A Biblical Approach to Conflict in Marriage

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I. Is marriage a covenant of grace, or a covenant of works?

A. "What causes quarrels and fights among you?" (James 4:1)

i. Bad answers: _____ genders or _____ needs.

ii. The Bible's answer: _____ wants.

B. What is a performance-based marriage?

i. A performance-based marriage points to _____ as the problem.

1. A performance-based marriage focuses on _____ (behavior).

2. The goal of a performance-based marriage is _____.

ii. The foundation of a _____ marriage is performance.

iii. A performance-based marriage is a covenant of _____.

C. What is a grace-based marriage?

i. The foundation of a _____ marriage is grace, and the goal is _____.

ii. Our marriages need grace because our marriages are _____.

iii. Our marriages must be covenants of _____.

1. The foundation of our marriage must be an acknowledgement that we are both _____ of God's grace and each other's grace.

II. How do we show grace in our conflict?

A. Communication

i. Our words are _____ and _____ things (Prov 12:18; 18:21; James 3:2–12).

ii. Communication problems are really _____ problems (Luke 6:43–45).

iii. How does a performance-based marriage handle communication?

1. High but _____ expectations.

2. _____ yell for yell, snip for snap.

3. Use speech as a _____ to get what you want (manipulate).

iv. How does a grace-based marriage handle communication?

1. Clearly communicate _____, and apologize when they are unspoken.
2. Try to remain _____ in the face of anger (Proverbs 15:1).
3. Your spouse's _____ don't dictate your _____.
4. Use speech as a balm to _____ and _____ (Ephesians 4:29).

B. Roles

i. Men and women are spiritual equals, but they were uniquely made with unique roles.

ii. A performance-based marriage _____.

iii. A grace-based marriage _____ and _____ freely.

C. Sex (Red-hot monogamy)

i. Sex is the source of so much tension, confusion, and sin in our marriages.

1. In the past, the church has viewed sex as only good for _____.
2. In recent years, the church has abdicated to _____ its role in defining sex.
3. We need to take back a _____ and _____ view of sex.

ii. In a performance-based marriage, sex is a _____ and the goal is self-pleasure.

iii. A grace-based marriage sees sex as an opportunity for _____ & ____ (1 Cor 7:3–5).

D. Family dynamics (the in-laws)

i. In marriage, two people branch off from their families to create a _____ (Gen 2:24).

ii. In a performance-based marriage, you expect time to be split with exact equality, you _____ the family you left, and you allow your parents too much influence.

iii. In a grace-based marriage, you strive to "_____" and "_____."

E. Finances

i. Finances are a source of external stress, but the question is, _____?

ii. In a performance-based marriage, you try to _____ financially & keep _____.

iii. In a grace-based marriage, you approach finances as a _____, with open communication, grace, _____ (1 Tim 6:10), and wisdom.