

## THREE TO GET MARRIED

# *Your Family of Origin*

## How the Family You Came From Affects the Family You Become

### Overview:

*Understanding what you bring from your family of origin (or FOO as we like to say) to your marriage can help you better understand yourself and deepen your understanding of one another's behaviors and attitudes.*

### **COMMON AREAS OF OUR LIVES THAT ARE INFLUENCED BY OUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN**

#### ◆ **Communication Styles and Expectations:**

- ◆ *Am I a linear or circular communicator?*

#### ◆ **Finances:**

- ◆ *Am I a saver or a spender?*

#### ◆ **Religion & Faith**

- ◆ *What faith background were you raised with?*

- ◆ *How was faith practiced in your family?*

◆ **Work**

◆ *Are you a workaholic or balanced worker?*

◆ *Who will work in your new family?*

◆ **Vacations:**

◆ *What do you like to do on vacation?*

◆ **Leisure time:**

◆ *What do you do for fun and relaxation?*

◆ **Holidays**

◆ *What holidays are important to your family?*

◆ *How are those holidays celebrated?*

◆ **Cultural Differences**

- ◆ *What are the different cultural background of your family?*
- ◆ *What aspects of your cultural background do you want to bring with you to your marriage?*

◆ **Reactions to Stress & Difficulties**

- ◆ *Do people in your family lean in and help out?*
- ◆ *Do people in your family ignore stress and difficulties?*

◆ **Reactions to Conflict:**

- ◆ *How is conflict resolved in your family?*

## Fears of Intimacy

We've all been hurt by someone—either from our family or in a past relationship. Whether we realize it or not, the wounds and scars left over from past hurts can cause us to hide behind facades because we are afraid (and sometimes even expect) that other people will hurt us, too... especially our spouse.

### Some Common Hurts and Fears That Can Manifest in Future Relationships

- ◆ If my family of origin did not allow me to have my own identity or my own sense of self (we were all rubber stamps acting the same way)...
  - ...**THAT CAN LEAD TO** ...the fear that my spouse will try to fix me and in the process I will be engulfed by them and lose my sense of self.
  - ...may also lead to the fear of never claiming a sense of who I truly am today or in the future.
- ◆ If I experienced any kind of abandonment, physical or emotional...
  - ...**THAT CAN LEAD TO**...the fear that my spouse will just leave me someday, too.
- ◆ If my parents rejected me...
  - ...**THAT CAN LEAD TO**...the fear that my spouse will eventually not like who I really am and will reject me, too.
- ◆ If I experienced any kind of abuse in my family of origin or in a past relationship (verbal, physical or emotional)...
  - ...**THAT CAN LEAD TO**...the fear of being attacked, and the fear that my spouse will tell me how horrible I really am.
- ◆ And, if I never seek help to deal with my past hurts and wounds
  - ...**THAT CAN LEAD TO**...the fear that I will be destroyed by my own junk!



### Common Coping Strategies:

If we don't deal with our fears of intimacy in healthy ways, our attempts to cope with them can lead to bad behavior and unhealthy attachments, such as...

- ◆ Perfectionism
- ◆ Becoming a Control Freak: feeling an obsessive need to exercise control over themselves and others and to take command of any situation
- ◆ Being a People Pleaser
- ◆ Lust (pornography, promiscuity)
- ◆ Overeating to feel fulfilled
- ◆ Indulging in distractions or escapisms, such as TV, Computer, etc.
- ◆ Addictions such as Gambling, Drugs, Alcohol, etc.



### How to Heal From the Wounds and Change Unhealthy Defense Mechanisms

- ◆ Taking time for **Self Reflection** is necessary in order to really understand ourselves.
- ◆ **Communication** is critical! Although it may be difficult, these painful areas must be discussed with your fiancé BEFORE you get married.
- ◆ Be willing to seek professional help! You don't have to go it alone. And, as we've mentioned before, advice from an OBJECTIVE 3<sup>rd</sup> party is the best choice.
  - ◆ Spiritual direction from a priest
  - ◆ Psychological help from a therapist
- ◆ Remember that God loves YOU! Imagine and feel God's healing love – imagine him healing your wounds
- ◆ With security in God, we can detach from unhealthy attachments (control, people pleasing, bossiness, etc.) to try to feel secure. Unhealthy attachments only make us feel less secure.