***Recap of 7/28/13:***

*(The following is based upon an article entitled* ***“Why Marriages Fail”*** *by Kerby Anderson of Probe Ministries International,* [*www.probe.org*](http://www.probe.org)*.)*

*1. Anderson writes: “Why do marriages fail? While the answers to that question are many, there is a growing body of empirical research to suggest there are four negative risk factors that create barriers to oneness in marriage and increase a couple’s chances for marital failure.” This research is important because it identifies factors which cause marriages to fail while unwittingly validating biblical principles and it is an indicator of marital success or failure with up to 91% accuracy, based only on data from before the couple was married.*

*2. The four negative patterns are: escalation, invalidation, negative interpretation, and withdrawal and avoidance. They are toxic communication patterns.*

*3. Escalation is defined as negative exchanges which become increasingly hostile and are often begun over minor things. (David R. Mace in his book,* ***Getting Ready for Marriage****, calls this the Negative Interaction Spiral.) It can happen as an “major shouting fight” or subtly as “muttering to oneself, rolling your eyes, or throwing up your hands.” The biblical antidote for escalation is rather than returning evil for evil or insult for insult but to return a blessing (1 Peter 3:9). Other pertinent scripture are Proverbs 12:18; James 1:26; 3:1ff.*

*4. The second toxic communication pattern is invalidation. Invalidation is defined as “…a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.” It can happen in three forms: it can be caustic, attacking the other person verbally; it can be subtle, “putting down the other partner for his or her feelings;” or it can be “uttering trite clichés like ‘it’s not so bad’ or ‘just trust in the Lord.’ While the saying may be true, they invalidate the pain or concern of the other partner.” The antidote for invalidation is validation, biblically this is expressed in passages such as Matthew 5:22 ( a warning about being careful about what we say to another and Proverbs 25:20 which warns of the dangers of being insensitive and unsympathetic to others.*