

from now, you will appreciate reviewing this record of your growth as a person and a spouse.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. “When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go” (Song of Solomon 3:4). A woman in love longs for closeness. Husband, does your wife’s need for face-to-face closeness seem like “clinging” to you? At the same time, is it okay for her to request face-to-face talking and physical closeness without wanting sexual intimacy? Serious tension can develop if a husband constantly reads his wife’s desire for closeness as an invitation to have sex. What can a couple do if this is the case? One solution that I have seen work in many marriages is getting on a schedule to take the guesswork out of when you will be sexually intimate. This kind of schedule leads in turn to regular, scheduled times for face-to-face interaction without the husband pushing the sexual issue, because he knows the schedule. Does this sound rigid and non-spontaneous? Nonetheless, it can work miracles in a marriage.

2. A wife always hopes, “Now my husband will hold me close” (Genesis 29:34 CEV). Husband, have you ever heard your wife say, “I need a hug”? God seems to have made women for closeness and hugs. When women friends greet each other, do they hug or shake hands? For a group photo, do several women stand shoulder to shoulder as men would do, or do they squeeze close together, almost cheek to cheek for the camera? When your wife wants you to hold her close in a nonsexual way, does she have some problem with you, or is she simply a woman expressing her womanly desires? Is she wrong for having these desires, or just different from you? If you have not been that aware of this female need for hugs and closeness that don’t always lead to sex, what little change will you make that can make a huge difference in your wife’s feeling loved?

3. As Paul seeks to advise the Corinthians concerning a dispute that had arisen in their church, he says, “In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman” (1 Corinthians 11:11 NIV). In other words, the basic New Testament principle is that women and men are equal before God. Eugene Peterson puts it well when he paraphrases this verse in *The Message*: “Neither man nor woman can go it alone or claim priority.” There is great truth here for today’s Love and Respect couple: there is always the temptation to become too independent of one another, particularly on the man’s part. Because a man leaves father and mother (Genesis 2:24),

his tendency is toward independence. The typical man, who does not have the same emotional need to connect as his wife does, should continually ask himself some important questions: Am I choosing activities that keep me too far away from her? Am I engaging in activities that keep me too independent and justifying them as “my right” or “something I need”? Do I sometimes change my plans but do not bother to inform her? Do I take on still more responsibilities (for example, in the church, on the job, in the community) even though my wife is overwhelmed at home with our children? Do I withhold information from her that she should know? Do I make decisions without including her, even though these decisions impact her significantly? Go over these questions, and anything else where your wife may be complaining about your being too independent (not involved enough at home). If the answer to any of these questions is yes, perhaps it is time to talk and pray with her about changes you could make.

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION SIX

In preparation for this session, read Chapter Ten, “Openness—She Wants You to Open Up to Her,” and Chapter Eleven, “Understanding—Don’t Try to ‘Fix’ Her; Just Listen.” The following questions are for study by an individual or by a 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 Ten

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

FITS US PERFECTLY _____ SOMEWHAT TRUE OF US _____ NOT TRUE OF US AT ALL _____



Compare your answers. If you both believe this is true of the two of you, at least to some degree, talk about it as much as feels comfortable. The typically “closed” husband may not want to go into it to any extent, at least at this time in your study. (Note that it is also possible for a wife to be closed, which could be perfectly normal for her. And, there are husbands who are quite expressive. If this reverse situation is true of your marriage, discuss how it affects your communication. For more on “exceptions” to the Love and Respect norm, see *Love & Respect* Appendix D, page 313.)

2 Read the material “Smash One of Her Lights . . .” (book pages 136–37) very carefully. It is one of the most important analogies in this entire workbook. Emerson illustrates the difference between the typically expressive-responsive wife and the typically compartmentalized husband by picturing two electrical circuits, both with 3000 lights. On the first circuit, if you smash just one light, the whole thing shuts down. On the second circuit, if you smash two thousand lights, the other thousand will stay lit. According to Emerson’s explanation, why is the expressive-responsive wife like the first circuit? Why is the compartmentalized husband like the second?

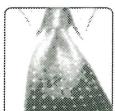


Compare notes on what you wrote down concerning the electric circuits analogy. It will probably be useful to read pages 136–37 together to grasp how important it is that the husband understands how one minor tiff can affect his wife all day and still be bothering her when they reconnect at day’s end. The husband has probably forgotten all about whatever happened earlier because he has compartmentalized it—shoved it aside where it can’t bother him. His wife, however, is an integrated personality who does not compartmentalize things. Everything is connected and one small remark that hurts her stays with her until the hurt is repaired. Talk together about what this can mean to each of you in different situations, for example, if you are invited out for the evening . . . if you planned to work together on something related to the house . . . if he hoped to make love that evening.

3 In “Wives See Husbands As Mysterious Islands” (book pages 137–39), Emerson describes a typical phenomenon: the husband is open, communicative, and charming during courtship, but after getting married he closes up. Why does this happen? How does it make the marriage vulnerable to the Crazy Cycle?



This could be a sensitive question, particularly if the husband thinks he is being accused of doing one thing during courtship and then the reverse after marriage. Compare what you wrote and talk about what is comfortable for both of you. His “closing down” after marriage could well be his not fully understanding how to love his wife properly. He is good-willed, but unaware (and possibly quite willing to learn). On the other hand, it is quite possible that after they got married, his wife started criticizing and being disrespectful, and then he closed up. Do not dwell on deciding if it was “the chicken or the egg.” Talk together about adjustments you both can make right now to keep the Crazy Cycle from starting to spin. And always be aware of the possibility that, basically, you may already be married to a loving husband or a respectful wife. There are things you can improve upon, but 80 percent or more of your marriage already consists of love and respect. If this is the case, be thankful and build on that foundation.



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

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Is my wife a good-willed woman? | YES <input type="text"/> | NO <input type="text"/> |
| Is she trying to control me? | YES <input type="text"/> | NO <input type="text"/> |
| Is she trying to connect and be close? | YES <input type="text"/> | NO <input type="text"/> |
| Is she trying to make me feel guilty? | YES <input type="text"/> | NO <input type="text"/> |



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



5 In “Beware of Becoming Embittered” (book pages 140–42), Emerson describes a disturbing problem that can be caused when a husband is closed toward his wife. As he withdraws and refuses to talk about much of anything, the husband can appear to be irritated, even bitter. His wife thinks he is secretly (or not so secretly) angry with her. What can a husband do to guard against coming across as bitter or harsh? See Colossians 3:19, and especially the letters from wives on page 142, for some simple but powerful ideas. Write down some things that may be useful in your marriage.



This question may be a sensitive one for discussion. If a husband is embittered because he secretly feels his wife is disrespectful, he may want to justify his attitude instead of seeing his wife’s need for love. And if the wife is hurt by his harshness or irritation she will want to judge him as unloving and minimize her own disrespectful actions. Good-willed spouses who don’t want to hang on to being angry or hurt over past problems can work their way into a discussion by comparing what they found in the letters from wives on book page 142. Also, if both of you are comfortable with the idea, look at Colossians 3:19 together. Paul’s words are God’s command to the husband to love his wife and not be embittered toward her. Why is bitterness never effective, always destructive? If a husband tries to use bitterness to “teach his wife a lesson,” what kind of “lesson” will she learn? (Also note: As a husband, you may be saying this question is not for you, because you’re not bitter.)

Nonetheless, husbands must always guard against sounding or looking bitter with a harsh tone or dark countenance. If a wife is perceiving her husband as “bitter and angry,” which of the following are the most useful: a loving look, a friendly gesture, a gentler tone? All of these?)

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



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

7 On book page 144, just before the chapter on openness ends, is some excellent advice for husbands concerning sex. According to Emerson, which of the following statements is true?

- To get sex I must try to appear to be more open.
- If I am genuinely open to my wife, she is more likely to be open with me sexually.



Talk together about the right answer, which is rather obvious, but not necessarily easy to practice for the typical husband. While the husband must be sensitive to his wife's need for openness, she needs to be sensitive to his need for sex. This will be covered more thoroughly in Session 12.



8 Look over the list of tips on book page 144. Husband, which ones are you already using? Which ones are you going to try? Wife, which of these tips would you like to have your husband try?



Share together about these ideas and how they might help your relationship. For starters, a husband should try at least one idea that he and his wife agree would be helpful.

Questions for Chapter Eleven

9 Chapter Eleven opens with a discussion of 1 Peter 3:7, which says a husband should live with his wife in an understanding way because she is the “weaker partner” (NIV) or “weaker vessel” (NKJV). Feminists tend to bristle at this, claiming it says men are stronger, and therefore superior to women. What has been your understanding of

“weaker partner”? Write your thoughts here, then compare them to Emerson’s explanation of what the verse means on book pages 145–46.



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



10 In “Always Handle Porcelain with Care” (book pages 146–47), wives are seen as porcelain bowls and husbands as copper bowls. Is this a good analogy? Why or why not? What does this comparison have to do with the husband needing to “understand” his wife?



Compare notes on your reaction to the porcelain/copper analogy. Talk about times when a wife wants to be “handled with care.” What are some specific ways a husband can do this?



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



Compare what you wrote. As you work on the rest of this session, take note when anything you wrote above matches up with some of the key truths in the rest of Chapter Eleven.



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



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



13 “‘Just Talking’ Is a Key . . .” (book pages 151–52) presents some valuable help for men who are trying to show their wives understanding. Husbands, read this section carefully, then list key phrases and sentences you want to remember and ideas you want to try. Wives, what do you see in this section that describes you? How important is “just talking” to you?



Compare notes on what you have each written above. If “just talking” is even moderately important to the wife, she can elaborate on why this is true. Wise husbands will “just listen” and try to understand.

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

- a. I agree completely and already do this, or plan to do this regularly.
- b. I’m not sure it would work . . . What would we talk about?
- c. I’d like to try it, but doubt we have the time.
- d. I think understanding is something you feel, not something you schedule.
- e. I think:



Compare answers, then discuss how useful it would be to schedule time to talk. (See Emerson’s additional comments on answers *b*, *c*, and *d* in *Work-book* Appendix VI.)

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



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

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY TO LOVE AND RESPECT

Take time to add your thoughts to the points below as you continue to create a record of your journey toward Love and Respect.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. Proverbs 31:12 says, “She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.” Do you believe this about your wife? Does this motivate you to be more open with her?
2. The wise husband is “quick to listen, slow to speak” (James 1:19 NIV). As you deal with your wife, do you find it easier to give solutions or give empathy (put yourself in her shoes and think about how she feels)? If you are more solution-oriented, recall a recent conversation with your wife where it would have been better to listen than to speak. Would it help to pray daily asking God to help you be more empathy-oriented?
3. In 1 Peter 3:7, the apostle tells husbands to “. . . live with your wives in an understanding way . . . show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.” God has made your wife with needs and vulnerabilities that are different from yours. Can you name some of them? Do you find yourself being impatient with some of her needs or vulnerabilities? How can you begin treating her with more understanding and respect in one or two of these areas?

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION SEVEN

In preparation for this session, read Chapter Twelve, “Peacemaking—She Wants You to Say, ‘I’m Sorry.’” The following questions are for study by an individual or by a husband and wife studying 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.)

1 On book page 156, Emerson introduces what he calls “the fourth side to connectivity”—peacemaking—and adds that it might be even more important than the three principles you have studied so far in C-O-U-P-L-E: closeness, openness, and understanding. As you began reading this chapter, what was your response to seeing peacemaking as a major principle for a husband to employ in “spelling love to his wife”? Choose from the statements below, or write your own response.

- a. “Peacemaking” suggests there has been a fight; frankly, I always try to avoid conflict. I just want us to get on with our lives.
- b. The best way to resolve a fight is to speak your mind and then drop it and move on.
- c. I don’t want to sound arrogant, but if my spouse would defer to my good judgments we wouldn’t have these arguments and peace would reign.
- d. Feeling at peace, because things are up-to-date with nothing between us, has a lot to do with my feeling okay about our relationship.
- e. I think:



Husband, which of the comments above captures your feelings? Wife, which statement captures yours? As this session of study will show, it is vital for a wife to feel at peace, with nothing between her and her husband.



2 Continuing on book page 156, Emerson mentions a “paradox” he found as he studied the Scriptures: “God intended for some conflict to exist in a marriage.” He goes on to say that secular research confirms that the best marriage relationships have conflict and that it almost seems that a marriage needs to have some conflict to keep the passion in it. What do you think? Do you agree that conflict puts just enough spice in marriage? Choose from these responses, or write your own:

- a. Sometimes conflict helps; sometimes it doesn’t.
- b. Conflict is never good; it squelches passion for me.
- c. A little conflict is good, because it’s fun to make up afterward.
- d. I think:



Discuss your answers, then compare your conclusions to what Emerson says about the risk involved when “the sparks fly” (book pages 156–57).



3 In “Husband and Wife Can ‘Work It Out,’” book pages 157–58, Emerson makes some comments that may be new to you concerning how spouses can deal with conflict in their marriage. Read these pages carefully, then jot down phrases or sentences that strike you as a different approach to working out conflict. (If you are study-

ing with your spouse, you can discuss what you find at this point, or wait until Question 4.)

4 What in particular does Emerson say on book pages 157–58 about how couples should view a conflict over sex? To put it in practical terms: “Tonight, after a particularly stressful day for both of you, who decides if you will be sexually intimate? First Corinthians 7:3–5 says both spouses have authority over the other’s body, so who decides?” When Emerson speaks at Love and Respect Conferences, his answer to this question is: “Yes!” This usually gets a laugh, but the real answer is found in 1 Corinthians 7:5, plus what Emerson says on page 158. How would you sum up his description on page 158 of “one of the great principles of the New Testament”?



Discuss the ideas you both put down, then compare your conclusions with Emerson’s further thoughts on this crucial question. (See Emerson’s additional comments in *Workbook Appendix VI*.)

5 In “My Wife Is Always Getting Historical,” book pages 158–60, Emerson gives husbands another important tip for making peace. Husband, as you read this section, think about how “historical” your wife has been or can be. Does she bewilder you with her seemingly endless memory? Wives, how do you see yourself regarding your tendency to “get historical” with your husband?

- a. Extremely historical (memory like an elephant)
- b. Somewhat historical (might bring something up now and then)
- c. Not historical at all (never bring up anything from the past)
- d. I think:



Compare your perceptions. What does the husband think of his wife’s historical propensities? Does she agree that she can be historical? Discuss your answers. If tension begins to rise, try to keep things light: “May I borrow your pink/blue hearing aids? I need help understanding what you’re trying to say.” (For more “lighten things up” ideas see *Love & Respect* Appendix A, page 307.)

6 According to book page 160, why is it usually not helpful for the husband to say, “Let’s drop it—just forget it”? At the bottom of page 160, what does Emerson recommend a husband say if he wants to make peace with his wife? Write out these three short sentences below and commit them to memory.



Take plenty of time to discuss this one. Be sure to read the letter from the frustrated wife on book page 160. Work together on the real issue: love for her, respect for him.

7 The section captioned “Why It’s Hard for a Man to Say, ‘I’m Sorry’” (book pages 161–62) offers important insights on how men think. Emerson speaks from experience when he observes: “When a woman says, ‘I’m sorry,’ to her it’s an increase of love. But when a man says, ‘I’m sorry,’ he fears he will lose respect.” Do you agree or disagree with his observation? What does your experience tell you?

- a. I agree on all counts.
- b. I partially agree.
- c. I disagree on all counts.
- d. I think (write your reasons for your answer above):

8 Read the story about the couple who had a childish fight, but then he said the words that made her “fall in love with him all over again.” Why is saying, “I’m sorry” so powerful? What dynamics are at work?



Discuss your answers and share what you think of Emerson's belief that when a husband humbly expresses sorrow for what he did, his wife melts. He doesn't think many men "grasp" this. Is he right?

9 Which points made in "A Short Course on Peacemaking," book pages 162–64, are most helpful, in your opinion? Some of the more obvious ideas are listed below. Choose from these, or find others you like as much or better:

- a. A husband should have absolute confidence in the power of his loving demeanor (see Proverbs 15:1).
- b. When a husband says he is sorry, he must be sure he means it, or be ready for another spin on the Crazy Cycle.
- c. The husband will make peace with his wife when he doesn't blame her but, instead, confesses his part of the blame (see James 5:16).
- d. When a husband says, "I'm sorry," it's a big turn on for a woman, but an even bigger turn-on is when he adds, "I think I understand your feelings and why you react as you do. Will you forgive me?"
- e. If a husband utters sincere words of apology, forgiveness, and love, his wife will trust his words and trust him. It can heal the whole thing.
- f. Other points I like:



The wife should be sure to fill out her answers to the above question along with her husband. Discussing your ideas can give you both more insights into how each of you thinks.

10 Chapter Twelve closes with a list of tips: “She’ll Feel at Peace with You When . . .” (book page 164). Do you see anything else here that would help the peace-making process in your marriage?



As you compare notes on this question, you might want to review your answers to Question 9. Then, agree on one thing the husband can do differently during the coming week. When he attempts to practice what you both have agreed upon, if at all possible, stop and talk about how it worked, how it felt. Always be positive and encouraging to one another. If he makes real progress on his “one thing to do differently” go over the tips and ideas again and choose another action or attitude he can use to improve your peacemaking process.

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY TO LOVE AND RESPECT

Build another “chapter” of your journal to Love and Respect by interacting with the following points.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. After giving advice to wives and husbands in 1 Peter 3:1–7, Peter writes this summary: “. . . all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit” (v. 8). As a spouse, which of these do you do best? Which does your spouse do best? Do you both bring strengths to the marriage that can make for peace?
2. “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18). Peace is possible if you believe the other person wants to be at peace with you and will

respond if you take the initiative. As a husband, do you have faith that if you were to apologize for being unloving, your wife would respond? As a wife, do you have faith that if you were to apologize for being disrespectful, your husband would respond? If your answer is yes, then as far as it depends on you, you can be at peace with your spouse.

3. “Be humble in the presence of God’s mighty power, and he will honor you when the time comes” (1 Peter 5:6 CEV). We fear that if we seek to make peace by humbling ourselves and confessing our lack of love and respect, our spouse will not reciprocate. Ultimately, however, this is not about our humility before our spouse, but being humble in the presence of God. According to this verse, when we are humble in the presence of God what eventually happens? How can we have the courage to humble ourselves in this way (see v. 7)?

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION EIGHT

In preparation for this session, read Chapter Thirteen, "Loyalty—She Needs to Know You're Committed," and Chapter Fourteen, "Esteem—She Wants You to Honor and Cherish Her." The following questions are for an individual or a husband and wife studying 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 workbook with a small group can be found in *Workbook Appendix I*, page 201.)

Questions for Chapter Thirteen

1 Read the opening of Chapter Thirteen on book page 165. What are your first impressions of the idea that a wife needs reassurance of her husband's love?



Which of the following responses comes close to yours? (Or write your own.)

- a. I'm well aware that my wife needs reassurance of my love, and I try to provide it whenever I see (or hear) that she needs it.

- b. Have never thought much about it—she knows I love her, why do I have to keep telling her?
- c. Reassurance? Every time I try to tell her I love her, she tells me I don't mean it, or I'm just saying that because I want sex.
- d. I think:



What is your reaction to page 165? Is reassurance of your husband's love something you like to hear fairly often? Check the answer that comes close to your ideas (or write your own).

- a. Reassurance is important to me, and I think most women feel the same.
- b. I've had my husband use that "Don't worry, I'm not going to trade you in for a new model" line, and I didn't think it was that funny.
- c. My husband is always telling me he loves me, and I never get tired of hearing it.
- d. I think:



Compare notes on your answers checked or written above. If you both feel about the same concerning the importance of a husband's loyalty, be encouraged. On the other hand, it is possible the two of you will not agree on the importance of loyalty, or even what loyalty looks like in a marriage. For example, it is not unusual for the husband to be rather unaware of how important it is to

reassure his wife of his loyalty and his love. The good-willed husband who falls into this category should be willing to learn as he proceeds with this session.

2 Read the letter from the wife at the top of book page 166. How does her husband reassure her? Are there any key words or principles you appreciate or find useful? Write them here:



Compare notes on what you see in the wife's letter that might be helpful in your own marriage. Spend some time on how the wife tells her husband she feels "emotionally disconnected" from him at certain times and what he does about it. Is "I'm feeling disconnected" something one or both of you might be able to say to communicate a need, or would it just trigger arguments?

3 Read the sections "She's a One-Man Woman . . ." and "It's a 'Swimsuit Issue' World," book pages 166–68. Is a wife being overly sensitive if she wonders about her husband's commitment, particularly with the barrage of beautiful females that bombard his eyes daily—in person and in the media? Choose from the following answers, or write your own opinion.

- a. A wife can't help but wonder sometimes.
- b. Either spouse might struggle with commitment.
- c. It would be nice for a wife to be reassured now and then, especially as her body reflects the aging process.

- d. What's a man to do? His wife should know he might look, but she has nothing to worry about.
- e. I think:



This can be a sensitive issue, so beware of stepping on your mate's air hose. Try comparing the answers you checked or wrote. Wife, if you do feel at least a little insecure, let your husband know without condemning him. Husband, how can you reassure your wife of your commitment? Does Job have some good advice when he says: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl" (Job 31:1 NIV)?

4 How does Song of Solomon 8:6 catch a wife's deep feelings about needing to always be sure of her husband's loyalty? Also read Emerson's thoughts on the wedding ring (book page 168). Why is a wedding ring so important? Write your ideas here:



Be sure not to skip this one. Share honestly with each other about your perspective on wearing a wedding ring. Is Emerson right when he says: "No husband should leave home without one"? Why or why not?

5 The prophet Malachi warned Israel against the prevalent practice of easy divorce that was going on in Israel as husbands dealt treacherously with their wives (see Malachi 2:14–15). Read “Are You Being As Loyal As You Could Be?” (book pages 168–69). Emerson is not saying that today’s good-willed husband is trying to be treacherous toward his wife—but what is he saying? How can heeding Malachi 2:14–15 help keep you and your spouse off the Crazy Cycle?



Discuss your answers to this question with sensitivity to each other. Try to dwell on the positive idea that “his love motivates her respect.” A big part of a husband’s love for his wife is being loyal in every way he can think of. In Malachi 2:16, the prophet tells husbands, “. . . take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously [with your wives].” Is this passage only for husbands in Malachi’s time, or is this also a warning for today’s husband to be on guard against things that can undermine faithfulness to God and his wife? What are some of those “things” that can tempt a husband to be unfaithful?

6 On book pages 169–70 read the story of Robertson McQuilken, who left his position as a seminary president to care for his wife who was slowly dying of Alzheimer's disease. What does McQuilken's "sacrifice" tell you about the meaning of being loyal as a husband? Write down some of the thoughts he expressed when he faced his decision.



You and your mate may want to read Robertson McQuilken's story together, then share your thoughts. See especially the quote, "Almost all women stand by their men; very few men stand by their women." How can a good-willed husband turn this statement from a possible guilt trip into a motivator to be more loyal to his wife?

7 Which of the tips included in "She Is Assured of Your Loyalty When . . ." (book pages 171–72) could be a real help in sparking the Energizing Cycle for your marriage? Pick out one and write a brief reason why this particular idea could help you and your spouse.



Compare your choices, then agree on which tip the husband should practice during the coming week. If you each have a strong preference, perhaps he can practice both ideas. Be sure to talk about and encourage what he decides to live out on a daily basis.

Questions for Chapter Fourteen

8 Wives often ask where Scripture talks about the husband respecting his wife. On book pages 173–75 Emerson spells out what it means for a husband to respect (honor and cherish) his wife. (See especially 1 Peter 3:7.) Which of the following ideas, taken from this section, are most useful to you as a spouse?

- a. God has made women so that they want to be esteemed, honored, and respected.
- b. The honor a wife seeks is a different kind of honor from what her husband seeks as a man.
- c. To your wife, respect, honor, and esteem are not qualities in and of themselves; they are components of the love she wants from you.
- d. Other:



A wife studying with her husband should be sure to give her opinion on this one to see how closely it matches her husband's choices. Talk together about Emerson's claim, "Your wife wants to know that you have her on your mind and heart first and foremost. This is what I mean by 'esteem'; when it's there, your wife will feel treasured as if she's the most loved woman on earth" (book page 175). Do you both agree he is right?

9 In “Our Kids Often Made Sarah Feel . . .” (book pages 175–76) Emerson shares a practical way he esteemed his wife, Sarah, at a critical time in their marriage. What did he do, and why was it effective?



If you have children growing up in your home, this story can be very applicable to your marriage at this time. Parenting is difficult at best. What does the final paragraph in the section tell you about why moms usually need more support and encouragement than dads as they do parenting tasks?

10 Back in Session 1, question 8 dealt with the time Emerson forgot Sarah’s birthday—completely! This was good for several more turns on the Crazy Cycle for both of them. For further insight on how much store women put in birthdays and anniversaries, read “Use Symbols to Show Your Wife Esteem” (book pages 176–79). Following are some quotes from this section. Write down your response to each of Emerson’s observations, whether you agree or disagree and why.