



You may wish to discuss one or both of these letters at length. In each case the spouse writing the letter has gotten the point: “pink” and “blue” must try to see and hear in the other color. When pink or blue sees it only one way, the Crazy Cycle will keep on spinning. If both spouses are agreed, now would be a good time to pledge to each other respectively:

As a wife, I want to see and hear in blue a lot more.

As a husband, I want to see and hear in pink a lot more.

10 What does Emerson mean near the bottom of book page 34 when he sums up the wrong anniversary card debacle by saying: “. . . and so two essentially good-willed people wound up spinning on the Crazy Cycle with no clue about how to slow it down or stop it”? How does he define *good-willed* on the top of page 35? Put his definition in your own words beginning with: “My spouse . . . ”



Compare your definitions of *good-willed*. This term will be popping up again and again in this study. The key point to remember is that no matter how nasty, irritating, or unreasonable your good-willed spouse is, he or she does not mean to hurt you in the ultimate, long-range sense. Oh, there may be some intent to hurt on a short-range basis, but this is not what your spouse really wants. What every spouse wants is love for her and respect for him. (For more on the concept of “good will” and questions like: “How can a sinful person have good will?” go to <http://loveandrespect.com/pearl/>.)

11 In “Scientific Research Confirms the Centrality of Love & Respect” (book pages 35–37), read the conclusions of marriage research expert John Gottman, who studied two thousand couples who had been married twenty to forty years to the same partner. What single factor stood out as a reason they stayed together for the long term?

- a. having enough money
- b. attending church regularly
- c. a loving, respectful tone to their conversations
- d. spending enough time together

Gottman adds that contempt is “perhaps the most corrosive force in marriage.” Do you think he is right?



Compare your answers. Talk about how contempt can hurt and how a loving, respectful tone can heal.

12 Read the analogy described under “You’re Stepping on My Air Hose!” (book pages 37–38). Emerson pictures the wife with an air hose leading to a big tank labeled “Love.” What happens when the husband does something to “step on her air hose”?

Which of the following statements are examples of how a husband can step on his wife’s air hose?

- a. “I’ll do the dishes, honey. You had a rough day with the kids.”
- b. “Can’t you get that kid to be quiet? I’m trying to get a few minutes rest.”
- c. “I know we planned to spend some time tonight talking, but the guys want to come over to play cards.”
- d. “Sorry I couldn’t call sooner. The meeting ran late, but I should be home about 6:30.”



Compare your answers. These choices should be “no brainer”s for both of you, but use this question to get into your own discussion of how a husband can step on his wife’s air hose. (Try not to step on each other’s air hose as you talk together.)

13 On book pages 37–38, Emerson continues his illustration by picturing the husband with an air hose leading to a big tank labeled “Respect.” What happens if his wife happens to “step on his air hose”?

Which of the following statements are examples of how a wife can step on her husband's air hose?

- a. "The bills keep piling up. Why can't you bring in more money?"
- b. "Honey, I know things are tight, and I'm so thankful that you get out there every day, working hard to make a way for us."
- c. "Jane's husband doesn't lie around watching so much TV."
- d. "I'm so grateful you like being home and being available when I need help."



You should find the right choices fairly easy to identify, but use the question to get into a discussion of what happens in your home. How can you step on each other's air hose, perhaps in all innocence?

14 In "Men Hear Criticism as Contempt; Women Feel Silence as Hostility" (book pages 38–40), Emerson gives valuable insight on just how pink and blue sunglasses and hearing aids can affect a marriage. List at least three statements or phrases that stand out for you, from your pink or blue point of view.

1.

2.

3.



Compare notes on what you find. Note that Emerson observes that spouses may have good will (they intend no evil toward each other), but because they don't decipher each other's code, she sees only his failure to love and he sees only her failure to respect. They lash out and the Crazy Cycle continues to spin! Talk about how to decipher each other's codes, how to slow and stop the Crazy Cycle. (For more ideas, see *Love & Respect* Appendix A, pages 305–7.)

15 The following is a letter from a wife who describes her life with her husband on the Crazy Cycle. As you read it, make notes on the following: Who is stepping on whose air hose and why? What starts this Crazy Cycle? What keeps it going?

We have been married for a long time . . . We have difficult and challenging jobs and he feels that if I want to discuss something with him, somehow I think I know more than he does. I have never been a shrinking violet and the thing my husband hates about me is what my boss loves about me. I can be very aggressive and I get things done. Should I keep my mouth shut? It's getting worse because we don't seem to be able to come to any kind of agreement, which is distressing at the very least. I am losing hope because we don't ever seem to get anywhere. I try to talk and he stonewalls me; he tries to talk and I stonewall him. It goes nowhere.

My notes:



Talk about what you have noted in the letter above. How does the wife's "Type A Personality" step on her husband's air hose? What is his basic way of fighting back that steps on her air hose? What does their "he stonewalls me, I stonewall him" routine tell you about this couple?

16 On book page 40 Emerson gives the secret to at least start decoding your spouse's messages: "Whenever a wife is complaining, criticizing, or crying, she is sending her encoded message: 'I want your love!' And whenever a husband is speaking harshly or sometimes not speaking at all, he is sending his encoded message: 'I want your respect.'"



How well do you decode your wife's complaints? Though not all of her complaints are cries for love (she can just be having a "bad hair day"), it helps to think first that her complaint might be rooted in her cry for love. Describe a time when you heard her cry for love underneath her complaint and responded lovingly. (If you can't think of any, just write your thoughts about how willing you are to listen better and decode her complaints.)

To complete this exercise, fill in the following: "The next time my wife complains or criticizes I will show her love by . . ."



How well do you decode your husband's actions or words when he needs respect? Silence or harshness are not always cries for respect, but they can be. Sometimes pride, or the inability to verbalize his need for respect can keep the need covered. Never forget that his "Respect Tank" is there and that you could be stepping on his air hose. Can you think of any times recently when you heard his cry for respect underneath his silence or harshness? (If you can't, just write your honest thoughts about how willing you are to decode his behavior and try to show respect.)

To complete this exercise, fill in the following: "The next time my husband appears unloving or harsh, I will show him respect by . . ."



Go slowly as you compare what you have written. This could be sensitive, but the benefits are well worth it. One area to explore is how the messages one spouse is sending another could be misread. For example, when a wife complains or criticizes, it's possible that she is frustrated about something unknown to the husband. She is not necessarily feeling a husband's lack of love. Of course, it still doesn't hurt if a husband reaches out with a touch or a hug to say, "It's okay, I'm still here for you." On the other hand, a husband's lack of love can also be hard to read. Sometimes the "big, dumb buck" is not looking for respect; he's just being selfish, unaware, or ignorant of how to treat his wife. A good approach for both husbands and wives is in *Love & Respect* Appendix A, under "To communicate feelings . . ." (book page 306). Spouses should never say, "You're being unloving," or "You're being disrespectful." As calmly as possible, she can say, "That felt unloving," or he can say, "That felt disrespectful." Then go on from there as explained on page 306.

17 As you complete your personal study of Session Two, take some time to think and pray about the messages you may be sending your spouse in code (and vice versa). And as you pray, ask yourself some basic questions: when I see the spirit of my spouse deflating, do I understand that the issue is never the real issue, which is a lack of love and respect? Do I grasp the importance of "pink" and "blue"—how different my mate and I are? Am I fully aware of my "air hose" and how it can be stepped on? Am I fully aware of how I might be stepping on my spouse's "air hose"?

If necessary, review book pages 31–35 and pages 37–40. These ideas are simply put, but they are profound. How well you embrace and practice them will have everything to do with how well you play your part in stopping, or at least slowing, the Crazy Cycle.



Talk about what this chapter has been saying to both of you. Share any “light bulb moments,” questions, or differing perceptions. Write down how well each of you responds to the following principles or concepts in this chapter (use a scale of 1–10, with 10 meaning “totally get it,” as one way to measure your responses):

___ The issue at hand may not be the real issue.

___ Pink and Blue are very different.

___ Each of us has an air hose that can be stepped on by the other.

___ Her complaints can mean, “Please come across more lovingly!”

___ His withdrawal can mean, “Please come across more respectfully!”

Although Emerson’s word pictures (pink and blue, air hose) are playful, they contain vital and practical truths. The better you understand and actually practice them, the better you will communicate with each other. Be aware that it may sound simple, but it is not. In Session Three, based on Chapters Three and Four of the book, Emerson will explain why.

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY TO LOVE AND RESPECT

As part of your journal, every session includes a study of foundational scripture passages quoted in the margins or text of the book. As you interact with Emerson’s med-

itations below, make notes as part of your journal. There is additional space at the end to record your current thoughts about your marriage and the progress you hope to make with this study.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. When counseling couples I often quote to them James 4:1: “What causes fights and quarrels among you?” (NIV). I point out that the apostle James wants each of us to evaluate why he or she is having conflicts—particularly if we are married. James continues: “You want something, but don’t get it” (James 4:2 NIV). What happens when a spouse does not get love or respect? As a wife, if you feel unloved, what do you do to try to get your husband’s love? Do any of these words or actions sometimes lead to quarrels? As a husband, if you feel disrespected, what do you do to get your wife’s respect? Do unloving words or actions (or just stonewalling her) help? Evaluate what you have been doing to this point while on the Crazy Cycle. How effective is fighting and quarreling to get what you want?
2. Runaway divorce statistics reveal that “. . . insanity is in their hearts . . .” (Ecclesiastes 9:3). As a wife, when you do disrespectful things in a misguided attempt to motivate your husband’s love, has it ever occurred to you that this is a little bit crazy? How often each week do you go a bit “insane” in an effort to get your husband to love you more? As a husband, when you do unloving things to make your wife respect you more, does it ever occur to you, “I am acting a little nuts here”? How many times this past week did you say to yourself (consciously or unconsciously), “I am not going to show love to that woman until she starts respecting me more”? If you both continue with this sort of “insanity,” how likely is it that you could be pushing your marriage over the edge? How long will it be before you become a divorce statistic?
3. What can happen when a husband tries to obey a command from God’s heart? In Ephesians 5:33, Paul is not making a mere suggestion when he writes, “. . . each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself” (NIV). A husband who took this verse seriously wrote to tell me, “The information God gave you is working all over in my life. I have seen the glow in [my wife’s] eyes when I apply it and the defeat [and] the despair . . . when I fail to practice the principles you are trying to teach me through your material and God’s word.” Husband, what is Ephesians 5:33a for you? A command? Or a “suggestion”? Wife, read Ephesians 5:33b, which tells you to respect your

husband. For you, is this a clear command, or a suggestion you can follow if he “earns” your respect?

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION THREE

In preparation for this session, read Chapter Three, “Why She Won’t Respect; Why He Won’t Love” and Chapter Four, “What Men Fear Most Will Keep the Crazy Cycle Spinning.” The following questions are for individual study, or study by husband and wife together. Remember to answer all unmarked questions first, then answer questions marked by the male or female icon (whichever applies to you). Finally, answer the questions with the couple icon, if you’re studying with your mate. (Suggestions for anyone planning to use this study with a small group can be found in *Workbook Appendix I*, page 201.)

Questions for Chapter Three

So far you have been introduced to the Love and Respect Connection and the Crazy Cycle. You have learned about “pink” and “blue” and differences between men and women. You know how to be more careful about stepping on your spouse’s air hose. You understand the dynamics of how the Crazy Cycle can affect a marriage: When she feels unloved, she can react in ways that feel disrespectful to him. When he feels disrespected, he can react in ways that feel unloving to her. And around and around they go. Nobody wants to be on the Crazy Cycle, even for a short time. Some couples, unfortunately, have been on it for years. Getting off and staying off is not as easy as you might think. In the two chapters of *Love & Respect* covered in this session, you will dig a little deeper into why wives find it hard to respect and why husbands in turn won’t love.

1 No one has ever expressed the Crazy Cycle dilemma better than the husband whose letter appears on pages 41–42 of *Love & Respect*. Read his letter carefully. What do you hear him saying from deep within his soul? What is his wife saying about him and their marriage? What do you think it does to this man to hear, “You’re not the man I thought you were”?



Compare notes on how you think a husband might feel when told, “You’re not the man I thought you were.” Then, to add a “fair and balanced” tone to your discussion, also consider this question: “What do you think it does to a woman when her husband angrily delivers his own message, which blames her for their problems?”



2 Read “Unconditional Respect—An Oxymoron?” (book pages 42–44). In his many years of counseling, Emerson has often heard women say they have never heard the two words “unconditional respect” put together in the context of a relationship (page 43). To these women unconditional respect sounds like an oxymoron (a term created by putting together two words that appear to be incongruous or contradictory). Why do you think so many women feel this way? Choose from the following ideas, or write your own:

- a. They think respect is something a husband has to earn.
- b. They think husbands are so unloving, they don’t deserve respect.
- c. They think that giving a husband unconditional respect is giving him license to do anything he wants.
- d. I think:



Discuss the answers you chose above. You may also want to tackle questions like the following: why does telling a husband he has to earn his wife's respect put him in a lose-lose situation? What is the difference between showing respect and feeling respect? Is it okay for a wife to show respect, even though she doesn't feel respect? What do facial expressions and tone of voice have to do with how a wife shows her husband unconditional respect?

3 In "It All Goes Back to Pink and Blue" (book page 45), a wife is quoted: "We think so differently, I don't even relate to what he considers respect (or the lack of it)." How could this wife adjust her pink sunglasses and pink hearing aids so she might begin to understand her husband's need for respect? Would it help if she remembered her husband's need for respect is just as great as her need for love? At the same time, how could this woman's husband adjust his blue sunglasses and hearing aids? How crucial is it that he respond patiently to his wife's struggle with the new idea of "unconditional respect" for him, especially if he has done things that deeply hurt her? Write your thoughts here and on the next page:



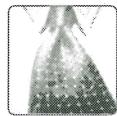
Talk about your respective perceptions of “respect.” What positive things could happen if each of you made a slight adjustment?

4 Continuing on book page 45, Emerson admits that for years as a pastor he went along with the cultural emphasis on unconditional love by the husband for the wife as the key to a good marriage. When he switched his message and started giving equal weight to unconditional respect for husbands, he got a mixed reception. One women’s group actually fired him after he taught two sessions! They wanted someone to speak on “How to Love Your Husband.” What they failed to see was that the way for a wife to fully love her husband is to respect him in ways that are meaningful to him. What do you think this might entail? How can a woman respect her husband in meaningful ways? When a wife attempts to show this kind of respect, what can a husband do in response to show his appreciation? Put your thoughts in writing:



Share what you have written. If either or both of you are struggling a bit with the concept of a man's deep need for respect, be sensitive to each other. It also might help to use some of the suggestions under "Things to say to lighten up the relationship," *Love & Respect* Appendix A, page 307.

5 In "Respect Is a Man's Deepest Value" (book pages 49–52), Emerson reports on a national survey in which 400 men were asked which they could endure better: (a) to be left alone and unloved in the world, or (b) to feel inadequate and disrespected by everyone. Seventy-four percent said they would prefer being left alone and unloved over feeling inadequate and disrespected (see page 49).



Would you have been among the 74 percent who believed the more negative experience would be feeling inadequate and disrespected? Why or why not?



Do the results of this survey question surprise you? Why or why not?



Compare your answers and also talk about Emerson's analogy (bottom of book page 49) in which he compares love and respect to food and water. Do you agree with his statement, "For men, love is like food, and respect is like water"? If love is like food (important) and respect is like water (even more important), what does this suggest for your marriage?

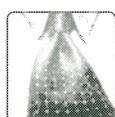
6 Emerson is often asked if there is any passage in Scripture where men are instructed to respect their wives as well as love them. Under "Husbands Are to Value Wives as Equals" (book pages 52–54), he cites 1 Peter 3:7, where Peter tells the husband to show his wife honor as ". . . a fellow heir of the grace of life." How does Emerson interpret this phrase (see last paragraph, page 52)? How does Galatians 3:28 teach the same idea?



Discuss the concept that although husband and wife are very different, as male and female they are equal in the eyes of God (see Galatians 3:28). How might a husband appear to forget this equality and unintentionally come across to his wife in a condescending manner? What does his wife feel during such moments? What practical things can a husband do to show he values his wife as his equal?



7 On book page 53 Emerson develops the concept that women are to be first in importance, while men are to be first among equals. As you think about how comfortable you are with these “firsts,” consider these questions:



Do you think your wife longs to be first in importance because she is a prima donna or because she wants to respond, give, and serve?



Do most husbands want to be seen as first among equals because they believe it is their “right” to dominate, or because they believe it is their responsibility to lead, protect, and even die for their family?



Compare your answers. In the second paragraph, book page 54, Emerson states: "When he honors her as first in importance and she respects him as first among equals, their marriage works." Do you think he is right? Are you willing to make this a major goal in your marriage? Is your spouse?



8 Under "Husbands: Do Not Say, 'I Told You So!'" (book page 54), Emerson cautions husbands that the concept of unconditional respect can be a "huge piece of information" for a wife to process. Why should a husband *never* say, "I told you so!" or try to use unconditional respect as a weapon?



Talk about what each of you is thinking and feeling. Obviously, a wise husband will not "rub it in" if his wife is struggling to process what Scripture teaches. Also read together on book page 55 the two letters from husbands after they attended a Love and Respect Conference. What insights did each man receive, and how did this information affect his attitude toward his wife?

Questions for Chapter Four

9 As he starts Chapter Four on page 57 of the book, Emerson discusses a powerful factor that can keep the Crazy Cycle spinning: the male fear of criticism, and especially contempt. Men may look powerful and impervious to their wives' words, but underneath they are very vulnerable. The male species is often labeled as the one that likes to get into fights, and as Emerson pointed out in Chapter Three, it is the male who primarily responds to the call to war, to protect home and family. Nonetheless, males do not handle conflict with their wives well at all when they feel disrespected (see survey questions results, page 58). Emerson writes: "Men know deep down that their wives love them, but they are not at all sure that their wives respect them." Are men being overly sensitive or perhaps a bit arrogant by being so concerned about being respected? Write down what you honestly think:



Share what you wrote with each other. Also read together Emerson's idea that among men there is an "honor code"—from boyhood men learn there are certain things men just don't say to one another. A woman will talk to her husband in the home in a way that a man would never talk to him. "He can't believe she can be so belligerent, so disrespectful" (bottom of book page 59). Does your experience as a husband bear this out? As a wife, do you think you ever talk to your husband in a "belligerent" manner?

10 Read “Are You a Criticizer or a Stonewaller?” (book pages 60–61), then answer these questions: Who is the criticizer and who is the stonewaller in your marriage? Why do men (as a rule) stonewall their wives?



This can be a delicate question for a husband and wife to discuss, so go easy on each other. Be sure you both define *stonewalling* the same way. Simply put, stonewalling is refusing to talk, period.

11 On book pages 61–62, “How Women Deal with Conflict Between Themselves” describes a typical female approach to conflict with another female, like a best girlfriend. Why do a wife’s complaints and criticisms, expressed during conflicts with her husband, seldom result in shared sorrow, hugs, and even laughter as often happens with a best girlfriend? Choose from one of the ideas below, then add your own thoughts:

- a. Husbands are too proud to admit they are wrong.
- b. Husbands don’t see their wives’ deeper goal of reconciliation.
- c. Husbands clam up because ongoing criticism feels like contempt.
- d. Wives are more critical and judgmental of their husbands than of their girlfriends.
- e. I think:



Share your answers. How do your perceptions differ? Do you see examples of “pink” (her viewpoint) and “blue” (his viewpoint)? Why is it obviously not a good idea for a wife to deal with her husband in the same way she deals with a best girlfriend?

12 In “A Wife’s Self-Image May Depend on Her Husband’s Approval” (book pages 62–63), read the letter from the wife who realizes that negative confrontation (being way too demanding and critical of her husband) doesn’t work. As you analyze her confession of mistakes, what would you suggest that might work much better?



Compare your findings on the wife’s letter. Discussing this question can be a real opportunity to work together positively to understand how Love and Respect principles apply to your marriage. Can both of you fill in the Crazy Cycle maxim below, without going to the diagram on page 5 of *Love & Respect*?

Without _____ she reacts without _____.

and

Without _____ he reacts without _____.



13 Read “A Wife’s Scolding Can Start the Crazy Cycle” (book pages 63–66). Why do wives often make the innocent mistake of scolding (or mothering) their husbands?



Talk about any “scolding” that might be going on in your marriage. Husband, be gentle in describing what you might think is scolding. Wife, try not to be defensive if he labels what you think are “constructive comments” as scolding. How can the male need for unconditional respect cause him to interpret certain comments by his wife as “scolding”? (For ideas on what the wife can do, see Question 14 below.)

14 To avoid sounding like she is scolding, which of the following questions is the best one for a wife to ask herself as she interacts with her husband?

- a. Is what I am about to say/do going to let him know that we are equals and he cannot treat me as “lesser than”?
- b. Is what I am about to say/do going to come across as loving or unloving?
- c. Is what I am about to say/do going to come across as respectful or disrespectful?



Talk about which response on the previous page is the best question for a wife to ask. Then identify the best question for a husband to ask himself before interacting with his wife. (See *Love & Respect* Appendix A, page 305, under “Always Ask Yourself.” Also go over the “Taboos” on page 307.)



15 On book page 66 is an account of how one woman asked her husband: “Do you want me to tell you I love you or respect you?” What was his answer?



At this point in the study, are you comfortable with asking your husband this same question? YES NO NOT SURE



What would be your answer? LOVE RESPECT



If you feel comfortable doing so, share your answers and feelings. If a husband answers “Respect,” he should try to help his wife understand without shaming her. Put a “U” next to any statements below that would help a wife Understand and a “D” next to any statements that would put her on the defensive.

- The reason I am so unloving is because you are so disrespectful.
- I’m sure you love me, but I don’t always have assurance you respect me.
- I know you don’t intend to be disrespectful, but sometimes you come across as disrespectful. At those moments I know I should love you anyway, but I don’t know how and it’s safer to stonewall.
- If you would just meet my need for respect, this marriage would be great.
- I couldn’t care less about your love; just give me respect.
- I know you often feel I don’t deserve respect, and you’re right. But I need you to respect who I am deep down, even though on the surface I’m somebody neither one of us likes at times.

16 In “So That’s It . . . I Need Respect!” (book pages 67–69), analyze the letter on page 68 from a wife whose husband strayed into an affair. Without excusing the husband’s wrongdoing, what were some reasons he strayed? What do these reasons suggest about ways to respect a husband?



Discuss the contents of the letter. As a wife you may be tempted to dismiss its many valuable tips because an adulteress is described as using her wiles to seduce the husband. This would be a mistake. What is wrong with seeing your husband as handsome, witty, and intelligent? Obviously all this can be overdone, but there are suggestions here for how a wife can respect her husband and give his ego a respectful, but not phony, boost. At the same time, there is a warning here for both spouses. A wife may not be tempted in the same way her husband can be tempted, but she is vulnerable nonetheless. The wise husband pays attention to his wife’s vulnerabilities and never ignores or belittles them. Many a wife has been drawn into an affair because she felt lonely and unloved. The best way to protect your marriage from an affair is love and respect—love for her, respect for him.

17 Read the section, “All This Should Be Obvious, Right?” (book pages 69–71). How true does the following statement at the very bottom of page 69 sound to you: “We easily see what is done to us before we see what we are doing to our mate”?

VERY TRUE _____ SOMEWHAT TRUE _____ NOT TRUE AT ALL _____

Does this saying remind you of any scripture passages (see Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31)? Why do husbands and wives often find it hardest to practice the Golden Rule with each other?



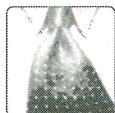
Talk about what it means for a Love and Respect couple to practice the “Love and Respect Golden Rule”: the wife should respect her husband as she wants to be loved; the husband should love his wife as he wants to be respected. Why is practicing this particular rule difficult? How can you help each other do it more consistently? (For some good review, see Chapter Two in *Love & Respect*.)

18

On book page 71 Emerson states that he believes married couples are at a crossroads. Then he asks some penetrating questions. These questions appear below, stated to apply directly to you and your spouse:



Will you appreciate your husband's need for respect, or will you denounce his feelings? Will you discover that the best way to love a husband is by respecting him in ways that are meaningful to him? Or will you focus on what you might feel is the key to a happy marriage—your womanly feelings—and dismiss his needs as antiquated chauvinism or male arrogance?



Will you appreciate your wife's need for love or just continue to ignore her feelings? Will you discover the best way to love your wife is to look beyond her criticisms and complaints to see why she isn't feeling loved? Or will you just cower before her apparent contempt and retreat to the shelter of your "stone wall?"

Spend some time in prayer as you answer these questions. It may be that you and your spouse are at the crossroads Emerson mentions. Will you take the fork labeled "Love and Respect?" Read the letter from the wife who, together with her husband, took that fork (book page 72). At this point in your study, are you gaining confidence that the simple message of *Love & Respect* really can work? Why or why not?



The many questions above can be heavy for both of you to deal with, but they can pay off handsomely in slowing and stopping the Crazy Cycle. Be honest, but sensitive to each other and share from the heart.

19 On book page 72, Emerson closes the chapter by admitting that at times he may sound like he is hammering wives for their lack of unconditional respect for their husbands. He continues: "But I'm not trying to hammer wives—I'm trying to help them, because I know how pivotal the wife's respect can be in slowing down the Crazy Cycle. Yes, many men are unloving clods to one degree or another, but they can change. In fact, many of them want to change, and the best way to get them to change is treating them with unconditional respect."

Respond to the above paragraph from your point of view as a wife or a husband. Do you think Emerson is trying to help wives, not hammer them?

YES ____ NO ____ NOT COMPLETELY SURE, NEED TO KNOW MORE ____

I think . . .



Give this question some careful thought and discussion. Husband, if your wife is still feeling a little "hammered" even after reading Emerson's assurances that he is really trying to help, listen to what she is saying and do not simply say things like, "You're foolish to worry," or, worse, "You may feel hammered, but it's what you needed to hear." Tell her that you want to be a more loving husband, and her respect can do nothing but help you achieve that goal.

20

As you complete this session, it may be a good time to review Question 18 and the answers you gave. Are you truly ready to take the fork in the road labeled "Love and Respect"? Write down your honest feelings at this point:



You may feel the need to go over the heavy questions in Question 18 and talk about them a little more. Go slowly with this. Be sensitive to each other and honor any doubts or questions either of you may have. You may want

to go back over Question 19 as well. Wives need understanding as they process what unconditional respect means to them and how they should act toward their husbands. Even though Emerson assures wives he is trying to help, not hammer, them, they may still feel a bit sensitive. Pray together about your study so far and your marriage. The Crazy Cycle is not easily slowed or stopped. It can be hard work, so let God help.

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY TO LOVE AND RESPECT

Continue creating your own journal by interacting with the following scriptures cited in *Love & Respect*. You may wish to make notes as you interact with Emerson's meditations. There is additional space to write your current thoughts about your marriage and your study so far.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. In 1 Peter 3:1–2 Peter instructs wives to be submissive (give respect) to their husbands, even if they do not believe or obey God's Word and are undeserving of respect. If a wife does this, Peter writes, her husband may be won over as he observes her "respectful behavior." What does Peter mean by "respectful behavior" on the part of a wife before her husband? I believe that part of what Peter had in mind includes a wife's tone of voice and facial expression. When he isn't the man she wants him to be (loving and considerate), can she still show him unconditional respect with the way she talks and the look on her face? She is not asked to endorse his unloving actions; she is asked to show him unconditional respect, just as he is supposed to show her unconditional love. Difficult? Very. But it can work wonders. As Peter implies, it is less about what a wife says (verbal language) and far more about how she comes across (non-verbal language). A good-willed husband, no matter how badly he might be fouling things up at the moment, will find it hard to continue resisting unconditional respect.

2. Why is it that Scripture instructs men to "fight for your . . . wives" (Nehemiah 4:14), but women are never instructed to fight for their husbands? On the pages of any piece of well-known literature, does the prince see himself as the rescuer of the princess, or does the princess want the prince to depend on her for protection? If an

intruder enters a home, what will the wife think if Harry screams, “Sally! Protect me! Go get that mean man out of here so I can stop huddling in the corner!”? What does a husband feel when his wife never respectfully acknowledges and praises his desire to protect her? Question for her: “Does my husband have a need to be respected (looked up to) in a way that I have been overlooking?”

3. In a marriage especially, “Reckless words pierce like a sword . . .” (Proverbs 12:18 NIV). How deep is the wound if a husband snarls in anger, “Nobody could ever love you!”? How deeply does it cut when a wife retorts: “Nobody could ever respect you!”?

Neither spouse “means it” but the effect is like a sword thrust, nonetheless. The Love and Respect couple works hard at never using “reckless” words, and instead heeds the rest of Proverbs 12:18: “. . . the tongue of the wise brings healing” (NIV).

4. A good passage for any married couple is Proverbs 14:8: “The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways . . .” (NIV). As you reflect on your study of *Love & Respect* so far, have you given much thought to your “ways”? As a husband, when you feel disrespected, is your way of reacting loving or unloving? As a wife, when you feel unloved, is your way of reacting respectful or disrespectful? It is so very easy to rationalize that your way of reacting is solely the fault of your mate and to tell yourself, “If my spouse changed, all would be well.” Take the rest of Proverbs 14:8 as the Lord’s warning: “. . . but the folly of fools is deception” (NIV). In other words, fools deceive themselves.

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION FOUR

This session is the last in Part One: The Crazy Cycle. Session Four covers Chapter Five, Six, and Seven of the *Love & Respect* book and deals with some of the most frequently voiced issues raised by the thousands of couples Emerson has helped slow or stop the Crazy Cycle. In preparation for this session, read Chapters Five through Seven of *Love & Respect*. As you read, you may identify with many of the questions and concerns others have voiced. You may prefer to concentrate on only one or two of the chapters, or you may find all three helpful. Choose what fits your situation. It is possible that none of these chapters will seem to fit your experience exactly. We suggest you go over them anyway, using the questions in Session Four as a review of key issues and principles that affect this marriage. Remember to answer all unmarked questions first, then answer questions marked by the male or female icon (whichever applies to you). Finally, answer the questions with the couple icon, if you're studying with your mate. (Suggestions for anyone planning to use this study with a small group can be found in *Workbook Appendix I*, page 201.)

Questions for Chapter Five

1 In the opening paragraph of Chapter Five (book page 73), Emerson relates that during many years of counseling couples, he has observed that old Crazy Cycle habits are hard to break. She may want to change, but “the rat needs to earn my respect” attitude dies hard. He would like to be different, but he fears looking like an unloving fool—again. As you begin this session, where are you on this continuum?