passivity/
Neglects Servant-Leader Domineering/
Controlling

WIVES

“Doormat”/
Passivity Well-Suited
Helper Overpowering/
Critical

Biblical Submission: Being a Suitable Helper

It is NOT...

- Being a doormat (woman who can't think for herself).
- Taking on your husband as a “fixer-upper” project.
- Saying that your husband is the leader and then running over him.
- Being a second hand or less valuable person.

It is...

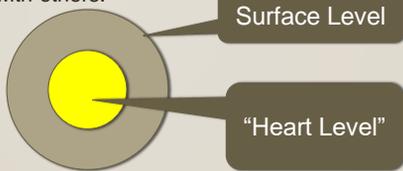
- Being an encourager.
- It is an act of faith, reverence to God.
- Helping your husband gain a perspective that he doesn't have.
- Reminding your husband of the importance of the spiritual aspects of marriage.

Getting to the Heart of Authentic Relationships

*“Keep thy heart with all diligence;
for out of it are the issues of life.”*
Proverbs 4:23

Two Levels of Relationships

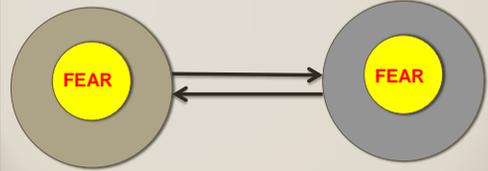
- We all have a surface layer that we show to others.
- We also have a deeper, more personal layer, around our heart. We may or may not share that with others.



From Encouragement: The Key to Caring by Larry Crabb

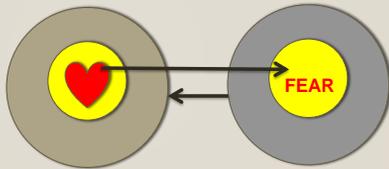
Surface Relationships

- Anger is often found in the outer layer to keep people back.
- Various emotions may be behind the anger. Fear would be one example.



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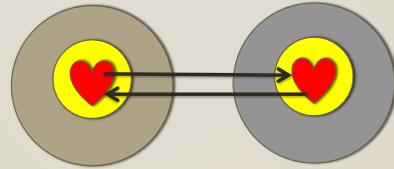
Supportive-Fearful Relationship



From Encouragement: The Key to Caring by Larry Crabb

Authentic Relationships

- Occur when each spouse speaks from their heart to the other spouse's heart.
- *Proverbs 20:5* "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out."



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