

## Life Group Lesson – 5/16/10

### Introduction –

1. Why did you get married? Really.

*I'm looking for those deep answers like, "she was hot or pretty (depending on your generation)/he was handsome; was caring; listened to me; made me feel important; made me laugh, etc."*

2. How many of us have left the "great dreams" we had for our relationships when we were dating or newlyweds? What made us decide to do that?

*There are a variety of answers here. Could be that our dreams were naïve or unreasonable. It could be that we realized they were too small and God has more in store for us than we thought. It could also be that we have experienced a few failures and are now settling for getting by or keeping peace, etc.*

3. How have "failures" impacted our ideas of what is possible in our relationships?

*This is a very important question to answer. All of us have the potential to fail enough that we stop trying to accomplish anything significant although some have a greater capacity to handle failure than others. If we develop a culture of failure, we will stop trying to do the hard things because we don't think it will pay off.*

### Text: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12a;

1. In what ways are you better personally because of the person you are married to (v.9)?
2. Where are the areas that your spouse picks you up? Where do you see yourself returning that (v.10)?
3. Do you see yourself as a protector for your spouse against Satan? How do you do that (v.12a)?

### Application

How do you react to the big and small achievements of the person you love? In "marital science," celebrating the good news is called "capitalization" – a measure of how much couples are "capitalizing" on the positive events in their lives. It just means that you make a big deal out of the good moments of your marriage.

How do you respond when something good has happened to your loved one? How do you think your loved one responds to you? Choose one of the following answers:

1. My loved one usually reacts to my good fortune enthusiastically and shows genuine interest.
2. My loved one is silently supportive. He/she doesn't say much but I know he/she is happy for me.
3. My loved one reminds me that most good things also have their down side and points them out to me.
4. My loved one seems uninterested. Sometimes I get the impression he/she doesn't care.

Research has identified four personality types based on how they respond to a partner's good news:

1. Active Constructive responders are those who enthusiastically react to good news.
2. Passive Constructive responders are those who show quiet support but their spouse feels loved and supported.
3. Active Destructive responders have a negative outlook, always seeing the potential downside of positive events.
4. Passive Destructive responders don't say much because they aren't interested.

### **Impact on Marriage**

Not surprisingly, groups 3 and 4 were associated with low scores on intimacy, satisfaction, and relational happiness.

While the Passive Constructive partners were positive and loving, they also scored poorly on the measure of relational happiness.

The only couples who scored high on relational satisfaction /happiness were the ones who reported making a big deal of the good things that happen to each other.