



SHARING SCRIPTURE

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Little Times of Trouble

June 8, 2019

Texts: Matthew 7:5; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:4-8; Ephesians 4:26, 27; James 1:19, 20; Colossians 3:19; Matthew 7:12

One of the most crucial topics in the field of family counseling is in dealing with conflict. A new wrinkle in family conflict management—due to changing laws around the nation—is that some counselors now promote smoking marijuana as a way to reduce marital stress! [1]

Perhaps a better approach to dealing with family conflict is to learn conflict management skills during courtship. Dating is all about taking a relationship for a test drive, and couples sometimes make false assumptions about their bonds when conflict arises. Some avoid conflict altogether, since it's never pleasant; others may see it as a sign that the relationship is doomed and figure they might as well break up. In these cases, the couple misses out on the opportunity to practice healthy conflict resolution. What a couple may learn is that one partner does not handle conflict well. That in itself could be reason enough to end the courtship. Healthy conflict management is a tool to build strong relationships, and is a key to successful families. [2]

It's fitting that this week's lesson is entitled "Little Times of Trouble." Working through small irritants can help families learn to deal with the big issues that crop up later on. Children especially need to learn how to sort out conflicts. Playground squabbles can give them the tools they need later on to manage trouble in the workplace. These little times of conflict can be great growing opportunities to raise fully mature adults.

Unfortunately, some of the big issues that can arise in families are truly horrific cases of abuse and control. What is particularly appalling is the way some have twisted Scripture to justify this cruelty ("wives submit to your husbands," etc). The Seventh-day Adventist Church is addressing the problem of abusive relationships with our "End It Now" summits and emphasize Sabbaths to give members tools to combat toxic relationships. Even a Sabbath school class can be a great venue to break the ice on the topic. The days of looking the other way or minimizing the impact of abuse must come to an end in any church that claims to be God's people on earth. As our lesson points out, "any form of abuse is contrary to the central principle of God's kingdom—unselfish love."

A truly mature family is one that has learned to make humility, forgiveness, and unconditional love the foundation of their daily interactions. Jesus said that we must

forgive people when they sin against us. Sometimes our offer of forgiveness is the motivation for offenders to actually ask for forgiveness and begin taking the necessary steps toward making changes in their lives. Even abusive homes can potentially become little slices of heaven on earth through the transforming power of God's Spirit.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/smoking-pot-could-reduce-conflict-132955687.html>

[2] <https://verilymag.com/2019/05/conflict-in-dating-guide>

For Reflection

Connecting: Each one draw a picture of a common tool that you'd find in any carpenter's shop or mechanic's tool chest. Now share with your group how this tool illustrates a relationship mechanism for healing or preventing interpersonal conflict (e.g. a wrench tightens loose bolts, and the bonds of marriage need regular tightening).

Sharing: How, exactly, can a person "Be angry, and do not sin"? (Ephesians 4:26)

1. When you're angry, it's okay to give people "the look," but don't lash out verbally or physically
2. You can explode in anger until bedtime, but then it's time to chill out
3. It depends on what you do with your anger—either letting it explode, or using it to address the underlying conflict that fostered it
4. There are some causes that justify anger, such as injustice
5. If you just hold your anger in without expressing it, it will eventually die down and go away
6. Other:

Applying: Do you know what to do if you discover a situation of abuse in your community? Open the search apps on your phones and look up the contact info for your local abuse prevention services. Can you find a link that gives you the steps necessary to take action to help such a situation?

Valuing: How are your conflict management skills? Pray for God to give you the will and the skill to be an effective peacemaker in all of your relationships.

Welcome to Sharing Scripture

We hope you have been enjoying Sharing Scripture as an interactive weekly resource for your Adult Sabbath School study guides. Not only does this resource start with a story in the news and link it with the Bible texts and topic of the Adult Sabbath School study guide, but it provides questions for reflection. The four questions follow this cycle of learning:

Connecting: a question or two that moves you from personal experience into the Bible

Sharing: digging deeper into Scripture and understanding what it means

Applying: experimenting in fun and interactive ways, making the Biblical concepts work for you

Valuing: a call to action in your life as God is prompting you to respond

If you appreciate using Sharing Scripture as a resource, and you know others who may be interested, please share these newsletters with a friend. Better yet, have that person sign up for this free resource personally. You can do that by calling by calling 800.272.4664 or by emailing us at creativeministryinfo@gmail.com.

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