



Shepherd Care®

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To Care for People Where They Live and Work

COMMUNITY Care TOPIC

The Four Horsemen of Marriage

In Revelation chapter 6, there are four horsemen that are the harbingers, heralds, and forerunners of the end. They precede the apocalypse, which is the ultimate end of all things. The first white horse comes to conquer, the second red horse brings war, the third black horse brings famine, and the fourth pale rider brings death and war.

In the book "Blink" by Malcom Gladwell, Penguin Books, pages 32-33, lessons about marriage can be gleaned. "Gottman is far more selective. He has found that he can find out much of what he needs to know just by focusing on that he calls the Four Horsemen: defensiveness, stonewalling, criticism, and contempt. If Gottman observes one or both partners in a marriage showing contempt toward the other, he considers it the single more important sign that the marriage is in trouble. 'You would think that criticism would be the worst,' Gottman says, 'because criticism is the global condemnation of a person's character. Yet contempt is qualitatively different from criticism. With criticism I might say to my wife, 'You never listen, you are really selfish and insensitive.' Well, she's going to respond defensively to that.

That's not good for our problem solving and interaction. But if I speak from a superior plane, that's far more damaging, and contempt is any statement made from a higher level. A lot of time it is an insult: 'You are scum.' It's trying to put that person on a lower plane than you. It's hierarchical."

How to Defeat the Four Horsemen

Also in Revelation, (chapter 19:11-13), we see described another horse and rider. This time it is Jesus Christ on a White Horse. If we focus on what the rider brings, then we can discover keys to live in a victorious and healthy marriage.

- Faithfulness and Truth. By committing to mutual honesty, truth, faithfulness, and fidelity.
- Righteousness. By committing to obtain and maintain right, holy, and appropriate relationships with God and all other people.
- The Word of God. A continual commitment to follow and be obedient to the commands and principles found in the Bible.

Having a successful and positive marriage relationship is obtainable. What horse do you want to ride?

Introducing your Community Chaplain

Eric Kieselbach

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"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."
Revelation 6:8

Nevertheless, let every one of you (husbands) in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Ephesians 5:33

All Scripture quotations, except otherwise noted, are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769. Public Domain.