**Marriage Enrichment Group - EVBC**

**THE HEALTH OF OUR MARRIAGES AS BELIEVERS WILL ALWAYS BE ABOUT MORE THAN US.**

**Purpose:** To contribute to the health of Christian couples as they continue together in their faith journey.

**Goal:** Find at least one significant addition and one significant subtraction for each partner to make within your relationship. **Eph 4:22-24**

**I-Attachment and the Christian Couple**

**I-THINK ABOUT IT:**

***Value of healthy attachment:***

 **1-Attachment is God’s design for marriage.**

 **2-Healthy attachment promotes appreciation for the blessing of marriage.**

 **3-Healthy attachment creates an environment that facilitates change/growth.**

**How do relationship insecurities affect attachment?**

 **1-Types of insecurities (or unhealthy attachments)**

 **2-Effects of insecurities**

 **3-“Felt” needs of insecurities**

**II-WORK ON IT:** **CLEAVE** – for building intimacy and attachment.

**III-CARRY IT** –

**Homework - Vow making** -

**1– What are three commitments you feel are important to make and affirm today to your spouse?**

**2-Don’t write anything down until Wednesday—make it a matter of thought and prayer.**

**Having heathy Attachments and addressing relationship insecurities through building intimacy and attachment comes on the platform of GOOD COMMUNICATION.**

**II – Communication and the Christian Couple**

**I-THINK ABOUT IT**

***Value of Good Communication***

 **1-Good Communication is an ornament in the life of the believer. Prov 25:11**

 **2-Good Communication is edifying for the speaker *and* listener. Eph 4:29**

**What effect does poor communication have within a marriage?**

 **One of the ways that “Destructive Patterns of Communication” have been evaluated is a categorizing set put together by John Gottman.**

**1-Type of Destructive Communication Pattern**

***Active***

**A-Criticism –**

**B-Contempt –**

***Reactive***

**C-Defensiveness** –

**D-Stonewalling** –

**2-Identfying Characteristics of Destructive Communication Pattern**

***Active***

**A-Criticism –**

**B-Contempt –**

***Reactive***

**C-Defensiveness** –

**D-Stonewalling** –

**THESE DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS ADVANCE RELATIONSHIP INSECURITIES AND AFFECT ATTACHMENT.**

**II-WORK ON IT**

**3-Addressing Destructive Communication Patterns**

 **A-Gentle Soft start-up** –

 **B-Build a Culture of Appreciation** –

**C-Take Responsibility** –

 ***Taking Responsibility can take on several different forms***

**Forbearance** – Not everything needs to be a “talked through,” “hashed out” situation. Not everything is an “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” **Col 3:13**

**Acceptance** – **The Aikido Principle** – “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (*WE* win). **Asking your spouse questions about his or her point of view and expressing willingness to look at the problem from a new perspective.**

 ***Helpful phrases can lower hostility.***

 What are all of your feelings about this issue?

 Tell me why this is important to you?

 Tell me how you would solve the problem if you were to solve it alone?

 This seems important to you. Tell me why?

 What disasters are you trying to avoid?

 **Forgiveness** – **Two types**

 **Decisional** – **Genuine volitional decision to forgive on the basis of God’s directive.** **Col 3:13**

 **Emotional** – Usually a longer process where unforgiveness is replaced by forgiving emotions like empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love for your spouse.

 **D-Psychological Self-Soothing** – Take a break and spend time doing something soothing and distraction.

 **TIME OUT! (4 C’s)**

 **Clues** – Discuss clues that would signal when timeout is needed.

 **Commit** – Commit to take a time out when either person asks.

 **Cool Down** – Not ruminating (plotting your come-back). Decreasing emotionally negative “flooding.”

 **Come Back** – Make a plan - long enough to allow the passing of emotionally negative flooding, condemning/extreme thoughts to ease, BP lower.

AT LEAST \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**III-CARRY IT**

 **1-This week, read the “Principles for Couples for a Soft Start-up Worksheet” individually.**

 **2-Plan a time to take a few minutes and reflect on the content using “I” statements. What has it said to *you* about *you* and convey that to your spouse.**

**Principles for Couples for a Soft Start-up Worksheet**

**Prov 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (ESV)

**Soft start-up is a way of starting difficult conversation or making a request in a way that is soft and gentle. It treats your relationship and spouse as valuable, with respect.**

1-Remember that your relationship is important. Protect it by treating your spouse with gentleness and grace whenever possible. Your relationship is more important that being “right” or “one-upping” your spouse.

2-Stop and think about how to start a difficult conversation. If you have difficulty thinking about how to talk. Think about what you would say to someone else in your life that you care about—perhaps a close friend, employer, or minister. You would likely speak carefully about a difficult topic with such people. Does not the person you have invested the most in throughout the time you’ve been together deserve at least as much consideration?

3-Choose times when you and your spouse are likely to have good self-control. When people are tired, stressed, or distracted, they tend to lose self-control more easily.

4-Start with a loving, caring and gentle statement about your relationship or partner. Consider that most of your communication is nonverbal, so use tender touch, good eye contact, soft voice tone and a relaxed body.

5-Use an “I” statement. Say something like, “I would like for us to spend more time together. I miss being together.” In contrast, if you use “you” statements, you can sound accusatory.

6-Close by giving the other person a sense of control and freedom about the topic. You might say something like, “Are you able to have a conversation or do we need to find another time?” Have faith in each other that if you cannot engage in the conversation at that time that there will be another opportunity soon.