

Marriage Conflict

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Marriage conflict is a normal part of married life. When two people come together in marriage, conflict is bound to happen. Each person has had different life experience, and undoubtedly, has different expectations of marriage and from his/her spouse. Therefore, each one is going to react differently to life's challenges. In the old days, most families in the Gambia would give out their daughters for marriage to a very close relative, who might not be even contacted whether he/she is agreed to marriage. A woman wouldn't be consented about the marriage; it is the parents who can decide the faith of their daughters. To me, this acts seems to be unfair to the women of whom I believed should be consulted first before the parents could go ahead in doing arrange marriage on their daughters' behalf.

The Response in the Gambia

Whenever two or more people come together, the chance of marriage conflict is bound to increase. Marital conflicts are not bad in themselves. It is our response to the conflicts that can be either helpful or harmful. Marital conflict can be the challenge to help us grow into more mature persons and a more mature relationship or it can destroy our marriages. Perhaps God is using the particular quirks of our spouse as sandpaper to polish the rough edges off our own characters.

Be happy when the way is rough because then our patience has a chance to grow. When our patience grows, it shows that we are mature. It shows that love really dwells within us. The nature of true love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love

does not demand its own way. It is not touchy. It does not hold grudges and hardly even notices when others do it wrong.

We see what is really within us when our spouse “pushes our buttons.” Will we erupt in anger? Will we be rude? Will we demand he/she do it our way? Will we allow marital conflicts to rule our lives? Will we implement techniques to create better communication? Even though our spouse may be wrong in what he/she says or does, our response shows who we really are on the inside. We have a choice. We can react in a constructive way or we can react in a negative way, parading our anger, our sense of injustice, and our wounded pride.

Examples

We don't have to look far to see examples of marriage conflict. Conflict can range from a minor disagreement over what to have for dinner tonight to the extreme of abuse.

It's often easy to get into a pity party and to feel wronged or self-righteous when a marital conflict occurs. There have been times in our own marriage where we truly felt that we had given all that we could give and that it was his/her turn to change. We found through retrospection that our heart and our motives were often far from right or noble and that we were very wrong in our attitudes and reactions to our husband/wife. We've learned that our husband/wife has much to say and it is often very correct.