

Chapter 3: Naked and Unashamed

Learning Objective

The goal of this session is for couples to identify places where innocence has been lost, and make a way for God to restore that innocence in the relationship so the two can be completely open and honest in their dealings with each other. The discussion of hiding strategies and reasons for hiding are designed to lead couples into confessing their sinful ways of maintaining their separateness and repenting to a marriage commitment that removes barriers.

General Session Assignments

1. Read Chapter Three of Marriage Rx: Prescription for a radical marriage.
2. Discuss and agree on how to create a safe environment.
3. Share five things your spouse doesn't know about you.
4. What is the greatest source of fear in your marriage?
(It may not be the same for each of you.)
5. What part of your identity do you protect from others, including your spouse?
6. Write on your leaf any hiding strategies brought to your mind by the Holy Spirit. Confess them to God and then share them with your spouse in a safe environment.

Small Group Session One

1. **Discussion questions**
 - a. How do you define "love" based on Ephesians 5:22-28?
 - b. How do you define "respect" based on Ephesians 5:22-28?
 - c. What are healthy expressions of being naked and unashamed in the physical, emotional, and spiritual realms?
2. **Group process**
 - a. Active listening exercise.
Get into groups of two (couples). For two minutes one person speaks to the other on any topic they choose. The listener practices "active listening" by paying close attention, using encouraging body language and nonverbal affirmation. After two minutes, reverse roles and repeat.
 - b. Active listening review.
How did that go? What happened? Did you feel heard? Were there any "aha" moments as you participated in this exercise?
 - c. How to Create a Safe Environment
A safe environment is not without conflict, but an environment in which all parties feel safe to resolve conflict. Brainstorm as a group what it takes to make

a safe environment. Make a list of key components that are necessary. Remember the HALT acronym (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) as some things to avoid. Ask the question: What do you need to feel safe?

- d. Write down the “ground rules” you agree on together. Take some time as couples to select your personal components and ideas from those offered in the brainstorming session. Use them to define what a safe environment is to you. Give opportunity for them to share their personal ground rules with the group as a way of publicly confessing their intention to establish a safe environment for conflict resolution.

Small Group Session Two

1. Discussion questions

- a. What are some typical hiding strategies you have observed in yourself or others?
- b. What causes you to withdraw? Compare how likely you or your spouse are to withdraw from conflict, on a scale of 1 to 10.

2. Group process

Covering weakness with love.

- a. Each person should write down 3 or 4 areas they consider to be their weakness, each on a separate slip of paper. The group leader will collect these, and see to it that they are kept anonymous.
- b. Place the men and women in separate groups. The men will discuss ways to cover in love the weaknesses expressed by the women. The women will discuss ways to cover in love the weaknesses expressed by the men.
- c. Come back together as a combined group to consider the answers given. First, the women pick a weakness and listen to the ideas of the men to cover that weakness in love. After hearing the solution(s) the women can offer additional ideas or amendments. Next, the men pick a weakness and listen to the ideas of the women to cover it in love. They also have opportunity to give feedback and other ideas.
- d. Allow three to five minutes for the couples to talk together about covering their weaknesses with love, and how that will change the way they interact with each other.

Hiding strategies exposed

- a. Review the list of hiding strategies identified in the discussion session above. Brainstorm together whether there are any other strategies that come to mind.
- b. Ask each participant to make a list of the hiding strategies they most frequently use.
- c. Allow three to five minutes for the couples to confess to each other the hiding strategies they most often employ. Instruct them to repent to being naked and unashamed in their marriage.

Small Group Session Three

1. Discussion questions

- a. How is the church to be naked and unashamed in her relationship with God?
- b. What church practices do we have that allow for being naked and unashamed with God?
(Eg: prayer, confession, communion, “one another’s”)

2. Group process

- a. Search the scriptures to find the “one another” commandments. Make a list of them, with their references. For example: Encourage one another – Hebrews 3:13.
- b. Discuss the practical ways a couple can obey the commandment to be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10).
- c. Discuss the practical ways a small group can obey the commandment to bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- d. Discuss the practical ways a church can obey the commandment to accept one another (Romans 15:7).

Be prepared to share any “God stories” with the group next time you get together.