Rev. Caroline Braskamp

Preston Hollow Presbyterian

14 February 2021

**5 Simple Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage:**

**Tear Down Emotional Walls**

**Welcome**

* Happy Valentine’s Day!
* 2nd week of 5-week marriage & relationship enrichment series based on the book, 5 Simple Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage… When You’re Stuck at Home Together by Gary Chapman

**Purposes for gathering today**

* Review the first skill: Call a Truce on Throwing Verbal Bombs
* Discuss the second skill: Tear Down Emotional Walls
* Have a conversation with your spouse (notes for a future conversation)

**Opening Prayer**

**Scripture: 1 John 1.8-9**

* NT letter that focuses on love
* Role of confession to repair relationships

8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

* Common call to confession used in liturgy
* We are sinners, confession is the way to make things right again

**Review**

* 5 weeks, 5 skills (can be learned):
	+ Call a truce on throwing verbal bombs
	+ Tear down emotional walls
	+ Discover & speak each other’s love language
	+ Learn the value of teamwork
	+ Have a daily “sit down & listen” time
* Straightforward, common sense; still difficult; new habits require practice
* If you can’t make it one week, Zoom recordings and handouts available on the Marriage Resource Page, [www.phpc.org/marriageresources](http://www.phpc.org/marriageresources)
* Chapter 1: Call a Truce on Throwing Verbal Bombs
* Words have power to heal or to hurt (bombs vs. balms)
* Types of bombs
	+ “you always… you never…”
	+ Judgment/criticism
	+ Bluntness/directness
	+ Name calling
* Difference between feedback and bombs: about a specific issue or a general personal attack

**Second Skill: Tear Down Emotional Walls**

* Metaphor: a failure or hurt that is not dealt with is an emotional block in the wall between two people… many blocks build a wall
* Only one way to remove the blocks: through apology and forgiveness
* We often learn how to apologize from our parents (mine were better at blaming than apologizing)
* Apology formula at our house: “I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It made you feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Next time I will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Is there anything I can do to make it better?”
* Really learned the essential ingredients of an apology from Brené Brown’s podcast “Unlocking Us” with Harriet Lerner (5/15/20):
	+ “No buts”
	+ Keeps focus on your actions and not the other person’s response and feelings (sorry that you felt hurt/sensitive/etc.)
	+ Includes an offer of reparation or restitution that fits the situation
	+ Does not over-do (if someone approaches you about a wrong, don’t hijack the confrontation and make it about you)
	+ Don’t get caught up in who’s more to blame or who started it; apologize for your part of the problem even if the other person doesn’t see their part
	+ Do your best to avoid a repeat performance
	+ Should not serve to silence another person
	+ Should not be offered to make you feel better if it risks making the offended party feel worse (all apologies aren’t welcome)
	+ Does not ask the hurt party to do anything, not even to forgive
* Apology is half the process, forgiveness is the second half
* forgiveness does not erase the memory of the offense (no forgive and forget)
* forgiveness does not rebuild trust; it’s the prerequisite for rebuilding trust
* “forgiveness is a choice just as apology is a choice. Both are necessary to remove the wall” (31)
* You can’t force someone to apologize or forgive, yet you can lovingly confront

**Conversation with your spouse**

1. What is your concept of a sincere apology? Talk about how you usually handle mistakes and what you’d like to start doing differently.
2. When in the past when I have hurt you and failed to apologize? (an opportunity to apologize)
3. When in the past week or month have I hurt you and failed to apologize? (an opportunity to apologize)
4. Is it easier for you to forgive or be forgiven?

**Closing Prayer**

**Looking Ahead**

* Feb 21: Discover and Speak Each Other’s Love Language