

I WANT A NEW MARRIAGE

Big Idea

Two magnets form a strong bond when properly aligned. Those same two magnets will have a strong rejection if not properly aligned. Early on most married couples focus on the things they have in common. Over time it becomes obvious that the typical couple has far more differences than similarities. Those differences are actually good! Marriage is a testing or proving ground for how well we are being transformed into Christlikeness. We will have conflict in marriage. What happens then? Does marriage have to turn into combat? **The big question in a marriage is not IF we fight ...the question is HOW we fight.**

Pastor Curt mentioned three destructive ways to fight: **arguing, complaining, and belittling.** *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:1-3*

God tells us how to be **healthy couples who fight for RESOLUTION.** Spurning God's help, unhealthy couples fight to have a **WINNER** and a **LOSER.** *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20* Three actions we can take toward resolution are **1) stop and listen carefully, 2) guard my words vigilantly, and 3) handle my anger righteously.**

This message also points out **4 Signs You Are Not Fighting Fair.** STAGE 1 – Negative / Critical Attitude toward your spouse, STAGE 2 – Contempt, STAGE 3 – Defensiveness, and STAGE 4 – Stonewalling

In times of conflict, we must fight for **unity**, not for personal **victory.**

Discussion Questions

- The big question in a marriage is not IF we fight ...the question is HOW we fight. What are some wrong and destructive ways to fight. What are some Godly, good and constructive ways to fight?
- What are we fighting for? After some discussion: What does James 1:19-20 say about this?
- What are we not to fight for? After some discussion: Check out James 4:1-3
- Are you fighting fair - are you in one of the four stages?

Prayer Focus

Ask God to reveal conflicts in relationships that you are currently managing. Pray for Him to provide you wisdom to reconcile with others in those relationships. Ask God to provide forgiveness that heals and restores relationship under conflict.

Next Steps

Assess your relationships with those closest to you, and identify ways to improve these relationships. Prepare a plan for resolving conflict in healthy ways. Seek forgiveness in any relationship that you are managing rather than simply trying to win. Think of places where you need to fight for unity

Leader Tip

Pray for your group members by name every day. Focus on helping your group think about strategies and language that must be present in healthy conflict.