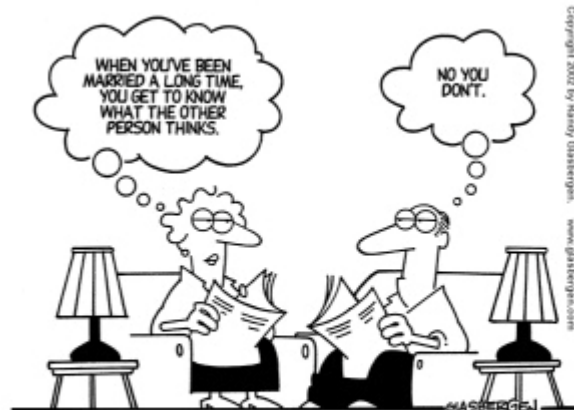


**MARRIAGE WORKSHOP – "Passionate Marriages: Keys to an Intimate Love Life" - July 14th at 12Stone™ Church - [REGISTER HERE!](#)**

Register today for our second Marriage Workshop on July 14th! [Dr. Doug Rosenau](#) will be joining us. Doug is a Licensed Psychologist, Marriage and Family Therapist and nationally known speaker and author. So make plans now to attend Monday July 14th at 6:30 p.m. in the Cafe Theater. Register today. Child care will not be available for this event.

**MARRIAGE AND CONFLICT - (PART 2)**



Last week, I talked about the vastly different experiences that my wife and I brought into our marriage. I came from a home where anger was an emotion that was off-limits... and where my parents never argued in front of the kids. My wife came from a home where every fight had a clear winner (and loser). It was not unheard of for them to throw pots and pans at one another to make their point!

You can imagine how difficult it was for us to fight fairly. When I got mad, I politely retreated into another room to cool down (in other words, I ran from the conflict). When she got mad, she would chase me, yell, and thrown things.

Some of our most dramatic meltdowns are now comical to me. Imagine me (the husband) under the bedcovers yelling "Leave me alone...I'm going to sleep!" while she stood over me trying to pull the covers off the bed and yelling back "Come out here and fight like a man!"

The real scary times in our marriage occurred when I did just that – when my blood was boiling over and I and was ready

to fight. In those moments, anger consumed me and all I was thinking about was conquer / win / control / dominate. Fighting fair was the last thing on my mind.

After we received Christ as our Lord and Savior, we began to yearn for something better. We deeply desired to rebuild our home and give our children a place of peace and tranquility. I will never forget the moment when I heard Pastor Kevin (PK) teach the lesson that led to a total turnaround in our home. He said that "In your marriage, you fight FOR each other rather than AGAINST each other." That was a totally new idea to me. It never occurred to me that we were fighting for all the same values. We BOTH wanted:

- Peace in our home
- Children who behaved
- Out of debt (to spend within our means)
- Time away for recreation and fun
- Our home properly maintained
- Etc. Etc. Etc.

The reason that I had been avoiding conflict is because I thought there had to be winners and losers. Our behavior had actually reinforced that unspoken belief. Each argument had a winner and a loser. But, in the end, we were both losing.

When PK taught the lesson, he had given everyone homework. We were to go home and create "**Fair Fight Rules**". We also needed to agree on the values and principles that would be used to resolve our conflicts and disagreements. Here are some ideas that we used in our rules:

- We decided that someone actually had to initiate a "fair fight". Whenever a conflict arose, we would schedule a time in the future when that issue would be discussed. This gave time for both of us to cool down and collect our thoughts.
- Since I would over-power my wife with intensity (now that I was willing to fight), I had to let her present her case first. I had to let her say everything she wanted to say before I was allowed to speak. I was not allowed to interrupt (which was my nature).
- One aspect of our Fair Fight Rules was the "Time Out" clause. If the intensity got too high and one of us was being intimidated or bullied by the other person, then either of us could call for a "Time Out" and suspend the conversation.
- These were all written out, along with consequences for breaking the rules.

In the beginning, as silly as it sounds – I actually pulled out that sheet of paper and followed the step-by-step process. And, we didn't resolve the issue in one sitting. Sometimes, it would take weeks (and even months) to completely settle and agree on a course of action. And, there have been multiple times that we needed outside help. There have been two significant issues that required a professional counselor to help us find common ground.

But, over time it became more natural to us and we became able to have disagreements without breaking the rules. Now, after 15 years of practice (and some very difficult seasons in our lives), "fighting fair" is a natural part of our marriage.

The reality is that we don't really fight any more. Once we realized that we were chasing the same goals and dreams for our family, we began listening to one another and resolving issues long before anyone would lose their temper. I can't remember the last time that my wife and I had a conversation that even resembled a fight!

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## Exercise for the week

Use your date night this week to discuss and develop your own "Fair Fight Rules". Some thoughts to consider:

- What do you need to do to bring God's wisdom and righteousness into your disagreements?
- When do you tend to "break the rules" and cause emotional pain to your spouse?
- How will this affect your children? How can you involve them and teach them as you learn?
- Just for fun - Consider adding rewards for following the rules, as well as punishments for failing to follow them.

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## Five Ways To Say "I Love You" To Your Spouse This Week

1. Make sure to plan to spend some time alone together over the Holiday Weekend.
2. Let go of things from the past that are holding you back.
3. Do something adventurous together.
4.  Practice forgiveness.
5. Watch a classic movie together and tell each other why you enjoyed it.

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## Two Dates Under \$20!!!

Each week we will offer two date ideas under \$20.00 so that everyone can afford to have quality time with each other.

### **Newlywed Night. . .**

See if you know each other as well as you think you do! Invite some couples over to test each others knowledge and enjoy a fun game night together! Buy a gift card ahead of time for the winning couple. Have each couple bring a treat and pitch in \$5 for the gift card.

### **Garden Lovers. . .**

Stroll hand in hand through [Vines Botanical Gardens](#).

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## Get - Away Ideas

Would you like to have some time alone together this July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend? Check out these ideas below! Options include spending the afternoon together with a picnic dinner and fireworks as the finale, or perhaps an overnight getaway, making it a truly romantic weekend!

[Centennial Olympic Park](#) . . . located *between* Baker Street and Techwood Drive is the site of Atlanta's daylong Independence Day celebration. *Live* Music & Entertainment start in the afternoon and end with a '*really big*' Fireworks Display choreographed to a Musical Score. Thousands of people turn out, but you can also view the fireworks from a variety of '*less crowded*' spots nearby. Festivities begin at 4:30 PM, with the fireworks show at 9:30 PM.

[Lenox Square](#) . . . Hosting the *largest* Fireworks Show in the Southeast, Lenox Square will light up the beautiful Buckhead District with over 20 minutes of Pyrotechnic Extravaganza at 9:40 PM. A military aircraft flyover, a "Kid Zone" featuring giant slides, an obstacle course and more will all culminate with the signature fireworks display. Admission is free and the event is open to the public. Other festivities begin at 6:00 PM. The [J.W. Marriott Hotel](#) in Buckhead is offering one of the best hotel accommodations for the Fourth of July weekend if you want to make a weekend of it.

[Dahlonega](#) . . . If the big city is not your cup of tea, get away to the Georgia Mountains for a weekend of Fourth of July celebration. Festivities begin at 8:00 AM and end with fireworks at 9:15 PM.

[Chateau Élan and the City of Braselton](#) . . . If you want to stay close to home; the city of Braselton is celebrating the fourth all day long. Check out the schedule of events and enjoy a day of festivities and end the evening with Fireworks at Chateau Élan.

[Mall of Georgia](#) . . . Celebrate the Fourth of July close to home at the Mall of Georgia. Enjoy a weekend of activities and a fabulous fireworks display.

These are just a few of the MANY Independence Day options for you to check out. For more info on local festivities [click here](#) and have a great holiday!

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## Additional Resources

Ready to go deeper? Try this resource for more insights on eliminating conflict in your marriage.

["Everybody Wins – The Chapman Guide to Solving Conflicts without Arguing"](#) – Dr. Gary Chapman

Every couple has disagreements. Chapman shows you how to focus on resolving the conflict---*not* on winning the fight! His simple blueprint for achieving win-win solutions to everyday arguments includes listening empathetically; respecting each other's ideas and feelings; and understanding why particular issues are so important to your spouse. Easy-to-read and effective advice!