

## **Chapter 5: Kinds of Relating**

### **Learning Objective**

The goal of this session is for couples to learn to relate to one another with love. Unloving ways of relating allow one person to control another, or to be controlled by them. True love allows another to freely exercise their will without coercion or manipulation. The ways people relate to others were learned through observation or direct teaching by an authority figure. Interrogating these patterns allows each to choose how they want to relate.

### **General Session Assignments**

1. Read Chapter Five of Marriage Rx: Prescription for a radical marriage.
2. Write your fears and anxieties on a rock and cast them before the Lord.
3. Review your "Family of Origin" assignments to find lurking control issues.
4. Discuss together: How must the church repent to model love-based relating?

### **Small Group Session One**

#### **1. Discussion questions**

- a. What public figures (movies, TV, literature or real) model law or shame based relating? How about needs-based relating? How about fear-based relating?
- b. When or where have you seen love based relating demonstrated?

#### **2. Group Exercise**

- a. Share together as a group: When have you experienced law-based relating? When have you experienced shame-based relating? When have you experienced needs-based relating? When have you experienced fear-based relating? When have you experienced love-based relating?
- b. Work together as couples to discover three practical things you can do to move toward love-based relating.
- c. As a small group, debrief the practical things you discovered so others can benefit from your insights.
- d. Spend some time together as a small group to pray back to the Lord any place that you experienced an "aha-moment" tonight.

## **Small Group Session Two**

### **1. Discussion Questions**

- a. What kind of relating was modeled to your spouse by his or her family of origin? In what ways did you accept or reject this method of relating?
- b. In what circumstances do you find yourselves tempted to act in law-based or shame-based relating?
- c. In what circumstances do you find yourselves tempted to act in need-based or fear-based relating?

### **2. Group Exercises**

- a. Work as couples to identify decisions you have made in your marriage under the influence of law, shame, needs and fear based relating. Write each of these on the cards provided.
- b. As a couple, ask the Lord to forgive you for the decisions you made. Ask Him for instruction or direction on what you must do now that the decision is made. Make a note of the answer on the back of the card and use it to guide your obedient response.

### **Small Group Session Three**

#### **1. Discussion Questions**

- a. How does law and shame based relating control another person based on whether they conform to a standard or not?
- b. How have you experienced law, shame, needs or fear based relating in the church?
- c. What practical things can you do to influence your church community toward love-based relating?

#### **2. Group Exercises**

- a. Read Galatians 5:16-18, 25. Brainstorm: How do you learn to walk in the Spirit? Make two lists, one for individuals and another for couples.
- b. Learning to pray and listen together: as couples ask God "What decision or issue should we lay before You?" Pray it through, and listen.
- c. Come back together as a group and have each couple present the decision or issue they need to lay before the Lord. Pray together with them and for them.
- d. How can this group influence the body of Christ to walk in the Spirit? What steps can you take to help your church community present an issue or decision to the Lord and listen for His guidance? How will you bring this about?