

COUPLES LEARNING TO FIGHT FAIR

Introduction – We have all had bad experiences with verbal encounters that turned into futile fighting. Our goal should not be to avoid fighting, but to learn how to fight fair. In a national survey of 50,000 couples, 78% said that they go out of their way to avoid conflict.

- A. The Word of God challenges us to communicate effectively even when we are angry.

Ephesians 4:26, 29, 31-32

- B. Ten Principles for Fighting Fair

1. Decide to see conflict as an opportunity to resolve differences, rather than avoid conflict at all cost.
2. Accept your reasonable responsibility in each situation, rather than blaming your partner for the problems.
3. Focus on what you can change about yourself to improve the situation, rather than trying to change the other person.
4. Communicate negative feelings by saying, “I feel...when...because....” rather than saying, “You make me angry....”
5. Practice active forgiveness in your relationship, rather than seek revenge for past hurts.
6. Channel your anger into fighting the problem rather than your partner.
7. Make sure you let your partner know you hear them rather than making it all about you being heard and understood.
8. Seek a win/win solution rather than turning it into a debate where you try to prove you are right.
9. Communicate respectfully and reassure your partner that you love them while you are in the process of conflict resolution rather than be disrespectful and question whether your partner still loves you.
10. Be specific and stick to the issue rather than go emotionally from one complaint to another in rapid order.

C. The most extensive biblical passage on marital relationships begins and ends with insightful recommendations.

Ephesians 5:21, 33

Conclusion – The purpose of fighting fair is to resolve the problem rather than come to a weak compromise or for one person to win an argument.