

Communicate

Joined Together

Fusion Marriage Series

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MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12

INTRODUCTION: Joined Together

Fusion is the marriage ministry of New Life Community Church. The Fusion ministry exists to help connect couples to the Lord, to each other, and to the family of faith in the church. The goal is that marriages will be strengthened, lives will be changed, and families will experience God's power and blessing in every area.

The Fusion "Joined Together" curriculum is designed for use in small groups. "Joined Together" consists of 7 units with 4 sessions each. The titles of the 7 units are: UNITE, HEAL, COMMUNICATE, INFLUENCE, OVERCOME, INVEST, and DELIGHT. Each small group session is followed by homework that couples should complete on their own, outside of group.

In order to get the most out of these 4 sessions, make every effort to:

1. Attend the small group each week together as a couple.
2. Do the homework. Sometimes multiple homework options are offered. Complete the option that best meets your needs.
3. Don't give up!

We ask that couples abide by 4 Ground Rules:

1. What's said here, stays here (unless there is a threat of harm to self or others)
2. Check with your spouse before sharing a story that involves both of you
3. No put-downs
4. Confess your own sin rather than talking about your spouse's faults.

COMMUNICATE

In this unit we will discuss, plan, and seek to grow in the area of communication. If you apply these COMMUNICATE teachings from the word of God and work together you have the opportunity to take the following steps:

- *Take steps to love and respect one another
- *Practice life-giving communication through "I-Feel" statements
- *Work on reflective "drive-through" listening
- *Discover your love languages and put love into action

Sign below to make a commitment to follow the above guidelines as you participate in this unit.

Name _____ Date _____



However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:33

1. PERSPECTIVE

What role does gender play in communication?

God created men and women with unique characteristics and different needs, though both genders are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). In marriage, we are positioned by God to minister to one another's needs, but since men's and women's needs are so different, we often fall short. We must rely on God's help through the Holy Spirit to understand the specific needs of our spouse as a man or woman, and ask God for the power to meet those needs. A key area where this is essential is in communication. The Bible indicates that men have a need for respect (Eph. 5:21, Eph. 5:33; Col. 3:18), while women have a need to be loved and cherished through communication (Eph. 5:25, Eph. 5:33, Col. 3:19).

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs discusses the marital commands to "love and respect" at length in his book *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*. He writes that when we don't meet our spouse's need for respect or love, we enter into a crazy cycle of communication in our marriages. This cycle is full of fighting, isolation, and brokenness. The key to overcoming the crazy cycle is for at least one individual in the marriage to commit to meet their spouse's need for respect or love regardless of the other's response. An unconditional commitment like this can only be sustained through a relationship with Jesus. Our motivation to love our wives or respect our husbands comes from our desire to obey and please God. We love and respect "as to the Lord." In this way, our commitment to communicate love or respect can truly be unconditional, not based on our spouse's performance. This unconditional commitment to loving or respecting our spouse regardless of his or her response results in a rewarded cycle. In the rewarded cycle, God is glorified, we experience the joy that comes from obedience, and we reap eternal rewards!

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

²² *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

Read 1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, go that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Discussion Questions

1. Take a few minutes to discuss questions 1A and 1B with another couple, then share your answers with the group.

1A. Share a time when you felt honored or respected by someone (parents, teachers, friends, spouses), then share a time when you felt loved. What would you say is different between the two experiences?

1B. What differences have you noticed about the ways men and women communicate? How are they the same, and how are they different?

2. Ephesians 5:21 starts out with a command for both genders. What is it? What does it look like to implement this command in daily life?

3. Men answer: Look at Eph. 5:25, Eph. 5:33 and 1 Peter 3:7. How can you better cherish your wife in your attitudes and actions?

4. Women answer: Look at Eph. 5:22, Eph. 5:24, and Eph. 5:33. In what ways could you improve showing your husband respect in your attitudes and actions?

5. Work together with your spouse for 10-15 minutes to answer questions 5A-5C. Then share your answer to 5B with the group.
- 5A. Look at the list of 26 Communication Needs. Circle "R" next to it if it requires respect. Circle "L" next to it if it requires love. Circle both "R" and "L" if it requires both.
- 5B. Men: Circle "M" next to the items in the list that you really need in communication. Women: Circle "W" next to the items that you really need during communication. Is there any pattern with communication needs for love and respect based on gender?
- 5C. Star (*) 3 items that are the most important communication needs for you personally. Share them with your spouse.

List of Communication Needs				
1.	Considering my opinion	R	L	M W
2.	Giving public praise	R	L	M W
3.	Telling me I'm a priority	R	L	M W
4.	Encouraging friend time	R	L	M W
5.	Encouraging interests	R	L	M W
6.	Providing alone time	R	L	M W
7.	Expressing commitment	R	L	M W
8.	Seeking my advice	R	L	M W
9.	Listening reflectively	R	L	M W
10.	Face to face talks	R	L	M W
11.	Trusting with decisions	R	L	M W
12.	Offering forgiveness	R	L	M W
13.	Resolving wrongs	R	L	M W
14.	Saying "thanks" often	R	L	M W
15.	Responding to touch	R	L	M W
16.	Keeping talk to the point	R	L	M W
17.	Focusing on solutions	R	L	M W
18.	Focusing on empathy	R	L	M W
19.	Appreciating work effort	R	L	M W
20.	Recognizing as a leader	R	L	M W
21.	Accepting emotions	R	L	M W
22.	Sharing regularly	R	L	M W
23.	Side by side talks	R	L	M W
24.	Appreciating service	R	L	M W
25.	Opening up to me	R	L	M W
26.	Cherishing me with words	R	L	M W

Close in Prayer

With gender-specific needs, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit's power to consistently and effectively meet our spouse's needs. Sit with another couple to pray for God's help in this area for this week.

Homework: Practicing Love and Respect

Complete the separate assignments for husbands and wives.

Homework for Husbands

Choose one or more of the options below to complete based on what best meets your needs.

Option 1: Be Sensitive. God asks husbands to treat their wives considerately and with respect as the "weaker partner" (1 Pet. 3:7). This means to live with wives in an understanding way, and to be particularly sensitive to a wife's weaknesses and needs. Ask your wife "What is one way I can be sensitive to your needs?" Write her answer down, and do it this week.

Option 2: Value Her. Many cultures position women as second class citizens, but God's word makes it clear that women are valued just as highly by God. God asks husbands to treat wives as "heirs of eternal life," (1 Pet. 3:7) which means to honor your wife as a spiritual co-equal, a valuable and worthy woman of God. Ask your wife, "What is one way that I can value you in the home?" Write down her answer, and do it this week.

Option 3: Apologize. God has created wives to value peacemaking in relationships. To foster peacemaking in your relationship, try two things that require humility at least once this week.

- a. Admit it when you are wrong.
- b. Ask for your wife's forgiveness.

Option 4: Be Open. God has also created wives to desire closeness to their husbands. To develop intimacy and closeness, do your best to open up once this week when your wife asks you simple questions about your day. Try these two things:

- When something happens that triggers your emotions during the day, make note of it.
- Identify what you felt and share the feeling with your wife.

Homework for Wives

Choose one or more of the options below to complete based on what best meets your needs.

Option 1: Build him up. In our culture, it is often assumed that respect has to be earned. But God's word is clear that a wife's respect for her husband is unconditional. God commands giving respect because in reality men often struggle with insecurity and self-doubt, and they desperately need regular validation. What is one thing a wife can say to build her husband's confidence? Say it to your husband about once every day this week.

Option 2: Respect him. Ask your husband, "What is one way that I can show you respect?" Write his answer down, and do it several times this week.

Option 3: Yield to him. The meaning of submission in Eph. 5:22 is to "yield." If we think about driving, "yielding" means giving the right-of-way (slowing down and letting another go first). Submission doesn't mean to get off the road (not say anything), or to cut them off (overpower with words/opinion). What is one way you will practice yielding and demonstrate submission in communication this week?

Option 4: Practice Companionship. When was the last time you "hung out" with your husband and spent time doing something that he enjoyed? Many husbands long for their wives to be present with them at sporting events, fishing trips, or during other activities that represent side-by-side companionship rather than face to face conversational time. Even though deep conversations may not happen during this time, your attention and presence communicate that you care. Ask your husband whether he would appreciate your participation in an activity like this and then make a plan to do it.



To answer before listening--that is folly and shame. Proverbs 18:13

2. LISTEN

How do we listen effectively?

God is an amazing communicator, and we are designed and created in his image to be communicators too. God uses many avenues to communicate with us such as his written word, his creation, and his Holy Spirit. Prayer is one of His most important means of communicating with us. Over and over again, we read in the Bible about God listening and answering the prayers of his people, and people hearing from the Lord through prayer. Psalm 18:6 states, "In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears." God is always available to listen to us and hear our cries. Ephesians 5:1 encourages us to "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children..." so we are called to be good listeners in our marriages and relationships. Ephesians 5:15 encourages us to be wise, and elsewhere in the Bible, God connects good listening with wisdom. However, we

need to intentionally learn the skill of reflective listening, the kind of listening that God models for us. It requires putting on the character of Christ and God's power to truly attentively listen.

Attentive listening involves the whole self and putting into practice the six skills listed below. The first four skills help our bodies be at peace. The final two behaviors empower us to be at mental peace and to obey God's command in Colossians 3:15: "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." "Thoughts Mirroring" means we are reflecting back what we hear without judgment. "Spirit Surrendered" means we are asking God to help us understand our spouse.

1. Eyes Watching
2. Ears Listening
3. Voice Quiet
4. Body Still
5. Thoughts Mirroring
6. Spirit Surrendered

Read Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-17

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Read Colossians 3:12, 14-15

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Read Proverbs 18:13

To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.

Discussion Questions

1. Take a few minutes to discuss questions 1A-1C with another couple. Then get ready to share your answers with the group.

1A. Share a time when someone (friend, teacher, pastor, counselor, spouse) listened to you attentively. How did you feel?

1B. How could listening to someone be a form of sacrificial love?

1C. How can you tell that someone is really listening to you before they respond?

2. Assign each couple one question from 2A-2D. Each couple will read the Bible passage, then prepare an answer to the question. Once everyone has their answers ready, take turns sharing the answers to your questions.

2A. What are we commanded to do in Ephesians 5:1-2, and what might be required of us if we do this?

2B. Ephesians 5:15-17 encourages us to be wise and make the most of every opportunity. How is listening to another person wise, and how does it maximize the opportunities for good communication?

2C. Ephesians 5:17 commands us not to be foolish, and Proverbs 18:13 warns against being a fool in communication. What does it say? How does failing to listen bring shame?

2D. Listening attentively and respectfully before responding requires the power of God and the character of Christ. As listeners who follow God's example, what "clothes" do we need to put on for this task (see Col. 3:12 & 14)?

3. What experience have you had in your marriage with reflective, Drive Through Listening?

4. Read the guidelines for Drive Through Listening at the end of the Homework. What questions do you have?

5. Turn and talk to your spouse to practice Drive Through Listening. Take 3–5 minutes to share about your day. Husbands will share first and wives will reflect and then ask follow-up questions. Then switch roles.

6. What was it like to practice Drive Through Listening?

Close in Prayer

Sit with a group of brothers or sisters and pray for God's help to attentively listen this week.

Homework: Listen Attentively

There are two parts to your assignment: private reflection about your listening in Part A, and practicing attentive listening in Part B.

Part A: *Private Reflection.* Answer the following questions.

1. How do you think God might respond to you if you called on Him for help to listen or understand your spouse? (see James 1:5–8).
2. How do you think your communication might change if you were a peaceful, spirit-filled listener?
3. Discuss your reflections with your spouse.

Part B: Practice. Choose one of the options below to practice listening this week.

Option 1: Practice Drive Through Listening (DTL) three times this week as part of attentive listening. DTL is a technique to implement "Thoughts Mirroring." See the guidelines if you have questions.

Option 2: Look at the Christ-like qualities we are to "clothe" ourselves with in Col. 3:12 & 14. Which are hardest for you? Practice these qualities in a discussion with your spouse this week.

compassion	gentleness
kindness	patience
humility	

Option 3: Look at the list of attentive listening behaviors below. Which are hardest for you? Practice these qualities in a discussion with your spouse this week.

Eyes Watching	Thoughts mirroring
Ears Listening	Spirit surrendered
Voice Quiet	Body Still

Guidelines for DTL Practice:

1. *Pray.* Pray daily for God's help to slow down and attentively listen with a surrendered spirit that reflects Christ's character.
 - Focus on the person's words
 - Don't interrupt
 - Ask questions to find out more, but avoid "why" questions
 - Repeat what you heard to show you understand
2. *Reflect.* Take time to summarize what you heard. Here are some phrases you could use.
 - What I hear you saying is.....
 - You're feeling that....
 - You are wanting....
3. *Ask.* Ask open-ended questions to increase your understanding before responding. Ask for permission to ask a question, and avoid questions that begin with "why" because they raise defenses. Here are some examples.
 - How do you feel?
 - When did this begin?
 - Anything more?
4. *Understand.* Check with your spouse to see if he or she feels understood. If the answer is no, continue to listen and pray that God would help you be patient. These phrases might help.
 - Sorry, I really want to understand. Can you repeat....
 - I'm having trouble understanding. Can you tell me more?
 - Please help me understand you. Can you explain....



The tongue has the power of life and death... Proverbs 18:21a

3. SPEAK LIFE

How do we speak constructively?

We have already discussed how God is an amazing communicator. He uses many ways to express himself to us so that we can know him well. In addition to being the perfect listener, God is the perfect speaker too. His words to us are full of love, compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience—and so much more! What about us? How can we follow God's example (Eph. 5:1) and choose to be wise (Eph. 5:15-16) in the way that we share and speak to our spouses? Fortunately, Colossians 3:8-17, Ephesians 4:29-31 and Ephesians 5:18-20 show us how to use our words in a way that glorifies God and demonstrates wisdom. We must make the most of every opportunity to communicate (Eph. 5:16) and model Christ's character as we do so (Col. 3:12). However, sharing in this godly way requires dependency on God's power to speak words that bring life into our marriages.

What tool will equip us to regularly have the qualities of godly speech? In his word, God models the use of "I" statements to share his plans, his character, and his vision for us. For example, "I am giving you" (Deut. 4:40), "I am the Lord" (Gen. 1:27), "I am the Bread of Life," (John 6:35), and "I am sending you" (Matt. 10:16). Following God's example and using "I" statements can position us to have godly speech that exhibits the character of Christ. "I" statements take courage and vulnerability, as they open up our hearts to our listener, revealing what is inside. "I" statements can create a safe, loving atmosphere for our sharing and minimize words that "speak death."

Read Colossians 3:8-17

⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Read Ephesians 4:29-31

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Read Proverbs 18:21a

The tongue has the power of life and death...

Read Ephesians 5:18-20

¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Turn and talk to another couple, then share your answers with the group. Who do you know that speaks life—someone who builds up and inspires with their words (a grandparent, friend, counselor, pastor, spouse, child)? What is attractive about the way they use their words?
2. The four scriptures have very similar instructions for how we are to use our words in communication to “speak life.” Work in pairs of couples to fill out the chart below with commands in each passage of what to do, and what not to do.

Speak Death: What I Should Not Say/Speak	Speak Life: What I Should Say/Speak

3. On the chart, underline ways you speak on a regular basis. Which column has more underlined items, and where do you think you learned those ways of talking?

4. Looking at the "Speak Life" column, it's clear that God has a specific way he wants us to use our words. Based on Col. 3:17 and Eph. 5:20, what is the primary goal of whatever we do or say?

5. How do you think the communication dynamic in your marriage would be affected if your regularly "spoke life" with your words?

6. What other tips or tricks do you have to stop before speaking death?

7. Your homework this week is to practice speaking life. One option is to use "I Feel" statements. Look at the guidelines about "I Feel Statements" at the end of the homework. What questions do you have?

8. If you have used "I Feel" statements in your marital communication before, how did it go? Practice one now. Two examples are at the end of the homework.

Close in Prayer

Sit with another couple and pray that God would clothe you with Christ's character so that you can have words that "speak life."

Homework: Use "I Feel" Statements

There are two parts to your assignment: private reflection about your speech in Part A, and practicing "I Feel" statements in Part B.

Part A: *Private Reflection.* Answer the following questions.

1. How often do you pray for God's help to use your words wisely? Is that enough, or do you need to pray more? (For some of us, learning how to speak life may require accountability or deeper healing and counseling).
2. What are some of your biggest obstacles to speaking life?
3. Discuss your reflections with your spouse.

Part B. *Practice.* Choose one of the options below to practice speaking life this week.

Option 1: Practice "I Feel" statements three times this week as part of speaking life. When you are feeling a powerful emotion, it may be a good time to use an "I Feel" statement so you slow down and carefully consider what to say. If you have questions, watch this 1 minute video to remind you what to do, or read the guidelines.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjlO7ELEvc>

Option 2: God's word gives us plenty of information about godly speech. From the list below or from the column "Speak Life" in the lesson, circle one quality of godly speech you will practice in conversation with your spouse this week.

- Slow to speak (James 1:19, Prov. 13:3, Prov. 29:20)
- Refraining from judging (James 4:11, Matt. 7:1)
- Doesn't mock (Psalm 1:1)
- Speaks what is right (Prov. 8:6)
- Graceful speech (Prov. 22:11)
- Speak up for the vulnerable (Prov. 31:8 & 9)
- Speak with wisdom (Prov. 31:26)
- Speak by the Spirit's power (Matt. 10:20, Mark 13:11, 1 Cor. 2:13, 1 Pet. 4:11)
- Sincere speech (2 Cor. 2:17)

Guidelines for "I Feel" Statements Practice:

1. *Pray.* Pray daily for God's help to slow down and demonstrate the character of Christ with your words. Here are some tips:
 - Be slow to speak (James 1:19; Prov. 13:3, Prov. 29:20)
 - Share in order to "build up and benefit" (Eph. 4:29)
 - Do not use statements that start with "You..."
 - Avoid speech types that "speak death"
 - Disclose the very first feeling you have
 - Use a genuine feeling
2. *Pattern.* Follow the pattern below. It keeps your words firmly in the "speak life" column!

*I feel (name a specific feeling)
when you (name a specific action or behavior)
because (state the effect on you)
and would like it if (name a specific action or behavior).*

Example: I feel disrespected when you continually interrupt me because I lose my train of thought and I would like it if you would wait to speak until I'm finished!

Example: I feel so happy when you remember my birthday because that shows I'm important to you and I would really like it if you remember it next year, too!



Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12

4. TRANSLATE LOVE

What roles do love languages play?

God's incredible power as a communicator was demonstrated when Jesus lived his life on earth: "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). By sending Jesus to earth, God translated the message of love in a tangible way that could directly, physically relate to people on an individual, personal level. Through Jesus, God the Father's communication went beyond words, revealing the loving presence and character of God in demonstrative actions (John 5:19).

How can we communicate like Christ and follow his example of translating love into action? One powerful tool to do this is the concept of love languages, developed by Dr. Gary Chapman in his book *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*. The five

love languages categorize our preferences for communicating love. Love languages focus on different ways to translate love into action in individual, personal ways that will be meaningful for our spouses. The way that each of us prefers love to be expressed in actions is unique. It depends on our life experience and God-given personality. Every love language works, but the ones our spouse is fluent in are most effective for communicating love in our marriage. Expressions of disappointment may indicate that our attempts to communicate love are “lost in translation,” and intentional effort is needed to speak our spouse’s love language. We will see that based on Christ’s example of loving the church, we are called to become multilingual in the five love languages.

The Five Love Languages	
<u>Language</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Words of Affirmation	spoken affection, praise, thanks
Gifts	gifts or gestures that show thought
Acts of Service	helping with chores, caring actions
Touch	hugging, holding, sitting close
Quality Time	undivided attention, special times

Read John 13:34

‘A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.’

Read Colossians 3:12, 17

¹² Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Discussion Questions

1. Turn and talk with your spouse, then share with the group. When did someone (God, spouse, teacher, or friend) communicate love to you through actions? How did this affect you?

2. What are the commands in John 13:34 and Col. 3:17?

3. Let's look at some ways Christ translated love into action for believers in scripture. Assign each couple or person a passage to look up. After everyone is done reading, report back to the group about Jesus' actions so everyone can fill in the blank column. You can check the definition in the introduction if you are not sure what the love language is.

<u>Jesus' Actions</u>	<u>Passage</u>	<u>Love Language</u>
	Matt. 8:3	Touch
	Matt. 14:13-21	Gifts
	John 16:33	Words of Affirmation
	Luke 9:10	Quality Time
	John 2	Acts of Service

4. What does love look like in marriage when it's translated into action through each language? Draw from your personal experiences to discuss examples of each love language. Write down one example for each language.

Words:

Touch:

Gifts:

Acts of Service:

Quality Time:

5. How do the examples you gave in #4 require the Christ-like qualities stated in Col. 3:12 -compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience?

6. Based on Christ's example and the command in Ephesians 5:1-2, we need to become multilingual in the five love languages so we can show love to our spouses and the world around us. How can you start practicing new love languages?

7. Take a few minutes to discuss questions 7A-7B with another couple. Then share your answers with the group.

7A. What makes it difficult to speak a love language that is different from what we prefer ourselves? What helps overcome these difficulties? (2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:3)

7B. How would your marriage change if you regularly used the love languages you each prefer to put love into action?

Close in Prayer

Following God's example in our actions is a challenging task that requires God's power. Sit with your spouse and pray that God would clothe you with Christ's character so that you can translate your love into action for one another.

Homework: Practicing the Five Love Languages

There are three parts to your assignment: individual assessment of your love languages in Part A, suggesting ideas in Part B, and practicing love languages in Part C.

Part A: Assess. Take the assessment in the Appendix individually to determine your love languages. You are bilingual in love languages if you score equally in two categories on the individual assessment! Share your results with your spouse.

My love language(s):

My spouses' love language(s):

Part B: *Suggest.* Fill in the chart below with ideas for how your spouse could show love to you in your love language. Share your charts with one another.

Love Languages: Love in Action

My Preferred Love Language	What you could do for me #1	What you could do for me #2	What you could do for me #3
1.			
2.			

Part C: *Practice.* Make a plan for when you will follow through and show love using the ideas in Part B. Try to practice your spouse's love language three times this week. Undertake this with prayer for help to remove any obstacles that prevent you from speaking your spouse's love language.

My Plan to Translate Love into Action

	When will I do it?	What will I do?	What Supplies do I need?
Idea #1			
Idea #2			
Idea #3			

APPENDIX A: Discovering Your Love Language*

For each pair of following statements, circle the letter behind the statement that fits you best within your relationship.

1. I like to receive encouraging or affirming notes A
I like to be hugged E
2. I like to spend one-to-one time with close friends B
I feel loved when someone gives me practical help D
3. I like it when people give me gifts C
I like leisurely visits with friends and loved ones B
4. I feel loved when people do things to help me D
I feel loved when people give me a reassuring hand shake or hug E
5. I feel loved when someone I love or admire puts their arm around me E
I feel loved when I receive a gift from someone I admire or love C
6. I like to go places with friends or loved ones B
I like to high-five or slap around with friends who are special to me E
7. Visible symbols of love (such as gifts) are important to me C
I feel loved when people affirm me A
8. I like to sit close to people I enjoy being around E
I like it when people tell me I'm attractive/handsome A
9. I like to spend time with friends and loved ones B
I like to receive little gifts from friends and loved ones C
10. Words of acceptance are important to me A
I know someone loves me when he or she helps me D
11. I like being together and doing things with friends and loved ones B
I like it when kind words are spoken to me A
12. What someone does affects me far more than what they say D Hugs make me feel connected and valued E
13. I value praise and try to avoid criticism A
Several small gifts mean more to me than one large gift C
14. I feel close to someone when we are talking or doing something together B
I feel closer to friends & loved ones when we wrestle, hug or shake hands E
15. I like for people to compliment my achievements A
I know people love me when they do things for me they don't enjoy doing D
16. I like for people to cross the street and shake hands or hug when they see me E
I like when people listen to me and show genuine interest in what I'm saying B
17. I feel loved when friends and loved ones help me with jobs or projects D
I really enjoy receiving gifts from friends and loved ones C
18. I like for people to compliment my appearance A
I feel loved when people take time to understand my feelings B
19. I feel secure when a special person is physically close to me E
Acts of service make me feel loved D
20. I appreciate the many things that special people do for me D
I like to receive gifts that special people make for me C

21. I really enjoy the feeling I get when someone gives me undivided attention B
I really enjoy the feeling I get when someone does some act to serve me D
22. I feel loved when a person celebrates my birthday with a gift C
I feel loved when a person celebrates my birthday with meaningful words A
23. I know a person is thinking of me when they give me a gift C
I feel loved when a person helps me with my chores or tasks D
24. I appreciate it when someone listens patiently and doesn't interrupt me B
I appreciate it when someone remembers special days with a gift C
25. I like knowing loved ones are concerned enough to help with my daily tasks D
I enjoy extended trips with someone who is special to me B
26. I don't mind the "kiss-hello" with friends I am close to E
Receiving a gift given for no special reason excites me C
27. I like to be told that I am appreciated A
I like for a person to look at me when they are talking B
28. Gifts from a friend or loved one are always special to me C
I feel good when a friend or loved one hugs or touches me E
29. I feel loved when a person enthusiastically does some task I have requested D
I feel loved when I am told how much I am appreciated A
30. I need physical contact with people everyday E
I need words of encouragement and affirmation everyday A

Now go through your quiz again and count how many "A, B, C, D and E's" you circled and place the number below.

TOTALS: A: _____ B: _____ C: _____ D: _____ E: _____

Which letter is your highest score? That is your primary love language. If you have two languages that scored the same, you are bilingual! If you have two that are close in score, you have a secondary language.

- A = Words of Affirmation
- B = Quality Time
- C = Receiving Gifts
- D = Acts of Service
- E = Physical Touch

*Adapted from: <https://m2mbatesville.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/lovelanguagetest.pdf>

Further reading on "The 5 Love Languages" can be found in <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/> or the book "The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts" by Dr. Gary Chapman

APPENDIX B: Communicate On-line Resources List

You can access these resources online at nlc.io/fusion.

Session 1: Perspective

- 15 minute video about love & respect by Dr. Eggerichs:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDXKg3bcTE4&t=2s>
- 25 minute podcasts by Focus on the Family- "Establishing Good Communication in Your Marriage"
 - Part 1: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/media/daily-broadcast/establishing-good-communication-in-your-marriage-pt1>
 - Part 2: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/media/daily-broadcast/establishing-good-communication-in-your-marriage-pt2>

Session 2: Listen

- 7 minute video about reflective listening by Fan the Flames
Dates: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtKMZckgPaE>

Session 3: Speak Life

- 1 minute video about the power of using "I" messages:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjlO7ELEvc>
- 2 minute video about false "I Feels": <https://youtu.be/hfVXJCO445A>

Session 4: Translate Love

- Resource page: <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/>
- On-line Love Language Assessment: <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/couples/>
- Five Love languages book trailer by Josh Franer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8JpOFWbUEs&t=4s>

