THE CONFLICTS IN MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION:

A funny look at a not-so-funny reality:

--Hymn - "The Fight Is On" (hymn was humorously used as an illustration of the conflicts in marriage)

--Illustration - Story of the chaotic barnyard ("Foundations for the Family" - Tyler, RBP, p. 51)

"Conflict" = friction; when two opposing forces, ideas, etc., meet together.

Friction causes heat and heat starts fires and fires destroy things!

I. WHY do Conflicts Exist?

Sin brought conflict (Gen. 3ff).

--Conflict with God
--Conflict with fellow man (Ex. Cain killing Abel)

Factors that cause conflict:

1. The conflict of the flesh (two natures)

   --Romans 7:18-19

   --Galatians 5:16-17

   Specific problems with the flesh:

   1) Selfish Lust - james 4:1-3

   2) Divisive Jealousy - I Cor. 3:1-3

   3) Conceited Pride - Phil. 2:3-4

2. The conflict of the world

   --I John 2:15-17

   The world's philosophies, methods, etc., often influence unsuspecting Christians.

3. The conflict of the Devil

Our "adversary" - I Peter 5:8

Satan instigates strife and conflict.

Conflicts are basically caused by differences.

Differences are not necessarily wrong; rather, they can be beneficial (I Cor. 12:4-20).

--Differences of personality (tastes, likes/dislikes, habits, etc.)

--Differences of opinion (understanding)

--Differences of conviction (belief)

(Romans 14:1-15:6)

Warning: Yoking up with unbelievers is asking for trouble (conflict)! (II Cor. 6:14-18)

About what do couples fight?
Name some potential sources (objects) of conflict:

DIFFERENCES OF PERSONALITY:

Some people are:	Others are:
Logical & objective	Emotional & impulsive
Passive & "laid back"	Active & aggressive
Feeling-oriented/ sensitive	Emotionally stable/ unmoved
Neat/detailed/perfectionist	Not concerned about details

It has been said, "If two people always agree, one of them is unnecessary."

Why does God allow conflicts in our lives?

Retribution - "You reap what you sow" (Gal. 6:7)

Chastisement - Discipline, to correct (Heb. 12:5-11)

Growth - Maturity (James 1:2ff)

Conflicts can be a means to growth (maturity) if handled Biblically!

Conflicts, like all trials (James 1:2ff) can either be beneficial or bomb shells. They can develop your relationships or destroy them. It all depends on how they are handled.

II. HOW do I Mend a Conflict?

A. Determine the actual cause
(the right ailment)

B. Apply God's Medicine
(the right answer)

1. Seek God's wisdom (from the Bible)

2. Follow God's advice (loving confrontation) (Mt. 5:23-24; 18:15-18)

Unresolved conflicts will become long-term "problems."

C. Respond with the proper therapy

How do you respond when confronted with sin?

Contrast:
King Saul - I Sam. 15:1-15
King David - II Sam. 12:1-13

1. Humble spirit

2. Soft words (Prov. 15:1, 25:15)

3. Gracious forgiveness (Mt. 6:14-15; Lk. 17:3-4; I Pet. 3:9; Eph. 4:31, 32; Col. 3:13)

PROBLEM

Sinful Approach:		Biblical Approach
1) Angry emotions		1) Spirit-control emotions
2) Blame shift	CONFLICT	2) Accept responsibility
3) Wrong solution		3) God's solution
4) Resentment/war/ disunity		4) Forgiveness/peace/ unity
5) Spiritual defeat		5) Spiritual growth

CONVICTION
of what is
right & wrong

Six "don'ts regarding conflicts:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself."

2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")

3) Don't play the "waiting game."
(Ex: "When you give in and apologize, I will")

4) Don't "fight fire with fire"
(II Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)

5) Don't practice "character assassination"
(Ex. attacking the person rather than the problem)

6) Don't dig up "old bones"
(Ex. bring up the past)

When a conflict is settled, bury it, and don't dig it up!)

III. <u>HOW</u> do I Avoid Conflicts?

You can't avoid conflicts stemming from the sin of someone else, but you can keep them from starting with you.

A. Walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-23)

B. Mind your own business (I Pet. 4:15)
(Fulfill your own role & responsibility)

C. Accept the differences of others (not all differences are sinful - Rom. 14)

D. Bend on non-moral issues (Rom. 15:1-7)

CONCLUSION:

*Remember, you are <u>one</u> with your spouse (Eph. 5:29-32). When you fight against him/her, you are fighting against yourself!