

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 2

Whose Truth?

A husband and wife each bring into marriage Core Beliefs that have been depended upon to preserve their personal well-being and identity. A husband and wife also bring into marriage different teachings and traditions that have been observed or passed on to them by their respective family, religion, community, etc.

At best, each spouse will bring into the marriage beliefs and habits that are honorable and will benefit being incorporated into the marriage relationship. At worst, there are behaviors and ways of thinking better abandoned or left in the past. Either way, personal habits and deeply ingrained elements of personality are not easily changed, abandoned, or altered without some degree of resistance.

So, when a husband and wife encounter conflict over differing beliefs, traditions or ways of thinking, whose truth wins? Is one spouse's experience more valid than the other's? Should one spouse simply defer to the other, or should each actively change their way of thinking about the matter at hand? These are all hard questions.

One of the first steps in resolving differing viewpoints requires each spouse to participate in active listening. Active listening requires there be no judgment placed on the spouse that is sharing. Active listening also requires that both spouses refrain from being defensive about parts of the conversation that apply directly to them.

The process of information gathering moves deeper when each spouse honestly and objectively observes how their words and actions impact their mate. Once each spouse recognizes and assumes personal responsibility for their actions, progress can be made in identifying common ground.

But active listening and close observation only go so far. Finding trustworthy sources of information about living with oneself and others, especially in a marriage relationship, can help bring objectivity and experience into the truth seeking effort. Seeking out successfully married couples, reading books on marriage, researching trusted online resources compiled by credentialed professionals, engaging in introspection that is guided by trained behavioral counselors, and meditating on biblical scripture are all trustworthy sources for reliable information about better thinking, better living, and being a better marriage companion.

Always keep this thought in mind; that is, it is important to remain emotionally open and available to the possibility that personal change may be necessary for you!

