



Nuggets 7: The "Nag-Withdraw" Syndrome

There's a cycle which slowly kills marriages. We guys are usually not very sensitive to our wives' needs. When she hurts long enough, she begins to complain. She wouldn't call it nagging but it is to him. He starts looking for space--maybe with friends, work or hobby. His withdrawing hurts her more. Not knowing what else to do, she turns up the volume. Which increases his desire to get away. Which makes her more bitter. This self-perpetuating cycle eats away a relationship.

That's depressing. But there are two pieces of good news. First, *cycles can be broken*. When you recognize your downward spiral, either of you can decide to stop what he/she does to perpetuate the cycle. What you have been doing isn't working. You may not have realized it, but there are better ways to fix things than by nagging or withdrawing. There is communication that builds up instead of tearing down. Caution: Our fallen nature wants to wait until our spouse makes an equal change. Christ in us would put priority on redeeming the relationship.

Couples go through the same arguments so often that they can play the tape. "When she says that, I say this, and then she always answers..." We are usually planning our next answer instead of listening. It's hard to *want* to listen. My mate may exaggerate. His/Her tone may be wrong. But underneath it all is some kind of pain or need that is trying to be understood. What would start to happen if I did the sober, unnatural, Christlike thing and really listened?

The second good news is that *there are good cycles* as well as bad ones. Jesus will give me responses that provoke good in my mate and vice versa. Could you use an upward spiral?

Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Matthew 18:6-9, 15, 21-35; Galatians 5:19-23; 6:1-5; Ephesians 4:29-32; James 1:19,20

TO SUBSCRIBE free, email subscribe@shbi.org **TO UNSUBSCRIBE** send a blank email to unsubscribe@shbi.org To communicate with us directly, email nuggets@shbi.org **Past issues** of Nuggets are archived at www.shbi.org/content/nuggets/nuggets.htm (You may place this link on your website.)

Copyright 2006 by G.B. Shelburne, III. May be freely reproduced or forwarded for non-commercial purposes provided content is unchanged and this copyright notice is included. These shepherding messages are sent to members and friends of New Beginnings Church (www.nbchurch.com), to students and alumni of South Houston Bible Institute (www.shbi.org), and to other interested persons.

Any scripture quotes, unless otherwise indicated, are from the HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION © 1978 and 1984 by the New York International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Tuition-free evening classes: www.shbi.org

Distance Learning Bible courses: www.shbi.org/content/distance/distancelearn.htm

To support SHBI's ministry: www.shbi.org/content/finances/finances.htm