

Dealing with Hurt & Moving Toward Healing

PRESENTATION TO THE ELDERS & ELDERS' WIVES

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE – MANSFIELD, OH
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Orientation to the Presentation

- Satan attacks the “work” and the “workers.” Our goal is to support and encourage the workers.
- We recognize that you all have different experiences, backgrounds, and situations.
- Some parts will apply to you more than others. That’s OK.
- Take in the information for yourself and to help others.
- This presentation is going to alternate between teaching of information and discussion.
- No one will be put on the spot to share.

Discussion

1. Discussion:

- How do you counsel someone who is hurt?

2. Discussion:

- What are some of the sources of hurt that affect elders and/or their wives?

Sources of Hurt

- Personal
- Marital
- Children
- Family of Origin
- Occupational
- Within the elder body
- Within the pulpit ministry
- Within the congregation
- From outside of the congregation

Forgiveness

A Heavenly Perspective on Interpersonal Forgiveness

- **Matthew 18:21-22**, “... Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?... Until seventy times seven.”
- **Ephesians 4:32**, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”
- **Colossians 3:13**, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”
- **Matthew 18:23-35** – Parable of the unjust steward.
 - He was forgiven a debt he could not repay and then would not forgive another person who owed him.

Working Definitions

• **Forgiveness**

- Forgiveness is the releasing of a debt created by some type of hurt or wrong.
- It is what one person does for another.

• **Reconciliation**

- Process whereby two people take steps to rebuild a relationship that has been hurt.
- Reconciliation always takes two and it can only go as far as the person who moves the least.
- Reconciliation is related to forgiveness, but it is also distinct from forgiveness.

Is Reconciliation Always Possible?

- God asks us to be responsible for our part and to not be a hindrance to the healing process.
 - **Romans 12:18**, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”*
- In some circumstances reconciliation is not always possible.
- In these cases, we must recognize that forgiveness can occur without reconciliation.

Forgiveness: Releasing a Debt

- When we perceive we have been wronged, we experience the hurt and a “debt” has resulted.
- Hurt creates, “You ‘owe’ me.” experience.
 - **Note specifically what they “took.”**
- People often find it difficult to forgive because they want the offender to repay the debt.
 - **We want the offender to feel how bad we hurt.**
 - **We want the offender to acknowledge and truly own the harm they caused.**
 - **We want them to be truly sorry and actively seek to make things right.**

Forgiveness: Releasing a Debt Cont’d

1. Waiting for someone to admit their fault keeps us holding the debt... We lose.
2. Forgiveness is often the only way to “settle” a debt.
3. Forgiveness does not change the nature of the transgression from wrong to right; nor does it presume the transgression never occurred.
4. Rather, instead of allowing the anger and hurt of the offense to **bond** us to the offender, forgiveness allows us to release and to detach from the wrong that occurred.

Psalm 55:12-14

When those close to us hurt us, it is particularly painful; as noted in this Psalm.

“For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.”

Discussion & Reflection

• **Discussion:**

- What things do you think make forgiveness hard to put into practice for those in the ministry?

• **Reflection:**

- Consider where you are at right now in terms of releasing hurt and forgiving. Are their people or situations that you should be intentional about working through?

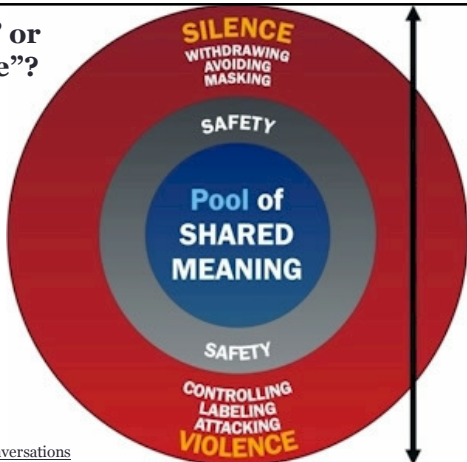
Dealing with Your Anger

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

The Paradox of Anger

- Anger is a universal emotion. Everyone has it.
- Anger is an “activating” emotion.
- Anger in two contexts in the same chapter:
 - **Ephesians 4:26-27**, “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.”
 - **Ephesians 4:31**, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:”

“Silence” or
“Violence”?



From *Crucial Conversations*

Avoiding “Silence” or “Violence”

Silence

- **Withholding** information from the pool of shared meaning.
- 1. **Masking** – sugarcoating, not saying what you really need to
- 2. **Avoiding** – staying away from topics, issues, people
- 3. **Withdrawing** – pulling out of communication

Violence

- Any action that tries to **force** others to take your view.
- 1. **Controlling** – coercing others to take our perspective
- 2. **Labeling** – using labels to dismiss people
- 3. **Attacking** – Belittling, put downs, etc.

From *Crucial Conversations* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2002

Discussion & Reflection

- **Discussion:**
 - What factors make it difficult for those in the ministry to deal with anger effectively?
- **Reflection:**
 - Talk to your spouse about how anger affects you both individually.
 - Consider how you deal with anger. Do you tend to you silence (internalizing anger) or violence (externalizing anger)? What changes do you need to make?

Dealing with Criticism

“TO AVOID CRITICISM SAY NOTHING,
DO NOTHING, BE NOTHING.”
-- ARISTOTLE --

To Consider

- **Proverbs 1:5**, *“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:”*
- **Proverbs 9:8b-9**, *“...rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”*
- **Proverbs 9:8a**, *“Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:”*
- **Proverbs 29:11**, *“A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.”*

Types of Criticism

Constructive Criticism

- Is specific enough to be clear.
- Is done to help the person grow and improve.
- Points out a need for growth or correction without attacking or demeaning the person.
- Isn't personally demeaning.
- Shows belief in the person's ability to grow and improve.
- Holds people accountable for behavior.
- Part of a dialogue. Willing to listen, share, and understand.

Unhealthy Criticism

- Either “microscopic” or “global.”
- Is done to indict or “pin” someone.
- Is personally harsh, a personal attack and/or demeans the person.
- Characterizes the person as failing or a failure.
- Indicts people for not fulfilling the speakers opinions, requests, and ideals.
- Is a monologue and only allows the other person to speak from a defensive position.

Range of Ways of Take Criticism

Dismissive: These people tend to quickly discount criticism and may overlook what they actually need to consider.

Prudent: These people consider and sort feedback, filtering-in what is wise and helpful and filtering-out what is not.

Over-Personalize: These people too quickly take in criticism and tend to ruminate about the opinions of others.

1 Peter 2:21-23

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22. who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23. who, when he was reviled [insulted; verbally abused], reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not [to get revenge]; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Remember:

1. Churches have distinct “personalities” when it comes to giving feedback and criticism.
2. At times, elders and wives can feel criticized for things that are both outside of their control and are not directly leveled at them personally.
3. Just because someone makes a comment or expresses an opinion to you, you are not required to respond to it or take it as personal criticism.

Discussion & Reflection

• Group Discussion:

- What are the sources of unhealthy criticism that elders and wives face?
- What are the sources of constructive criticism?

• Personal Reflection:

- What sources of unhealthy criticism are taking too much of your time and energy?
- What sources of constructive criticism do you need to make sure that you take time to hear?
- How do you generally receive criticism (both constructive and unhealthy)? Dismissive? Prudent? Over-Personalize?

Getting Re-grounded

LESSONS FROM I SAMUEL 30:1-8

Lessons from I Samuel 30:1-8

1. The Unexpected Happened: Verses 1-2

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

2. Everyone was Distressed: Verses 3-4

So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

Lessons from I Samuel 30:1-8

3. David was Personally Affected: Verse 5

And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

4. Strong Emotion Turned to Blame: Verse 6a

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters:

Lessons from I Samuel 30:1-8

5. David Turned to God for Strength: Verse 6b

but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

6. David Turned to God for Direction: Verses 7-8

And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

Application of 1 Samuel 30:1-8

David's Experience

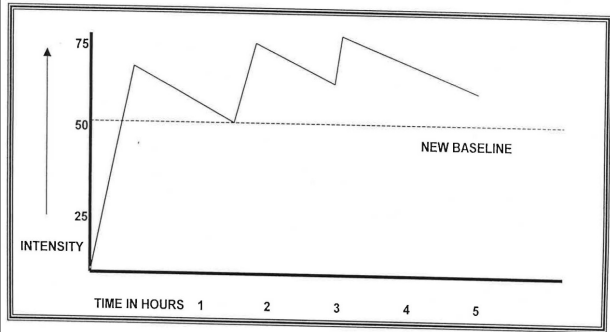
Application for Today

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The unexpected happened | 1. The unexpected happens |
| 2. Everyone was distressed | 2. People react |
| 3. David was personally affected | 3. Leaders feel it personally |
| 4. Strong emotion turned to blame | 4. Strong emotion is expressed often at the leader |
| 5. David turned to God for strength | 5. "Ground yourself" with God's strength and comfort |
| 6. David turned to God for direction | 6. Trust God for direction for <i>the next step</i> and walk in it. |

Don't Forget to "Ground Yourself"

- If we try to solve problems when we aren't emotionally grounded and thinking through the lens of God's truth, our decision-making will suffer.
- Note the lenses that we might accidentally use:
 - Frustrating, anger, and/or retaliation.
 - Pride or wanting to "save face."
 - Fear of the unknown or worry about the future.
 - Trying to control what we cannot control.
 - Fear of others' opinions and/or what they might think of us.
- We all use these lenses sometimes. Our goal is to recognize them and to shift toward the mind of Christ.

Why I Feel So Bad Graph



Your Top Priority After Being Triggered

- Your top priority is to focus on lowering your baseline tension level back down.
 - Your fight-or-flight response will want you to keep thinking about the issues at hand and trying to solve the problem when you are least able to think clearly.
- Lowering your baseline tension level will allow you to use both your logical reasoning and your emotional awareness.
 - You're awareness of the "still small voice" improves significantly as you become calmer.
- Physical, emotional, relational, spiritual

Psalm 18:2

How do you refocus on the Rock?

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

Discussion & Reflection

- **Discussion:**
 - What helps you to get "re-grounded" and resettled after something "hits" you?
- **Reflection:**
 - What things do you need to intentionally spend more time doing to help you to get "re-grounded"?

The Catch-22

IDENTIFYING WHAT WE CAN AND CAN'T CONTROL

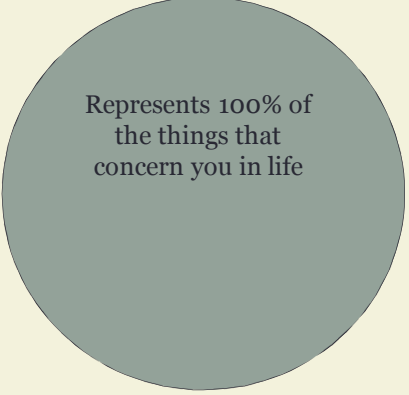
Being Caught in the Middle

- One of the most common issues elders deal with is being "in the middle" between church members who want (or don't want) something to occur.
 - Moving too fast for some and not fast enough for others.
 - Working hard to make something go well only to be criticized for what you did do.
 - Members holding you responsible for things that aren't within your control.

Remember:

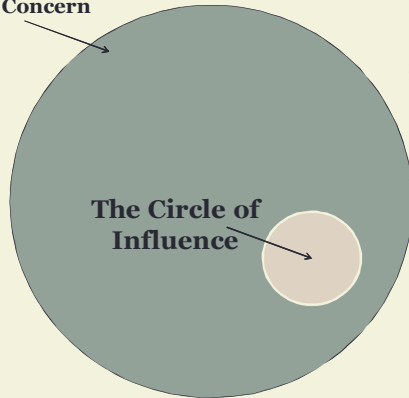
- Because of how seriously elders and wives take their stewardship, it is easy for them to accidentally take on responsibility for what is not within their control.
- If we mix up what **we feel we need** to control with **what we can only influence**, we will feel anxious and grasp for control.
 - God is fully aware of what we can and cannot control.
 - God recognizes that you can influence others, but do not have control over them.
 - God is pleased when we use our influence well and leave the rest to Him.

The Circle of Concern



Represents 100% of the things that concern you in life

Circle of Concern



- It is your personal stewardship.
- ~10-30% of the Circle of Concern.
- It represents the portion of your concerns that you can do something about right now.

Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence

- Many people spend 90% of their time in the 90% they cannot control.
- This leads to stress, anxiety, feeling out of control, difficulty letting go.
- The goal is to spend 90% of your time in the 10%.
- The Circle of Influence represents your personal stewardship.
 - It is what you can actually do.
 - It is what God expects of you, not more.
 - The challenge is to leave the Circle of Concern up to God!!

From 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. Free Press.

Discussion & Reflection

- **Group Discussion:**
 - What things do you believe elders try to control that are really outside of their control?
- **Personal Reflection:**
 - What things do you personally struggle with trying to control that you cannot really control?
 - What things do you need to accept as areas where you can influence, but not control the outcome?

“What ifs?” & Re-living Hurts

THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND

Thinking About the Future

- **Planning is a good thing.**

- **Luke 14:28-30**, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”

- **Worry is not.**

- **Matthew 6:34**, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Planning Versus “Future-Tripping”

Planning	“Future-Tripping”
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considering options for prudent action. 2. Based on stewardship, priorities, and values. 3. Focuses on what is in one’s personal control today. 4. High awareness of God’s grace and provision in the future. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentally playing out possible future scenarios about what could go wrong. 2. Based in worry, uncertainty, and anxiety. 3. Focuses on what is not in one’s personal control. 4. Has a limited awareness of God’s grace and provision for the future.

Remembering Versus “Dredging”

Remembering

1. Can consider the past without being consumed by it.
2. Is able to remember both positive and painful events.
3. Learns from past events and uses what is helpful.
4. Does not bind the person’s identity to the past (failures, setbacks, or pain)

“Dredging”

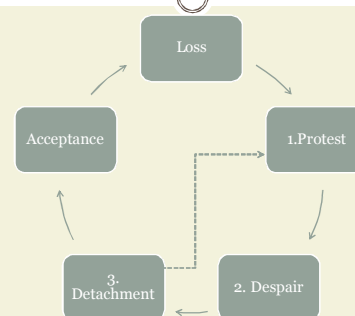
1. Overfocuses on the negative or painful aspects of the past.
2. Regret and “if only...” mindset to the past.
3. Allows the past to “haunt” our present and to fuel anxiety about the future.
4. Is tied to discouragement and depression.

Dealing with Losses

Types of Losses

- Physical – Acknowledged – e.g., death of a loved one.
- Unacknowledged – Symbolic losses
- Loss of an expected/anticipated outcome
 - Loss of families and talented brethren in your church.
 - Loss of close relationships. Hurt trust.
 - A young person you shepherded through thick and thin grows up into adulthood brought you great joy... only to surprise you by telling you that they are leaving the church.
 - Loss of respect for you and your role.
 - Parents who anticipate their children and grandchildren to be part of the church.
 - When church members anticipate that their close friends (people they grew up with; potluck groups, etc.) will remain to be part of the church.

Grief and Loss



3 Phases of Grief after Loss or Perceived Loss

1. Protest

- Shock, confusion, denial, anger at others, anger at self, anger at God, lowered self-esteem
- Crying, pain, weakness, nausea, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, etc.

2. Despair

- Agony, grief, anguish, depression
- Bargaining and “urge to recover” that which was lost, slowed thinking and actions, continuing physical symptoms.

3. Detachment

- Apathy, indifference, loss of interest, desire to withdraw and “give up”
- Decreased socialization, no new friendships, bland expression, absent spontaneity.

Isaiah 53:3-5

Because
Jesus was
this...

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Hebrews
4:15-16

... We have
the blessing
of this

15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Discussion & Reflection

• Discussion:

- What are some of the losses that elders and/or wives face as part of their role and position in the church? Example: Loss of flexibility in making family choices.

• Reflection:

- As you identify potential losses, consider whether there are ones that Satan could potentially want to use against you.
- Talk to your spouse or other confidant about it and pray for God’s protection and healing in this area.

Hurt and Insecurity

SOAP BUBBLE, RUBBER BALL, & BOWLING BALL

Hurt and Insecurity

- The combination of hurt and insecurity “catches us coming and going.”
- Insecurity makes hurts feel more painful.
 - We are more easily hurt in the areas we are most insecure about.
- Hurt tends to lead us to feel insecure.
 - We tend to feel insecure about areas where we have been hurt.
- Because we don’t want to get hurt again, we tend to avoid situations that may lead to more hurt.
 - When we feel insecure about something, we tend to avoid those situations instead of facing them directly.

Exodus 4:10-14: Are You Like Moses?

10. *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*
11. *And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?*
12. *Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*
13. *And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.*
14. *And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.*

Poorly Defined: Thinly Defined, Not Flexible



- Example: Soap Bubble
- Very fragile
- Almost anything can pop it
- When it pops, it disintegrates
- Hurt easily.
- Tends to fear conflict.

Rigid: Highly Defined, Not Flexible



- Example: Bowling Ball
- Completely solid & hard
- Nothing penetrates it
- How this person responds:
 - Hardens emotions against others as a way to not hurt.
 - May dismiss others as a way to cope.
 - May be an impatient listener.

Healthy: Defined and Flexible



- Example: Rubber Ball
- Has a flexible exterior that withstands most things.
- Bounces back and holds its shape due to internal filling.
- How this person responds:
 - Can maintain a sense of identity when around others disagree.

Where Do You Fall on This Continuum?

Too Soft Thick Skin/Soft Heart Too Hard



Jeremiah 1:7-9

Letting Go of
Doubt by
Trusting
God's Ability
to Empower

“But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.”

Discussion & Reflection

• Group Discussion:

- What things do you believe help elders and wives to maintain a “thick enough skin.”
- What things might show that an elder or wife has started shutting people out?

• Personal Reflection:

- With whom do you need to practice reinforcing your boundaries?
- With whom do you need to soften?
- What can you do to focus on Christ’s ability to empower you instead of on your own abilities?

Lament

USING EXAMPLES IN THE PSALMS
TO RELEASE STRONG EMOTIONS

Psalms for Every Occasion

- The book of Psalms contains numerous types of Psalms including:
 - Worship and Praise
 - Repentance
 - Recounting history of God’s presence with His people.
 - Wisdom
 - Lament
- Through the Psalms, God has given us a wealth of examples for sharing our hearts with Him at almost any time and any occasion:

Characteristics of Lament Psalms

- Definition: “to express sorrow, regret, or unhappiness about something.”
- The lament Psalms provide us with an example of pouring out hurt, frustration, pain, and complaint to God.
- The writers of the lament Psalms did not “sugar coat” their fears, hurts, needs, frustrations, confusion, etc.
- The lament Psalms provide a model for honestly naming and working through painful circumstances.

Psalm 142:

A Prayer of David When He Was in the Cave

1. I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.
2. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.
3. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.
4. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

Psalm 142:

A Prayer of David When He Was in the Cave

5. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
6. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
7. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Discussion & Reflection

• Discussion:

- What Psalm or other Scripture do you go to during times of hurt or frustration?

• Reflection:

- How can the lament Psalms be used to help you work through our hurts and frustrations?
- Identify a lament Psalm and go through it verse by verse applying what you can directly to a specific circumstance in your life.

The Role of Support

WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER

Support and Accountability

Each of us needs people for:

- Support & Encouragement
- Accountability
- Guidance and/or Mentoring
- Challenge and/or Confrontation

What is the role of each of the following in the areas above?

- Another elder (or other elder's wife)
- Your spouse?
- Personal friends/confidants

Discussion & Reflection

• Discussion:

- In what ways do elders appreciate receiving support from their wives?
- In what ways do the wives appreciate receiving support from their husbands?

• Reflection:

- Talk to your spouse about what you can do for each other to provide encouragement and support.
- Talk with your about your support network as individuals and as a couple. What is something you can do to stay connected to others?

Recommended Resources

- [A Tale of Three Kings](#) by Edwards
 - A story about Saul, David, and Absalom that focuses on dealing with pain, loss, and heartache caused by other Christians.
- [The Choosing To Forgive Workbook](#) by Carter and Minirth
- [The Anger Workbook](#) by Carter and Minirth
- [Boundaries](#) by Cloud and Townsend
- [Crucial Conversations](#) by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler
 - About communicating and dealing with conflict.