



Reconstructing Love

a marriage seminar by Michael and Amy Smalley

**Four fundamental truths that can literally
redefine your marriage for the better.**



www.gosmalley.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
WK 1 - RENEWING YOUR SPIRITUALITY	03
WK 1 MEMORY CARDS	06
WK 2 - RECONSTRUCTING ANGER	07
WK 2 MEMORY CARDS	10
WK 3 - REFOCUSING YOUR EXPECTATIONS	11
WK 3 MEMORY CARDS	14
WK 4 - REDEFINING MEN AND WOMEN	15
WK 4 MEMORY CARDS	19

Week 1

Renewing your spirituality

Introduction

Studies have shown that couples who pray together stay together. Yet spiritual growth together as a couple is often rife with conflict and many couples feel like they are simply ships passing in the night when it comes to their spiritual togetherness.

In this session you will learn the most important elements to a thriving spiritual life together. You might be surprised to learn how your differences spiritually can actually become your greatest strengths.

PLAY DVD

SESSION NOTES

Learning how to respect each other's spiritual differences is important if you are ever going to connect significantly on a spiritual level; it's your differences that can actually help you grow closer together!

- **Appreciate your spouse's spiritual background**
 - **Talk about how you were** raised spiritually—try to keep it positive—
 - **Talk about how you grew** from your experience or how far you've come.
- Lead by example
- Follow Jesus' lead

Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made

himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.

➤ **Don't be your husband's Holy Spirit**

Proverbs 27:15-16

A nagging wife is as annoying as the constant dripping on a rainy day.
16 Trying to stop her complaints is like trying to stop the wind or hold something with greased hands.

➤ **Don't lead her with an iron fist**

Ephesians 5:25-26

And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word.

➤ **Find God in your experiences together**

- Be an encouragement.

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of a good person is a deep, life-giving well, but the mouth of the wicked is a dark cave of abuse.

Romans 14:9

So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

- Be a listening ear- engage in your spouse's spiritual process
- Talk about how you grow best.
 - Small groups- what type? (Sunday School class, home group, men or women's study, couple's

- class)
- Reading books- what kind of books?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ask each other where you think your spiritual life is together on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being the best it could be and 1 being the worst it could be). Now ask each other how you could improve your spiritual life together and get it closer to a 10.
2. How can you appreciate each other's spiritual lives better?
3. Discuss what ways (Sunday School, small groups, praying together outside of meals, family devotionals, etc.) you would like to grow together spiritually. Try to decide on at least two ways you'd like to grow together.

KEY MEMORY VERSE CARDS FOR WEEK ONE

Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.

Ephesians 5:25-26

And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word.

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of a good person is a deep, life-giving well, but the mouth of the wicked is a dark cave of abuse.

Week Two

Reconstructing anger

INTRODCUTION

How do you share your needs and feelings, effectively, when you're angry? More importantly, what do you do when you've really hurt the one you love the most with your anger?

In this session you will learn about the good and bad sides of anger along with the idea of taking an effective time-out when you are upset. Conflict is actually a great way to grow closer together, but unresolved conflict can literally destroy your marriage.

PLAY DVD

SESSION NOTES

- First things first, call a time-out...you already have an anger problem so you know you won't be able to stop yourself once you get going.
- Then, discover why you're upset
 - Download a list of the most common "hot buttons" or Core Relational Fears at our website www.gosmalley.com/theblog/free-stuff
- Webster defines anger as a "Sudden violent displeasure accompanied by an impulse to retaliate."
- Anger is simply your reaction to an unmet expectation (which we'll get into in week 3), demand, or belief.
- Two types of anger
 - a healthier type is "passion or energy";
 - an unhealthier type would be "agitated or boiling."
 - Anger is used almost 300 times in the Bible (love almost 500, Hate 76, Jealousy 26)

- Destructive anger is ... negative beliefs or “reading people’s minds”, being self-centered (James 1:20), blaming, judgmental, self-righteous, or when it is allowed to linger and turn into bitterness.

Ephesians 4:26-27

And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

Philippians 4:5

Let your gentleness be evident to all.

1 Peter 3:9

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

- Good anger is “passion and energy”...
 - Anger that gets you to act for the good of the relationship or to protect yourself is healthy anger.
 - “I’m hurt.” or “I need something to change.”
- How can we communicate effectively when we’re angry?
 - First of all, we can’t escalate or avoid.
 - Escalator- needs to be right. Lives with many should’s in life. Needs to get even. Need to blame.
 - Avoider- fear losing control. Fear losing relationship. Don’t like feeling intense emotions. View anger as a weakness.
- But we can do the following...
 - Maintain personal space and space of the other person.
 - Stick to the topic at hand
 - Maintain personal integrity

Proverbs 12:18

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

- Avoid the blame game
- How do you repair with someone you've hurt?
 - Ask how you hurt them
 - Give them time
 - "What do you need from me?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who in your marriage is usually better at calling a time-out?
Please discuss your answers.
2. How have you handled anger in the past that was productive?
Could you share that with the group?
3. What is your typical response when you get angry?
4. What point was most helpful to you from tonight's lesson in dealing with anger?

KEY MEMORY VERSE CARDS FOR WEEK 2

Ephesians 4:26-27

And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

Philippians 4:5

Let your gentleness be evident to all.

1 Peter 3:9

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Week Three

Refocusing your expectations

INTRODUCTION

What do you do when your expectations are not met? In this session you will learn how you don't have to let the expectations go, but rather, learn how to fulfill them in a new way that actually honors the relationship instead of stress it out! Discover the difference between what you need and what you expect.

SESSION NOTES

- **Laws of expectations:**
 - We all have them about almost everything!
 - The degree to which reality fails to measure up to our expectation is the degree to which we feel disappointed.
 - Continued disappointment leads to anger, frustration, contempt, despair, and devastation.

Romans 5:2-5

Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we [a] rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

- **How to develop realistic expectations and overcome them with love:**
 - **Be aware** – Areas for you to consider: time together,

sexual frequency, vacations, socializing, diet, shopping, children, finances, cleaning, household repairs, and roles.

- **Be fair** – You can expect fidelity, you can expect it will take work, you can expect joy, expect an active sex life, expect your marriage to honor God. Learn the difference between hoping for something and demanding something.

John 16:33

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

➤ **Learn the art of simply “being”**

Philippians 4:11-12

Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.

- **Be bare** – “open to view; unconcealed; undisguised...”
– We have to be honest about our expectations and cannot keep them hidden inside. Let them be revealed before our spouse’s eyes, if you don’t, you’ll always struggle working together as a team.

➤ **Accept each other, faults and all!**

Romans 15:7

Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What expectations did you bring in to the marriage? How have those affected your marriage (positive or negative)?
2. Have you ever shared your expectations about sexual frequency, time together, roles, household chores, etc.? If not, when could you schedule a time to discuss these important areas (that typically carry expectations)?
3. Discuss with each other how you can “accept” each other better. What are some meaningful ways for you two to connect through sharing your expectations?

KEY MEMORY VERSE CARDS FOR WEEK 3

Romans 5:2-5

Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we [a] rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

John 16:33

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

Romans 15:7

Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

Week Four

Redefining men and women:

Learning the real differences and how they affect your relationship!

INTRODUCTION

Men and women are different. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that one out. We know that many reading and going through this workbook have read too many books on the differences between men and women.

We hope this session proves to be new information for you. We discovered through our Marriage Restoration Intensive programs the two greatest needs of men and the two greatest needs of women. They might surprise you, but once you hear what they are you will immediately understand and relate.

PLAY DVD

SESSION NOTES

"It is the difference between men and women, not the sameness, that creates the tension and the delight."

Edward Abbey

- **Men and women are both equal in the eyes of God, both with high value!**

Genesis 1:27

God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female.

Men and women communicate differently

- In children as young as three years of age, about the time language is developed.
- little girls talk to be liked - little boys often talk to boast.
- Little girls make requests - little boys make demands.
- Little girls speak to create harmony - little boys prolong conflict.
- Little girls talk more with words - little boys use more actions.

Ephesians 4:29, 32

29 Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. 32 Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

- Whether conscious or unconscious, men often talk to establish status from others. Women use words to connect themselves emotionally, to express feelings, or build rapport. Men often share facts and figures as in a report. Tannen labels these communicative differences “rapport - talk and report - talk.”

James 3:1-12 (New Living Translation)

Controlling the Tongue

1 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.

2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand

speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

- Men and Women think differently – **Women think and men act**
 - Women have more connections between right and left side of their brain functioning. Women tend to be intuitive global thinkers.
 - Women are prone to become overwhelmed with complexities that "exist", or may exist, and may have difficulty separating their personal experience from problems.
 - Conclusion: women tend to be more sensitive.
 - Out of balance women's sensitivity will overwhelm women and men.
- **Men have greater brain hemisphere separation, which explains their skills for abstract reasoning and visual-spatial intelligence.**
 - Men rely easily and more heavily on their left brain to solve one problem one step at a time.

- Conclusion: Men tend to focus on one problem at a time or a limited number of problems at a time.
- Out of balance men will become so single focused all they focus on is their needs and desires (Men see the world more unilaterally)
- What are the greatest needs of a woman?
 - To feel valued and connected.
- What are the greatest needs of a man?
 - To feel admired and successful.
- PUT IT ALL IN PERSPECTIVE ON HOW WE SHOULD TREAT EACH OTHER

Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which command in God's Law is the most important?"

37 Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and

prayer and intelligence.' 38 This is the most important, the first on

any list. 39 But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as

well as you love yourself.' 40 These two commands are pegs;

everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you demeaned or criticized your mate for simply being a man or a woman?
2. How does "being made in God's image" give value to men and women?
3. List out 5 things that you appreciate about your mate on a separate sheet of paper – share that list with your mate.
4. Discuss whether or not the greatest needs of a man or woman match to your own needs.

KEY MEMORY VERSE CARDS FOR WEEK 4

Genesis 1:27

God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female.

Ephesians 4:29, 32

29 Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. 32 Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which command in God's Law is the most important?" 37 Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' 38 This is the most important, the first on any list. 39 But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' 40 These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."