

The Dishes Go In the Dishwasher One Way

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[music]

Mark Savage: Today we're talking about the slow fade of disagreement.

Jill Savage: And when I think about disagreement, I think about your coffee.

[laughter]

MS: Great. [laughter] Why?

JS: Seriously though, seriously, though. It seems like that's been something that we have disagreed on over the years. And it's not that you drink the coffee, that's fine, you can drink the coffee, it's that you slop the coffee all over my freshly mopped kitchen floor.

MS: Yeah.

JS: That's the issue.

MS: Because for me, life is a party.

[laughter]

JS: That's right.

MS: You know?

JS: I know, I know it is, honey. And so I come downstairs and I see coffee splotches on the floor. And it is as if, I can tell exactly where he went in the kitchen, because I can follow the coffee splotches. And so, it so frustrates me. So in my not so good moments, what I often do is, I come over here to the sink and I wet a paper towel and I begin to grumble as I clean things up like, "Oh, am I the only one that sees this? I swear I'm the only one that cleans up after anybody around here," and before you know it, I am just tucking away all this bitterness. It's almost like it's a... There's a backpack on my back and I'm filling it up and I'm getting weighed down by it and then... And all of that because of coffee. And then you walk in the door, and you look at me wrong and I throw the whole thing at you. [chuckle] And you're like, "What is going on?" And I can go back 10 years about that point in point.

[laughter]

MS: Right.

JS: But then on my better days, on my better days, I come downstairs and I see the coffee splotches, and I walk over to the sink and I wet a paper towel and I begin to clean them up, and I know what I need to do and that is, I need to use my God tool of forgiveness. So God, I forgive him for this coffee splotch, and I clean it up. And I forgive him for this one, and I clean it up. And this one and I clean it up. And Lord, one more over here, I love that man and I'm gonna buy him a sippy cup.

[laughter]

MS: It will probably leak.

[laughter]

JS: It, probably would. It probably would, but sometimes man, it's the little things that become such big things, and we find ourselves in disagreement all the time. And I think part of it is because our imperfection bumps into...

MS: Right.

JS: Each others' imperfection.

MS: Yeah.

JS: And that's what we struggle with.

MS: Yeah. I think for Jill and I, which is true of every marriage that that we all have struggles with the other things that our spouses do that irritate us, [chuckle] and those easily can become fueled, and then what happens in disagreement is that we end up battling with each other and arguing with each other because we don't know what to do with it, we don't know how to navigate it.

JS: Well, and one of the things that I've really come to understand is that I need to ask myself, "Is this hurting me or is this just irritating me?" And when I can ask myself that, then it kinda helps me to know what God tool I need to pull out, okay? If it's something that's hurting me that Mark is doing, I might need to pull out my God tool of courage, because I need to speak up and I need to talk about it. But if it's just his humanness coming out, then I might need to pull out my God tool of grace, and just simply give him grace for being human, making mistakes, dripping coffee all over the kitchen floor, that deserves maybe just the God tool of grace. So what I ask is, "Is this hurting me or is this just irritating me?" And then the answer to that helps me to ask the next question, which is, "Is this something that needs to be corrected or is this something that needs to be accepted?" This is where we sometimes have to crush our human nature, this is where we have to crush our sin nature and we have to get honest about whether I'm making a mountain out of a mole hill, or whether this is something that I absolutely do need to address, because in some way it's hurting our relationship?

MS: In the past, I would've found my irritations, and I... If you remember from an earlier video, I had a whole list of those irritations and then, I exhausted myself and Jill at trying to change her and trying to make her stop my irritations. And it's impossible, you cannot do that. I cannot make Jill overcome all those things just like she can't make me overcome the...

JS: All those...

MS: All those things that irritate her.

JS: And so one of the things that I have found that is particularly in the situation with the coffee is I've chosen that when it comes to coffee splotches, I will always pull out my God tool of grace. I just have decided, this is a place where I'm just gonna give Mark grace space, the space to be human, to make mistakes, and I'm just... I'm gonna be okay serving him in that way to actually clean that up. And when I do that, then when you... Because when you pull out your God tool of grace, you actually go through a quick action of forgiveness, is what you do. You forgive in that moment and then you allow them to be human and you move on. And what a powerful change that's been for me, because when I see those coffee splotches, I no longer get tangled up on the inside.

MS: Yeah. And for me, I really do try to be attentive. I have no idea though how I do it. [laughter] I actually will walk through the room and come back and go, "Dang, [laughter] what were you doing?" "I have no idea." And that's with the sippy cup.

[laughter]

MS: I don't know.

JS: Exactly.

MS: I don't know how I do it. But I do try to be attentive and clean up after myself, but I still [chuckle] don't know how I do it.

JS: Right. But sometimes you have to do the same thing with me.

MS: Absolutely, yeah.

JS: I mean, there are things that I do that bother you, I lose things all the time, all the time, right?

[laughter]

MS: Maybe break your sunglasses all the time.

JS: A lot.

MS: Yeah.

JS: Like you only buy me sunglasses at the Dollar Store.

MS: Yeah.

JS: That's why.

MS: Yeah.

JS: So, sometimes we have to ask ourselves, "Does this hurt me or irritate me? And then ultimately it doesn't need to be corrected or accepted.

MS: Yeah.

JS: So I think that's important. So, as we think about though this slow fade of disagreement, what happens is, one little disagreement like that or one irritation builds on top of another, builds on top of another, and slowly the hearts begin to come apart. And we have to turn that around. And so, what we wanna talk about today is, we wanna talk about three healthy ways to disagree. Some important steps to take. So the first one is actually to listen to one another. And most of the time, most of us are listening to disagree.

MS: Yup.

JS: We're listening for rebuttal. What are we going to say back, how are we going to build our case? But what we need to do is we need to listen to understand, and to begin to really take a peak at what's going on inside of his heart, what's going on inside of her heart?

MS: And we learned this in a big way. I know I did after the affair, that when Jill would voice her hurt. Prior to this, I would've listened for defense or listened for rebuttal, but all I could do in all humility was to hear what she was saying and then to ask forgiveness, or to hear what she was saying and then communicate more of the story, or in some way in hearing what she needed, when I was really listening, then I could provide what she was asking for.

JS: Right. But you are headed into that second healthy way to disagree and that is to resolve one conflict at a time.

MS: Ah, right.

JS: That was a big one that you and I really had to sort through, because we were dealing with so many different layers of emotion and actions and things that had happened, and it took so long to really dig through that and peel away the layers. And so, I remember on a couple of occasions, where I would say to you, "This was very painful." We would drive by some place where you were with the other person, and I would say, "This is very painful for me." And you would just be humble in that moment and apologize again. And I wasn't searching for an apology again, I was just expressing my hurt and how painful that was for me to see that day in and day out. And so, you would just handle that so well in that moment, I felt validated, I felt listened to. But then, there were times where you needed to... You wanted to give more information or you wanted to come back and communicate something to me, but you chose to wait on it. And sometimes you would wait an hour, sometimes you would wait a day or two later. You didn't minimize it to the

point of not bringing it to the table, but you came back and I so appreciated that, because emotionally, we could only handle one conflict at a time. So then you would bring back and you would say, "I wanna kind of talk about part B of what you communicated yesterday, because here's a way I was hurt."

MS: We learned so much through the crisis of the affair and God brought us through much deeper than we were before.

JS: And then there was a third piece that I think was really important to us and that was to the best of our ability, you can't always do this, but we began to learn how to talk about frustration outside of frustration.

MS: Oh, right.

JS: It's kind of a rule that we created. "Don't talk about frustration in frustration." And that was... I mean, it took some time, and you can't always do it perfectly, but what a difference that made, because then we really moved from debate to dialogue.

MS: Yeah.

JS: And that is such a difference. And so, I think it's so important that we have the self-control to back off. Sometimes we have to know when we need to dial down or when we need to step away and to resolve one conflict at a time, to listen well, and then not talk about frustration in frustration, if at all possible. And what a difference that makes is, we are sorting through the places where we disagree and guess what? We're two imperfect people trying to do this life together and we will disagree.

MS: Absolutely. We both, during that time, we moved in such a big way from the listening to disagree or listening to debate, to listening to here, and I think that's... The heart of all that is, I wanna hear what you're saying and I wanna be attentive to what you need. And so, in being attentive to one another, we begin to transform in the depth of our intimacy.

JS: And not only that, but what... So many of these faiths work together, because as we've learned how to disagree in a respectful way, one of the things we've done is we've minimized less.

MS: Oh, right.

JS: So, that's how it has so worked together.

MS: And so what we're longing for is peace. Let's look at what God has to say. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God which we crave, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

JS: And that's really... It's just such a wise word for us to close with, because when we're the middle of disagreement, so often what we do is we begin to go after each other and what we have to do is really take that to the Lord and he helps us dial down. Oftentimes, we have to actually do that inner work in our heart. Maybe we need to forgive or give grace or begin... Because that doesn't mean we can't go back and discuss an issue. It means that I have done the work to un-clutter my heart so we can have a much better discussion. So once again, we're reminded that a real marriage isn't perfect, a real marriage is two people being perfected.

[music]