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Home To Home



Passing on Five Cornerstones of Christian Marriage

Cornerstone #3

UNDERSTANDING

◆ *Think about this:*

If it can be achieved by men or women, then it is not worthy of God's intervention.

◆ *Memory Verse*

Ephesians 4:32

Please print or write this verse and be prepared to share it from memory when you meet with your **Home To Home** Host Couple.

◆ LESSON OVERVIEW

A. What is Understanding?

1. Striving to **comprehend**. Working earnestly to grasp the "full" or accurate meaning.
2. Being **considerate** of another and working toward embracing his/her best interests.
3. Trying to fully **appreciate** the other's position—looking at the situation from the other's point of view.
4. Being **willing** to communicate with a humble, genuine, and caring presence:
 - > Having good eye contact.
 - > Listening without interrupting.
 - > Choosing not to get defensive.
 - > Having the attitude of "believing in" and "wanting the best" for the other person—wanting that person to actually feel you're on his/her side.
5. **Going out of your way** to be considerate of another's needs, struggles, desires and ideas.
6. **Treating** others so they feel valued and appreciated.

Circle a definition above that is the **most important** to you.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

B. Understanding Who?

1. **Understanding God's perspective.** The Scriptures teach us that although it may cost all we have, we are commanded to "gain understanding."

Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Proverbs 4:7

With a humble and teachable spirit, we are to seek to know the Lord and His ways so that we may follow Him, rather than follow the ways of our society or our own fleshly desires.

2. **Understanding your mate.** Depend on the Lord to give you the **desire** to understand and seek the will of God with your whole heart. As you draw closer to Him, He will give you the **desire** to understand your mate, the kind of understanding in which your mate will feel understood.

Loving, empathic communication helps you to understand your mate. What is needed from you is a humble and teachable heart attitude. Become more concerned with what, how, when, and why your mate is experiencing certain thoughts and feelings.

It is vital that you—

"BECOME A STUDENT"

of your mate's interests, desires, frustrations, worries, hopes, and needs.

Become less concerned with insuring that you win—that you get your "two cents in"—that you get your point across.

Although your needs are important, if you want to understand your mate, trust that the Lord will meet your needs as you seek to meet those of your mate's.

*And my God will meet all of your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. **Phillipians 4:19***

Note: Your needs ARE IMPORTANT and personal dignity needs to be maintained. You are not to become a doormat or a slave to an abusive, foolish, or extremely insensitive mate. This is not understanding your mate. This is foolishly enabling his/her hurtful, destructive, or irresponsible behavior to continue and grow. In a way, this is hurting your mate. See "**TOUGH LOVE**" in the Descriptions section.

C. Why is Understanding important?

1. Without gaining **understanding**, your heart attitude will become cold and self-centered. If you are living a **selfish**, carnal life, you will possess little or no desire to understand or be considerate of your mate's needs and feelings. Thus, you will become defensive, hardened, and focused on your own needs.
2. If you seek to know the Lord and understand the Scriptures so as to please and obey Him, **then** you will be given the **heart's desire** to understand your mate. Then God will bless your marriage richly.

*... find out what pleases the Lord. **Ephesians 5:10***

*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. **Psalm 37:4***

- a. Understanding your mate requires **loving empathy**. Even if you want to "get defensive" with your mate, you should make a sincere choice by faith to return a blessing and enter into his/her point of view.

The Holy Spirit will honor such a choice and He will empower it.
Remember: The choice is up to you; the empowering is up to Him.

- b. Exercising loving empathy requires **humility**. Therefore, understanding your mate requires humility.

Put your feet into your mate's shoes. Walk around awhile. Begin to get a feel for what life must be like for him/her, taking into consideration

gender, background, health, personality, strengths, weaknesses, the way he/she was raised, fears, doubts, stressors, etc.

Ask God to help you **listen attentively** so that you may be able to hear the unspoken words, or those emotions and unmet needs that are camouflaged behind words of pain, loneliness, silence, or despair.

Ask God to enable you to experience your mate's perspective as he/she sees it.

This will take humility and practice. This will also take a God-trusting, mate-honoring, heart attitude.