

## SESSION 1

### Why FIREPROOF will change your marriage

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*The challenge in the movie is: Can a man or woman love unconditionally?*

*When we are loved well our spirits naturally open up and we want to connect... we close our spirits because something causes us to wall ourselves off—the sin of the world-- These walls look like hurt feelings, fear, and unmet expectations*

#### 4 Steps to set the right environment for a fireproof marriage

##### 1. Respect people's WALLS

*"Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but discipline is wasted on fools." Proverbs 16:22  
NLT*

You can't force someone to open up (The bigger the mistake the longer the time to heal)

*Be patience.*

*Romans 8:24-25 NIV*

*But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

##### 2. Suspend JUDGMENT with CURIOSITY and FASCINATION

*...because we are imperfect, therefore we make bad judges.*

*"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults--unless, of course, you want the same treatment. <sup>2</sup>That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. <sup>3</sup>It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. <sup>4</sup>Do you have the ` to say, "Let me wash your face for you," when your own face is distorted by contempt? <sup>5</sup>It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor." Matthew 7:1-5 (MSG)*

*...because we don't know all the facts.*

*"But sometimes our humble hearts can help us more than our proud minds. <sup>3</sup>We never really know enough until we recognize that God alone knows it all." 1 Corinthians 8:2, 3 (MSG)*

##### 3. Value your mate's DIFFERENCES

*When two people are in conflict, they often point to their differences as the problem.*

*13 For you created my inmost being;*

*you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*

*your works are wonderful,*

*I know that full well.*

*Psalms 139:13-14 (NIV)*

*If a relationship is to feel like a safe place, it must make room for all of both people.*

##### 4. You must decide to SERVE your mate

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor Romans 12:10 NASB (in English Standard Version- "Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honor".)*

**"Whoever wants to be great must become a servant" Mark 10:43 (Msg)**

## SESSION 2

### SEXUAL INTIMACY and Its BETRAYER

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*GREAT sex is an outcome of a GREAT relationship. SEX IS A SERVANT OF LOVE*

*"If God has given us such a gift as sexuality, then our truest form of gratefulness will be shown by the way we handle the gift." Chip Ingram*

*Why is it so difficult to talk about sex? It reveals vulnerability... Wives there's probably no where else more tender than this area for your husband. YOU WANT GENUINE INTIMACY and so does he*

*How men define intimacy- sex*

*How women define intimacy- emotional connection*

*What's the biggest betrayer of real sexual intimacy- PORNOGRAPHY*

*You saw a great example of how porn destroys real connection with a false and cheap substitute*

*Eph. 5:3-4 "Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people." NLT*

*Immorality = Greek word porneia, pornography. Sexual indulgence outside marriage. Self satisfying with no regard for others.*

*Impurity = sexual behavior that defrauds, uses, or manipulates.*

*Greed = lust that consumes*

*HOW DO YOU SEE SEX? A GIFT FROM GOD OR MEANS TO SATISFY SELFISH ENDS.*

*Sex is design by God to bring two people together as one. It's a husband and a wife exchanging and appreciating all aspects of the human form. A wife needs the comfort of the emotional connection to truly open up and share in the sexual experience.*

*So is this the chicken before the egg kind of thing? Who gives intimacy first? Who steps up?*

*1Corinthians 7:3*

*The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband.*

*Be ENCOURAGING*

*May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other-- each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other. Romans 15:5*

*Shapely and graceful your sandaled feet, and queenly your movement – your limbs are lithe and elegant, the work of a master artist. Your body is a chalice, wine-filled. Your skin is silken and tawny like a field of wheat touched by the breeze. Your breasts are like fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is carved ivory, curved and slender. Your eyes are wells of light, deep with mystery. Quintessentially feminine! Your profile turns all heads, commanding attention. Song of Songs 7:1-9*

*Create ANTICIPATION about your time together. (Romance NOT QUICKIES)*

### **Session 3**

#### **The Art of Validation**

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*If you learn anything from this session, we hope you learn how to love each other through honoring each other's thoughts, feelings, and needs.*

*A definition of validation*

*"To validate someone's feelings is first to accept someone's feelings. Next, it is to understand them, and finally it is to nurture them. To validate is to acknowledge and accept one's unique identity and individuality."*

*Amy's definition: "I want to HONOR your feelings and needs more than I want to be right or prove you to be wrong"*

*"Painful feelings that are expressed, acknowledged and validated by a trusted listener will diminish. Painful feelings that are ignored will gain strength."*

*... feelings either being validated or not validated.*

*When we invalidate our mate, we reject, ignore, or judge their feelings.*

*According to Scott Stanley, Daniel Trathen, Savanna McCain, and Milt Bryan from their book A Lasting Promise state, "invalidation is one of the very best predictors of future problems and divorce."*

*The fundamentals of validation*

- 1. Offer to listen- put aside all distractions, make eye contact*
- 2. Ask spouse, friend or child to share their feelings or needs about the situation*
- 3. Identify the feelings by asking specific questions*
- 4. Repeating back specific statements and you can help even more by rewording what you hear*
- 5. Be patient when your spouse is sharing.*

*How validation impacts your relationship*

*When your spouse, or you, feels validated, the energy to fight gets sucked out of the relationship. It is like pouring a huge bucket of water on a fire, your spouse's emotions and needs can relax once she feels validated.*

*Obstacles to Validation- Negative Beliefs*

*Negative beliefs are when one person believes the motives or behavior of the other to be more negative than may actually be the case.*

*Ex. "I know exactly what you meant!"*

*Ex. "You did that just to irritate me didn't you?"*

*Ex. "You are just too sensitive!"*

*Ex. "You don't like my family that's why you aren't yourself around them"*

*Ex. "You don't really care about me, all you want is a warm body."*

*Negative beliefs fuel hopelessness –  
It's the negative lens that looks for the worst.*

*Self fulfilling prophecy*

*Practice giving the other person the benefit of the doubt...*

*ask questions when you're feeling misunderstood like "What did you just hear me say?"*

*when you want to be understood "I may be wrong here but I feel like you just said ..."*

## SESSION 4 RESOLVING THE IMPOSSIBLE CONFLICTS

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### *Beyond Words to Feelings*

True communication usually does not occur until each partner understands the feelings that underlie the spoken words.

### *3 Expectations for EFFECTIVE communication*

*Expect Time-Outs – I need a break.... I think I'll be ready to talk in an hour. I'm committed to you and I want to work this out.*

### *Expect MISUNDERSTANDINGS.*

*When we expect our spouse to "get it" all the time we're setting our relationship up for frustration and pop offs of the mouth.*

*"Post a guard at my mouth, God, set a watch at the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3 (MSG)*

### *Expect that you'll need PATIENCE.*

*"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone." Proverbs 25:15*

### *Start with being a great employee*

*LISTEN to the words the speaker is saying.*

*"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry..." James 1:19*

*REFLECT BACK to the speaker what you think they are saying.*

*When you value a person, VALUE THEIR WORDS and FEELINGS just as much.*

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18*

*Now you need to be a great Customer*

*Keep it SHORT and CONCISE*

*Only share your own FEELINGS and NEEDS*

*Do not BLAME the employee through CRITICISM or SHAME*

### *Finding Win/Win Solutions*

- 1. BRAINSTORM for all possible solutions*
- 2. You want to discuss FEELINGS rather than FACTS*
- 3. There is no such thing as a WIN / LOSE scenario*