

Questions for Discussion and Application

Marriage Conference – Teacher: Paul David Tripp – February 3-4, 2012 “What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage”

1. Paul shared that Luke 6:43-45 teaches: 1) Marriage problems are heart problems; 2) Your words and behavior reveal more about yourself than about your spouse; 3) Lasting change in your marriage always travels through the pathway of *your* heart. 4) I am the greatest problem in my marriage.
 - On what or whom do you *tend to blame* your responses and behavior?
 - During conflict, in what ways do you tend to respond to your spouse with threats, manipulation or guilt?
 - What types of conflict typically occur in your marriage (money, parenting, time management, communication, intimacy, etc.)? What tends to *flow from your heart* when these times of temptation occur? Where do you desire the Lord to help you grow and change?
2. Paul Tripp shared that sin causes you to shrink your life to the size of your life; i.e., your self-centered wants, needs and feelings. The good news is that you are not left in this prison of selfishness. Jesus came to rescue you from you, not rescue you from your spouse (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-15).
 - How would you evaluate your love for your spouse—a biblical, self-sacrificing love or a self-centered love?
 - What particular ways can you grow to no longer live for yourself but for Christ and for the good of your spouse?
3. Paul Tripp shared from Matthew 6:19-33 that 1) everyone lives for some kind of treasure, 2) the thing that you treasure will control your heart, and 3) what controls your heart will control your behavior. Your words and behavior are always an attempt to get out of your marriage what you treasure. Your marriage is only in a safe place when you value and treasure what God values and treasures.
 - If someone watched the last 8 weeks of your life, what would they conclude is your treasure? What would your spouse say is your treasure?
 - How would you complete the following sentence: If only I had _____ (a kind response, good communication, things go the way that I planned, God meet my needs, fulfilling relationships, more money, understanding, a little compassion, a husband who loved me, a wife who respected me, etc.) then I would be happy and satisfied? What does your answer reveal about your treasure?

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- Is your marriage enhanced or victimized by what you treasure?
4. Paul Tripp shared the following principles from Galatians 5:13-15: There are two approaches to marriage: one that *indulges my desires*, and another that *seeks to love and serve the good of the other*. Only those who truly love God will truly love others. Marriage crises and a lack of love for your spouse are rooted in a lack of love for God.
- Does your life reflect a love for or a lack of love for God? How would your spouse describe your love for the Lord?
 - If you lack a love for God, how does that reflect in you marriage relationship? Is the Holy Spirit calling you to repent, confess your lack of love for God and change?
5. Paul Tripp defined love this way: Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not demand reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.
- What specific actions did you take this week to show love for your spouse? In what particular ways do you desire your love to grow?
 - To what degree was your expression of love for your spouse born out of an awareness of God's love for you (willing, sacrificial and unconditional)?
 - Paul Tripp shared that true love grows out of the soil of gratitude. What do you appreciate about your spouse?
 - Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit that should increasingly be reflected in marriages living for God's Kingdom. Which fruit of the Spirit do you need to grow in? In which fruits would your spouse like you to grow?

Paul Tripp shared that marriage is rooted in worship in three distinct ways: 1) worshipping God as Creator who imprinted the image and glory of God in your spouse's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual makeup, 2) worshipping God as Sovereign—everything, even this mess, happens according to His perfect plan and 3) worshipping God as Savior—no one loves or cares for you or your spouse's soul more than Jesus.

- Are you celebrating or critical of the creation of God in the way he has hardwired your spouse? Are you appreciating or tolerating their unique personality, physical attributes and unique qualities as a gift from God?

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- Paul Tripp said, “God will write a story for you that you would never have written for yourself.” How are you responding to God’s story in your marriage? Are you embracing his grace and sovereignty or wishing you had someone else’s story?
- Paul said, “If you are celebrating the grace of the Savior, you will be gracious in the failures of your spouse.” How do you typically respond when your spouse sins against you? How do you typically respond to their weaknesses or deficiencies?
- How can you grab hold of God’s redeeming and rescuing grace in Jesus to begin the process of change and restoration in your marriage?