



## Calvary Chapel Tustin Couples Fellowship

### *Love & Respect*

#### **Session 3: Chapters 8-11**

This session begins 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 8: "C-O-U-P-L-E: How to Spell Love to Your Wife"**

1. To get started with Session Three, the six words represented by C-O-U-P-L-E are listed below. Next to each word is a brief definition. Under each word, write what it suggests to you. Does your definition match the one given?

*Closeness: She wants you to be close.*



My definition:



My definition:

*Openness: She wants you to be close.*



My definition:



My definition:

*Understanding: Don't try to "fix" her, just listen.*



My definition



My definition:

*Peacemaking: She wants you to say, "I'm sorry."*



My definition:



My Definition:

*Loyalty: She needs to know you're committed*



My definition:



My definition:

*Esteem: She wants you to honor and cherish her.*



My definition:



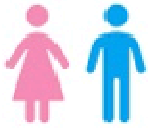
My definition:

Which of these six principles sounds most interesting? Which is most necessary to a happy marriage? Why?



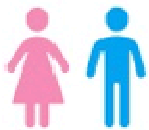
Husbands and wives should compare their respective definitions and discuss them. How did they differ from the definitions given? How does your definition differ from your spouse's? When your study of C-O-U-P-L-E-S is complete, see if your opinions have changed, and note why they might have changed.

2. On page 118, Emerson defined the acrostic word C-O-U-P-L-E as “two people connected together.” What does it mean for you to be “connected” to your spouse?



This could prove sensitive, especially if the husband sees his wife's efforts to connect with him as an effort to control him. Go over page 118 again. Wife, do you agree that when you come across as negative and offensive you are really crying out for C-O-U-P-L-E, the things your husband can do to connect with you? Husband, can you see yourself starting to decode your wife's messages, which may sound negative, but are really her cries for your love?

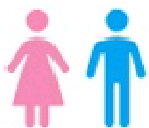
3. Farther down on page 118, Emerson writes, “Wives want connectivity...Women confront to connect.” Why is this good? How can it turn out not so good?



Discuss your answers and learn a little more about one another.

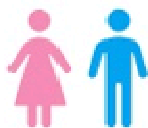
## Chapter 9: “Closeness – She Wants You to Be Close”

1. Chapter Nine opens with a biblical definition of *closeness* (page 125). Write that definition below and be sure to add what it means “to cleave.” Obviously “cleaving” involves sex, but what other kinds of closeness are involved?



Talk together about what closeness means to each of you. How important is it for the husband to let his wife know he wants to be close with a look, a touch, or a smile?

2. Read carefully “The First Few Seconds Set the Tone” (pages 126-127). Why are those first few moments when a couple comes together after being apart all day so important to the wife?



Share your answers, and then talk about how you are doing during the first few moments when you arrive home. How easy is it to be perfunctory, preoccupied, and self-absorbed with your own needs? Is Emerson saying couples have to spend a lot of time reconnecting? What is more important—quantity or quality? Take a good look at what the two of you have been doing to reconnect after a busy day.

What is your typical routine? Is Emerson right when he says, “The first few moments of reconnecting will set the tone for the rest of the evening”? If you agree with him, you may want to talk about changing your usual routine and spending at least a few minutes talking about what each of you did that day—achievements, frustrations, humorous incidents...

3. Read the sections entitled, “Involvement or Independence?” and “Only Chickens Get Henpecked” (pages 128-30). Then mark the line below according to what you need – more involvement with your spouse, or more independence from your spouse.

**Involvement ----- Independence**



According to Emerson, “In the typical marriage relationship, she leans more toward the ‘Involvement’ side while he leans more toward the ‘Independence’ side.” Talk together about the amount of tension you see in your marriage, between her need for involvement and his need for independence. Remember, this kind of tension is normal, so think positively about how you can solve this need for ‘space’ and her

need to be ‘close.’

4. Chapter Nine closes with tips and techniques for being close (pages 131-33). Go down the list and find things that you are doing well. Then find one thing that you have not done for a while. Write it here, and then plan how you can do it in the next twenty-four hours.



Husband, take time to ask your wife what she would like. (Maybe she will just want you to surprise her.)

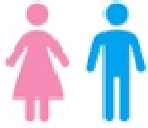
### Chapter 10: “Openness—She Wants You to Open Up to Her”

1. As he begins Chapter Ten (page 135), Emerson shares from his counseling experience, describing how couples act when they come in to see him. Men tend to be closed, playing it close to the vest. The wife is much more open, wanting to talk and connect with her husband. Does this describe you and your spouse—the husband more quiet and closed, the wife more open and talkative?

Fits us perfectly \_\_\_\_

Somewhat true of us \_\_\_\_

Not true of us at all \_\_\_\_



Compare your answers. If you both believe this is true of the two of you, at least to some degree, talk about it as much as feels comfortable. The typically “closed” husband may not want to go into it to any extent, at least at this time in your study. If the reverse situation is true in your marriage, discuss how it affects your communication.

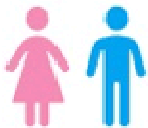
**2.** Do you keep your wife up-to date? Read “Sarah Prefers...” (pages 139-40) and see if you have ever struggled (or perhaps you are struggling now) as Emerson did. Following are questions a husband could ask himself if he is tempted to think his wife is snooping or prying. How he answers each question can tell him a great deal concerning why he may not be keeping his wife informed. **(Wives should answer these questions as well.)**

Is my wife a good-willed woman?                      Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Is she trying to control me?                              Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

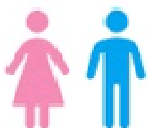
Is she trying to connect and be close?                Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Is she trying to make me feel guilty?                    Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_



Share how you answered the questions from your individual perspectives. If the husband perceives the wife as coming across as “prying or controlling,” this is her chance to reassure him of her good intentions. And if the husband realizes he has been reading his wife wrong (decoding her incorrectly), this is his chance to apologize for misinterpreting her heart, to say that he is sorry and from now on he will try to do a better job of decoding (and keeping her up-to-date).

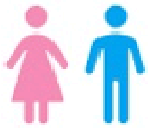
**3.** To close Chapter Ten, Emerson asks husbands a practical question: “How Will You Then Live With This Sensitive Creature?” (pages 143-44). As a husband, what practical ideas do you find on these pages that you can or should use? As a wife, what do you see on these pages that you would like to respectfully point out to your husband?



Compare what you found on pages 143-44. Husband, did you ask yourself, “How often do I come off as harsh when I’m just telling her what I think?” Wife, did you think about, “How sensitive am I to my husband’s words and moods? Am I letting him know tactfully and respectfully when he steps on my air hose because he sounds harsh?”

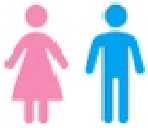
## Chapter 11: “Understanding—Don’t Try to ‘Fix’ Her; Just Listen”

1. Chapter Eleven opens with a discussion of 1 Peter 3:7, which says a husband should live with his wife in an understanding way because she is the “weaker partner” (NIV) or “weaker vessel” (NKJV). Feminists tend to bristle at this, claiming it says men are stronger, and therefore superior to women. What has been your understanding of “weaker partner”? Write your thoughts here, and then compare them to Emerson’s explanation of what the verse means on pages 145-46.



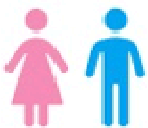
Discuss what you each wrote about 1 Peter 3:7. What do you think Emerson means when he says the wife is the weaker vessel (or partner) “because of her vulnerability to her husband within the marriage relationship?”

2. The bottom half of page 147 talks about something you may have noticed: The principles in C-O-U-P-L-E connect and even overlap. How can practicing closeness and openness help a husband with understanding his wife? Write your ideas here:



Compare what you wrote.

3. Read pages 148-51. What does Sarah usually want from Emerson—a “solution” or a listening ear? How is the man’s typical desire to “fix” whatever seems to be wrong an example of “blue” thinking? How is the woman’s typical desire to “just want to talk” an example of “pink” thinking?



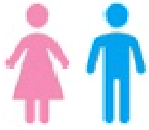
Compare yourself with Sarah and Emerson. Does the wife usually want to “just talk”? Does the husband prefer to exchange information, come to conclusions, or “fix a problem”? If the two of you fit this profile, how does it sometimes lead to problems? What can each of you do about it?

4. Do you agree that “Understanding Takes Scheduled Time”? (See pages 152-54). How does this idea strike you? Be totally honest.

- \_\_\_ a. I agree completely and already do this, or plan to do this regularly.
- \_\_\_ b. I’m not sure it would work...What would we talk about?
- \_\_\_ c. I’d like to try it, but doubt we have the time.

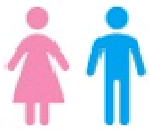
\_\_\_ d. I think understanding is something you feel, not something you schedule.

\_\_\_ e. I think:



Compare answers, and then discuss how useful it would be to schedule time to talk.

**5.** Look over the list of tips at the bottom of page 154. Husbands, pick at least one thing you will try this coming week. Wives, choose at least one thing you would like your husband to try this coming week. Write your choices here:



Compare your choices and agree on what the husband is going to try. (The wife should not be judgmental if her husband doesn't perform flawlessly. Be encouraging as he tries things that may be new to him.)

**My current thoughts about our marriage:**