

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

Introduction

Welcome – I am so glad you are here. What an exciting weekend we are going to have.

I am very excited that you have chosen to spend your weekend at a **MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT SEMINAR**. That tells me 2 things: 1 – You love your companion and family very much; 2 – You love marriage and you want to make it even better.

Don't misunderstand me, I am sure there may be some here who are struggling and need some help, and that's o.k.

But most of the time the couples that should go to marriage seminars, **DO NOT**.

I want you to know I think you are special and God is going to help you this weekend.

I want you to think of this Marriage Enrichment Seminar as a time to collect some tools for your marital workshop.

Marriage jokes: Did you hear about the guy that found the Genie lamp and rubbed and out came the genie? The genie said, "You have three wishes, anything you want."

The fellow thought and then said, "I like to travel but I don't like to fly. Would you build me a long bridge from California to Hawaii and then to Japan?"

The genie said, "Wow, that is a pretty hard and difficult request. What is your second request?"

The man thought again and then his eyes lit up with excitement as he asked, "Can you explain how a woman thinks?"

The genie responded, "How wide did you want that bridge, a two lane or a four lane."

Why should we have a marriage seminar? Why should we spend these hours together? There are four basic reasons why:

a. Most of us want to make our marriages **WORK**. Nobody enters marriage expecting it to fail, but they do.

b. All of us have to **WORK** on our marriages. Even if you have been married at least 2 hours.

c. Many marriages don't WORK. They start out never answering the question, "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife with, I don't know, will I?" They are excited and say yes.

- * The first phase of marriage is the IDEAL.
- * The second phase of the marriage moves into the ORDEAL.
- * The third phase of too many marriages moves into looking for a NEW DEAL.

d. Many of us don't know how to WORK on our marriages.

Too many of us had poor role models and consequently we have not learned what would make our marriages great.

How many noticed a certain word kept popping up? WORK

Tonight I want you to sit back and I want to take you on a journey that most of us have experienced.

It's a journey that will help us visualize what went on unnoticed by many of us during our courtship and dating days.

I want you to think with me about our subject:

Session I — THE GAMES COUPLES PLAY

Scripture text: Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

1. How many can remember when you first say the person you are now married to?
2. The beginning for most of us here today took place at a very romantic moment.
3. For most of us romance dominated the first part of our relationship.
4. What is Romance? Is it:
 - a. A person smitten by love for another person.
 - b. Love letters.
 - c. Walks in the rain.
 - d. ½ hour kisses. Remember those? Think.
 - e. \$100 phone bills.
 - f. Absentmindedness at work.
 - g. Ridiculous attempts at poetry.
 - h. All those activities that lead up to the wedding.

- 1) Anticipation
- 2) Free flowing advice from in-laws

- 3) Problem with the flowers arriving on time and in the right condition.
- 4) The friend of the bride that slaughters the wedding song.
- 5) Endless picture taking.
- 6) Eternal receptions.
- 7) It is a wonder that anyone survives the wedding day.

5. It is those highly charged romantic feelings that keeps things moving.

a. Remember at Jacob's commitment to Laban to work 7 years for Rachel's hand.
 1) But then he ends up with her sister. 2) That was one disappointed patriarch.

b. It is romantic love that gets us to walk the runner down the aisle, to light the candle and then to kiss the bride.

Scott Peck, a famous psychiatrist, has an interesting perspective on romantic love. He says, "Falling in love is a trick that our genes pull on our otherwise perceptive minds to hoodwink us or to trap us into marriage."

He is sort of saying that no rational person would ever commit himself or herself to another fallible, fickle human being, for richer or poorer, sickness and health, till death do us part. Never would a rational person do it. But romantic love temporarily renders us insane enough to do what we would never have the courage to do if we were sane. And that is get married.

It seems all couples go through romantic love. This is the stage that short circuits our brains enough to get us married.

I. What is Romance?

It is difficult to define because it is not a science or an art form.

A. ROMANCE IS COMPOSED OF FANTASY, EMOTION, NONRATIONAL DELIGHTS – SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM THE ORDINARY. IT IS A SPECIAL TIME OR EVENT FOR TWO INDIVIDUALS.

B. Romance often Includes:

1. The element of the unexpected. Most wives love this.

a. The routine of life takes up most of our time and energy but a romantic surprise breaks up the monotony.

b. It says, "I'm thinking about you. You're on my mind. I want your day to be different."

c. Bring home flowers for no special occasion.

d. Find a new restaurant.

e. Put a note in the kitchen cabinet that says, "I Love You."

f. Doing the same thing for 20 years may not be romantic.

2. The practice of dating.

a. Just the two of you.

b. Dating means selecting a specific time to be together and making plans for the event.

c. Don't talk about work or children. Rather talk about yourself.

d. Make it a fun time.

e. Laugh and enjoy each other even if you are a little crazy.

f. Let the waitress know you are with your spouse on a date.

g. This is key to successful dating. Dating should center on an activity where you can interact together.

3. Since romance is often emotional and nonrational it sometimes includes the impractical.

a. Splurge on a gift you may not afford.

b. An out of the ordinary event or restaurant.

c. This element will build great memories.

d. These times will take you through the difficult times.

4. It has within it the element of creativity.

a. Discover what delights your companion and then make those delights happen in many different and creative ways.

b. Do not let your mate predict what you will say when you kiss her goodbye or how you will respond.

5. It includes the element that involves daily acts of care, concern, love, speaking your partner's love language, listening, and giving each other your personal attention.

a. This will convey a message of acceptance and thoughtfulness to your spouse.

b. You see romance begins in the mind and not in your glands.

6. Romance involves commitment.

a. There are many highs and lows, joys and disappointments in our lives.

b. Romance rises and falls.

c. But if there is commitment in marriage then the romance will thrive.

d. Commitment is based upon the attitude of the heart which affects our daily activity.

II. How Do You Keep Romance Alive?

At this time let's go inside of us and try to understand what is happening to us during the time of courtship and getting married. Let's begin first with the men:

A. Men, if you would allow me to hang around with you for any length of time, it would not take long to determine what it is that you really treasure in life.

1. This would let me know what is at the top of your priority list.

2. You may fool me for a time but if I would hang in there long enough the truth about what it is that you treasure would be sure to come out.

3. As I would be around you, your treasure would eventually show through in your conversation.

4. We talk about our treasure.

5. It will show up in our schedule. I would find you making time for that which is your treasure.

6. It would manifest itself by the kinds of people you choose to be close friends with.

7. This is true because we tend to choose friends and spend time with those who treasure the same things we treasure.

8. It would reveal itself by the way you spend your money. It is amazing that we can always scrape up enough money to spend or invest on that which we treasure.

9. I could be tipped off by the books you read, magazine you subscribe to, by where and how you use your leisure time.

10. But sooner or later I would know what you treasure.

11. I could discover who or what you really value.

12. Jesus said it very clear when He said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

a. This seems to be saying that you will have feeling about that which you treasure most.

b. You will have feeling when you think about that treasure and you will be motivated and excited about that which you treasure.

c. Your pulse will beat faster and a smile will come upon your face when you are involved with your treasure.

B. Husbands, there was an era in each of our lives when it would have taken all of about 15 minutes for a third party investigator to conduct a treasure hunt in our life.

1. During the courtship phase of our relationship with the wives we are now married to there was not much of a mystery going on as to what our lives revolved around, about what we really treasured.

2. We treasured the woman of our dreams. Our perfect "10".

One guy said he should have settled for about a 4 worth 6 million dollars.

3. During those days everyone knew who it was that we treasured.

4. We would talk about the woman we loved.

5. We spent an enormous amount of energy and creativity in dating the woman we loved.

6. We rearranged our schedule so that we could spend every spare moment with that woman.

7. Even money was not an object. We spent all kinds of money.

8. It was no mystery to anyone who we treasured.

9. It was surely no mystery to the lady we were pouring our attention, affection and our appreciation upon.

10. She felt loved. She felt prized. She felt courted and wanted and appreciated.

11. She felt held in high regard. She felt safe and secure.

12. Putting it in another way she felt treasured.

13. She just knew it would last. She even figured it would even get better and better.

14. Then came the wedding and then the honeymoon and then the return from the honeymoon and the move into the apartment and the realities of everyday married life.

15. It is at this critical point that married men do something that is absolutely instinctive.

a) It is as natural and as reflexive as eating and sleeping.

b) What is it you ask?

c) Married men without any premeditation, without any malice or forethought calmly proceed to shift their attention to the attainment of their next objective or goal in life.

d) This is usually to proceed in the career or vocation that they have committed themselves to.

16. 99 out of a hundred newly married men are not even aware of this shift in emphasis that transpires in their lives.

17. But without any advanced warning or any advanced communication with their partner most men shortly after things get settled down in marriage systematically dismantle the emotional equilibrium and the self esteem of their bride by simply closing the book on their courtship and romance era of their lives and next they fix their gaze or shift their gears and they say, "Now I need to make a name for myself in the market place."

18. It is though men say to themselves, "Now that I am married and I got that job done, let's see what is next on life's agenda."

a) Let me stress here that these are subconscious kinds of choices.

b) Men mean no harm. They are not even aware of what they are doing.

c) If you would ask them, they would say, "I still love her. Nothing has changed." They are not even aware of it.

19. You see, you have to understand how little boys are raised by grown men.

a) It goes all the way back to childhood.

b) The dad assigns the little guy a list of responsibilities and says you do this chore and when you complete it accurately and satisfactorily then you do this chore and that chore and you work yourself right down the list and do what you are told.

c) He does this chore then this chore and that one until they are all done.

d) When he gets a little older and gets involved in athletics he knows how the game works.

1) First there is the try outs.

2) Then there are the practices.

3) Then there are the games.

4) Then there are the tournaments.

e) Then there are the awards banquets.

f) Then you put that uniform away and wait about three weeks and you shift your focus to the next sport.

20. It is the same way in the market place.

a) At his first day at work he received an assignment from his manager and is told to work on it, complete it, present it, then pack up and move on to the next assignment.

b) This mode of operation is the way of life for this man and has been since childhood.

21. So men continue this task oriented pattern in their relational lives.

a) So when they get the marriage job completed they attend the award banquet, the honeymoon, and then they move on to the next challenge.

22. Everything I have been saying makes perfect sense with men and don't bother telling me it doesn't.

a) We are made this way and function this way.

b) We are raised this way and live this way.

c) As I am explaining this there is very little emotion attached or emotional activity going on in the minds of men right now.

d) And most men are saying, "Oh yeah. That's right."

e) They probably have not thought of it quite this way but they understand. Not earth shaking but very interesting.

23. It might not be earth shaking to men but it is earth shaking to women.

24. Men, we have no idea what our innocent little instinctual shifting of gears did to our wives. If we did, or had any idea, we would fall on our knees and repent to God and ask forgiveness from our wives.

C. We have to look at this whole phenomenon of courtship, engagement, and marriage and married life.

1. You have to look at the whole thing from day one.

2. From a woman's perspective.

3. Let me take you back all the way back to your courtship days.

a) All the way back to when you first started making eyes at this woman you were infatuated with.

b) When you first started driving around to find her.

c) When you first started those stumbling conversations with her and then took her out.

d) Finally, you started dating her and then you started courting her and you are now saying I am with you get on with it.

4. During this whole courtship phase, most men are completely oblivious to the subplot of that courtship mainly what is going on in the mind of the woman.

5. Early in the mind of the young woman who is being courted is the big question, what is this guy really after.

a) She asks this question 100's of times.

b) What is this guy really after.

c) Is he after a good time, is this a good time relationship?

d) Is he after a cheap thrill?

e) Is he after a casual friendship, a serious relationship, just what is he after?

f) Along with that she is asking herself, "I wonder how badly am I going to get hurt in this relationship?"

g) Am I going to get all emotionally charged and then get discharged from it and discarded?

h) This is going on day and night in the mind of the courted woman.

i) Over time as she observes the effort and the commitment of the man she is dating as she keeps receiving phone call after phone call and love letters and dinners and long walks, and kisses and conversations she gradually, sometimes even against better judgment, she gradually allows herself the privilege to believe that maybe, just maybe, this man really loves her for who she is.

j) She starts to say to herself maybe this isn't a set up for a heartbreak.

k) Maybe he really does appreciate what God made me to be.

l) Maybe he really does treasure me.

m) As the relationship continues to grow, her fears diminish more and more until finally at the engagement time when the woman crosses that last bridge of doubt and she says, "I guess I can just believe it."

n) It is here she burns that last bridge of fear and allows herself the freedom to say, "I am someone's treasure."

1) I have never been before someone's treasure, but now I am.

2) I trust this man.

3) It has taken me months or maybe years but I know he loves me and I am important to him. I can finally say with confidence that I trust his love and am no longer worried that he will pull out the rug from underneath me.

4) Then comes the wedding and that sort of seals it.

5) Then on the honeymoon she revels in his love and when they return from the honeymoon she is fully expecting that married life will substantiate her long time incoming trust of her husband's love for her.

6) In other words, she is finally over most of her fears and anxieties of whether or not she is treasured or whether or not she is going to be mistreated.

7) In other words, she is ready to start writing the book on wedded bliss.

8) As she is picking up the pen, just about the same time, the husband is closing the book on the task of getting the marriage job done.

9) What you have right there is the stage that is being set for a play called disaster.

D. The husband now calmly proceeds to focus his attention on the next challenge of his life's agenda.

1. He is now ready to make a buck or two.

2. He is ready to climb a rung or two on the ladder of success.

3. He works so hard at it that he has very little time left for long walks or love letters or candle light dinners, or flowers, phone calls or much of anything else.

4. All of these items used to be front burner items because that is what it took to get the job done.

5. But the marriage job is done and now we need that energy to get the next job done, the next thing on the agenda in life.

6. Do I have to tell you that the young bride is shattered?

a) Her worse nightmare is coming true.

b) She views his new agenda as evidence of personal rejection.

c) She says to herself, "This was a set-up".

d) He doesn't really treasure me after all.

e) He did not want me, he wanted a wife.

f) How could I have been so stupid. I bought into all that wining and dining and here I sit trapped, wrecked and deceived.

7. Men, can you see what is going on here in the mind of your wife?

a) We have no idea what goes on in the mind of our wives when we stop treasuring them.

b) We have no idea what goes on in the mind of our wives when we stop courting them.

c) Stop romancing them.

d) If we did we would never stop.

E. It should come as no surprise that God in His Word, the Bible, has one overarching imperative to husbands with respect to how to build a long lasting mutually satisfying and God glorifying marriage.

1. Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands love your wives."

2. Using an acceptable synonym let me put it this way, "Husbands, treasure your wives."

3. The usage here in the Greek is a present imperative verb tense which means this verse could be rendered, "Husbands continue to treasure your wives." Or keep on treasuring your wives. Or **DON'T EVER STOP TREASURING YOUR WIFE.**

4. **DON'T EVER STOP TREASURING YOUR WIFE !!!**

5. Husbands, remember this, God is on your side. He is on their side too. But He is on your side.

6. God is for us. He wants our marriages to flourish and be satisfying to us.

7. He is a good God and wants us to enjoy them.

8. He created us and knows all about us.

9. God is saying, "Husband, don't shift gears. Don't de-treasure your wife or pull the carpet out from underneath her."

10. If you do that it could cripple your marriage severely for many years and could even kill it.

11. Statistics show there are an enormous amount of divorces in the first five years of marriage and a lot of them come from this very scenario.

a) The set up in the mind of the wife.

b) The shifting of focus and gears in the life of the husband.

c) And all of the struggles and fights and miscommunications that happens afterward.

F. Some people even here this evening have crippled marriages because of this.

1. Some are worse and have marriages hanging in the balances right now because of this.

2. Husband, do not stop treasuring your wife.

G. There are 5 ways you can keep on treasuring your wife.

1. Court creatively — write, call, walk.

2. Communicate meaningfully — meaningful conversation is the shortest road to intimacy.

3. Serve her cheerfully.

4. Inspire her regularly.

5. Walk with the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Learn again to treasure your wife!!

Tonight, I want you to take your companion's hand and I want us to pray to God.

Husbands: Your prayer should be:

First — God forgive me if I have not been treasuring my wife. If I have put her on the back burner of my commitment.

Second — God help me to cheerfully learn this weekend how I can be the best husband my wife could ever have.

Wives: Your prayer can be:

First – God help me to recommit my life and love to my husband. May I learn this weekend to totally trust him with my heart and soul.

Second – God help me to cheerfully learn this weekend how I can be the best wife my husband could ever have.