## **SESSION TEN**

## **In-Session Guide**

C. The Rewa	ed Cycle: Part 2 rded Cycle Reveals Our Inner Freedom and of
	is my responsibility. This reveals who I am. You do ne to be the way I am; you reveal the way I am.
Mark 7:21-23 tions, thefts, m	For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornica- nurders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, oride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the
Love reveal	ls the husband's freedom of spirit and maturity.
an opportunity	<b>3-14</b> For you were called to <b>freedom</b> , brethren; only do not turn your freedom into for the flesh, but through <b>love serve one another</b> . For the whole Law is fulfilled a the statement, "You shall <b>love</b> your neighbor as yourself."
Respect rev	veals the wife's freedom of spirit and maturity.
	Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but [use it] of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.
	ervants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are atle, but also to those who are unreasonable.
1 Peter 3:1-2 I	n the same way, you wives respectful behavior.
Romans 12:10	give preference to one another in honor
these we best	12:23-24 and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on ow more abundant honor But God has [so] composed the body, giving more or to that member which lacked.

# D. The Rewarded Cycle Leaves a Legacy, Revealing That We Are a Good Example to Others.

Unconditional love shows the husband an example. The best thing a father can do for his children is love their mother.

1 Timothy 4:12 in ... love ... show yourself an example of those who believe.

# Unconditional respect shows the wife an example. The best thing a mother can do for her children is respect their father.

1 Timothy 6:1-2 ... regard their own ... as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against ... And ... not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

Titus 2:5 ... being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

# E. The Rewarded Cycle Reveals We Are Winning Our Spouse the Wise Way. Unconditional respect can win your husband.

1 Peter 3:1-2 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any [of them] are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

1 Peter 3:15-16 But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always [being] ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence: and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be **put to shame.** 

1 Corinthians 7:16a For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband?

#### Unconditional love can win your wife.

Hosea 3:1 Then the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."

Lorintmans 7:100	Or how do you kno	ow, O nuspand, w	netner you will <b>s</b>	ave your wife?

### **Discussion Questions**

#### For Better, Not Worse: A One-Sentence Success Story

Testimony Time: Several of you state briefly what you applied from the last session.

For example . . .

- I envisioned heaven and the glory that is coming at that unending first moment. The world meant less to me.
- I thought, "All I have to do is put on love and respect in my marriage and God will reward me throughout eternity. Talk about incentive!"
- I confirmed in myself that I am capable (and expected) to still love and respect my spouse unconditionally, no matter his or her response.

#### 1. Marriage Is a Tool and Test\*

In His parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus teaches us to do what we do as to Him (Matthew 25:31–40). Ephesians 5:22 tells wives to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord." Ephesians 5:25 tells husbands to love their wives "just as Christ also loved the church." Paul is teaching husbands and wives that in marriage the true believer is always conscious of Christ. Ultimately one loves or respects because of their love and reverence for Christ.

How does the idea that your marriage is a tool and test to deepen and demonstrate your love and reverence for Christ impact your behavior?

#### 2. In Between You and Jesus

As a husband, you are called upon to love Christ. Periodically, your wife walks between you and Jesus. Your love for Christ should spill over onto your wife as love for her.

If you do not love your wife, what does this reveal about your relationship to Christ?

As a wife, you are called upon to reverence Christ. Periodically, your husband walks between you and Jesus. Your reverence for Christ should spill over onto your husband as respect for him.

If you are not respecting your husband, what does this reveal about your relationship to Christ?

#### 3. Beyond the Shoulder of Your Spouse Stands Christ\*

In the ultimate sense, your marriage has nothing to do with your spouse. It has everything to do with your relationship to Jesus Christ. You practice love or respect because beyond your spouse, you picture—with the eyes of faith—Jesus Christ standing there.

How does this biblical reality and imagery encourage you?

#### 4. Pink and Blue Make Purple

The Bible says in Genesis 1:27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." In other words, both male and female reflect the image of God on earth.

Some contend that Jesus the Lover is the image of God on earth. After all, Jesus wants us to be close to Him, open to Him, understanding of Him, at peace with Him, loyal to Him, and esteeming of Him (C.O.U.P.L.E.). Some think Jesus is pink and therefore the desires and nature of women best reflect the image of God on earth.

But wait!

Christ the Lord is the **c**onquering king, is **h**ead over all, was given all **a**uthority in heaven and earth, has all wisdom, knowledge and **i**nsight, will **r**elate to us on His terms, and is planting a **s**eed that will be born again into His eternal family (**C.H.A.I.R.S.**). Christ the Lord is blue. Christ the Lord reflects the desires and nature of men.

So to speak, Jesus the Lover is pink and Christ the Lord is blue, but when pink and blue are blended we get purple, the color of royalty, the color of God. Together husband and wife reflect Jesus the Christ, our Loving Lord!

God is not pink. God is not blue. God is purple! Together, as husband and wife they reflect the image of God.

For this reason, when a husband and wife marry and become one, they can and should reflect purple, the whole image of God on earth.

What do you think about this?

Discuss how this could affect you as a couple and how you come across to others.

#### 5. My Response Is My Responsibility\*

Suppose Sarah is the one at fault. She is being disrespectful. I have a "right" to feel hurt, angry, depressed. But if I do, I am right back in the victim mind-set again. No matter who is at fault, I can't expect Sarah to heal my hurts or comfort me. My only real comfort will come from my Lord and trusting Him with my situation. Like anyone else, I must grasp a key Love and Respect principle and never let go: No matter how depressing or irritating my spouse might be . . .

#### My response is my responsibility.

Do you fully believe that your response is your responsibility? What happens when you make your spouse responsible for your response?

### **Immediate Application**

Write down in talready know yo	he space below or ou need to begin a	ne or two things pplying or prac	s that came to cticing this wee	mind during thi	s session that you
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#### **Final Devotional**

#### Look! Just Over Your Spouse's Shoulder! It's Jesus!

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

-Matthew 25:40 NIV

As we come to the last session of a Love & Respect conference, we close with *the Remarded Cycle*—the very heart and soul of the Love & Respect Connection. And why is it the heart and soul? Because it teaches husbands and wives this all-important truth:

In the ultimate sense, your marriage has nothing to do with your spouse.

It has everything to do with your relationship to Jesus Christ.

The scriptural basis for this statement is Jesus' parable of the last judgment (Matthew 25:31–46). Those deemed righteous ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you?" (vv. 37–39). The King answers the righteous and says, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (v. 40).

The audience quickly sees the application to them: whatever I do for my spouse, I do for Christ as well. A husband's unconditional love for his wife reveals his love for Christ. If love for her is missing, so is love for Christ. A wife's unconditional respect for her husband reveals her reverence for Christ. If respect for him is missing, so is reverence for Christ.

All of us must make the personal application. Jesus is saying, Emerson, look at me. This isn't about Sarah. She may not deserve love—that's not the point. You show love to Sarah in order to show Me that you love me. Or, Sarah, look at me. This isn't about Emerson. Yes, he needs to change, but this is about you coming across respectfully as your way of showing your reverence for Me.

To seal this idea, I use one of the most memorable images of the entire conference. Whatever you do by way of love or respect, you do not do it primarily to get your marriage off *the Crazy Cycle*. Nor do you do it to get your spouse to meet your needs. Ultimately, to practice love or respect, especially in moments of tension or conflict, you look at your spouse and just over his or her shoulder you envision Jesus Christ, standing there looking at you, saying, *Truly, as you have done it to your spouse, you have done it unto Me*!

As I tell the crowd, "When I see Jesus back there behind Sarah, it's as if I hear Him saying, Emerson, this isn't about Sarah, this is about you and Me. Yes, I see her finger in your face as she scolds you for being unloving. Yes, I agree she could be more respectful. So what will you do? Just walk away, or look beyond her to Me because, as a man of honor, you will do the loving thing as unto Me?"

I get letter after letter about the Christ-over-the-shoulder image. Here's an example: "If I see Jesus looking at me over my husband's shoulder, then I'm bound to treat my husband with the respect due to him out of my love and reverence for Jesus. I do believe that was the single brightest lightbulb flash for me!"

To realize you are doing your marriage as unto Christ is revolutionizing—and sobering. The image of Christ standing there, just beyond your spouse's shoulder as part of every conversation, is a reminder that you will be standing before Him at the final judgment. As you envision Him, you will more fully understand that your marriage is really a tool and a test to deepen and demonstrate your love and your reverence for your Lord. You will grasp the power of *the Rewarded Cycle*:

### HIS LOVE BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HER RESPECT HER RESPECT BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HIS LOVE

**Prayer:** Thank the Lord for being the "seen" guest in every conversation you have together. Pray for the strength and wisdom to always envision Him at the center of your marriage, especially in moments of tension or conflict.

**Action:** As you talk together, each of you can practice seeing Christ over each other's shoulder. Talk about how this feels. What is the Lord telling you?

For more "husband-friendly devotionals that wives truly love," see Emerson's book <u>The Love & Respect Experience</u> (Thomas Nelson, 2011).

#### A Personal Word: "In God We Trust"

I need God. You need God. So, here is what you can do if you are feeling a bit helpless and hopeless. It is amazing to me the number of people who think about praying but never really pray.

The Bible says, "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). We're not talking about health and wealth. We are talking about you asking God to enable you to show love and respect at those times you don't want to or feel unable to. I am telling you, if anything is heard in heaven, it is this prayer. This is an unselfish prayer. This is a prayer based on the heart of God.

Too many pray, "God here is what is on my heart. Please fulfill my desires for me." That is totally different from praying, "God here is what is on Your heart. Please fulfill Your desires for me."

Ephesians 5:33 is the will of God, is it not? John the Apostle said, "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked Him" (1 John 5:14,15).

So, when you have something on your heart that is also on God's heart, look out! When your will is in keeping with His will, He hears you.

Husbands, it is God's will that you love. Ask Him for help.

Wives, it is God's will that you respect. Ask Him for help.

Heaven responds. God is not some cosmic killjoy. Trust Him. Pray this prayer over the next several weeks.

#### Dear Father,

I need you. I cannot love and respect like this. But I know You hear me when I ask You to help me. Forgive me where I have been unloving and disrespectful. I open my heart to You, Father. I will not be fearful nor angry at You or my spouse. I see my partner in a whole new light. I forgive my spouse. I will appreciate my partner as different not wrong. I am actually excited, Lord. Fill my heart with love and reverence for You. Ultimately, this is about You and me. It isn't about my spouse.

Thank You for this enlightenment. My greatest reward comes from doing this "unto" You.

Prepare me this day for those moments of conflict. I especially ask You to put love and respect in my heart when I feel unloved and disrespected. There is no credit for loving and respecting when it is easy. I believe You hear me. I anticipate You responding to me. I have on my heart what is on Your heart. I thank You in advance for helping me take the next step.

I believe You will reward me throughout eternity for what I do in my marriage. I believe an eternal first moment is coming in which I will be overwhelmed. Today, I renew my commitment to believe that everything I do toward my spouse matters to You. Nothing is wasted. When I am loving and respectful during a conflict, this contributes to my eternal reward. Salvation is a free gift through Jesus Christ. I cannot earn this. But rewards come in response to what I do daily in the home. My eye has not seen, my ear has not heard and

it has not entered my heart what You intend to do in response to my love and respect in the home. Thank You for revealing this to me. I am humbled.

I believe this brings conviction to my spouse if anything will, but I don't do it for that reason.

I believe this will influence my children. I am committed to leaving a godly legacy.

I believe this matures me and reveals my freedom of spirit. My marriage is a test and tool.

And I believe this touches Your heart as I do this "unto You." I do this out of love and reverence for You because You love me and intend to glorify me throughout eternity. It's between You and me. I am a true believer.

In Your Name, Amen.