

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 797  
Molalla, OR 97038

Pastor Dale Satrum



Phone: 503-829-5101  
Fax: 503-829-9502

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**Overcoming The Storms Of Life**  
***Overcoming The Storms Of Marriage***  
(Part 2)

**Intro:** Obviously one of the most common storms of life we face has to do with our marriages. Anyone who is married has experienced conflict. The real issue is how do we overcome it? How do we navigate through it? How do we not let it destroy us? (5 keys to overcome)

**I. Marital Storms Are Normal**

*I Cor. 7:28 "...However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems."* (NLT) If you choose to get married you will have problems! It's part of the marital package. WHY? What happened to "happily ever after?"

A. Marital storms are normal because of gender differences

1. God created men and women different. In the book of Genesis, it says that He created them male and female. Different by design right from the beginning.
2. God did not create men to act like women or women to act like men. In our culture today, there is great pressure placed upon men to act like women in the area of relationships. The belief that women understand relationships and men don't have a clue!
3. This type of thinking is wrong / worldly / and has created confusion and damage to many relationships. The truth is that men and women just understand relationships differently...Not wrong...just different.
4. Lisa and I and our gender differences. (Explain: She's more verbal – more sensitive Emotionally – she can multi-task – estrogen Vs testosterone – like movies about love – I like Gladiator!

B. Marital storms are normal because of personality differences

1. God did not create two people alike. We all have a variety of differences despite gender and one of these is personality. Each of us has a unique personality.
2. Odds are, you did not marry someone with the exact personality as yourself. You probably married someone with some opposite traits. It is true that opposites attract.
3. So now combine gender differences with major personality differences and you have the recipe for the perfect storm!
4. Share about the personality differences with Lisa and I. Yes there are some

similarities, but also great differences. (Explain: She likes routine – safety – details and organization – she likes to follow the rules -

- When 2 people get married, all the elements of a major storm are already there.
- A marital storm does not mean you have a bad marriage. Storms are inevitable! It's what you do in the storm that makes all the difference. It may be just a tropical depression, but if we're not careful, we can do things to make it a category 5 hurricane! So...what do we do?

## II. Choose Humility Rather Than Hatred

### A. Humility before God

*James 4:6 "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (NIV)*

1. If we want God's help in our marriages then we'd better get this figured out how we tap into it. It is through humility rather than self-reliance. As long as you think you can fix this thing yourself, He will let you try.
2. The sooner we admit we can't fix our marriages the better off we'll be. God's grace and help is only available to the humble not the arrogant. In fact, He opposes the arrogant.
3. So how do I humble myself before God? Let go of your belief that you can change your marriage by your efforts alone. Get rid of your pride. Admit to God that He is the only one who can save your marriage.
4. Ask for His forgiveness. What? I haven't done anything wrong! That is your pride speaking! Of course you've done things wrong. Own your part. An inability to admit wrong is evidence that pride rules your heart.
5. Then, agree to participate with Him in whatever He wants you to do. Humility admits that God knows more about marriage than I do. Pride has clinched fists before God. It is unable to receive anything from God. Humility has open hands.

### B. Humility before your spouse

*Phil. 2:3 "Don't be selfish... Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." (NLT)* Pride thinks of self first, humility thinks of others first. The #1 reason for divorce...selfishness / Pride.

*Prov. 10:12 "Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love makes up for all offenses." (NLT)* Hanging on to hatred / bitterness / unforgiveness / always intensifies the storms. All forms of hatred. It is our pride that causes us to hang on to these things!

1. This is why we need God. We can't do these things without His help. Left to myself, I am a selfish – self-centered – prideful – I want it my way type of person. This is who I am without God controlling my life.
2. So what does it look like to humble ourselves before our spouses? I'm not going to be nobody's door-mat! You better not be asking me to do that!
3. One of the most significant ways to demonstrate humility in our marriages is to be

willing to ask for forgiveness for our part of the marital storm and to grant forgiveness to our spouse.

4. "I know what I did / said was wrong. I know I hurt you. Will you please forgive me?" The only thing that will keep us from doing this is our pride. The only thing that will keep us from granting forgiveness is our pride.
5. When you grant someone forgiveness, you give up the right to ever bring the issue up again. You can no longer use it as a weapon to wound the other person. It's over. You choose to let it go.
6. This is a step some of you need to take today. This is a step that will unleash God's grace upon your marriage. You have to trust Him!

### **III. Choose Understanding Instead Of Undermining**

#### **A. Be intentional about increasing marital understanding**

*Prov. 16:22 "Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it." (NASB)* The more understanding you have about your marriage the more life you will experience.

*Prov. 3:13 "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. (NASB)* The more wisdom you have in marriage the more blessed it is.

1. Ignorance is NOT bliss when it comes to relationships. Ignorance relationally is a disaster. Yet this is how most people enter marriage. They think love is all they need. Finding the right person is all they need. Romantic...but not reality.
2. Then, after the realities marriage set in people embrace this fatalistic perspective that believes it is impossible to understand the opposite sex. "Men, Women...who can understand them? (Men are from Mars – Women from Venus)
3. Think about all of the skills that you have. How did you attain those skills? You had learn them? Someone had to teach / show you and then you had to increase your understanding and practice those skills. (driving / trained for job /
4. Why do we think that understanding how to have a great marriage and the skills to implement healthy relationships are to come natural? They don't. They must be learned. They must be practiced.
5. One way you can be intentional about your marriage is to take the Love and Respect class that starts this Tuesday night. (explain) Showing up at this class doesn't mean your marriage is shipwrecked. It simply means you are committed to understanding.

#### **B. Be intentional about removing things that undermine each other**

*Eph. 4:29 "Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." (NLT)*  
*Gal. 5:15 "But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another." (NLT)*

1. Unfortunately, these verses describe many marriages. Too often, there is so much harsh, wounding communication going on. Married couples are literally devouring

- one another verbally and destroying their marriages in the process.
2. We have embraced the idea that these types of behaviors are acceptable and normal in marriage. Let me make this very clear...They are NOT! Doing things that destroy another person should never be normal or acceptable.
  3. Some of you are literally destroying your marriages with your words. You are undermining the very foundation of your relationship with your critical / wounding / mean spirited talk.
  4. When I was growing up, I was taught this: “If you can’t say anything nice...don’t say anything at all.” This is a great skill in marriage. In fact, it’s essential! If you are the type of person who says everything you think and feel you will undermine and destroy your marriage. (Praise God I haven’t said everything I’ve thought!)
  5. It is time to develop some emotional and verbal discipline. It’s time to make a commitment to stop all forms of wounding, unloving talk in your marriage. (Critical / nagging / derogatory / put-downs / focused sarcasm / belittling / past mistakes)
  6. Some of you are thinking; “I just say these things because I want them to change.” If you want someone to change for the positive, you don’t use a negative wounding technique. Will you make a commitment to this?

#### **IV. Choose To Meet The Deepest Need Not Create The Deepest Wound**

*Eph. 5:25,33 “For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her...So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” (NLT)*

- The marital commands in Scripture are different because God created men and women with different primary needs. A woman’s primary need is to be loved. A man’s primary need is to be respected. They both need love and respect. We’re talking primary need.
  - To not meet someone’s deepest need is to eventually create the deepest wound.
- A. A Husband must meet his wife’s need for unconditional love
1. I don’t know any husband who doesn’t admit to loving his wife. I don’t know any husband who wouldn’t die for his wife. It usually breaks down in how he demonstrates this sacrificial love.
  2. Men and women have different definitions of what love looks like. Men think that their job / their providing for their family – home / coaching soccer – involved with kids / I am not saying these things are not important, women look at other things.
  3. It is very important that as husbands we learn to love our wives by their definition NOT ours. How do I find that out? That’s may be one of the unsolved mysteries of the universe.
  4. Here’s what you do...ask her to define it for you. “What things can I do so that you feel loved and cherished?” What things communicate love to you?”
  5. CAUTION: Don’t ask this question unless you have every intention of fulfilling it. It will be too wounding for her to be that transparent to only have you ignore her deepest need. (Wives, realize this takes time – it’s new!)

B. A Wife must meet her husband's need for unconditional respect

1. I think often women wonder why their husbands don't respond to all their loving. "If I just love my husband more it will impact him in some positive way and he'll respond to me better.
  2. The reason that doesn't work as well as you'd like is due to the fact his greatest need is for respect not love. This is a hard one for our culture to swallow since we are a love dominated culture.
  3. We also believe in our culture that respect must be earned. Yet the bible is very clear. Respect in the marriage relationship is unconditional just like love. Plenty of wives who believe; "I start respecting him as soon as he starts earning it...as soon as he starts acting respectable." Yet, this is not what scripture teaches.
- How would you feel if your husband told you that you have to earn his love?
    4. When it comes to respect, men and women define it differently. As a wife, you may think you are very respectful, yet it may not be received by your husband that way.
    5. Here's what you do...ask him to define it for you. Ask him what behaviors and attitudes convey respect to him. Also, take the Love and respect class because he may have difficulty defining it for you. He will need some help.
    6. CAUTION: Don't ask this question unless you're willing to fulfill it. To ignore your husband's deepest need will wound him as well.
  - The greatest way to influence someone to change is to meet their deepest need. Will you?

**V. Choose Christ To Change You**

- I believe it is more important to become the right person than it is to find the right person. If you are committed to the first part, the second part will care for itself. If 2 people are committed to becoming the right person, you will become the right person for your spouse. How?

A. Let Jesus change you into a new person

*Gal. 2:20 "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (NLT)*

1. I do not believe it is possible for you to be the spouse you need to be without letting Jesus change your life. As long as "the old self" is running your life and marriage, you're going to have some pretty devastating storms.
2. If Christ lives in you and is running your life and marriage, you will overcome whatever the storm is. He's navigating not you.
3. Have you given Christ your old life or are you still hanging on to it? We can't experience new life until the old life is dead. ..until then, the old life is still in charge. If you want a new marriage it starts with a new you! This is why Jesus came!
4. Are you willing to give your life to Christ? "I don't want the old me living any longer, I want the life You bring." Who wouldn't want to have a spouse that demonstrated the characteristics of Jesus?

- The new you is made with the ability to draw of God’s power. Before Christ you operated on internal battery power. Now, you’re wired to plug into 220!

B. Daily tap into His power

*Eph. 3:20 “Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power **at work within us**, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.” (NLT)*

1. As long as you’re operating on your power for your marriage, you will be underpowered for the task. We need to be tapping into the power that is available to us in Christ. HOW?

2. Ask for it – Every day for every situation / believe it will be there when you need it. It’s promised to you.

Depend on it – Your dependence is in God and His power not your own. Lord, I am depending on You today. Agreement to obey and follow. – Humility before God.

Walk in it don’t wait for it – God’s power shows up in the moment you need it not before. Put yourself in places to need it believing He will give you the ability to do what He asks you to do. (Therefore, walk forward by faith and His power will meet you there. (Forgiveness / humility / meeting spouses needs /

- If we do this, we will see God do more than we could ever ask or think in our marriages.
- Are you experiencing some marital storms? They don’t have to be devastating. Will you...Choose humility rather than hatred / Understanding instead of Undermining / Meet the deepest need NOT create the deepest wound / Choose Christ to change you?