

### I. Introduction

A. *Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid* begins with three-second knife fight

1. Anyone can lead Hole-in-the-Wall gang if take on Butch Cassidy
  - a. So this giant named Harvey challenges Butch to a knife fight
    - 1) Butch says, “*Not until me and Harvey get the rules straight.*”
    - 2) Harvey says incredulously, “*Rules? In a knife fight? No rules*”
  - b. Butch says, “*Well, in that case...*” and kicks him below the belt
2. About the same time frame, a guy in London changed all the rules
  - a. His name was John Graham Chambers, Marquess of Queensbury
  - b. Before him boxing was brutal (*John O’Sullivan fight 75 rounds*)
  - c. The Queensbury Rules codified a code of conduct for the ring
    - 1) No wrestling, grabbing or kicking was allowed (*sorry Butch*).
    - 2) Size of the ring (24 feet), 15 rounds lasting 3 minutes each
    - 3) Can’t hit while a man’s down, hanging on ropes, on one knee
    - 4) Rules also banned any hitting below belt (*again, sorry Butch*)
3. To have a fair fight, you really do have to agree on the rules

B. We continue with at *God @ Home: Difference Faith That Makes*

1. Christians should have happier, more successful marriages. Do we?
  - a. There is a similar divorce rates for believers and non-believers
  - b. That is a bit is misleading; it measures self-identified Christians
    - 1) When couple attends church together, rate is 35% lower
    - 2) What about couples who take their faith home from church
    - 3) Pray together, praise together, pick up a Bible? *Stay together!*
2. We’ve been discussing how we can take faith home in marriage
  - a. Even the most Christian marriages will have fights and feuds
  - b. Why? Every Christian marriage is made up of two flawed people
  - c. Unlike a knife fight, there are rules in how to fight in marriage
    - 1) Husbands and wives will fight, but we need to follow the rules
    - 2) I’m calling these “*The Kingsbury Rules.*” Back to Ephesians 4

## II. The Kingsbury Rules: The Text (Ephesians 4:1-3)

A. We suggested in earlier lesson, Paul makes a transition in **Eph 4**

1. Up to this point, he has been talking about our calling as Christians
  - a. You may be familiar with a preacher receiving a “call to preach”
  - b. May wonder why we seem more called to big church & more pay
  - c. All of us have received a calling from God that we must live out
2. Now he begs us to live or walk worthy of our calling (**Eph 4:1**)
  - a. This is going to be the “practical living” section of the book
  - b. He will discuss aspects of practical Christian living (*like marriage*)
3. Paul’s discussion of practical faith begins right here (**Eph 4:2-3**)
  - a. These are the qualities we need to live together in any relationship
  - b. He’s not specifically talking about marriage, but it certainly applies
    - 1) It’s not easy; we’re all a bunch of knot-heads at times, right?
    - 2) We need a set of rules to live by when things get hard, right?

B. These are the “*Kingsbury Rules*” for getting along in a relationship

1. **Humility**: There’s no “I” in team; husbands and wives are a team
  - a. When the two become one, then the me must give way to the us
    - 1) You simply can’t be in a relationship and always get your way
    - 2) If I am looking out for ME, then who is looking out for US
    - 3) Humility says that US is more important than getting my way
  - b. If I always humble myself, what if I never seem to get my way
    - 1) Jesus says to humble yourself and trust God! (**Luke 18:14**)
    - 2) We spend time and energy protecting our pride (**Prov 18:12**)
  - c. My worst moments as a husband come because I think I’m right
    - 1) When she doesn’t agree with me, it’s because I’m not clear
    - 2) When she still doesn’t agree, I get frustrated... and louder
    - 3) Problem in that scenario is that I don’t begin with humility
  - d. Humility makes possible the two most important marital skills–
    - 1) Humility allows me to forgive quickly when I am wronged
    - 2) It allows me to repent even quicker when I’m the one wrong

2. **Gentleness:** It's same Greek word for "*meekness*" (*older versions*)
  - a. It is the Greek word used for tame or domesticated animals
  - b. It is not weakness; it's strength that's been harnessed for good
  - c. This trait was valued by Greeks as a sign of culture and civility
    - 1) Gentle was half-way between being bad-tempered & spineless
    - 2) It was strength but always under control– Think Mr. Spock.
  - d. On second thought, think Jesus Christ (**Matt 11:29**, **2 Cor 10:1**)
  - e. We all have warts and flaws; no one knows that more than spouse
    - 1) Gentleness calls us to tread lightly when dealing with flaws
    - 2) Power focuses on the weakness in others; gentleness does not
3. **Patience:** Word Paul uses is from two words "*long*" and "*temper*"
  - a. We know what it means to be "*short-tempered*" (blow up easily)
  - b. Patience is just the opposite; patience refuses to respond quickly
    - 1) Patience doesn't ignore wrongs; anger is not its first reaction
    - 2) Patience isn't unaware of mistakes; it is very aware of its own
  - c. Patience responds so as to refuse anger (**Prov 15:1**; **Eccl 10:4**)
    - 1) Is it possible for a husbands/wife to respond like this all time?
    - 2) No, but it must be possible for ONE you to respond patiently!
      - a) Many fights are short-circuited if ONE partner is long-tempered
      - b) You MUST take turns here; the same partner can't do it all the time
4. **Bear with Others:** This is sometimes translated "tolerate" or "accept"
  - a. Sometimes you just have to pick your battles carefully
    - 1) **Saying:** "*Make sure the hill you fight for is worth dying on*"
    - 2) Not every hill is! Sometimes you need to tolerate and accept
    - 3) You smile, grit your teeth (hard to do at same time) and love
  - b. Early on, we discovered Lynn is something of neat-freak and I's not
    - 1) OK, not a neat freak, but compared to me she certainly was
    - 2) There've been dozens of negotiations and a few battles fought
    - 3) Gradually I got a bit better and she's lowered her expectations
  - c. But there were a lot of times when both of us had to bear with

### III. Conclusion

- A. The “*Kingsbury Rules*” Paul gives should actually keep us from fighting
1. If I’m always humble, gentle, patience & tolerant, we’d never fight
    - a. Lynn would wonder who I am and what I did with her husband
    - b. We’ll never be completely humble, gentle, patient and tolerant
    - c. So we’ll never get to the point where we’ll never fight
  2. These same principles will help us to fight fair when we fight
    - a. **Humility**: Not focused on win    c. **Patient**: Listen to my spouse
    - b. **Gentle**: I’ll pull my punches    d. **Tolerate**: Choose my battles
  3. You could create a whole list of rules for fair fighting from these
- B. That’s what I did “*Kingsbury Rules for Fair Fighting in Marriage*”
1. **Focus on Goal**: Resolution is a healthy goal; winning isn’t
  2. **No Ambushes**: Give your spouse time and schedule discussion
  3. **One Subject**: Fight’s bring up other issues; save those for later
  4. **Set a Time Limit**: About 20 minutes. Summarize. Hug. Revisit
  5. **Grant Equal Time**. Listen to partner; Never interrupt them.
  6. **Don’t Accuse**: “I felt hurt when you didn’t call” can’t be refuted.
  7. **No Below Belt**: No bring up past failures. No record of wrongs!
  8. **Take a Break**: If it gets too heated, take a walk or make coffee
  9. **Feedback Loop**: If things get too heated, your parrot before reply
  10. **Keep Private**: May need feedback from a friend, not on Facebook
  11. **Need Inhibitions**: Never fight when you are too mad or drinking.
  12. **Watch Tone**: Studies suggest words aren’t as important as tone
    - a. In fights, we can have a belittling, sarcastic, or disrespectful tone.
    - b. We also tend to get louder when we argue without realizing it
  13. **Don’t Be Comedian**: Fight humor tends to be sarcastic & belittling
  14. **Apologize**: Can use apology to short-circuit the fight. Resolve it
  15. **God Gets Ringside Seat**: Always pray before, during, after fight.
- C. Some sermons aren’t really geared to an invitation. Let’s pray.