

## Conflict Resolution

Many times, our discussions about an issue, such as money, can escalate from a discussion to an argument. Once an argument gets heated, it is very difficult to change the emotional reactions that occur. The best way to deal with a heated argument is to have an agreement on how to have a fair fight before it happens.

Determine a quiet time – a cool off period so that both parties can pray and reflect on the problem at hand. Use this time to try to put yourself in your spouses shoes.

When coming together to talk, first pray together before you begin.

Position – it is best that both are seated in chairs that are facing each other, hold hands, and look at each other in the eye.

Stay on topic – have one person express their concern without interruption, the other person just listens, and vice versa.

Reflective listening – when the person speaking is finished, the listener should repeat back (reflect) what the spouse said.

If a resolution is not possible at that time, determine when and where the two of you will meet again to discuss. It may need to be several days as an example.

Determine a method to use to work through the problem, such as a conflict resolution exercise.

Timing is everything – determine what times of the day you agree not to bring up an argument to discuss, such as dinner time, right before bed, etc.

Nagging – determine how many times a spouse needs to remind the other before an different action is considered.

Always end with a hug and a kiss and in prayer.

We agree to abide by the above guidelines when dealing with conflict.

Husband's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_.

Wife's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_.

## <sup>1</sup>Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict

- 1) Set a time and place for discussion.
- 2) Define the problem – be specific
- 3) List the ways each spouse has contributed to the problem.
- 4) List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful.
- 5) Brainstorm 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do not judge or criticize any of the suggestions at this point.
- 6) Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions. Be as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each suggestion feels for resolving your issue.
- 7) Agree on one solution to try.
- 8) Agree how you will each work toward this solution. Be as specific as possible.
- 9) Setup another meeting to discuss your progress (place, date, and time).
- 10) Reward each other for progress. If you notice your partner making a positive contribution toward the solution, praise his/her effort.

After reviewing the conflict resolution recommendations, highlight the ones that you want to incorporate when dealing with conflicts, or draft a new conflict resolution agreement based on these recommendations.

<sup>1</sup> Prepare/Enrich Workbook for Couples with Biblical References, pg 13, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

[illegible]

## Once and For All Decisions

There is a principle of communication that can be enormously helpful that I refer to as the once and for all decisions. These are decisions based on the Bible that a couple can agree upon that do not change no-matter-what! They simplify communication and decision making. Here are several examples of once and for all decisions couples have agreed upon:

- We are committed to remain married to each other our entire lives. We will never consider divorce or even mention it as a possibility even if we are having a heated argument.
- By God's grace, we will become debt free and never go into one penny of debt.
- We will buy reliable used cars and drive them "until the wheels come off."
- We will be generous givers.
- We will pray with each other daily.
- We will be honest with each other.
- We will have a weekly money date.

These decisions will benefit you the rest of your lives.