

Major Pitfalls in Relationships

Adapted from Stuart Scott in *The Exemplary Husband*

Since the Fall, Sin has Always Been the Problem in Relationships

- Adam & Eve experienced a perfect union, free from sin against God and against one another
- The Fall immediately created division between man and God, but it also created difficulty in human relationships (**Gen. 3:12-13; 4:8**)
- We have relationship problems because sin remains

Pitfall #1 - NOT PURSUING CHRIST FIRST AND FOREMOST

- When ‘making our spouse happy’ or ‘being loved well by our spouses’ is the most important we will be disappointed.
- Experience teaches us this - (Ills. Having it all only led to a feeling of disappointment)
- **Instead:** Make Christ your life and treasure. Pursue him as your “first love.” (**Phil. 1:18-21**)

Pitfall #2 - PRIDE (THE MINDSET OF SELF)

- Self-exalting pride
 - Traits: defensive, blame-shifting, renaming or ignoring sin instead of admitting & seeking forgiveness, reluctance to being accountable to anyone, rarely sees anyone else as capable of giving advice or beneficial input
 - **Instead:**
 - Put on a humility that treats others as more important than self (**Phil 2:1-4**)
 - Admit sin (**Psalms 32:5; James 5:16**)
 - Seek counsel (**Proverbs 1:5; 15:22**)
 - Welcomes accountability (**Hebrews 10:24-25**)
 - Makes requests that consider the glory of God and good of others (**Phil 2:1-4**)
- Self-focused Pride

- Traits: finds it difficult in being others-minded. My thoughts, my agenda, my problem, my lacks, my desires, my needs
- **Instead:** Seek to focus on God’s desires & serving the good of others. (**Ro 12:10**)

Pitfall #3 - SINFUL COMMUNICATION

- Be sensitive to self-initiated and reactionary sins in communication
- Traits: deceitful, unwholesome, hurtful words, tone of voice, body language.
 - Our flesh wants to excuse these sins, because of circumstances. Scripture does not give us this option
- **Instead:** Communicate with truthfulness and love at all times (**Eph 4:29**)

Pitfall #4 - A LACK OF APPRECIATION AND THANKFULNESS

- “When we are focused on the negative aspects of a person or of a relationship, rather than on the positive, we are reluctant to relate as we should.”
 - Consider the example of Paul, Jesus in Revelation 2-3
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- **Instead:** Regularly think and share thoughts of appreciation and thankfulness (**1 Th 5:11**)

Pitfall #5 - SELF-FOCUSED EXPECTATIONS

- “Looking and waiting for another’s growth, time, care, or attention is always a bad idea.”
- What do you think are some common expectations that we bring to marriage?
- **Instead:** Focus on God’s desires and your own responsibility to others instead of your desires and the performance of others.
- “See your own sin as large and others’ sin as small”