

5.7 The Parable of the Net

Marriage is like a fishing net. Each day fishermen use their nets to catch fish and sell them at the market.

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, 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. Selfish demands, disrespectful judgments, angry outbursts, independent behavior and dishonesty accumulate over time. The burden of the unhappiness they cause ruins a couple's willingness and ability to meet each other's emotional needs. Eventually the marriage supplies no benefits to either spouse and ends in divorce or emotional separation.

Good marriages are like the second fisherman's net. Love Busters are eliminated as soon as they appear, making it easy for each spouse to meet the other's emotional needs.