

Staying in Love (featuring Andy Stanley)

Preparation for Session 1

To experience the kind of lasting love relationship we all crave, the Bible teaches us to *make love a verb*—as each of us learns to give priority to the other.

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)

Jesus gave us the foundation for romantic love relationships that endure. This foundation is crystallized for us in the words of Jesus in John 13:34.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)

Let these words motivate you to be proactive in loving your spouse, as you take your cues in this from Jesus himself.

Preparation for Session 2

Review: To experience the kind of lasting love relationship we all crave, the Bible teaches us to make love a verb-as each of us learns to give priority to the other.

Use the following devotions during the week to help you get ready for Session 2.

Day One

Read through Philippians 2:3-8, which gives relationship guidelines rooted in the life example of Jesus Christ.

Day Two

Look closer at Philippians 2:4. Why do you think it's so important for married couples to make the effort to actively take notice of each other's personal interests and even get involved in them?

Day Three

In verses 5-7 of Philippians 2, we're pointed to the example of Christ as the right standard for our own relationships with each other. From what you see in these verses, how would you describe the relational standards that Jesus demonstrated for us?

Day Four

Verse 8 in Philippians 2 tells us to what extent Jesus humbled himself for the sake of fulfilling God's plan for having a relationship with us.

How far did Jesus take it? And in our relationships with each other, how far should we go in humbling ourselves for the sake of one another?

Day Five

Re-read Philippians 2:3-8. How would you summarize the uniqueness and radical difference in the relational guidelines that are taught here, as compared to the relational guidelines we're more likely to learn from the culture around us?

Preparation for Session 3

Review: During our last session, we learned that we can't have it both ways; if we give priority to pursuing deeper love and closeness in our relationships, it means no longer giving the priority to our own rights and needs and preferences.

Use the suggested devotions during the week to help prepare you for your small group meeting.

Day One

Read: Proverbs 4:23

Why is it so important to know the spiritual and emotional condition of our hearts?

Day Two

Read: Matthew 5:19

How do these words reinforce the importance of knowing what's going inside you?

Day Three

Listen to David's prayer in the final two verses of Psalm 139. Adapt this prayer in your own words as you seek God's help in understanding your heart.

Day Four

Look at the statement made in Psalm 119:32. The picture is one of freedom and power that comes from obeying God. According to this verse, what makes this freedom and power possible? What might this mean practically for your life?

Day Five

Focus on the words of Proverbs 4:23.

What can you do to protect your heart, spiritually and emotionally?

What does it need to be protected from?

Preparation for Session 4

Review: During last week’s session, we learned that romantic relationships are where we get “bumped” the hardest, bringing to the surface the baggage from our pasts. Learning to stay in love requires that we fully understand what’s going on in our hearts... and squarely facing it.

Day One

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 - How is love described in the words of 1 Corinthians 13:4-6?

Which of the characteristics of love seem to be most powerful and influential in how they affect your marriage?

Day Two

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:7 and focus on the four active expressions of love that are stated there.

Focus on the first phrase on the list-how would you express it in your own words?

How does it demonstrate itself in attitudes and actions?

Day Three

Read 1 Corinthians 13:7 and focus on the second phrase on the list. How would you express it in your own words?

How does it demonstrate itself in attitudes and actions?

Day Four

Express the third phrase on the list in 1 Corinthians 13:7 in your own words.

How does it demonstrate itself in attitudes and actions?

Day Five

Review the four active expression of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13:7 and focus on the final phrase on the list.

How would you express it in your own words?

How does it demonstrate itself in attitudes and actions?

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