

How to Have a Champion Marriage
Lesson 1
Premarital Training - Making a Choice You Can Live With.

I. LOVE IS A DECISION, NOT A FEELING

A. Definition of God's Love: Agape denotes an undefeatable act of kindness and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good for the other person, no matter what he does. This is a self-giving love that gives freely without asking anything in return.

1. Agape – love by _____ .
 - a. Refers to the will – it is an act of the will.
2. Love by saying, “I chose to.”
3. Love born out of the will lasts forever.

B. Philos – love by chance

1. Needs a feeling, needs chemistry.

C. Love is not _____ until it is given _____.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

D. Love is first an _____ and then it becomes a feeling.

E. Love is found in the agreement of the _____ of God and not _____ from it.

I John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1. God is love.

I John 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

2. God's love has been _____ to us. We need to learn to draw from it.

Romans 5:5 (NKJV)

⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

3. Love starts in the _____.

Proverbs 3:3-4 (NIV)

³“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

4. Follow the way of love.

I Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV)

¹Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

5. Always choose love.

I John 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

6. You decide to _____ or not to love every day.
7. No emotion is on its own; every emotion is born out of thought.

II. 5 LOVE LANGUAGES – HOW WE RECEIVE LOVE

- A. Words of Affirmation (Encouragement and Praise)
- B. Acts of service
- C. Gift-giving
- D. Quality time
- E. Physical touch and closeness

III. EMOTIONAL LOVE TANK

- A. Love is a decision – you make a choice to love your spouse.
- B. When your emotional love tank is _____, you can feel pain, abandonment, rejection, hopelessness and loneliness.
- C. Love is sowing then _____.

IV. IT'S A CHEMISTRY

- A. Obsession – You are consumed with the person and you think of nothing else but them day and night. You experience a “high on life” feeling.

- B. You experience the most perfect, wonderful and warm feeling.
- C. This only lasts about 2 years and then it dies. It's not real love that the marriage was founded on; therefore it becomes a battlefield. We need to learn to love by doing love, not because we're on a high. If it's a "high," it's about "me" instead of about my mate.
- D. Real love is:
 - 1. A _____ action. You choose to give to the other person and fulfill their needs (their love tank).
 - a. A willingness to submit your own desires in order to focus on the other person's desires.
 - 2. A need for your own personal _____.

V. BEING LOVED BY YOUR SPOUSE

- A. Love grows out of reason and choice.
 - 1. Reason – you stop and _____.
 - 2. Choice – you make plans to _____ it.
- B. Learn how to meet the other's deep emotional need of love.
 - 1. Learn how by getting the _____ to do it.
 - 2. Pay close attention to your spouse and their needs.

VI. 5 LOVE LANGUAGES IN A MARRIAGE – Love Language One

- A. _____ (words that build up)

Song 4:9 (NIV)

⁹You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.

Song 1:3 (NIV)

³Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you!

Song 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.

Song 1:16 (NIV)

¹⁶How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming! And our bed is verdant.

- 1. Build up your spouse through verbal _____ and compliments.
- 2. In Song of Solomon, they take plenty of _____ to verbally pat the other on the back to say, "I love you."

3. Sacrificial love takes:
 - a. Thought
 - b. Planning
 - c. Time

B. Words of Affirmation

1. Use words that build up your spouse.
2. Verbal compliments or words of appreciation are powerful ways of communicating love.
 - a. The object of love is not to _____ something you want, but instead to do something for the well-being of the one you love.
 - b. It's a fact that when we _____ affirming words, we are far more likely to be motivated to reciprocate.
3. Forget the little things that don't matter. Don't nag.
4. Every time he or she does something good, give him or her a verbal _____ (get rid of nagging words).

C. Encouraging Words - Bring out the untapped potentials in one or more areas of his or her life. The Holy Spirit is an encourager.

Rom 12:8a (NIV)

⁸ . . . *if it is encouraging, let him encourage...*

1. First, learn what is important to your spouse.
2. "I know," "I care," "I am with you."
3. I believe in you and in your _____ (give credit and praise).
 - a. Most of us have more potential than we will ever know.
 - b. Sometimes it's easier to have faith in yourself when you know someone else has faith in you.

Scripture References:

Acts 15:32 (NIV)

Acts 4:36 {NKJV}

I Thess 3:2 {NKJV}

I Thess 4:18 (NIV)

Phil 1:7 (NIV)

D. Kind words in conflict.

I Cor 13:4(NKJV)

⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

1. Use kind words and _____ as a genuine expression of your love.
 2. The tone of voice you use is very important.
 3. We can share hurt, pain and even anger in a kind manner. This is an _____ of love.
 - a. Take steps to build intimacy by sharing feelings with each other.
 - b. The same words shared in a loud, harsh voice will not be an expression of love, but instead, an expression of condemnation and _____; they will not build intimacy.
- "A soft answer turns away anger."***
4. See the event through the other person's eyes and kindly say that you understand. Be willing to _____ you're wrong and ask for forgiveness.
 - a. Seek understanding and reconciliation.
 - b. Conflict calls for kindness and tenderness spoken in a soft voice.
 5. Love doesn't:

I Cor 13:5 (NIV)

⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

- a. Keep a score of wrongs.
 - b. Bring up past failures.
6. If you try to make the person pay for the hurt, you make intimacy impossible (choose to forgive).
 - a. It's amazing how many individuals mess up every new day. They insist on bringing yesterday's failures into the next day, and in doing so, they pollute a potentially wonderful day (this is bitterness, resentment and revenge).
 - b. We can choose to live today being free from the failures of yesterday.
 1. Forgiveness is not a feeling; it is a _____.
 2. Forgiveness is an expression of love.

Mark 11:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

3. Don't pay back

I Thess 5:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. ¹⁶Rejoice always

Rom. 12:21 (NKJV)

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Cor 13:5 (AMP)

⁵It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it (it pays no attention to a suffered wrong.)

E. What love is not:

1. Not self-seeking – not about you – its about the other person.
2. Not touchy – doesn't let anything bother it, not easily hurt/offended.
3. Not fretful – not an over-thinker: “What did they say? What did they really mean?”
4. Not resentful – doesn't think on the negative – thinks on the good.
5. Takes no account of the evil; love doesn't remember wrong.

I leave the love walk when I:

- a. Seek self – it's all about me
- b. Let things bother me
- c. Over think
- d. Think negative
- e. Remember wrong
- f. Demand - becomes child and parent relationship.

F. Humble words - love makes requests, not demands

1. Intimacy comes out of knowing each other's desires and wants by request. Do not make _____.
2. Requests introduce the element of choice. Love is always a choice.
3. Request creates the possibility for an expression of love, where as a demand _____ that possibility.

G. Various dialects

1. Our deepest human need is the need to feel _____ - words of affirmation will meet that need.

***Key - express verbal appreciation for the things you like about the other person, but don't give compliments at the same time.**

2. Look for something _____ in your mate every day.
 - a. Tell them how they make you _____.
 - b. Point out the good things in their character.
 - c. Tell your spouse you enjoy being with them.
3. Verbal _____
 - a. Compliment them on their appearance.
 - b. Think of what you want to say to them ahead of time.
 - c. Speak when you see them.
 - d. Tell others how wonderful your mate is.

VII. 5 LOVE LANGUAGES IN A MARRIAGE - Love Language Two

A. Acts of Service

Song 6:2 (NIV)

²My lover has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies.

Song 7:12 (NIV)

¹²Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom— there I will give you my love.

I Pet 4:11 (NIV)

¹¹... If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

Rom 12:7 (NIV)

⁷If it is serving, let him serve;...

1. Do things you know the other person would like you to do with them or for them.
2. People who receive love through acts of service usually possess these qualities:
 - a. They can't sit until everything is in order.
 - b. They have a high level of energy.
 - c. They are motivated by task.
 - d. They don't procrastinate.

- e. They love to do things; therefore they connect through doing something.
 - 1. They are hobby people.
 - 2. They like sports.
 - 3. They like activities.
- f. It hurts them when you don't do things with them.
 - 1. They connect emotionally through you being an active part of their project or carrying your load.
 - 2. They want you to be involved in their projects because they care about what you think.
- g. Do something _____ for them.
- h. Do something for the other person because you know it's important to them. (Do something you know they would like you to do.)
 - 1. Find out what your spouse likes and learn how to do it.
 - 2. Make it a priority to be _____ with them.

B. "I've always felt loved by her. She is the best housekeeper in the world. She is an excellent cook and she keeps my clothes washed and ironed. She is wonderful about doing things with the children. I know she loves me."

- 1. Start doing things you _____ your spouse would like you to do.
 - a. Seek to _____ your spouse by serving them.
 - b. Express your love for your spouse by _____ things with them.
- 2. Acts of service require:
 - a. Thought
 - b. Planning
 - c. _____
 - d. Effort
 - e. Energy
- 3. Always do things with a _____ spirit. This can be considered sacrificial love.
 - a. Don't complain about doing things with them.
 - b. Do it because you love them and you want them to feel loved.

4. Fill their love tank and give them expressions of your love for them through _____.
 5. Jesus said the greatest leader is the servant.
 6. Serve one another in _____.
 7. Emotional love tanks are filled by:
 - a. Helping with things (They will say, “No, I can do it.”)
 - b. Doing things with _____.
 - c. _____ is shown and felt by doing things for the other person.
- C. Same language but different dialects.
1. Find out from your spouse what is important for you to do as an act of service.
 2. Make requests and _____ demands.
 3. Criticism and demands tend to drive wedges.
 4. Choose to love, then:
 - a. Express it in the way in which your spouse requests it.
 - b. Surprise them with your thoughtfulness.
 5. Criticism often needs clarification.
 6. We tend to criticize our spouse in the area we have the _____ emotional need.
 7. Criticism is an ineffective way of pleading for love. _____ a request instead.

Scripture References:

Luke 22:27 {NKJV}

²⁷For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

John 12:26 {NKJV}

²⁶If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Rom 14:17-18 {NKJV}

¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Mark 10:44-45 {NKJV}

⁴⁴And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

ANSWER KEY

Page 1

choice
love, away
action
word, apart
given

Page 2

home
love
empty
reaping

Page 3

selfless
growth
think
do
experience
Affirming, Words
appreciation
time

Page 4

get
receive
compliment
abilities

Page 5

tenderness
expression
judgment
confess
commitment

Page 6

demands
suffocates

Page 7

appreciated
good
feel
appreciation

Page 8

special
active
know
please
doing
Time
positive

Page 9

service
love
them
Love
not
deepest
Make