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

**Learn the Value of Teamwork**

**Welcome**

* 4th 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**

* Quick review of the first 3 skills
* Discuss the 4th skill: Learn the Value of Teamwork
* Have a conversation with your spouse (notes for a future conversation)

**Opening Prayer**

**Review**

* Skill #1: Call a Truce on Throwing Verbal Bombs
* Words have power to heal or to hurt (bombs vs. balms)
* Difference between feedback and bombs: about a specific issue or a general personal attack
* Skill #2: Tear Down Emotional Walls
  + About having a deeper emotional connection (how you handle mistakes and hurts)
* Only one way to remove the blocks of disconnection/hurt: through apology and forgiveness
* Skill #3: Discover and Speak Each Other’s Love Language
  + Words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, physical touch
  + To determine someone’s love language, observe their behavior, complaints, and requests

**Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4.7-12**

* Part of Wisdom tradition (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, Song of Solomon, parts of the Psalms)
* Wisdom as how to live ordinary life faithfully before God
* Importance of the word, “hevel” (vanity, mystery, breath, mist)

7Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8the case of solitary individuals, without sons or brothers; yet there is no end to all their toil, and their eyes are never satisfied with riches. “For whom am I toiling,” they ask, “and depriving myself of pleasure?” This also is vanity and an unhappy business. 9Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. 11Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? 12And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

* Everyday, common wisdom of teamwork
* Work is made more pleasurable when done together, for someone else

**Learn the Value of Teamwork**

* “Marriage is a team sport. Successful couples learn how to work as a team”
* Common activity in marriage counseling/preparation to list all the couple’s responsibilities, and determine who will handle what (how many of you remembering doing that?)
* those assignments weren’t meant to be forever
* Division of labor/shared tasks changes over time—certainly changed during the pandemic
* In an ideal world, this division is based on individual strengths and interests
* However no one loves to take out the trash! Some things just need to get done!

How to revisit family responsibilities

1. Begin with questions rather than statements (What stresses you the most, and what can I do to be helpful?)
2. Evaluate and take into account your personality differences (Morning/night, neat/messy, enneagram number)
3. Discover your spouse’s passion and help them attain it (“if you could do anything in the world, what would you like to do?”)

How to think about teamwork and family tasks (Gottman)

* How to share family tasks is a perpetual problem, always shifting/changing
* So we try and find what’s good enough for now
* Way to really address how to organize the team is to dig deeper: behind every problem/conflict is an unfulfilled dream
* Family work just needs to get done for the good of the order—so that there’s room for dreams and purpose (the rest of life)

**Conversation with your spouse**

1. Ask your partner: what do you find most stressful about our daily life and routines, and what could I do to be helpful?
2. What personality differences in your marriage do you find most difficult? How can you use those differences to work for you instead of dividing you?
3. Ask your partner: if you could do anything in the world, what would you like to do? What can I do to help you accomplish that dream?
4. Are there any roles or responsibilities that need to shift?
5. What chores or responsibilities can the kid(s) take on to help the family team?

**Closing Prayer**

**Looking Ahead**

* March 5: Have a Daily “Sit Down and Listen” Time (last week!)