



Calvary Chapel Tustin Couples Fellowship

Love & Respect

Session 4: Chapters 12-14

This session continues a discussion of the Energizing Cycle, a way to keep the Crazy Cycle from spinning in your marriage, or how to stop it if it seems to be starting up again. The Energizing Cycle is about how his love motivates her respect, and how her respect motivates his love.

Note: The following questions and discussion topics are primarily for you to answer and discuss privately as a couple. Some of these topics may also be discussed in a group setting at the next meeting. In the group sessions, the following ground rules apply: (1) Do not share anything with the group that would embarrass your spouse; (2) You may pass on any question you don't want to discuss.

Chapter 12: "Peacemaking: She Wants You to Say, 'I'm Sorry.'"

1. On page 156, Emerson introduces what he calls "the fourth side to connectivity" – peacemaking – and adds that it might even be more important than the three principles you have studied so far in C-O-U-P-L-E: closeness, openness, and understanding. As you begin reading this chapter, what was your response to seeing peacemaking as a major principle for a husband to employ in "spelling love to his wife"? Choose from the statements below, or write your own response.

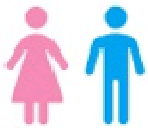
- a. "Peacemaking" suggests there has been a fight; frankly, I always try to avoid conflict. I want us to get on with our lives.
- b. The best way to resolve a fight is to speak your mind and then drop it and move on.
- c. I don't want to sound arrogant, but if my spouse would defer to my good judgment, we wouldn't have these arguments and peace would reign.
- d. Feeling at peace, because things are up-to-date with nothing between us, has a lot to do with my feeling ok about our relationship.
- e. I think:



Husband, which of the comments above best captures your feelings? Wife, which statement captures yours? As this session of study will show, it is vital for a wife to feel at peace, with nothing between her and her husband.

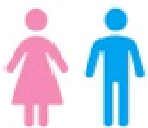
2. Continuing on page 156, Emerson mentions a “paradox” he found as he studied the Scriptures: “God intended for some conflict to exist in a marriage.” He goes on to say that secular research confirms that the best marriage relationships have conflict, and that it seems that a marriage needs to have some conflict to keep the passion in it. What do you think? Do you agree that conflict puts just enough spice in marriage? Choose from these responses or write your own:

- ___ a. Sometimes conflict helps; sometimes it doesn't.
- ___ b. Conflict is never good; it squelches passion for me.
- ___ c. A little conflict is good, because it is fun to make up afterward.
- ___ d. I think:



Discuss your answers, then compare your conclusions to what Emerson says about the risk involved when “the sparks fly” (pages 156-57)

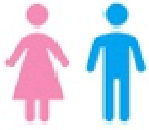
3. In “Husband and Wife Can ‘Work it Out,’” pages 157-58, Emerson make some comments that may be new to you concerning how spouses can deal with conflict with their marriage. Read these pages carefully, and then jot down phrases or sentences that strike you as a different approach to working out conflict.



Discuss your responses to the above question.

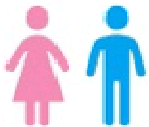
4. In “My Wife is Always Getting Historical,” pages 158-60, Emerson gives husbands another important tip for making peace. Husband, as you read this section, think about how “historical” your wife has been or can be. Does she bewilder you with her seemingly endless memory? Wives, how do you see yourself regarding your tendency to “get historical” with your husband?

- ___ a. Extremely historical (memory like an elephant).
- ___ b. Somewhat historical (might bring up something now and then).
- ___ c. Not historical at all (never bring up anything from the past)
- ___ d. I think:



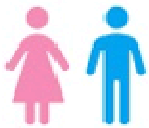
Compare your perceptions. What does the husband think of his wife's historical propensities? Does she agree that she can be historical? Discuss your answers. If tension begins to rise, try to keep things light: "May I borrow your pink/blue hearing aids? I need help understanding what you're trying to say." (For more "lighten things up" ideas, see Appendix A, page 307).

5. According to page 160, why is it usually not helpful for the husband to say, "Let's drop it-just forget it"? At the bottom of page 160, what does Emerson recommend a husband say if he wants to make peace with his wife? Write out these three short sentences below and commit them to memory.



Take plenty of time to discuss this one. Be sure to read the letter from the frustrated wife on page 160. Work together on the real issue: love for her, respect for him.

6. Chapter Twelve closes with a list of tips: "She'll Feel at Peace with You When..." (page 164). Do you see anything else here that would help the peace keeping process in your marriage?



As you compare notes on this question, you might want to agree on one thing the husband might concentrate on during the coming week. When he attempts to practice what you have agreed on, make a point of talking about how it worked, how it felt. Always be positive and encouraging to one another. If he makes real progress on his "one thing to do differently", go over the tips and ideas again and choose another action or attitude he can use to improve your peacemaking process.

Chapter 13: "Loyalty: She Needs to Know You're Committed"

1. Read the opening of Chapter Thirteen on page 165. What are your first impressions of the idea that a wife needs reassurance of her husband's love?



Which of the following responses comes close to yours? (Or write your own.)

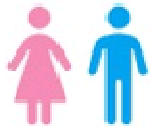
- ___ a. I'm well aware that my wife needs reassurance of my love, and I try to provide it whenever I see (or hear) that she needs it.

- ___ b. Have never thought much about it - she knows I love her, why do I have to keep telling her?
- ___ c. Reassurance? Every time I try to tell her I love her, she tells me I don't mean it, or I'm just saying that because I want sex.
- ___ d. I think:



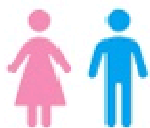
What is your reaction to page 165? Is reassurance of your husband's love something you like to hear fairly often? Check the answer that comes close to your ideas (or write your own).

- ___ a. Reassurance is important to me, and I think most women feel the same.
- ___ b. I've had my husband use that "Don't worry, I'm not going to trade you in for a new model" line, and I didn't think it was that funny.
- ___ c. My husband is always telling me he loves me, and I never get tired of hearing it.
- ___ d. I think:



Compare notes on your answers checked or written above. If you both feel about the same concerning the importance of a husband's loyalty, be encouraged. On the other hand, it is possible the two of you will not agree on the importance of loyalty, or even what loyalty looks like in a marriage. For example, it is not unusual for the husband to be rather unaware of how important it is to reassure his wife of his loyalty and his love. The good-willed husband who falls into this category should be willing to learn as he proceeds with this session.

2. Read the letter from the wife at the top of page 166. How does her husband reassure her? Are there any key words or principles you appreciate or find useful? Write them here:

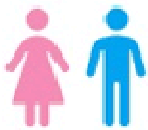


Compare notes on what you see in the wife's letter that might be helpful in your own marriage. Spend some time on how the wife tells her husband she feels "emotionally disconnected" from him at certain times and what he does about it. Is "I'm feeling disconnected" something one or both of you might be able to say to communicate a need, or would it just trigger arguments?

3. Read the sections "She's a One-Man Woman..." and "It's a 'Swimsuit Issue' World," pages 166-68. Is a wife being overly sensitive if she wonders about her husband's commitment,

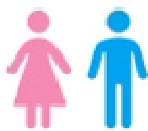
particularly with the barrage of beautiful females that bombard his eyes daily - in person and in the media? Choose from the following answers, or write your own opinion.

- ___ a. A wife can't help but wonder sometimes.
- ___ b. Either spouse might struggle with commitment.
- ___ c. It would be nice for a wife to be assured now and then, especially as her body reflects the aging process.
- ___ d. What's a man to do? His wife should know he might look, but she has nothing to worry about.
- ___ e. I think:



This can be a sensitive issue; beware of stepping on your mate's air hose. Compare the answers you checked or wrote. Wife, if you do feel at least a little insecure, let your husband know without condemning him. Husband, how can you reassure your wife of your commitment? Does Job have good advice when he says: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl" (Job 31:1)?

4. How does the Song of Solomon 8:6 catch a wife's deep feelings about needing to always be sure of her husband's loyalty? Also, read Emerson's thoughts on the wedding ring on page 168. Why is a wedding ring so important? Write your ideas here:



Be sure not to skip this one. Share honestly with each other about your perspective on wearing a wedding ring. Is Emerson right when he says: "No husband should leave home without one?" Why or why not?

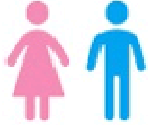
Chapter 14: "Esteem: She Wants You to Honor and Cherish Her"

1. Wives often ask where the Scripture talks about the husband respecting his wife. On pages 173-75, Emerson spells out what it means for a husband to respect (honor and cherish) his wife. (See especially 1 Peter 3:7) Which of the following ideas, taken from this section, are most useful to you as a spouse?

- ___ a. God has made women so that they want to be esteemed, honored and respected.
- ___ b. The honor a wife seeks is a different kind of honor from what her husband seeks as a man.

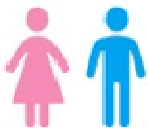
___ c. To your wife, respect, honor and esteem are not qualities in and of themselves; they are components of the love she wants from you.

___ d. Other:



A wife studying with her husband should be sure to give her opinion on this one, to see how closely it matches her husband's choices. Talk together about Emerson's claim, "Your wife wants to know that you have her on your mind and heart first and foremost. This is what I mean by 'esteem'; when it's there, your wife will feel treasured as if she's the most loved woman on earth" (page 175). Do you both agree he's right?

2. In "Our Kids Often Made Sarah Feel..." (pages 175-76), Emerson shares a practical way he esteemed his wife at a critical time in their marriage. What did he do, and why was it effective?



If you have children growing up in your home, this story can be very applicable to your marriage at this time. Parenting is difficult at best. What does the final paragraph in the section tell you about why moms usually need more support and encouragement than dads as they do parenting tasks?

3. Back on page 12, Emerson tells of the time he forgot Sarah's birthday – completely! This was good for several more turns on the Crazy Cycle for both of them. For further insight on how much store women put in birthdays and anniversaries, read "Use Symbols to Show Your Wife Esteem" (pages 176-79). Following are some quotes from this section. Write down your response to each of Emerson's observations, whether you agree or disagree and why.

a. "you will never be able to show her the amount of emotional openness and esteem that she really wants - no man could-but symbolic things can do a great deal to bridge the gap."

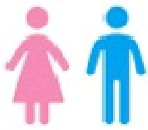
Agree ___ Disagree ___ Explain:

b. "Women are the ones who have babies, and that's one reason that birthdays are a big deal to them...In a woman's mind, who could possibly forget a birthday? She never would."

Agree ___ Disagree ___ Explain:

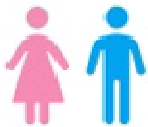
c. "...a marriage date is etched in the woman's soul. Since childhood, your wife dreamed of the wedding day..."

Agree___ Disagree___ Explain:



This section offers some great discussion possibilities. As a wife, do you feel about birthdays and anniversaries the way Emerson describes? As a husband, do you begin to grasp how important this can be to a woman? Discuss the example of giving the wife a Mercedes or a little rock with a sentimental message inscribed on it (see page 178). Is Emerson overstating his case when he claims most women would treasure the rock more? What is his point? And be sure to read the letter from the wife whose husband “went all out” for Valentine’s Day. Should more husbands try things like this? Why or why not?

4. Read “Thank Her for All She Does and “Your Wife Will Feel Esteemed When...” (pages 181-82). Which of these ideas and tips for ways to make a wife feel esteemed seem most practical to you? Write down your choices and when you plan to try them.



Be sure the wife gets to contribute her opinion on what the husband might like to try. Later, after the husband tries at least one of these tips, talk about the difference it made and how this practice can be continued.

My current thoughts about our marriage: