

HANDOUT MODULE SIX

Enriching your marriage – steps to resolve conflict

You will have conflict even in an excellent Christian marriage. Most arguments in marriage are about money, personal habits (especially untidiness), children, housework, sexual intimacy, family and friends. such conflict can be caused by:

- Genuine misunderstandings
- Genuine differences of opinion
- Lost trust
- Selfishness within the marriage
- Personality clashes
- Sinful attitudes and habits
- Satan promoting conflict

Some people use the 'avoidance/denial approach'. This includes pretending there is no conflict or running away from a conflict situation. other people use the 'attack approach'. This can include harsh words, manipulation and in extreme cases even physical threats. The Christian approach should be the 'peace making approach'. This approach seeks to find a way forward that listens to, respects and where possible accommodates your spouse's views whilst recognising that there will always be differences and rarely does everyone end up with all they wish.

Nine basic principles when in disagreement with your spouse

- Lose some battles
- Let go of the past
- Do not say things in an accusing manner
- Never fight in public
- Try to understand not only what the other person is saying but also what they are feeling
- Never let the sun go down on your anger (ephesians 4:26)
- Do not let problems fester
- Apologise
- Practice the power of forgiveness

How to raise difficult issues with your spouse

- Do not put off the conversation but do choose a good time to have it
- start gently
- Show respect
- Remember your spouse did not mean to cause you hurt/upset
- stick to one point/resentment in one conversation
- Be prepared to put the discussion on hold in a calm way (ephesians 4:26 again!)

Remember the golden rule: 'Treat others as you would wish them to treat you.'