

1<sup>st</sup> = Teaching "The Tongue" Jas. 3  
2<sup>nd</sup> = Teaching

## ROADBLOCKS TO MATURITY

Campus Bible Study Women's' Retreat

February 17-19, 1995

Camp Bethany

### INTRODUCTION

What do you want more than anything else?  
What causes you the most pain?  
How are these two connected?

Today we are going to talk about Roadblocks to Maturity. What are roadblocks? A roadblock is an obstruction that halts or hinders progress. Today we will discover some of the ways that our progress towards loving others is blocked.

The one thing we want more than anything else in this world is to be loved - to be valued. We want to know that we are loved, and we want to feel highly valued. This is God's whole redemptive purpose - that we come back into His arms to realize His love, and then love others in return.

Why, then, is love so hard, so defeating? If love is what we want more than anything else, why is it the hardest thing to get? Hopefully, after this morning's workshops, we will have a deeper understanding of why we can't get what we want most of all.

In the workshops we will be talking about some of the ways we "stiff-arm" God's love toward us, and others as well. We will talk about:

Where did these "roadblocks" come from? How did they even start?

How our "female" ways of reacting and relating are sinful and immature.

How these "ways" cause roadblocks in our spiritual growth, and

How these roadblocks thwart our goal, which is to <sup>experience</sup> love and be loving in return.

Although this may sound like a pretty depressing topic for a retreat, I think we will feel some relief about being able to talk openly about these immature reactions. We all know that we stumble on these "roadblocks" and it will be helpful to discover God's way of relating so we can become mature women of God who are strong Christian workers and lovers of people.

In the workshops you will look for

- (a) why we do these things,
- (b) the effects on other people,
- (c) the mature Biblical responses for how to grow past the negative, and
- (d) how to help others who have problems in the same area of sin.

2 Cor. and Col. 3:25 indicates that we are able to have compassion and empathy toward those who have the same "affliction" as we do. We want to help others from suffering the same consequences we have suffered because of our naiveté' and foolishness. This is not to categorize you, but will help you become aware of how you affect others and why it is so hard to get along with other women. Many of you feel much more confident in relating to guys than you do girls, and that is because we girls know these "ways" and so can't be fooled as easily.

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### PROBABILITY THEORY

Probability theory is a branch of mathematics that deals with the analysis of random events, which cannot be predicted in advance.

#### DEFINITIONS

Sample Space - The set of all possible outcomes of an experiment is called the sample space.



Event - A subset of the sample space is called an event.



Probability - The probability of an event is the ratio of the number of favorable outcomes to the total number of outcomes.



Relative Frequency - The relative frequency of an event is the ratio of the number of times the event occurs to the total number of trials.



Empirical Probability - The probability of an event based on the relative frequency of the event in a large number of trials is called empirical probability.



Theoretical Probability - The probability of an event based on the number of favorable outcomes to the total number of outcomes is called theoretical probability.



Probability of an Event

The probability of an event is denoted by P(A).

The probability of an event is always between 0 and 1. If P(A) = 0, the event is impossible. If P(A) = 1, the event is certain. If 0 < P(A) < 1, the event is possible but not certain.

This retreat could be a turning point in many of your lives. It could easily be the most hopeful and positive retreat and Bible study of your Christian life so far. A lot of this will depend on your commitment to be honest. If you have an attitude of openness and willingness to admit and talk about your particular "roadblocks," then the Holy Spirit will speak to your heart through the Word and you will go home encouraged and motivated to change.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about the different topics we will cover in the workshops. These are the areas that cause problems and are especially relevant to us - the female sex....things like expectations, judging motives, gossip, manipulation, and bitterness. Do any of these sound familiar to you? No, of course not. That's what other people do!

We'll call this the "Game of Sinful Emotions." It is like a game because we move naturally from one to the other if not checked! These are natural, instinctive, self-protective, responses from our sin nature. (Matt. 7). They are like a treadmill in that one leads to the other, and unless checked they become more deeply imbedded in our personality. I will define each one because definitions are very important. We must understand what the words means so proper weight can be given to them.

(Chart) JUDGING MOTIVES  
EXPECTATIONS  
MANIPULATION  
GOSSIP  
BITTERNESS

Let's start with "Judging Motives." This is the attitude that thinks, "You didn't act *for* me, so you must have something *against* me..." In judging motives, there is no room for considering where or what the other person is going through. The closer you get to people, the more clearly you see their odd, irritating ways, their bad habits, their sin problems - things that drive you up the wall, and rather than say something to that person, you begin to withdraw. For instance, a roommate - she bugs you and it's embarrassing, and you get mad! You think, "Why doesn't she just do what she is supposed to do...then I wouldn't feel so uncomfortable!" Wars in the mind start, and you begin judging her motives, because after all, she "should know" how much she's bugging you! But, one of the problems is that now since a friendship has been started, your own identity is now tied in with that person.

Matthew 7:1-5 is about how you view the sinful behavior of others - and a lot of the way you view others is going to determine in large part how they respond to you. The judging talked about here doesn't mean we aren't allowed to judge the *morality* of a person's action. But we are supposed to separate the person from the sin and not use the behavior as an excuse to *write her off*, or *despise her*, or *ignore her*, or *gossip* about her - in other words, judge her. The wrong way to judge is by *punishing* with silence, anger or withdrawal - and a lot of this depends on your temperament. Some are more aggressive and attack - others withdraw, waiting for an opportunity.

The truth is, many times we are guilty of the very same kind of sin that we judge in other people. We recognize it because we do the same thing! We think somehow that by judging *her* sin, *ours* will not be exposed! This is the "log" talked about in Matthew 7. God calls it hypocrisy, which *means we impose a standard on someone else that we won't do ourselves*.. We want others to give us grace and understand what we're going through, but we reserve the right to deal with them under the law, instantly condemning them in our minds..

So, what is the right way to judge? How do we rightly evaluate a situation? Well, the first step is to admit our own "log" and accept God's grace. As long as I have a log in my own eye, how can I see my sister's "speck" clearly? The issue is, do we just want to win and be "right," or will we care enough to

love others? That is why so often Christian counselors will advise going back to parents to ask for forgiveness - not for what they did, but for our own sin, when we hold bitterness, anger. And we ask for forgiveness regardless if they change or not.

After we have dealt with our own "log," we are much more able to lovingly deal with the speck in our roommate's or friend's ~~heart~~. eye

This is a change in attitude from using the speck as an excuse to judge and demanding that someone else "straighten" up, so now you can pay attention to how you can help your friend get rid of a "roadblock" so she can grow spiritually. Actually, we **may** find that her "speck" *does not even exist* and we were guilty of misunderstanding what she said or did. We were wrong in our judgment! How many times have you been angry with a person for this or that only to find out that when you took the time to talk about the issue, you found out that you misinterpreted what was really going on? You will talk more about this in your group this morning.

What about Expectations? This is the attitude where you *expect* that something to happen. "Some day my prince will come and life will be happy every after." "If I am nice to people, they will be nice back." And because these beliefs are deeply imbedded, we look for them with reason or justification. And have anger if we don't get whatever it is we were expecting.

Manipulation. This is the attitude that believes that every situation needs to be managed, handled, or skillfully turned so that our expectations can be achieved. We women are greatly skilled in manipulation and have the ability to *artfully* and *secretly* manage other's thoughts and actions to fit into our schemes. It is interesting that manipulation also means *orchestration, strategy* and *administration*. God, in a perfect sense, is a manipulator in that He has **strategized** all of history, **administrating** it with people according to their heart's intent, and **orchestrating** events so that His strategies come together in His time. So, this is a womanly skill that can be transformed into something wonderful and used in a godly way. Depends on the attitude!

Gossip? The Old Testament indicates that this is a person who rushes around telling stories. A "whisperer," or "babblers." The gossip whispers poisonous reports in someone's ear that she *would not dare say* in front of the person talked about. 2 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 2:3 uses the words "malicious and slander" for gossip. This is taken from the Greek word for "false accuser." Those who gossip are usually motivated by jealousy and competition, as well as a lack of love. A tactic used very much by Satan to stir up division and strife!

5. Bitterness. Bitterness is an unresolved, buried, conflict with another person. Many times we are surprised at our own nasty words or reactions and wonder, "where did that come from?". Usually bitterness is spent out on people in authority or others who remind us of those with whom we are bitter. If we had a dad that verbally and physically abused us, then when we come across a boss or spiritual leader who has a strong personality, our bitterness will rear up like a "sea monster from the deep!" The Bible says that bitterness takes root and grows and grows and grows - like cancer. Many are affected by our bitterness. It usually carries an attitude of "I didn't deserve that." "How could she/he do that to me?" It is true that many of us have suffered wrongly and painfully at the hands of others. The harder thing, however, is to decide to forgive, knowing that God is quite able to handle that person at the appropriate time in the appropriate way. Romans 12 tells us that we are to leave room for God to carry out His judgments.

In a book called, *Strengthening Your Grip*, Charles Swindoll says:

"Attitude is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important that appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a friendship, a church, or a home. The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude."

Those are the five topics we will cover this morning. I pray that each of us will benefit by deeper insights into our own hearts so that we can possess more and more the Mind of Christ.

The workshops will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. For the sake of order, each one of you has been assigned to a specific workshop leader. Each workshop will be covering the same topics, so they are the same, except for leader and location. The list is hanging up (wherever) Take a look and go where you are assigned. If you cannot find your name, please come to me and I will assign you to a workshop.

Let's pray, and then come back here at the end of the workshop.

## DEALING WITH ANGER

INTRODUCTION - review thesis, barrier concept (last week)

1. Biblical View toward anger:

- a. define righteous anger: toward sin; for good of other; under control;
- b. contrast to unrighteous anger: toward person; to pay back; not under control

>> Most of our anger is unrighteous!!

### KEY INSIGHT

1. When I get angry at how I was treated by another person, it's usually because certain personal rights which I have have been violated. (EXAMPLE) typical rights:
  - a. to have loved ones do what you ask sometimes.
  - b. to have things organized or under control.
  - c. to respect for your possessions or for things you invest in.
  - d. to a certain amount of quality time alone w/ loved one weekly.
  - e. to retaliate when your rights are violated.
  - f. to have your loved ones treat you as good as you treat them.
2. Therefore, the key to dealing w/ anger is in adopting a Biblical perspective toward my rights.
3. Wrong responses:
  - a. "Yes, my rights were violated, but I shouldn't care." only builds up inside into resentment & bitterness
  - b. "I am a doormat." - unbiblical; is a role for confrontation (vs 5b) - next week
  - c. "I will examine & redefine my rights." (get rid of unreasonable ones) - closer, but still fundamentally wrong
4. Right response - transfer your rights to God

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1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation in the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation in the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation in the country.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation in the country.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the international situation in the country.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the future prospects of the country.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the conclusions of the study.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the appendixes.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the bibliography.

11. The eleventh part of the report deals with the index.

a. scriptural basis: stewardship passages (Matt 25); serva passages (Mk 10)

b. in transferring my rights to God, I:

- M.A.H.P.*
- distinguish between rights (which I transfer to God & responsibilities (i.e. to discipline in love; to be a good employee; etc.) which I will faithfully discharge
  - acknowledge that God now owns these things & will be responsible for their protection & control
  - now view them as priveleges entrusted to me to be used responsibly to advance His work & to serve others
  - understand that God will work for my good as much (often more) when these priveleges are denied and when they are granted (Rom 8:28)
  - in view of the above, purpose to thank God in advance whatever the outcome

c. expect God to test His rights (by letting the privileg be w/drawn)

d. when this happens, our response will be the key in determining if we really transferred the rights & if we will be victorious in the relationship

- if we are able to thank God, we have truly transferred
- focus on the spiritual qualities God is seeking to develop in you through the situation (patience, flexibility, trust for material security, joy i midst of pain, stability, genuine servitude, etc.)
- proper confrontation &/or discipline of the other person when appropriate (NEXT WEEK: but key to its effectiveness is this foundation)

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