



## Nuggets 30: Two D's that Destroy Marriage

I have watched several people die. More often I have watched marriages die. The tragedy is that the problems themselves were often quite fixable, had there been communication and a will to try. *Defensiveness* kept the spouses from lowering their guard and really listening to one another. *Discouragement* destroyed their will to keep trying.

Understanding these two dangers, a couple can consciously decide to counter them. Each mate often feels attacked and unfairly criticized by the other. But a mate can step back and take a fresh look at the expressed grievances of the other. Ask yourself, "Laying aside all the emotional exaggeration and unfair language, what is the real pain or need that my partner is trying to communicate? What legitimate message have I missed because I have been too busy defending myself? Jesus says truth sets us free. We each have to be humble enough to listen for and accept the truths we need to learn about ourselves. This is where sincere Christians should have a great advantage over unbelievers.

Discouragement comes when progress seems slow, or when we temporarily slip back into old ways. Not every marriage can be reclaimed but many can. It is hard work. Like recovering from a debilitating illness, it takes patience and a belief that the effort is well worth it. It helps to remember that discouragement itself is often our greatest problem and we can decide not to let it win. God will not violate people's free will but he really can bring about changes that are humanly impossible. Our job is to each obey God's teaching in our own life and trust God to do the God-sized things. You may grow in God and become more able to contribute to healing. God may show you new healing approaches and behaviors.

If even one partner will take a new look and begin responding in a new way, deadlock can often be broken.

James 3:13-18; 1:19,20; Proverbs 10:19; 16:32; Matthew 7:1-5; Ecclesiastes 7:8,9; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 12:3; Revelation 2:3; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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