

Fireproof Your Marriage

Session 2

He First Loved Us

Do you know God's Love? Do you reflect that love to your spouse?

Holy Cross Lutheran Church • Indianapolis



Review Session 1

He Said/She Said

Ephesians 5:21-33

In a relationship Men seek _____; Women seek _____

Last Week's Homework

How did it go???

QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN

A: Read through the quotes below, Put a check beside the ones that would make you feel most **loved**, if said by your husband. Why?

- "It sounds like you had a stressful day today. Would you like to talk about it? What happened?"*
- "I really like that new haircut. It makes you look very pretty"*
- (In response to you calling him at work, sounding very upset and asking to talk with him.) "I have some people in my office, but I want to hear what's wrong. Hold on just a minute, and I'll get to a place we can talk privately."*
- "Those boxes are really heavy. Here, let me get them for you."*

B: Read through the quotes below. This time, check the ones that would make you feel most **unloved**. Why?

- "I know your birthday is tomorrow, but I've been really busy. Here, you can take the credit card and spend 50 bucks on yourself "*
- "I heard John's wife went to that new fitness class and lost 10 pounds. Why don't you go check it out-it might make you feel better about yourself."*
- "When are you going to clean up this house? it's a mess."*
- "Can't you see I'm in the middle of watching the game? You're always wanting to talk about something when I'm trying to relax."*

QUESTIONS FOR MEN

A: Read through the quotes below. Put a check beside the ones that would make you feel most **respected**, if said by your wife. Why?

- "The garage door opener doesn't seem to be working correctly and I know you're better at understanding mechanical things. Would you take a look at it?"*
- "My husband took the kids out to the park yesterday to give me a break. He's really great about giving me the breaks I need."*
- "That's great that you got a raise at work. You've earned it."*
- "I'm having a hard time with my co-worker-he has been undermining me with my boss, What do you think I should do?"*

B: Read through the quotes below. This time, check the ones that would make you feel most **disrespected**. Why?

- "You're not really a fix-it kind of guy-don't you think you should call someone to repair that?"*
- "When are you going to start being responsible and quit spending so much time on that dream of starting your own business?"*
- "Last night, it took my husband three hours to figure out how to get the new computer working. Technical things are not really; his strength."*
- "When are you going to start making more money at work?"*
- "We really need to have more income to get; all these bills paid."*

Men: What does respect look like to you? Why is respect such a critical issue?

Women: Share how you feel love. Why is emotional connection and understanding so important?

When you say "I love you" to each other, what does that mean? What does it look like?

Every couple needs to have that conversation.

He First Loved Us

You can't give what you don't have.

Video

As the conversation begins, Caleb talks to his father about his relationship with Catherine and how she is responding to "The Love Dare." What emotions show in his face and his words? Why does Caleb feel the way he does?

Do you empathize with Caleb in this scene? What happens when love is not "returned"?

Who do you think is more important to Caleb, himself or his wife? What does he say that leads you to your conclusion?

When Caleb asks his father, "How am I supposed to show love to someone who constantly rejects me?" his father re-directs Caleb's eyes to the cross. What is his father implying? How does the point apply to Caleb?

You can't give what you don't have.

The first step to loving unconditionally...

Romans 5:5

God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁷ In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- According to verse 19, why do we love each other?
- Love is modeled. *Children learn what they live.*
- Have a conversation about the love you experienced as a child (or didn't!). What did it look like? Was it unconditional?
- Do you know and believe the love God has for us? *Verse 10.*
- Before we can love each other unconditionally, what do we need?
- Talk about your relationship with God!
- Be a mutual encouragement spiritually. God intendeds marriage to be beneficial spiritually. You are literally "soul mates".
- How do we grow in God's love (His for us; ours for Him)?

Philippians 2:1-4

¹ *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,* ² *then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.* ³ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* ⁴ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Reread Verses 1 & 2. The two verses form a conditional statement that starts with “if” and continues with “then.” Read through the verses carefully. What conditions start with the word “if”? What does this passage say we need to have in order to love others? In particular, what do we receive when we’re united with Christ? What do we need from the Holy Spirit?

How does Caleb’s behavior in the video contrast with verse 3 & 4?

Think about John Holt’s (the dad) answer to his son, “You can’t love her because you can’t give her what you don’t have.” How does John’s point align with this passage? What “if” condition(s) does Caleb most need in his life in order to love his wife?

Think about your marriage (or other significant relationships in your life). To what degree do you try to manage the relationship using your own wisdom and abilities? What’s the result?

Reread 1 John 4:7-19

This passage of Scripture explains how God’s love for us works in our lives. What phrases or ideas particularly touch you? (underline/highlight) Discuss with your spouse.

What does verse 13 say God has given us to enable us to “live in Him?” Give some practical examples from your life of how you know God lives in you.

Fireproofing for Women AND Men

John 3:16

¹⁶ *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

In this week’s video, Caleb is missing the Source of real love in his life. The foundation for this love is described in the most famous verse in the Bible: John 3:16. How would you answer this question: “Do you know God’s love, and do you reflect that love to your spouse?”

1 John 4:18

¹⁸ *“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”*

God’s love for us and within us is perfect. As you these this verse, is there anything you fear about fully and unconditionally loving your spouse? About loving God? Identify any fears you have and pray for God to help you “drive out fear” with His love.

Self-evaluation

Below are several ways in which you can love your spouse through God. Rate yourself on each:

1. How frequently do you study God's Word and use that wisdom to guide your love and marriage?

VERY INFREQUENTLY INFREQUENTLY ONCE IN A WHILE FREQUENTLY VERY FREQUENTLY

2. When you struggle to love your spouse, how likely are you to pray for God's encouragement, strength and guidance?

VERY INFREQUENTLY INFREQUENTLY ONCE IN A WHILE FREQUENTLY VERY FREQUENTLY

3. How likely are you to ask God to help you view and love your spouse in the same way He does?

VERY INFREQUENTLY INFREQUENTLY ONCE IN A WHILE FREQUENTLY VERY FREQUENTLY

4. How frequently do you pray for your spouse?

VERY INFREQUENTLY INFREQUENTLY ONCE IN A WHILE FREQUENTLY VERY FREQUENTLY

Fireproofing Challenge for the Week

Option 1

If you haven't already entered into a lifelong relationship with God, do it now. You can then use His great love to support a lasting marriage. God's love doesn't require perfection or complicated steps. Although sin separates us from God, God has made a way for us. Jesus came to bridge the gap between a perfect God and imperfect people. Paul wrote:

⁹ *If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* Romans 10:9

That's all it takes—just an acknowledgement of your need for forgiveness and your trust that the death of Jesus IS the payment for all your sins. If you would like to explore God's love further, please speak with either Pastor Sattler or Pastor McClean. We want to help you get God's love for YOU straight first, before you try to love each other.

Option 2

Look at the answers to the "frequency" questions above. Select the lowest-ranked question and for the rest of the week focus on improvements you can make in this area. Pray for your spouse and about the areas in which you could improve.

Review from Last Week

Men: Focus on one way in which your spouse feels loved.

Commit to implementing it this week in a practical way.

Women: Focus on one way in which your spouse feels respected.

Commit to implementing it this week in a practical way.

Singles: In your work, school, or home environment, whose life would you like to add value to by giving them greater love or respect? What can you do this week to make that happen?