



Principle #14: Recognize the Real Enemy

Problem: Quarreling

Realize that your spouse is NOT your enemy. Satan is the enemy and he wants to destroy, divide, and devour our relationships. Our own pride and evil desires can also get the best of us. If we are a new creation in Christ, we can choose to put on the armor of God, resist the devil and our own evil desires, and stop fighting against each other.

Ephesians 6:12 (NLT) "For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."

John 10:10 (NLT) "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT) "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are."

James 4:1 (NLT) "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you??"

Make it Personal: How will seeing my spouse as an ally instead of an enemy change the way I interact with them?

Principle #15: Be United

Problem: Discord

Seek to be "Sympsychoi" – the Greek word for "of one mind." Be united and unified. Make an effort to be on the same page, agreeing with each other and at peace.

Philippians 2:2 (NLT) "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose."

Ephesians 4:3 (NLT) "Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace."

Psalms 133:1 (NIV) "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT) "I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other... be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."

Make it Personal: In what areas do I need to try working together more and agreeing with them more?



Principle #16: Have a Clean Slate

Problem: Record Keeping

The clean slate refers to chalkboard that had to be washed after each use. It's so important to wash the slate clean; don't keep a record of wrongs. Don't let frustrations build and linger, and choose not to go to bed angry! Rejoice in God's new mercies every morning and follow His example by starting fresh each day. After you've gotten through a "growing session" reiterate it's a clean slate and move on in love.

1 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT) "...It [Love] does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged."

Ephesians 4:26 (NLT) "And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry..."

Lamentations 3:23 (NLT) "Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning."

Make it Personal: What records do I need to let go? How will I proactively seek a clean slate?



Principle #17: Choose Joy

Problem: Negativity

Joy is a safeguard.

Joy is a choice! It's a matter of the will...

Would you prefer to be around someone who is joyful or miserable and negative?

Philippians 3:1 (NLT) "Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith."

Philippians 4:4 (NLT) "Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!"

Psalms 118:24 (NLT) "This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

Make it Personal: In what areas do I need to choose more joy? Will you choose to rejoice today and be glad in it?



Principle #18: Share Expectations

Problem: Unmet Expectations

Be open in your communication to share your own expectations, but also be flexible and willing to surrender them. Seek to meet each other's expectations.

Proverbs 13:12 (NLT) "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life."

Make it Personal: How can I excel in surrendering my own expectations and meeting theirs?

Principle #19: Be Intimate

Problem: Platonic in Marriage

Make sex a priority in your marriage. God designed sex as a beautiful gift in marriage. Embrace intimacy.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (NLT) "The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. ⁴The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

Song of Songs 7:10 (NLT) "I am my lover's, and he claims me as his own."

Make it Personal: How can I make sexual intimacy in our marriage more special?



Principle #20: Be Gracious

Problem: Ungracious

Love by God's grace, and give extra grace for off days. Know how much you need God's grace and love and offer to others what you have received from him.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT) "Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NLT) "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Make it Personal: How will I be more grace-giving this week?

