Notes for “Struggling with Spouses” (Genesis 3:1-16)

-March 9, 2025

\*Guys please forgive me if the message Sunday didn’t follow or contain all of these notes. I’m still not certain what was going on, but here is what it should have been!

1. Revel in the beautiful uniqueness of your design.

* This principle is not found in chapter 3, but going backward into chapter 2 to investigate how God created male and female.
* We are different- physically, emotionally, physically, relationally.
* Difference does not mean difference in value or appreciation.
* Similarities:
  + Equality of personhood and dignity
  + Created by God and in His image
  + Designed for mutual respect and harmony
  + Enjoy a unified destiny in Christ- (no male or female, slave or free, Jew or Greek)
* Differences:
  + Hormones
  + Bone and muscular density
  + Longest finger (male ring finger, female is index)
  + Brain segments
    - Men use more gray matter, women more white matter
  + Body design
  + Necessary fuel and dietary needs
  + Cultural expectations for nurturing/protecting
* Differences are a blessing, not a burden. I wouldn’t want to marry me!

1. Recognize the challenges in communication.

* Understand that problems in any relationship typically tie back to breakdown in communication.
* Chapter 3 begins with temptation of Eve.
  + Problems abound. Satan is purposefully going after the woman- not because she is inferior, but as an attack on God’s design and to utilize potential communication problems.
  + Prohibition on eating of the tree is communicated to Adam prior to Eve’s creation. It appears that Eve’s knowledge was relayed through Adam.
* Problems can be in omission or unnecessary additions.
* Communication difficulties are expected in every area- particularly marriage.
  + Only 7% of communication are the words that come out of your mouth.
  + The other 93% is tone, inflection, body language, and perception.
  + Communication is not defined by what you say, but by what is heard.

1. Attack your problems, not one another.

* Embarrassment, pain, and frustration lead to lashing out.
* Unfortunately, our partners make easy targets. They are immediately there and we feel safe.
* Certainly, there needs to be open communication about how individual attitudes and actions impact you, but there also needs to be a determination to attack your problems, not your person
* Look at the example from Adam and Eve- “…and they sewed”
  + That seems like a little detail, but it illustrates that they both assumed a role in trying to remedy the problem that they created.
  + Adam could have demanded that she fix it and attempt to blame her.
* Attack your problems. Work toward solutions.
* Problem solving can be an exercise in increasing intimacy when handled correctly.

1. Avoid the blame game.

* God walks into the Garden, calls out, converses, and then questions what they did.
* Adam chooses to blame Eve. “..the woman”
* Adam chooses to deflect a portion of that blame on God. “..that you gave me”
* Adam is doing all he can to deflect from accepting personal responsibility
* Blame doesn’t bring about resolution. It assigns weight to remedy what may not be your partner’s thing to fix.
* My personal experience in counseling… husband/wife have problems and point fingers
  + Answer is usually somewhere between the two sides
  + We all share responsibility- if not for what we did, for how we responded.
* God making two one means that the problems of one become the problems of the other.
* Don’t just blame. Determine to work together toward resolution.

1. Note the root for sinful supremacy.

* Understand the natural, sinful tendency to desire power and authority
* God’s pronouncement to Eve- “Your desire shall be for your husband”
  + Translated “desire shall be toward your husband” denoting the struggle
* Eve will desire to be in charge and Adam will as well
* Our problem with the idea of headship is that we only know it in its fallen sinful form
* Headship is plan from beginning
  + God created Adam first
  + Paul uses order of creation as basis of argument for position
  + Firstborn was emphasized
* Headship was meant for representation and servant leadership, not to subdue
* You’ve heard that woman attempt to usurp authority, but men can also attempt to dominate
* When problems arise, ask, “Is this based on my desire to be in charge and get my way?”

1. Honor one another.

* After this, Adam determines to name Eve
  + Prior to this she was called woman
* She is now “ha vah” or Eve which means “living, alive, reviving, staying alive.”
  + Here first name was about origin, this one is about destiny
* The name that Adam assigned to Eve was meant, not to demean, but to honor her
* It is easy in disagreement to determine to win the argument, but at the cost of dishonor
* Determine above all, even in conflict, to honor your spouse.
* Determine to move beyond the conflict and continue to honor your spouse.

1. Grasp the impact of successful spousal relationships.

* This was the first institution created for the welfare of the race. It has incredible weight.
* Successful spousal relationships impact our children.
* Our homes impact our churches. Our churches impact our communities. Our communities impact our country and our culture.
* God chose marriage as the picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church.
* Our marriages can be sources of inexpressible joy and incomparable impact when we handle them appropriately.