

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

## Session V— Warning Signals of a Crumbling Marriage

Scripture: I Corinthians 13

I. The love chapter describes the kind of love we should be expressing to our companions.

Why would you choose the perfect love passage to talk about the crumbling marriage?

This section may be a little hard for some since some of you may have experienced some severe difficulties in your marriage.

A. The contents of this chapter are extremely important to establish as a goal for our relationships.

B. No matter what your past may be there is certain hope for the future if you will correct certain things. This chapter may be hard for some. Some of you may even hurt from some of the insights.

C. Someone has said, “Though I cannot go back and make a brand new start, my friend, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.”

II. There are at least four stages of a crumbling marriage.

A. The DUMB stage - this is when the partner thinks that marriage is going to be easy.

B. The DISILLUSIONED stage - this is the stage where the partner realizes that marriage isn't what they thought it would be.

C. The DISTORTED stage - this is the stage where every issue in the marriage is negatively blown out of proportion.

Statements like this can be heard: “You are not making my happy any more.” “Then you look for someone else.”

D. The DISMANTLING stage - this is when a mate intentionally provokes his or her companion.

In this stage the goal is to bring down the person you are married to.

When these things are detected early then an early death can be avoided.

“A sure sign your marriage is slipping is when you start bidding against each other at auctions.”

There are:

III. Ten warning signals of a crumbling marriage.

#### 1. IMMATURITY

Someone described marriage like a cafeteria: You pick up something that looks good and pay for it down the line. What happens is only the mature people want to pay at the end of the line.

Did you hear about the husband who said his wife was very immature; she would come home and sink his ships in the tub.

There are two basic signs for this behavior:

##### a. SELFISHNESS - in love with yourself.

There are 3 basic causes of divorce:

1. Selfishness
2. Selfishness
3. Selfishness

There are two basic kinds of people in this world:

##### 1) GIVERS - They ask what can I do for you?

Before marriage this is where most couples live, as givers.

These are healthy marriage builders.

##### 2) TAKERS - These ask what can you do for me?

Too many people become this after marriage.

##### b. PRIDE - This is a strong sign of selfishness.

Eve blamed the serpent, man blamed Eve, but no one said, “I did it”.

Mark Twain said, “Temper is what gets you into trouble but pride is what keeps you there.”

The second signal:

## 2. DYSFUNCTIONAL BACKGROUND

Six common characteristics of this kind of family:

- a. CONTROL - this is when someone controls all interactions, feelings and personal behavior at all times.
- b. PERFECTIONISM - this demands that everyone must always be right in everything they do.
- c. BLAME - this occurs whenever things don't turn out as planned and family members blame themselves or others.
- d. DENIAL - this is when families deny feelings, perceptions, thoughts, wants, and especially negative feelings by not talking about them and acting as if they do not exist.
- e. INCOMPLETION - this is when family members never complete transactions, but instead keep the same fights and disagreements going on for years.
- f. UNRELIABILITY - this is because no one gets their needs met, so the trust level is very low.

The third warning signal:

## 3. UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

There are some people who have some unbelievable high ideals what their marriage should be.

Most of us have a certain amount of flaws or weaknesses.

How many here have mates with at least 1 flaw? 2? 10?

Robert Shuman said, "One fellow vowed not to marry until he found the ideal woman. But alas, she was waiting for the ideal man."

I heard a story about the wife who went to the police station with her next door neighbor to report her missing husband.

The police asked for a description of her husband. She said, "He is 35 years old, 6' 4", dark eyes, athletic build, 185 lbs., soft spoken, dark wavy hair, and good to the children."

At which when the neighbor heard the description she protested. THAT'S NOT YOUR HUSBAND! Your husband is 45 years old, he's 5' 4", he's got bloodshot eyes, he's bald, chubby, weighs 230 lbs., has a big mouth, and he's mean to the children.

The wife replied, "Yes, I know, but who wants him back?"

The fourth warning signal:

4. INABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE - Too many people are killjoys.

Laughter is like changing a baby's diaper. It does not permanently solve any problems, but it does make things more acceptable for awhile.

If you will be as creative after marriage as you are before marriage you will have a successful marriage.

What are some things to remember?

Flowers, candy, car wash, etc.

The fifth warning signal:

5. PETTINESS - this is where little things add up like the drip, drip, drip of a marriage faucet.

It is the little things that destroy more than the big things.

Termites destroy more properties than volcanoes and earthquakes.

Do you remember the man who walked from New York to California several years ago. He walked across country and it took him several months.

The reporters at the end of his walk asked him if he ever felt like quitting.

He said, "Oh yes, many times."

They said, "What was it? Was it the storms, the cold weather, the rocky mountains." They mentioned the tough elements of life that would stop a man.

He said, "No. I prepared myself for all of that, so when they came I braced through it. The thing that almost tempted me to quit was when I would get sand in my shoes."

It is the same as sand in the marriage. It's those little things in the marriage. Those petty things that cause people to give up.

The sixth warning signal:

## 6. INATTENTION - not being attentive to your mate.

When a girl marries, she gives up the attention of many for the attention of one.

Signs of inattention:

- a. You give answers to your companion without any AFFECTION.
- b. You have stopped cultivating COMMON INTERESTS.
- c. You would rather be with other PEOPLE.

If you always have to be with other people, you have a problem.

- d. You stop LISTENING.
- e. You avoid your SPOUSE.

You keep going to bed after your mate has gone to bed.

You find excuses for not coming home.

The seventh warning signal:

## 7. POTENTIAL AFFAIRS

Warning signs of potential affairs: (ask these questions)

- a. Is my marriage DRIFTING apart?

You are either growing together or growing apart.

Partners cheat because of:

1. Emotional immaturity,
2. Unresolved conflict in the marriage, and
3. Unmet needs in the marriage.

- b. Do I make EXCUSES to be with someone else?

Wife of couple who called because a man had become inappropriate with her.  
When? When they had gone to get a video while the other two partners were home with the children.

Watch out for those eyes that say more than how are you!!!

c. Am I PREOCCUPIED with thoughts of someone else?

Can you think of anyone else who constantly occupies your mind?

d. Do I put myself in COMPROMISING SITUATIONS?

All affairs are set up by compromising what you know to be right.

e. Do I send out improper BODY LANGUAGE?

Lengthy handshakes.

Jean Rose said, "People who are not looking for affairs and are not sending off messages, are not hustled. It's as simple as that."

Steps to affair proof your marriage:

a. You must know the PRIME TIMES when you are the most vulnerable.

- 1) Early in career building
- 2) A new baby in the home
- 3) At age transitions
- 4) When there are unmet needs for intimacy
- 5) Mid-life crisis or mid-life re-evaluation
- 6) Having to deal with an aging body
- 7) Moving transitions
- 8) When wife enters or re-enters the job market

b. You must stop COMPARING your marriage with others.

c. You must continually work on COMMUNICATIONS.

Studies show wives who become involved in extramarital affairs do so mainly for someone to talk to.

d. You must carefully choose your FRIENDS.

It is very well documented that most affairs occur between family members, close personal friends or co-workers.

IF YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS DO NOT HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THEIR MARRIAGE, THEY SHOULD NOT BE YOUR BEST FRIENDS.

e. You must never think, “this could NEVER happen to me.”

Most people who think it will not happen to them often fall into the trap.

We must live very concerned and very carefully that nothing even gets close to possible failure.

f. You must look beyond the temptation to the CONSEQUENCES of your sin.

You never get to go back. Things are never the same again. You can be forgiven but the shame remains.

ILL - I want to share with you a letter written by a teenage girl. To my understanding this is a true letter. What she has done is to draw a word picture for her father who just had an affair.

It's late at night and I am sitting in the middle of the bed writing to you. I have always wanted to talk with you so many times during the last few weeks but there has never been any time when we have been alone.

Dad, I realize that you are dating someone else. I know that you and mom may never get back together and that is terribly hard for me to accept, especially knowing that means that you may never come home or be an everyday dad to me and my brother again.

At least I wanted you to understand what is going on in our lives. Don't think that mom asked me to write this because she didn't. She doesn't even know I am writing, I just wanted to share with you what I have been thinking.

I feel like our family has been riding in a nice car for a long time. You know the kind you always like to have as a company car. The kind that has every extra inside. No scratches on the outside. But over the years the car has developed some problems. It's smoking, the wheels wobble, the seat covers are ripped and it has really been hard to drive or ride because of all the shaking and squeaking.

But you know dad it's still a great car or it could be. With a little work it could run for a few more years. Brother Brian and I have always been in the back seat with you and mom up front. We always felt secure when you were driving and mom was beside you. But last month when you left, mom had to take over the wheel.

It was night time. We just turned the corner and suddenly we looked up and we saw another car coming at us out of control, heading straight for us. Mom tried to swerve out of the way but the other car smashed into us. The impact sent us flying off the road crashing into a light post.

The thing is Dad, just before we hit, we saw that it was you driving the other car. We saw something else. Sitting next to you was the other woman..

It was such a terrible accident. We were all rushed to the emergency ward. When we asked where you were nobody knew. We are still not really sure where you are in all of this or if you are really hurt. Did you need help?

Mom was really hurt. She was thrown into the steering wheel and she punctured her lungs and it almost pierced her heart. When the car wrecked, the back door smashed into Brian. He was covered with cuts from broken glass and shattered his arm. He is now in a cast. He is still in so much pain and shock that he does not want to talk or play with anybody.

And as for me, I was thrown from the car and stuck out in the cold for a long time. My right leg was broken. And as I laid there I couldn't move and I didn't know what was wrong with Mom and Brian. And I was hurting so much myself that I couldn't help them at all.

There have been times since that night that I have wondered if any of us would make it. And even though we are getting a little better we are still here in the hospital and the doctor says that I will need a lot of therapy on my leg. I know they will help get it better. But Daddy, I wish it was you helping me instead of them. The pain is so bad.

But what's worse is that we miss you so much. And every day we wait to see if you are going to visit us in the hospital and every day you don't come.

I know it is over by my heart would explode with joy if somehow I could look up and see you walk into my room. At night when it is really quiet they push Brian and me into Mom's room and we all talk about you. About how much we all love driving with you. How we all wish that you were back with us.

Are you alright? Are you hurting from the wreck? Do you need us like we need you? If you need me I am here and I love you.

A few days later this little girl, because of this incredible word picture that she painted for her dad, walked out of her bedroom and down the stairs and her dad was waiting for her. He stopped the affair and the family was reunited.

Please listen to me. DON'T DO IT. DON'T DO IT. DON'T DO IT. THE PAYMENT IS TOO GREAT!

If you are close to doing it, STOP NOW.

g. You must start you own affair at HOME.

Follow these steps to have an affair with YOUR SPOUSE.

- 1) Value your SPOUSE.
- 2) Add SPICE to your marriage.
- 3) TOUCH each other often.
- 4) Do the UNEXPECTED.
- 5) Give TIME to your companion.
- 6) Share EXPERIENCES.
- 7) Be BEST FRIENDS.
- 8) Take VACATIONS from responsibilities.

The eighth warning signal:

8. CONSTANT conflict.

If you are having this in your marriage it will wear you down.

The ninth warning signal:

9. FINANCIAL conflict.

Marriage is when a man takes a girl off of a pedestal and puts her on a budget.

A lot could be said here. Finances is one of the top 2 reasons for divorce.

Be careful. Don't separate check books. No such thing as his or her money.

The last warning signal:

10. OVER-COMMITMENT to things other than my marriage.

For too many people home is a cloverleaf where we pass by each other on the way to meetings.

We need to stop like we are doing this week and do a check up.

Are we overcommitted to the unimportant things and undercommitted to the important things?

No one ever says on their death bed, "I wish I had spent more time at the office."

## CONCLUSION

This poem summarizes what I want to close with.

### I Have Arrived

I have not seen the plays in town,  
only the computer printouts.  
I have not read the latest books,  
only the "Wall Street Journal."  
I have not heard birds sing this year,  
only the ringing of phones.  
I have not taken a walk anywhere,  
but from the parking lot to my office.  
I have not shared a feeling in years,  
but my thoughts are known to all.  
I have not listened to my own needs,  
but what I want I get.  
I have not shed a tear in ages,  
I have arrived.  
Is this where I was going?

-Natasha Tosefowitz

Lord, help us re-prioritize our life.

WITHOUT GOD WE CANNOT.

WITHOUT US GOD WILL NOT!