

LESSON 4: STRENGTHENING YOUR MARRIAGE

Part 1: Love Languages

1. **Serving Each Other** – Some people feel loved when we do things for them. These may be simple things like tidying the house, washing the dishes, pulling the weeds.
 2. **Words of Affirmation** – Some people feel loved when we say positive things to the other person. They may be compliments like, “You cook so well,” or “You have beautiful hair,” or “You are a great mother.” They may be words of gratitude or appreciation: “Thank you for cooking dinner.” “Thank you for working so hard to provide for the family.”
 3. **Gifts** – Some people feel loved when we give things to the other person. Gifts don’t need to be expensive or even cost money. It may be as simple as a flower that you picked on the way home or a poem that you wrote.
 4. **Physical Touch** – Some people feel loved through physical touch. This includes everything from holding hands, hugs or stroking the other person’s hair.
 5. **Spending Focused Time Together** – Some people feel loved when we spend special time with them. This does not mean that we are in the same room but doing different things. It means that we give each other focused attention. In our busy homes, it may mean that we take a walk together and share about our days.
- Think about your spouse – what do they seem to like or appreciate? What do you think their love language is?
 - What are some new ways you could show love to your spouse right away?
 - Think about yourselves. Which of the ways to show love do you prefer? What are the things that your spouse does that make you feel most loved? How can you share that with your spouse?

If it is difficult to know what your spouse likes, you can try an experiment. For one week choose one of the love languages and practice showing love that way. What is the response? If there is no change then try a different language. Keep trying week by week until you see a response from your spouse.

Part 2: Prayer

Take a few minutes to make a plan for when you will pray with your spouse.

Part 3 Spouse before others

Tamar was so frustrated with Caleb, she couldn't believe he had done it again. He had just arrived home to announce that he was going away for 4 days to help his mother.

She had explained that the 4-month old baby was sick and couldn't sleep. So she needed Caleb to help her at home with the other children and getting the fields ready to plant. But he said that he had talked to his friends about the situation and they all agreed that he should visit his mother.

So, he was going to leave in the morning. While Tamar sat awake feeding their new baby, she had to admit that she admired that he cared so much for his mother. But she felt a little jealous—why didn't he see that she needed him to care for her in the same way? Who was going to help her?

- In the story, what were some ways that Caleb put others before his wife?
- How could Caleb have prioritized his wife and still shown his care for his mother?

Part 4

Take time to think of one example in your life from each area in which you could do a better job putting your spouse before others.

- Time – Are there times when you have made your friends or others more important than your spouse?
- Decisions – Are there decisions you made without considering the thoughts or feelings of your spouse?

Pray and ask God to give you wisdom how to change and the strength to be able to honor your commitment to each other better.