



Marriage minute

A marriage ministry of St. Andrew Lutheran Church

Conflict

Have you ever been in a conflict but couldn't remember what started it?

It's not new.

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." GENESIS 3:12.

Adam is every man and woman. He thought their conflict was over what his *wife did*. But he learned their conflict was in *his* heart. He was with Eve when Satan came calling but instead of sending a warning he extended his hand and took the fruit. He mistook the *content* of their conflict with God for the cause of their conflict, his heart. God told them the ugly consequences of their sin and made equally clear his beautiful grace in the promise of an offspring of the woman who would crush the serpent's head.

We play out that same pattern in our living rooms and kitchens. Even the most trivial matter can quickly escalate into something major and hurtful. When you're itching for a fight it's easy to find one.

We think we know what the conflict is about; but what if it's not about that at all. What if it's about the cause? Then, I have to look at what's in my heart.

Listen to this totally fictional argument. Listen for the content (what it looks like it's about) and the cause (what it's really about) of this conflict.

"The Jones want us to come for dinner Saturday."

"No, I'm tired. Let's not."

"You're tired? But today is Tuesday. Are you saying you'll be tired Saturday?"

"I'm saying I'm tired of going out. I just want to stay home and relax."

"How about what I want to do?"

"You always want to go out. And we go out a lot."

"Your idea of a lot and my idea of a lot are quite different."

"No kidding! Just look at our sex life."

There may be a big difference between what you're arguing about and what's really causing it. Begin with honest repentance of what's in your heart and then move to honest communication about it.

Tell each other what you learned from that activity -- other than it's easy when it's someone else's conflict!

Pray that you confess the sin in your heart in any conflict and get to the cause, not just the content.

Pastor Randy Hunter
St. Andrew Lead Pastor
for Preaching and Vision