Love Busters

(by Ken Weliever)

*“Marriage is like a fishing net. Each day fishermen use their nets to catch fish and sell them at the market,”* writes Dr. Willard Harley in his book *Love Busters.* Using this analogy Dr. Harley says, *“One fisherman takes his fish from the net every day, but let’s debris from the ocean accumulate. Eventually so much debris is caught in the net that he can hardly cast it out of the boat, and when he does, it’s almost impossible to retrieve. Finally, in a fit of anger, he cuts the net loose and goes home without it. He’s unable to catch and sell fish again until he buys another net. Another fisherman removes debris every time he retrieves the net with the fish he caught. Each time he casts his net, it’s clean and ready to catch more fish. As a result, he catches and sells enough fish to support himself and his family.” “In this parable,”* Harley says, *“the fish are emotional needs met in marriage and the debris are Love Busters, habits that cause unhappiness.  Bad marriages are like the first fisherman’s net.”*

 [Last Sunday] we wrote about the Love Bank concept that we shared Sunday in the marriage enrichment class. We also shared the six “Love Busters” that Dr. Harley identifies as the most common habits & behaviors that make withdrawals from the love bank.  These behaviors will soon deplete the love bank if habitually & repeatedly done. Consider them in light of Scripture.

**(1) Selfish demands.**  Marriage is about selfless love for our mate. Headship is not dictatorship.  Husbands have no right to egotistically make demands of their wives.Remember***“Love does not insist on its own way”***(**1 Corinthians 13:4**).  Selfish Demands never solve our marriage problems.

**(2) Disrespectful Judgments.** Harsh criticisms. Lecturing. Ridicule. Sarcasm. Threats. All of these are love busters. They make huge withdrawals from your mate’s love bank. They impugn motives. Dem-

ean character. And attack integrity. ***“Love is patient. Love is kind”*** (**1 Corinthians 13:4**). Not judgmental.

 **(3) Angry Outbursts.**  Some people justify angry tirades by saying, *“Yes, but I get over it quickly.  Once I get it out of my system, I’m fine.”* Well, the same thing could be said of a tornado!  But look at the damage and carnage it leaves in its wake.  Angry outbursts hurt feelings. Inflict pain. And severely damage relationships.   And they make huge withdrawals from your spouse’s “love bank.”  Love is ***“not easily angered”*** (**1 Corinthians 13:5**).

**(4) Annoying Habits.** Harley says *“whether it’s intentional or not, a couple’s behavior will affect the love they have for each other.”*  Like the drip, drip, drip of a leaking faucet, annoying habits become irritating. Aggravating. They’re different for everyone.  Identify habits that bother your spouse. Work on eliminating them. ***“Love does not act unbecomingly”*** (**1 Cor. 13:5**).

**(5) Independent Behavior.**  When we get married we become “one flesh.”  We are to “nourish and cherish” our mate. We become partners.   All of this involves a unity of mind, heart and soul.  It shows respect. When decisions are made that are not mutually agreeable and equally satisfying the marriage will suffer.  We are commanded to ***“submit to one another in the fear of the Lord”*** (**Ephesians 5:21**).

**(6) Dishonesty**. No relationship can survive, or thrive, when there is not complete honesty.  Harley calls it “radical honesty.” Some justify lying to avoid conflict, or because the truth may hurt.  While the truth may hurt, a lie hurts even worse. Honesty makes deposits in the love bank. Dishonesty always makes withdrawals (**Ephesians 4:25**).

If your marriage is suffering from these “Love Busters,” let me recommend that you invest in Dr. Harley’s book.  Application of its principles will help you overcome these bad habits and help you make deposits in one another’s love bank. (edited by Kevin Heaton)

**The 7,000**

(by Russ Bowman)

***“I have been very zealous for the Lord God … I alone am left; and they seek to take my life”***(**1 Kings 19:14**). Such was the complaint of Elijah as he hid on Mt. Horeb, discouraged, despondent, & desperate. During his life as the spokesman of God to Israel, he had witnessed degeneracy unequaled in their history. Omri had contributed to the moral digression of God’s people, infamously practicing evil ***“worse than all who were before him”***(**1 Kings 16:25**). His son, Ahab, amplified that wickedness, marrying Jezebel and leading Israel to embrace her Sidonian god Baal. Elijah had faithfully opposed the ungodly influence of Ahab, performing significant miracles and defeating the prophets of Baal. But he had also seen Jezebel slaughter God’s prophets and certainly had witnessed the growing iniquity which accompanied Baal worship. Finally, when Jezebel vowed to execute him, Elijah fled, afraid for his future and that of Israel.

Our age is not completely unlike Elijah’s. Many Christians are scared, discouraged, and despondent. We have witnessed unparalleled moral digression in our nation — promiscuity, perversion, dishonesty, violence, greed, selfishness. Every day we are confronted with increasing godlessness which seems to pervade every aspect of life. Disciples are rightfully concerned about the future of our country and the difficulties which will confront our children. Witness the particular passion for politics that has enveloped so many. The outcry for political change among Christians has been unparalleled. Yet I fear that we will see a continued trend toward ungodliness in our culture simply because our population is becoming more secular and profane. After all, a democratic government will always reflect the moral status of the majority. And if the majority become the animals that evolution has portrayed, then things will get worse. Perhaps much worse.

So do we, like Elijah, withdraw to the wilderness and hide in our caves? It’s easy to feel like we are defeated and alone and that no one else cares about what is right and holy. Even within many local churches there is so much temporality and compromise that faithful followers can become dejected. For a long time it’s been easy to be a Christian in America. How will we respond if it gets hard? When Elijah complained to God that he alone was loyal, God responded by reminding him that ***“I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal”***(**1 Kings 19:18**). I don’t know what the population of Israel was then, but I suspect that 7000 was a minute percentage. Yet they reminded the prophet that the cause of Yahweh was not lost. And so with us. God’s people may be in the minority and we may feel that we can have little impact, but there are lessons to be learned from the 7000.

***God still reigns.***It may not always appear so. We may feel overwhelmed by the power of government or media or academia. But the power of God remains unrivaled, and it is imperative that we remember that. Certainly the Christians who struggled under the sword of Rome must have felt similarly oppressed. But they spread the gospel into all the world and history has borne out the survival of God’s kingdom even as Rome fell. No matter what, there is no real doomsday until God’s doomsday. ***God’s people can still be God’s people.***I suspect that it was difficult to be faithful and raise a godly family in a culture given to Baal worship. Certainly they faced the same selfishness and dishonesty and sexual immorality that we face. In fact, they may have had considerably greater challenges than do we. But those 7000 were still loyal to Yahweh. We can be faithful also. Culture and government may digress; our economy may fail and our children may struggle just to survive. But God promised to care for His own (**Matthew 6:25–33**) and perhaps they will learn faith that is far beyond our own. Service may be easier or harder, but it is always possible.

***God has confidence in the influence of even a few godly people.*** Did He not offer to spare Sodom for the sake of ten righteous men (**Genesis 18:23–32**)? Did He not expect the world to know of His glory through the influence of one tiny nation? Did He not send Elijah back to his work — one man to change the history of Israel? Did He not send twelve uneducated men to turn the world upside down? When Jesus designated His disciples ***“salt of the earth”***and ***“light of the world”***(**Matthew 5:13–16**), He obligated us to exert an influence which is far beyond our numerical measure. It doesn’t take much salt to change flavor, or much light to dispel darkness. We have a job to do. ***God’s kingdom should be our greatest concern.***These 7000 had not given themselves to temporality. Their citizenship was elsewhere; they served a greater King. It is easy to be swept away with circumstances. Perhaps the 7000 resented the godlessness of Ahab. Perhaps they longed for change in Israel. Surely they were repulsed at the cultural digression around them. But they had not bowed to Baal because they were loyal to Yahweh, confident in Yahweh. And no temporal circumstance was going to affect that. As Americans, we have the opportunity to affect change in our country, but let us not forget the kingdom that is to be our first priority. After all, like Israel, America is not eternal. The Kingdom of God is. May we promote it. 7000 was no great number. But they were God’s 7000. And they were enough.