



MARRIAGE BASICS

Overview:

In this series, we introduce some principles for establishing a healthy, life-long marriage. This takes love, trust, and communication skills.

Lessons:

1. Love is a Choice, Not Just a Feeling
2. Trust is Earned, Not Freely Given
3. Healthy Couples Keep Talking



LOVE IS A CHOICE, NOT JUST A FEELING

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/Marriage-Basics

TALKING POINTS

If you're working from a faulty definition of love, your marriage is missing the foundation it needs to last a lifetime.

- Modern culture depicts love as a _____ that comes and goes. Many couples use this unrealistic standard to measure the _____ of love in their marriage.
- The Bible paints a different picture for _____ love: Love is a choice, not just a feeling. Love is based on a _____ and is represented by our marriage _____. **Proverbs 20:25**
- The ultimate analogy for love is how Christ loves his _____. He gave up his life for his “_____” even though he didn't feel like it. **Ephesians 5:25-27**

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe how you think our culture (through entertainment or popular opinion) views love and marriage. Explain. How might those views be fueling the divorce rate in our country?*
2. *Make two lists: (1) good feelings you've felt in your marriage (2) bad feelings you've felt in your marriage. How have feelings affected your marriage, positively and negatively?*
3. *Read Proverbs 20:25. Looking back, do you think you understood the commitment you were making on your wedding day? What promises have proven hardest to keep?*
4. *List some choices or sacrifices you've made for your marriage. How did you come to those decisions?*
5. *Read Ephesians 5:25-27. What did Christ do to set his bride (the Church) apart? What does it mean for you to set your spouse apart in marriage? What would your spouse say you need to do to set the marriage apart more?*
6. *Talk about the 5 love languages. Which one is your love language? Which one is your spouse's primary love language?*
7. *What are some practical ways you can start speaking your spouse's language?*

TRUST IS EARNED, NOT FREELY GIVEN

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TALKING POINTS

Choosing love will lead to a life-long marriage, but it'll feel like bondage without a daily commitment to earning trust.

- Trust is relying on the _____ or _____ of another person. Your ability to truly trust someone is based on their _____, not yours.

Deuteronomy 7:9

- Trust is _____, not freely given. That's why every spouse needs to work hard to earn trust from their spouse _____.

- Trust is _____ and _____. Building trust happens _____ over time, like building up a saving account.

- Trust is _____, but forgiveness is _____. Extending forgiveness opens the door to restoring broken trust.

Colossians 3:12-13

DISCUSSION

1. Review the definition of trust. What is the basis of trust? Describe a time you've given trust to someone who hadn't proved their integrity to you? What was the result?
2. Identify one area where you've had a hard time trusting your spouse. Why has it been hard to trust them? Identify an area where your spouse has a hard time trusting you? Why?
3. Review the 3 components to trust (reactive, measurable, takes time). Think about that area where your spouse has a hard time trusting you. How will you incorporate these components to start building that trust?
4. Read Deuteronomy 7:9. What does it say about God that He is willing to earn our trust? Share ways God has earned your trust.
5. What role does forgiveness play in earning trust? Is there an area where you need to extend forgiveness to your spouse, even if he/she still has trust to earn?

HEALTHY COUPLES KEEP TALKING

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TALKING POINTS

Love and trust are great, but without the practical skill of good communication, your marriage might not go the distance.

- Healthy couples keep talking, even when it leads to _____. Fighting is good and helpful if you do it the _____ way. **Ephesians 4:29**
- Avoid the three unhealthy “Fight Languages”: _____, _____, and _____. These habits become the issues that _____ you from talking about the issue you’re trying to solve.
- Healthy communicators use “_____...” statements instead of pointing fingers at their spouse. Learn to be an active listener and work together to find solutions.

DISCUSSION

1. *How have you viewed conflict in your marriage up until now?*
2. *On a scale from 1-10, how often do you feel like your spouse doesn’t understand your point of view? In your opinion, what contributes to the breakdown?*
3. *What’s your primary “Fight Language”? What would your kids (or friends) say?*
4. *Read Ephesians 4:29. On a scale from 1-10, rate your ability to use your words constructively. In what ways can you improve?*
5. *Review the good habits of communication. Which skill do you need to work on the most? How can those skills help you the next time you have a conflict?*
6. *How often do you get to action steps in your conflicts? What keeps you from moving forward?*

