

Discovering Buttons II

In the last session, we talked about those inappropriate tendencies as we were talking about the subject of helping people identify their buttons. Today, we're going to continue that discussion. In some ways, when you have people come, you can go through all these questions that we're going through and issues in one session, but it can actually take you two and a half hours. Or you can even these presentations do it with one part of the presentation first and then the second part of the presentation next.

As you're helping people identify their buttons, you're also going to help people see their understanding of home life flow. What I mean by that is a lot of times, people will be raised to be early, people will be raised to be late because that's what their parents were and that's what they saw or they're on time. It's fascinating. In my own marriage, we would go to church or any event. My mother and father were about a half hour early to everything. In church, we were the first one there. We were there before anybody was there. There was a balcony in our church. We had a seat and in that seat we were there half hour early no matter what. It is really interesting because my wife, their family was the last to get there. When their family showed up in church, it was time to begin church.

Now, when we were first married, you can just picture what that was like. She will be late for like in my mind everything even if they were right on time. To me, that was late. For me, I want to be early for everything. We had to get self-awareness of how that would go because at first when we were aware of our issues, we were just doing this inappropriate dependency control on each other. She's half hour early and I'm like "You're late." But again, we needed to come to that self-awareness and find that time that we could compromise on of what we wanted to be.

Here's another thing: holidays. I find that so interesting. You're doing pre-marriage counseling or marriage counseling and you'll find that to one person that you're talking to, the holidays are a precious time. They're special. Daddy was home. Everything was nice and everybody got the gifts that they wanted and they liked. And then on the other hand? The next person, holidays was a time of tension. The holidays were something that we just endured.

So now you get this couple together. In one family, we love putting up Christmas lights. In the other family, Christmas lights were a drag. If you talk about holidays, someone will say, "On holidays, there is nothing tension in our home." So now, twenty years later in the marriage, when it comes to Christmas light time, the guy doesn't want to do it. So then you're saying, "Why don't you want to spend two hours putting Christmas lights for your wife?" "Well, it's because Christmas lights for whatever reason create all sorts of internal hurt and tension from something that happened twenty years ago!" The buttons.

Vacations. "We never took vacations. We just worked." "We took vacations every year." You see, these are just issues you bring them up and you talk about them and you'll help people identify those buttons in their lives. Here's another one in the home life flow. Let's just use the word "truth" here. So you're living in life and everything went bad. In the area of truth in the home or talking, communications, one is your word is your word but it's somewhat situational what you mean by what you say. Another person was raised whatever you say is absolutely what you mean no matter what. And then they marry someone who's more situational. "I meant that because of this."

Or you get relational. People talk in their home life flow out of things that sort of please each other. Another legalistic: "I said that." "No, you didn't." "Yes, I did. I said exactly that." The words are very legalistic. Now can you imagine? In a home life flow it's not just time issues but it's communication type issues. How people are raised relate a lot to it. Even such thing as birth order can affect some of that.

Here's another area: emotions. We talked about emotions earlier. In some homes, emotions are always transparent. In some homes, emotions are closed. In some homes, the father is closed. The mother is transparent. Opposite way in other homes. A person now before you is they have a definition. "I'm like my mother. I don't share my feelings." Or "My father. I don't share my feelings."

Usually what happens so often is that the person who's open marries somebody who's closed because they sort of find that interesting. So then the two people have to find a way to both be open enough but not too open or you'll find inconsistency. Open and transparent about certain things but not others. That area we keep still about. Others are just plain dishonest with their emotions. They don't even know how they feel, and if they did, they wouldn't tell.

So here you'll have somebody out there and you're helping them with their coming to you, and you'll find that many of their buttons relates to just simple things: transparency, clothes, inconsistent,

dishonest, unclear—all those emotional things. When you help people find out how they actually are, you can help them in a big way find out what their buttons are.

Here's another area. You get someone together and you do a little counseling. You ask them. Let's talk about pleasing cues. Oh, what does that mean, Pastor? Are you one who pleases? Are you one who receives? Are you one who gives and receives? Are you one who gives with conditions? Are you one who does not receive? Now, it's hilarious at times to hear a married couple or a family where people have a whole different understanding of the pleasing cues.

So this is what you have. You have maybe a wife or husband who is into pleasing and the other is into receiving. Eventually, what happens is the one who pleases gets burned out, the one who receives takes advantage. Or the giving with conditions. "Oh, I'll please or give to you but only if this happens." You'll find that a lot of times in sexual politics. "I'm not going to make love with you unless this happens." And then the tit vs. tat deal where you're just going back and forth and there's kind of speaking score. Or you'll have like "No matter what I do, the person doesn't receive." But then how they grew up and how they thought about pleasing one another and their family life or in school or as they kind of matured is a big factor of where some of those buttons are actually going to be located.

Here's another one: relationship style. You have an introvert hypothetically married to an extrovert. The introvert is always being saved by the extrovert, and the extrovert is always being saved by the introvert. So they have this sort of hidden agenda conflict that relates to their relationship style. Or you'll have someone midline and they're married to an introvert and extrovert. The midline person's always like "Balance, balance, balance. You're always so quiet. You're always so talkative." You get the point. Those become areas of buttons.

Here's another one. We talked about it be fruitful and multiply in human relationships and all those things. As we're kind of jumping around, you'll find all these apply in that cultural mandate. Family values, career values. As a child, you were raised with a family of how many children? That can go either way. "We have ten children and no way am I going to want to be in a family with ten children with my own." And then the other person, "We have two children but we want ten." I'm just joking here a little bit. But my point is some of those issues relate to life or issues relate to women, children, work. Those are their issues.

When I grew up, my mother worked in a factory. I didn't see my mother as much. Whereas my own wife has stayed home and raised all of our kids without working outside the home. People have different expectations. There are roles modeled in the home. How was the father figure in the home and the mother figure? What if there wasn't a father figure in the home? What if the father figure wasn't there? It's a single mom or divorced mom or vice versa. All of those family values and then how they fit with career and work, you bring them out there and people's buttons will be related to many of these types of topics.

Another area is sexuality values. I'm not talking about the practice of sex. I'm just talking about sexuality values such as what does it mean, femininity? And then the big topic of modesty. It's fascinating when they do polls on these subjects. It's hilarious. In every society defining modesty, there's a different standard. What if you came from a home where modesty was much more seriously taken in terms of more restrictive but then the person that that person is married had a much more loose understanding of modesty. I'm not talking about loose as sexual. I'm just saying that whole different in expectations.

Or masculinity. In our home, the men didn't cry. In our home, the men were very expressive. Maybe in some homes, the men were more emasculated. Those are negative words, emasculation, men don't cry, and all that. I'm not even trying to comment on all that. But what you will find is who someone is and how their identity was put together many times in their past life and they bring to a current relationship and many of the buttons they have are in those areas.

Here's the sexual practice values. In some homes, you'll find as a pastor, sexuality was very shameful for whatever reason even though it was practiced that's why they were children and there was different things but there were like an area of shame or something dirty you don't talk about. In other homes, it's talked about freely. So then you have one home has that thing and if you talk about it, the spouse will not be comfortable. If you don't talk about it, they won't be comfortable. You can have all those issues. Or masturbation. Masturbation's a fascinating subject because even though it's quite practiced by almost everybody more and more male and female today, people have different understandings of what that is.

On the assessment, you might bring that out. On these sexual practice values, in some ways some already are not going to even have the comfortability to talk about it like the shame issues or others just we'd rather not. A lot of times on this slide, it's fascinating. If you've over forty, they don't want to even

do this slide. If someone is under forty, I have found they want to do this slide and they don't feel bad about it. It's a fascinating thing, and yet sexuality, sexual identity, sexual image of the body, marriage and commitment, or even something as the liturgy of relationships. "This is my second relationship" or "I first went out at this age and that age I lost my virginity here." It may be a lot of times when they weren't even believers yet.

All of that stuff is there. A lot of times it's hidden and buried. When it's buried, buttons just get pushed over some of these issues. As I think about these questions, what they really are is just tools for you in pastoral care. You can utilize these tools. You can ask questions. But your goal is not to say necessarily what's exactly right, what's not right. Sometimes you got to be careful because the people you're talking to will try to get you into the referee thing. They'll try to have you bite on a certain subject and they want you to say, "That's better than that."

If you can offer balanced biblical counsel, great. But what time does someone eat? If they're late or if they're early. What's the definition of modesty? Is modesty to the general population or modesty specific to the church I'm going to? Beat debates all the time. Understand this. So many people have those buttons inside of them and they just live miserable lives because they're just playing out those buttons almost against each other. Satan I believe has a heyday as he gets people to just sort of fight over things that really if they talk about they'll realize, "Okay, this is who I am." We can come to compromise position. We can respect each other's background and who they are.

These are important things. This is the type of presentation to look at again. You can even use these slides as you're sort of helping people asking questions if you have a little PowerPoint or just print them out. These are tools for you as you help people understand what sets them off and then helping people to identify that and finding a way to get along with one another.

In next sessions, we're going to keep working on things like if you find a conflict now, buttons were pushed that there's a conflict. We have sessions on making a peace fire and finding out how to help that. Find other's peace again. We also have sections on appropriate boundaries and many more things as this course unfolds.