

MID-LIFE MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT PART 3
By Pastor Glenn Pease

LESSON 3

SHARE THE POEMS YOU WROTE THIS WEEK.

I will start with the one I wrote for Lavonne.

I think that I shall never see,
A tree as lovely as my wife,
For though the tree gives much to me,
It cannot satisfy my life.
It's fruit and shade are very pleasing.
It's leaves are a wonder to behold,
But a forest of trees when I am freezing,
Without you dear would leave me cold.

Man does not live by bread alone and neither do women. A wife needs more in her husband than a bread winner. She needs her ego fed as well as her body. She needs constant reassurance of her dignity as a woman. Except when they are asleep mates are communicating something to each other constantly by words and actions. It is impossible not to communicate. Therefore, we need to be conscious that we are communicating something at all times, and need to focus on the positive.

Dr. Herbert Otto in his book More Joy In Your Marriage writes, "Lack of communication is perhaps the greatest single cause of failure in marriage. Invariably, what is left unsaid causes the most harm. What has been said can be dealt with, talked over, and worked out. What is never communicated fosters and builds up pressures, causing misunderstanding and frustration.

"In marriage counseling, we repeatedly hear the despairing cry: Why didn't you tell me you felt that way years ago! The feelings not communicated at the time they occur build a thin transparent wall between a couple. The more that remains unsaid and unexpressed, the thicker and darker this wall grows, and the more difficult it becomes to penetrate."

LET'S PLAY PERSPECTIVE

Each of us give what we feel is the way it is in our marriage as to which one of us is more liberal or more conservative. We are not talking politics, but attitude toward life and change. I am the liberal and Lavonne is the conservative. I am more likely to want to go to a movie or to eat in a restaurant that has a bar connected. I tend to be the one to try anything new. On the other hand, her resistant to change may also prevent us from wasting time and resources on what are misadventures, and thus, there is a balance that is not a burden. I feel that women are more conservative than men. Is this your feeling as well?

God seems to be willing to change to fit the changing circumstances. Jonah 3:9-10, Ex. 32:14, Psa. 106:45, Joel 2:13-14 God does not change in his nature but in his response, and this is what we have to do as mates to have a happier marriage. Change is a major factor in mid-life, and we must be flexible. It is often like the teen age period in that we tend to do radical things that we would not do at other times. Byron said, "Of all the barbarous middle ages, that which is most barbarous is the middle age of man."

1. It is the time of life when men are most likely to have an affair and run off. 48 year old Henry Smyth, a trusted accountant ran off with a 22 year old cocktail waitress. Men want to fulfill their fantasies and become careless. The civil war between duty and desire rages and many choose the way of escape. It is the age of great responsibility, and yet also of great rebellion, for there is the urge to chuck it all for something else.

2. Boredom in the bedroom. Lack of variety and excitement makes mid life the most dangerous period for taking risks. The answer is to be ever changing and not getting into ruts. Avoid being hardened into stubborn patterns. Women tend to be to conservative at a time when a man needs some creativity and enthusiasm. He needs a more aggressive wife at this time.

Each partner needs to know what the other needs. What kind of changes would enhance your partnership. Each needs to be honest and reasonable in sharing their desire for change. It is not saying you are not good enough for me, and the past has no value. It is saying I have changed and now I have different needs that call for change.

David Maitland wrote, "Most relationships are improvable less by abrupt, dramatic changes, which are impossible to sustain, then by modest, repeated changes which have the potential for enduring. A slight change in the compass-heading will, on a long journey, result in arrival at a quite different destination. Radical change in that heading unsettles all aboard."

"I should say that the relation between any two decently married people changes profoundly every few years, often without their knowing anything about it; though every change causes pain, even if it brings a certain joy. The long course of marriage is a long event of perpetual change, in which a man and a woman mutually build up their souls and make themselves whole. It is like rivers flowing on, through new country, always unknown." D.H. Lawrence.

HOMEWORK

1. Discuss what changes you would most like to see in your marriage. What would you most like to add and subtract?
2. Do something together you have never done before. For example play the taste game. Go to the store and buy something for each other you have never tasted before. Play the laughing game and try to make each other laugh without tickling. Think of something funny or act out that which is funny.

