



INTRODUCTION

I. Remember...conflict arises from your unmet expectations and sinful cravings.

- Powlison: "I have yet to meet a couple locked in hostility who really understood and reckoned with their motives. James 4:1-3 teaches that cravings underlie conflicts. Why do you fight? It's not 'because my wife/husband . . . '—it's because of something about you."¹

II. Remember...Confession is humbly acknowledging your sin and honestly admitting it to your spouse.

(a) Confession is humbly acknowledging our sin before God.

Kris Lundgaard: "The grace of God in Christ and the law of sin are the two fountains of all your holiness and sin, joy and trouble, refreshment and sorrow. If you are to work with God and glorify him in this world, you need to master both."

(b) Confession is honestly admitting our sin to our spouse.

Bonhoeffer: "In confession the break-through to community takes place. Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community...In confession the light of the Gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart."

¹ Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes*, 151.



III. Remember...forgiveness is continually choosing to forgive sin and not treat our spouse as they deserve.

John Piper: "The Lord 'bears with' us every day as we fall short of his will. Indeed, the distance between what Christ expects of us and what we achieve is infinitely greater than the distance between what we expect of our spouse and what he or she achieves. Christ always forgives more and endures more than we do. Forgive as you have been forgiven... Let the measure of God's grace to you in the cross of Christ be the measure of your grace to your spouse... As the Lord counts you righteous in Christ, though you are not righteous in actual behavior and attitude, so count your spouse righteous in Christ, though he or she is not righteous. In other words...take the vertical grace of forgiveness and justification and bend them out horizontally to your spouse."²

IV. Remember....joy comes at the end of repentance and forgiveness

John Calvin: "If anyone insists on his own goodness and despises others . . . let him look into himself when this petition confronts him. He will find he is no better than others and that in the presence of God everyone must duck his head and come into the joy of forgiveness only through the low door of humility."

Conclusion

² Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*, 46-47.