Mark and Judy Keappler

Recognizing how evil hunted us individually in the Battle for Women’s Hearts and Battle for Men’s Hearts was eye opening and transforming to each of us. We were both able to identify the way of pride that actually sabotaged our deep desires, and God has continued to use this personally for us to grow us in the way of surrender.

Yet for us, discovering how evil hunts us in our marriage relationship was a stunning difference. Having evil at work in the midst of a marriage relationship can feel nuclear. It gets mucky and hard to discern who and what is the problem, let alone how to correct it. Our tendency to fall back into our pose is often most powerful when we are being triggered by our spouse, and it will often cause the spouse to respond out of their own pose framework.

Judy and Mark Keappler

I (Judy) desired to feel important to Mark, to be valued by him and to experience intimacy. Yet I was sabotaging those desires by responding to Mark in conflict with pessimism, criticism, and shutting down. On the other hand, I (Mark) desired to experience joy in our relationship, to be accurately understood, and be Judy’s hero. Yet I sabotaged these desires with responding to Judy with ways of fixing, rationalizing and minimizing. Evil had hunted our marriage skillfully. We experienced this familiar pattern of unmet desire and sabotage over and over again, even though the circumstances might look different each time.

In the Battle for Your Marriage we were able to untangle our fear and pride dance within a supportive fellowship. This gave us a safe place to admit how our way of pride was keeping us from experience the richness that God had for us in our marriage. We both had to take responsibly and repent of our pride, forgive one another for the harm we had done and choose to walk in the Way of Humility. This required vulnerability in the midst of fear and being willing to engage one another’s feelings and desires instead of reacting to our fear out of our poses.

While our familiar sinful pattern can still rear its ugly head in our relationship, we have made progress in experiencing God’s delight in us and our delight in each other. It is worth the suffering, crucifixion, and death to experience the resurrection, life, and glory in our marriage.

*After going through the Battle for the Heart Individually, both Lee and Mary Ellis have actively served as facilitators and speakers at the Battle for men and women events. In 2012, they were among the couples that experienced the first Battle for your Marriage materials.*