



He Said/She Said

Clip No. 1 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BURNING QUESTION: How can you better fulfill your God-given role in marriage?

SCENE SET-UP: Both Caleb and Catherine Holt recognize their marriage is in trouble. In what comes across as humorous, true-to-life conversations, they are actually both running down the other person and complaining about all of his or her faults.

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 4 (He Said/She Said)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Communication. Misunderstanding. Differences Between Men and Women. Gossip. Respect. Sensitivity.

BACKGROUND INFO: Caleb Holt feels his wife shows him no respect for the hours he spends working and the passion he puts into his job as a fireman. On the other hand, Catherine Holt believes Caleb is insensitive and the root of the problems in their marriage.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 5:21-33; James 1:19; 1 Peter 3:1-9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does respect look like for most husbands? Why is respect such a crucial issue for men?
2. How do you think wives can best show respect for their husbands?
3. What does sensitivity to feelings look like for most wives? Why is emotional understanding and connection such a crucial issue for women?
4. How can husbands better connect emotionally with their wives?
5. What is the harm in speaking ill of your spouse to your friends, family, or co-workers? What's a better way you can deal with misunderstandings between you and your spouse?
6. Are you quick to listen and slow to speak when communicating with your spouse?
7. Name one specific way you can honor your spouse this week.

“Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

Ephesians 5:33 (NASB)

ANSWERING THE BURNING QUESTION: Without focusing on the shortcomings of your spouse, how can you better fulfill your God-given role in marriage? Be honest and admit if things are undermining or destroying your marriage. Identify specific areas and deal with them in specific ways. Develop a biblical strategy of response, and invest time, energy, and prayer in dealing with the destructive forces in your marriage. Don't allow barriers to build up that can hinder your communication with one another. Remember that famous line from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*? “What we have here is a failure to communicate.” Much marital strife relates to lack of communication. If you're a husband, learn how to speak your wife's language of love and emotional understanding. If you're a wife, learn to speak your husband's language of respect. By focusing on changing yourself (and not speaking badly about your spouse to other people), you will ultimately change your marriage.



The Train is Coming!

Clip No. 2 ... Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BURNING QUESTION: Will you rescue people from spiritual danger?

SCENE SET-UP: Capt. Caleb Holt arrives with his team to help two girls trapped inside a wrecked car that's on the train tracks. As they attempt to get the girls out of the car, a train unexpectedly comes around the corner and races toward them. Caleb and his team must quickly step into danger to save the girls while there is still time. When certain methods don't work, the team refuses to quit.

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 5 (The Train!)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Rescue. Evangelism. Leadership. Teamwork. Endurance. Gratefulness.

BACKGROUND INFO: Firefighters are trained to risk their own lives in order to save the lives of others. Working together and using all the resources available helps them to be effective in dangerous situations.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-15; John 15:9; Jude 20-23

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does this car wreck scene illustrate saving people from spiritual danger? How does it focus you on evangelism?
2. Colossians 1:13 explains that Jesus rescues people spiritually. The word "rescue" means that He went into danger and brought people out to a place of safety. How did He do this?
3. How does the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross help people spiritually? (See Colossians 2:13-15.)
4. In some parts of the world, it is dangerous to tell others about Jesus. Why is it worth the risk?
5. Why is it important not to give up if one method of saving someone doesn't work?
6. How did Michael respond to God after almost losing his life? How do you respond to God when He protects you or helps you?

"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 1:13-14 (NASB)

ANSWERING THE BURNING QUESTION: Have you allowed Christ to rescue you from a life of sin? If so, will you team up with the body of Christ and do whatever is necessary to rescue others?

After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, He commanded His followers to go into the world and give their lives in order to save and disciple others (Matthew 28:18-20). He stated that, "Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for a friend" (John 15:13). Jesus modeled this type of love and calls us to work together to help save others from going into eternity without Him (James 5:19-20). When tough times come and we feel like giving up, we should take courage and stand strong knowing God is with us and will reward us if we don't give up (Galatians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 15:58).



Salt and Pepper Shakers

Clip No. 3 ... Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BURNING QUESTION: Do you understand the covenant nature of marriage vows?

SCENE SET-UP: Capt. Caleb Holt and Lt. Michael Simmons are talking about Caleb's decision to get a divorce. Michael points out that Caleb made a lifelong covenant vow with his wife when he got married. Caleb tries to avoid responsibility for his marriage's failure. Michael superglues salt and pepper shakers together to show how marriage bonds two people together permanently.

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 6 (I Want Peace)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Marriage. Covenant. Vows. Commitment. Divorce. Endurance.

BACKGROUND INFO: Caleb Holt's motto at work is to "never leave your partner behind." But he doesn't practice this at home with his wife. Both Caleb and Catherine are selfish and blame the other one for the failure of the marriage.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Matthew 19:3-6; Malachi 2:13-16; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the difference between how Michael and Caleb view marriage vows?
2. If people really meant and honored their own marriage vows, how would it affect the divorce rate?
3. What does it mean to be committed to someone "for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health"? Do you think people truly understand their vows when they get married?
4. Some people work through their marriage problems and other people get divorced over the same problems. Why do you think that is?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 5:4-5. How should this principle affect marriages (and divorces)?
6. Read Malachi 2:13-16 out loud. To treat your spouse and your vows "treacherously" means you don't take your vows seriously. What does this say about God's opinion of divorce?
7. How are Jesus' words in Matthew 19:3-6 similar to Michael's analogy of super-gluing salt and pepper shakers together?

"(Jesus) said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Matthew 19:5-6 (NKJV)

ANSWERING THE BURNING QUESTION: Will you agree with what God's Word says about the permanence of marriage? Will you honor your own marriage vows that you have spoken before God? Two sinners that are married can make life really difficult and painful for one another. But marriage is a covenant. It stands upon unconditional vows based upon unconditional love. Though divorce is very common in our culture, God's Word should not be ignored when times get tough. Instead of divorcing us, Jesus loved us in our sin and died for us to deliver us (Ephesians 5:20-25). He wants our marriages to reflect His sacrificial selfless love. Commit to love your sinful, imperfect spouse like Christ loves you.



The Cross

Clip No. 4 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BURNING QUESTION: Have you experienced God's unconditional love as shown through the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus Christ?

SCENE SET-UP: Frustrated with his wife's lack of response to "The Love Dare," Caleb Holt talks to his dad about his floundering marriage. Caleb eventually realizes that he can't truly love his wife because he hasn't yet received God's unconditional love in his life.

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 12 (What You Don't Have)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Pride. Unconditional Love. The Cross. God's Love. Surrender. The Gospel.

BACKGROUND INFO: With his marriage falling apart, Caleb Holt clings to a shred of hope that things can change in his relationship with his wife. With help from his father, Caleb tries to win back the heart of his wife through "The Love Dare." Aggravated by his wife's lack of interest, Caleb is ready to give up on his marriage altogether.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: John 3:16-17; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:17-18; Galatians 1:4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Define the term "unconditional love."
2. Is it possible to love someone without condition? What does it look like?
3. How does it make you feel to know that God loves you unconditionally?
4. What hinders you from living abundantly in the unconditional love of God?
5. What hinders you from loving other people with the same abandon?

**"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
1 Corinthians 1:17-18 (NASB)**

ANSWERING THE BURNING QUESTION: So, have you experienced God's unconditional love that enables you to love others in the same way? A. W. Tozer said, "We must do something about the cross, and one of two things only can we do—flee it or die upon it." The cross of Christ is divisive, yet it offers our only hope in a fallen world. We say we love everything from baseball to chocolate cake to Elvis. However, if we haven't experienced the love of God poured out in our hearts (see Romans 5:5), then we can't possibly begin to truly love the people around us. Life doesn't get any deeper than Jesus and what He did for us on the cross. His sacrifice obviously delivers us from sin's penalty and power. But Galatians 1:4 tells us that it also delivers us from worldly thinking and empowers us to live differently from this world's agenda—and that this world's agenda knows nothing about unconditional love. You'll never see a change in your marriage or in your broken relationships until you love the other person unconditionally. And you'll never be able to offer that kind of love until you've first experienced God's love for you.



Breaking Free

Clip No. 5 ... Study by Stephen Kendrick



THE BURNING QUESTION: Do you give up and give in to temptation ... or do you stand strong?

SCENE SET-UP: Caleb Holt is addicted to pornography, but he recently surrendered his life to Christ. While on the Internet, a pop-up ad tempts him to click on a porn site. He struggles with going back to his old habit. After reading that an addiction is like a “parasite” that destroys lives and marriages, Caleb removes his computer to avoid temptation.

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 15 (Temptation)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Temptation. Receiving Counsel. Escape. Lust. Pornography. Obedience.

BACKGROUND INFO: Caleb Holt’s addiction to pornography was destroying his mind and his marriage. It also fed his anger, dissatisfaction, and mistreatment of his wife. Caleb’s new faith in Christ is quickly put to the test in an unexpected moment of temptation on the Internet.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:14-15; 1 John 2:15-17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Can you relate to Caleb’s struggle against temptation? Have you ever been tempted to do something wrong and felt very restless inside wanting to give in?
2. Sometimes it is best to avoid temptation by removing the source; other times it is best to remove ourselves from the temptation. How does 2 Timothy 2:22 express this thought?
3. While we are tempted, we feel alone, overpowered, and unable to get away. But God gives us promises to help us know how to operate by truth, and to resist falling into sin. What promises does He give in 1 Corinthians 10:13? How does this verse help us?

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)

4. Jesus explained that lusting in your heart is committing adultery in God’s eyes (Matthew 5:27-30). He also explained that we should remove the source of temptation. How did Caleb’s action of removing his computer illustrate Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:29? Why was this a good first step for Caleb?

TACKLING THE BIG QUESTION: Will you learn to resist temptation by the power of God or continue to live in sin? Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted. However, when we yield to temptation, we face unwanted consequences (James 1:14-15). But God’s Word gives us multiple tools to help us. The first tool is allowing God’s love to fill us so we don’t want to find satisfaction somewhere else (1 John 2:15-17). Secondly, when temptation comes, we are to stand on the promises of God (1 Corinthians 10:13). Thirdly, we must get ourselves away from the temptation (2 Timothy 2:22), connect with those who are walking in victory, and remove the sources of temptation that have caused us to fall (Matthew 5:29).



Caleb's Apology

Clip No. 6 ... Study by Michael Catt



THE BURNING QUESTION: Is unforgiveness hindering your relationship with God ... or someone else?

SCENE SET-UP: Now up to Day 43 of "The Love Dare" (as he continues on past the "required" 40 days), Caleb Holt tries to take care of his wife Catherine while she is sick. They talk about "The Love Dare," he tells her about his new relationship with Christ, and he seeks her forgiveness

SCENE SELECTION: Scene 19 (The Apology)

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Forgiveness. Reconciliation. Humility. Bitterness. Brokenness. Service.

BACKGROUND INFO: Caleb Holt has accepted a challenge from his father to pursue his wife Catherine, and win back her heart. Caleb has found unconditional love in Christ and is now trying to love his wife in the same way. He realizes that he must now ask for her forgiveness and seek reconciliation in their broken marriage.

KEY STUDY SCRIPTURES: Matthew 6:12-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:18

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How has God shown forgiveness to you?
2. Describe a time when you received undeserved forgiveness from someone close to you.
3. Why is forgiveness so important in a marriage relationship?
4. What are the dangers involved in not resolving an area of unforgiveness in a relationship?
5. Is there an area of unforgiveness in your life? How do you plan to deal with it?

"When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions."

Mark 11:25-26 (NAB)

ANSWERING THE BURNING QUESTION: Is there an area of unforgiveness that's hindering your relationship with God or someone else? The extent of our power in prayer and our ability to walk by faith are in direct proportion to our being right with other people. We may come to Christ and receive His forgiveness, but we can stall out our Christian walk if we fail to seek forgiveness from others. Anything that is an issue between you and another is ultimately an issue between you and God. Seeking forgiveness, especially from your spouse, requires the right approach—"speak the truth in love" (see Ephesians 4:15). It also requires the right attitude. You must come humbly, without flaunting your sin or pointing blame at the other person. God will honor the steps you take toward forgiveness. We are the recipients of an untold measure of forgiveness from the Lord. We should, in turn, quickly extend forgiveness to one another and humbly request forgiveness when we've been wrong.