

Carefronting

When an issue of conflict arises between a husband and wife it should be dealt with in a timely and biblical manner. To fail to do so will compound the problem and drive an emotional wedge into the relationship.

We have already observed that *hiding* and *hurling* (Gen. 3: 6-13) are both sinful responses to conflict. What, then, is the biblical approach for effectively dealing with problems? I believe that God's method involves *carefronting*. This concept is born out of Ephesians 4:15—"speaking the truth in love". Carefronting differs from confronting in that it is done in a loving, caring manner. "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2: 3-4). Because carefronting is driven by love for the other person the carefronter is willing to take the risk of being hurt in order to get the matter settled.

How is carefronting done? I would suggest that a couple consider using the *Three-Step Method*:

1. **State the problem** (as you see it. Keep in mind we all are prone to misperception and misjudgment. Be tentative rather than dogmatic in your approach. Start with an "I" statement.)
2. **State how you feel** (about the problem. In other words, how the problem is affecting you personally. Remember, a feeling is an emotion (angry, sad, disappointed, irritated, aggravated, scared, etc.) not a thought.
3. **Look for a mutually agreeable solution** (Brainstorm together about the possible options/solutions that are available. Don't get "tunnel vision". Sometimes solutions are a mixture of several different options. Be willing to compromise!

Scenarios:

1. Bob has asked Kate to stay within their budget because money is tight. While balancing the checkbook he notices that she has overspent and they will not be able to pay the power and telephone bill on time.
2. Meg feels that Tom is always distracted and unwilling to give her the time and attention that she needs to feel loved. He rarely hugs or kisses her without an ulterior motive.
3. Bob overheard his wife, Sabrina on the phone talking to her mother about their marital problems. Bob already knows that she was against them getting married.
4. Jonna likes to keep a clean apartment but her husband, Phil grew up in a home where his mother picked up after him and his father.
5. Kurt feels that Kathy has lost interest in their physical relationship. He realizes that she works full-time like he does but is feeling rejected.

6. Robin likes to spend time with her husband, Kyle doing things together on weekends but he has shown little interest. Recently, he spent two consecutive Saturdays fishing with a friend of his.
7. Catherine is hurt when she sees Greg staring at other women when they are out shopping. He says he loves her and it means nothing but she is still offended.
8. John has a tendency to speak before he thinks. Last night he blurted out that he thought his wife, Roxy was “starting to get fat.”
9. Mary cannot understand why her husband, Tommy does not cut the grass, wash the cars, take the trash out, etc. like her father did. She is frustrated that he doesn't seem to care about the way things look at the house.
10. Martha wishes her husband, Paul had more spiritual interest. It seems like she is the one who has to take the lead in having devotions, going to church, and studying scripture together.