

Your God-Tool of Humility

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Jill Savage: Welcome to Double Date with Mark and Jill. One of the things that we're doing this year is we're working our way through the God Tools.

Mark Savage: Yep.

JS: The God Tools are the tools that we talk about in *No More Perfect Marriages*, and they are the tools that we need to use on a daily basis to handle the imperfections in marriage.

MS: Absolutely.

JS: I think it's easy to say that we have these tools, but what we've been digging into is finding out that it's harder to use them. And so the God Tool we want to focus on in this edition of Double Date with Mark and Jill is the God Tool of humility. Now I have a question for you. Do you ever feel like conflict in your marriage doesn't get resolved? Like it just gets swept under the carpet, we move on, but it really doesn't get resolved? If so, it's probably because one or both of you are not using the God Tool of humility. Because humility is what allows us to apologize. Humility is what allows us to actually ask for forgiveness. And honestly, humility is what allows us to extend forgiveness. Because we realize that we've messed up as many times as our spouse has messed up and we're no different. And so that allows us to be able to say, "I forgive you."

MS: I think humility is like a door into another room of our soul, and it allows us to really look at those things that are hindering us. So many times we want to look into that other room in our spouse's soul, but we have to use the tool of humility. We have to learn how to use that tool for ourselves.

JS: It's almost like a magnifying glass that we look at of our own stuff. And it reminds me of Matthew chapter seven. This was a situation that happened in my life years ago. It was a time that we were in counseling. We were in marriage counseling, but it was very early on. We were just discovering the damage that the home that he grew up in had really done to his frame of mind, his perspectives, and up to that point we just really didn't understand that. And it'd been a pretty toxic environment and we didn't realize the blueprint that he carried into our marriage. And so we were in this counselor's office and about every other time it seemed like the counselor would say, "Mark, that's a really good question. But I think next week, why don't you come alone? Why don't you come alone and we'll dig into that question and we'll dig into that in your life, in your heart." And so it seemed like that was happening every other time or so, and here's what happened, pride kicked in for me. Because I started looking at him going, "Well, obviously, he is the bigger problem here." He keeps getting detention from the counselor. [laughter]

MS: I have to stay after school or go back to detention.

JS: That's right. And so, anyway, I began to kind of be an expert finger pointer. Now, I didn't actually ever say that to him, but the tone of voice I had said that. My attitude said that. And in the midst of that, I was actually reading in the book of Matthew, and I came across Matthew 7. And Matthew 7 actually tells us, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there's a log in your own eye? You hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." As I read it that day, it didn't say brother, it said husband. And really God took the log that was in my own eye and hit me over the head with it. I deserved it. He called out my pride. He convicted me of pride. And it was then that I was reminded that I needed... I didn't at that time know about this concept that we now call our God Tools, but then I needed to use humility.

MS: Yup. The challenge is that in our life, in our marriage, we want what we want. We want to do what we want to do. And we think that we know best [chuckle] that's needed. But we don't.

JS: We don't. And so that's where pride, though, really begins to creep in. One of the things we've tried to do with some of these is to look at what life looks like without the tool and then what it looks like with the tool. So we came up with just a few things that I think will be very helpful. So for instance, without humility we're self-centered. But with humility, we are others-centered.

MS: And self-centered people are not fun to be around.

JS: Exactly. Exactly. Here's another one. Without humility, our way is the right way. But with humility, other ways can be a different kind of right.

MS: That's powerful.

JS: It is. Because this is where a lot of conflict in marriages happen because we're fighting over the way that you do something, and the truth is you can do it both ways. And it's like, let's stop nit picking each other, let's use our God Tool of humility, and let's let each of us do things our own way.

MS: I think a powerful picture for us is what humility allows... It opens the door, it gives power to cooperation. To move from that competitive spirit, which is destructive, to a cooperative team which is powerful.

JS: Exactly, that is a great picture. Alright, here's another one: Without humility your needs and desires are the most important consideration. But with humility, others' needs and desires are taken into consideration. So we really begin to put others at a higher priority and we stop serving ourselves.

Another one, without humility, conflict has no closure because there are no full apologies. But with humility, conflict has closure, because we can say, "I'm sorry, will you please forgive me?"

That was something that years ago, we identified that we were offering half apologies. A half apology is, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I said I was sorry". [chuckle] It's even "I'm sorry" with attitude. And that's a half apology; it's not sincere, it doesn't acknowledge the hurt that happened, even if it

was unintentional hurt. But when we use our God Tool of humility, we're able to say, "I'm sorry. I know that the way I just said that, or what just happened, I know that that hurt you or it broke trust, or whatever we need to recognize, but I ask for your forgiveness, will you please forgive me?" That's a full apology and that's when we experience closure.

MS: And when your spouse comes with that full apology, the conflict is closed when you voice, "I do forgive you". So it's a beautiful picture that has to be driven totally by humility, otherwise, it's prideful.

JS: Alright. And here's one more, without humility, it's all about doing things my way. With humility, it's all about doing things God's way. Really humility and submission walk hand in hand. And so we need humility in our marriage, but it's also what allows us to let God lead us, that we recognize we don't have all the answers. That we go to God's word and that we're able to read about having the log in our own eye, we're able to identify that.

When we allow God to convict us, which is when God says, "Hey, you're off track". It's not condemnation. Those two are so close. Conviction says, "I did a wrong thing". Condemnation says, "Therefore I'm a bad person". No, God loves to convict our heart because he's perfecting us. He wants us to strengthen our humility muscle. He wants us to grow to be more like Him. But the enemy wants to get in there and move conviction to condemnation, which is shame, and we don't want to live in that. But humility allows us to say, "God, I don't have the answers, but will you show me the answers? Will you lead me? Will you convict my heart where it needs to be convicted?" In last month's Double Date, we talked about doing a love audit. It takes humility to be able to ask ourselves some of those hard questions like, "How am I doing at loving my spouse in this particular way?"

MS: Right. For myself, in the past, I would have said that I was a humble guy. But I think there was a growing humility, but many times it was false. And genuine humility is obvious. I think others will recognize it and might even comment about it, but it's not a manufactured thing. It's genuine. And it's deep. And it's a deep recognition that "I have no clue what to do, God will you show me? Dad will you show me?" And it's a healthy view of Dad (God) versus the unhealthy view.

JS: I love thinking about humility from the perspective of raising the white flag of surrender. I really do. That's where humility starts. Is it starts in our relationship with God and recognizing that we don't have all the answers, but then we're able to take that into our other relationships, the relationships that we have here on earth, and recognize that our way isn't the only way, that we don't have all the right answers. And that's a beautiful gift we can give each other, because when we use our God Tool of humility, it reduces criticism. It squashes pride. It extends kindness. It increases patience. It is powerful.

MS: I think of going back to the God Tool from last month, love, that humility waved, allows us to really genuinely love one another, to interact with one another. I remember when we were going through our crisis, and as we were getting healthy, in the past I would fight just to fight. And I didn't actually know that. With humility, the white flag I raised was, "I'm not going to fight with you. I'm going to talk with you. I'm going to be honest with you". It took huge humility to be honest. And so as you think about humility, it's a powerful tool that allows you to embrace one another, to accept one another, to be honest with one another, and to live and pursue that fully developed life that you desire.

JS: Right. Pride is a thief. Don't let pride steal from your marriage anymore. This is Mark and Jill Savage, signing off with a reminder to use your God Tool of humility every day.