

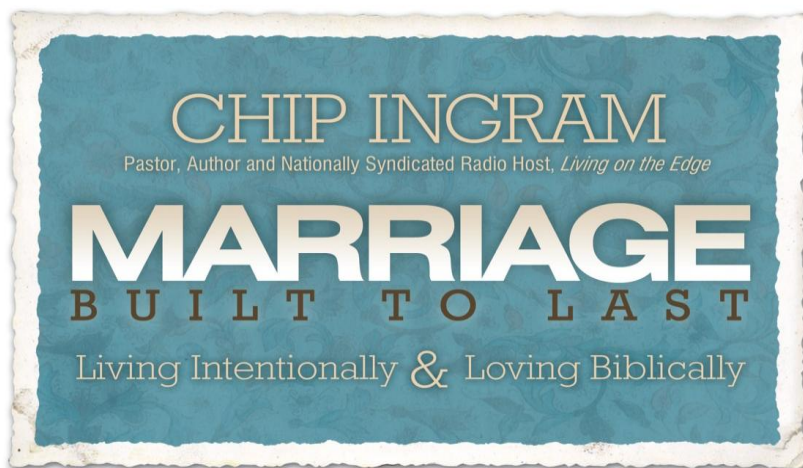
Welcome to Lakeview Church's Marriage and Family Ministry

Our Vision

To Help Equip and Empower Couples Grow Closer to Christ and Each Other

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Marriage and Family Ministry



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The “*Marriage: Built to Last*” Series

7 Sessions Dealing With:

- 1) ~~Adjusting to Expectations~~ (12/8)
- 2) ~~Learning to Communicate Clearly~~ (1/5)
- 3) **Communicating with “*Love and Respect*”** (1/19)
- 4) Breaking Down Walls (2/2)
- 5) Resolving Conflict (2/16)
- 6) Restoring Sex and Intimacy (3/1)
- 7) Striving for a Christ-Centered Marriage (3/15)

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The “*Marriage: Built to Last*” Series

REVIEW Session #2

Learning to Communicate Clearly

Discussions and Sharing

1. 5 Principles from Ephesians 4
2. Three Tools:
 - a. The Conference
 - b. Word Pictures
 - c. The “*I Love You List*”

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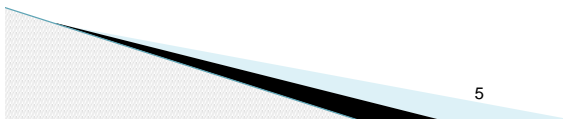
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Communicating "*Love and Respect*"

The Love and Respect approach to marriage is based on the awareness that any couple is always potentially on one of three cycles:

1. The Crazy Cycle,
2. The Energizing Cycle, or
3. The Reward Cycle.

None of these cycles is a permanent, static situation.



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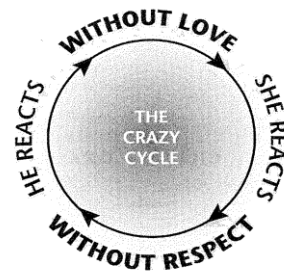
The Crazy Cycle: Around and Around We Go!

A lot of couples, however, seem to spend most of their time on the Crazy Cycle, which is summed up like this:

**WITHOUT LOVE, SHE REACTS WITHOUT RESPECT.
WITHOUT RESPECT, HE REACTS WITHOUT LOVE.**

Clearly, the Crazy Cycle triggers and fuels itself. When a wife feels unloved, she tends to react in ways that feel disrespectful to her husband. When a husband feels disrespected, he tends to react in ways that feel unloving to his wife.

And around and around they go – on the Crazy Cycle.



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The Crazy Cycle: A Bad Marriage?

All couples will experience the Crazy Cycle to some degree. This does not mean you have a bad marriage. **Every marriage has some conflict and trouble.**

In fact, 1st Corinthians 7:28 states that when two people marry they “will face many troubles in this life” (NIV).

Q: Think of a time when you and your spouse got on the Crazy Cycle. What happened? Did you keep spinning?



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Love and Respect must be Unconditional

Scripture offers the answer to the Crazy Cycle in **Ephesians 5:33**

Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

This verse is the summary statement of the greatest treatise on marriage in the New Testament: **Ephesians 5:21-33**

God **commands** (not suggests) that a man **must** love his wife and a woman **must** respect her husband. What is more, the love and respect is to be **unconditional**.



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***Unconditional* Really Means "Unconditional"**

For many wives, the concept of ***unconditional respect***, seem to be an oxymoron.

But when a wife insists that a husband **earn** her respect, she puts him in a lose-lose situation. If he must unconditionally love his wife as she demands *and* he must earn her respect as well, he is likely to just give up, shut down, and say, "*I can never be good enough for you.*"

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***Unconditional* Really Means "Unconditional"**

Unconditional respect, like unconditional love, is all about how one ***sounds*** (tone of voice and word choice) and ***appears*** (facial expressions and physical actions).

A husband may not deserve respect because he has not earned respect, but a wife's disrespect for him is **ineffective** long-term – and not biblical.

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Unconditional Really Means "Unconditional"

On the wife's side, her greatest value is **love**. One of her greatest fears is that, if she shows her husband respect, he will treat her like a doormat, abuse her, or worse. Feminist voices have trumpeted this idea for years, ***but I don't buy it.***

The man with basic goodwill wants to serve his wife, and he would even die for her. Another key passage full of Love and Respect truth is 1 Peter 3:1-7.

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Unconditional Really Means "Unconditional"

When the wife respects the husband as first among equals and he honors her as first in importance, their marriage is balanced, and the Crazy Cycle will not spin. **Granted, achieving this balance is not easy**, especially if the Crazy Cycle has been spinning for a long time. A wife can slip back into wanting him to earn her respect; a husband can slip back into getting discouraged, thinking, "What's the use?"

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Unconditional Really Means "Unconditional"

Discussion Questions:

Q: Wives, you may have fears associated with giving your husband unconditional respect. If so, what are some of your fears? How can that fear be overcome?

Q. What does unconditional respect NOT mean?

Q: In Hosea, the Lord reveals that unconditional love qualifies as the best way to influence a wife to change her heart. Do you believe this is an effective way to pursue your wife?

Q: Husbands, do you have any concerns about giving you wife unconditional love? If so, what are some of your concerns? How can that fear be overcome?

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Unconditional Really Means "Unconditional"

Remember, you can never completely get off the **Crazy Cycle**. She will always see and hear in PINK, and the in BLUE, which means the smallest things can cause the Crazy Cycle to start revving its engines. Does this mean you must always live on edge – walking on eggshells to avoid trouble? Not at all.

There is another cycle that will help you build a stronger, happier, more biblical marriage as you energize each other with Love and Respect. And that cycle is called the **Energizing Cycle**.

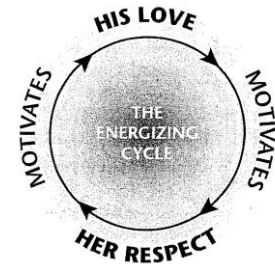
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The Energizing Cycle: Keeps the Crazy Cycle in Its Cage

While there are ways to slow or stop the Crazy Cycle (remember, you never get completely off), it can always start up again and usually does, even for happy, well-adjusted couples. The way to keep the Crazy Cycle in its cage is to get on the Energizing Cycle, which is summed up like this:

**HIS LOVE MOTIVATES HER RESPECT.
HER RESPECT MOTIVATES HIS LOVE.**



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The Energizing Cycle:

To show their love, husbands live out the principles summed up in the acronym **C-O-U-P-L-E**, which provides six ways to spell love for a wife:

- **C** -- Closeness *She wants you to be close--and not just when you want sex.*
- **O** -- Openness *She wants you to open up to her; to talk and not be closed off, acting angry or disinterested.*
- **U** -- Understanding *Don't try to "fix" her; just listen--and be considerate when she's really upset.*
- **P** -- Peacemaking *There is power in saying, "Honey, I'm really sorry."*
- **L** -- Loyalty *Always assure her of your love and commitment.*
- **E** -- Esteem *Your wife wants you to honor and cherish her.*

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The Energizing Cycle:

To show their respect, wives live out the principles summed up in the acronym **C-H-A-I-R-S**, which offers six biblical ways to spell respect for a husband's deepest desires:

- **C** -- Conquest *recognize and thank him for his desire to work.*
- **H** -- Hierarchy *thank him for his motivation to protect and provide for you.*
- **A** -- Authority *Acknowledge his desire to lead--and don't subvert his leadership.*
- **I** -- Insight *Listen appreciatively to his ideas and the advice he wishes to offer.*
- **R** -- Relationship *Value his desire for you to be his friend and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with him.*
- **S** -- Sexuality *Respond to his need for you sexually; don't deprive him*

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The Energizing Cycle:

The two acronyms are not magic words or cure-all formulas. *The Energizing Cycle will work only if **you** do.* And as you practice C-O-U-P-L-E or C-H-A-I-R-S, your marriage will be happier, stronger, more biblical, and more honoring to God.

Husbands, please note: every one of the letters in the C-O-U-P-L-E acronym is a key to motivating your wife to do the six things listed in the C-H-A-I-R-S acronym.

Wives, please note: Every one of the letters in the C-H-A-I-R-S acronym is a key to motivating your husbands to do the six things listed in the C-O-U-P-L-E acronym.

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

If a husband applies just one of the C-O-U-P-L-E concepts each day, he takes giant steps toward making his wife feel loved. To check himself on how well he is practicing C-O-U-P-L-E, the husband should ask himself the following biblically based questions on a regular (at least weekly) basis:

Closeness - Because a husband is to "cleave unto his wife" (Genesis 2:24), my face-to-face time with her causes her to feel emotionally connected and energized.

- Have I been moving toward my wife or away from her?
- Realizing her deep need to share with me, have I set aside time to talk to her face-to-face?
- Do I tell her on a regular basis that I love her, admire her and appreciate her - or do I save those remarks for when I want sex?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

Openness - Because a husband is not to be "harsh" (annoyed and resentful) toward his wife (see Colossians 3:19), I must counter any tendencies to be withdrawn or preoccupied, making her think I have no intentions of being tender and transparent with her.

- Do I share my thoughts and problems with her (a big part of *Closeness*), or do I keep things to myself to prove I am strong and capable?
- Do I come across as irritated or angry when she tries to draw me out, or am I open and transparent when she shows concern?
- Do I turn my spirit more toward TV and the newspaper than toward the heart of my wife?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

Understanding - Because a husband is to live with his wife "in an understanding way" (1 Peter 3:7), i need to be attentive to her womanly concerns (even though I may not share her interests) because I want to make her feel understood and cared about.

- When she shares her concerns or problems, do I tend to listen and let her talk, or do I try to "fix" her or what is wrong?
- Do I see my wife as made of porcelain or other fine china, or do I treat her like she is made of cast iron.
- Do I increasingly see that "just talking" (a big part of *Closeness* and *Openness*) is key to making her feel understood?
- Do I understand that talking is as important to my wife as sex is to me?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

Peacemaking - Because God said, "The two shall become on flesh" (Matthew 19:5), I am always to seek ways to "be at one" with my wife, to always live in peace, which surely includes my apologies for my part in any rift or argument between us.

- Do I tend to talk things through and resolve issues, or do I tend to say, "Let's just drop it and move on"?
- When my wife expresses hurt or anger, do I easily say, "I'm sorry. I was wrong"--or do I tend to get defensive, and express hurt and anger myself?
- Do I really understand how saying "I'm sorry" touches her deeply and makes her feel connected like few things do?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

Loyalty - Because Scripture says, "She is your companion and your wife by covenant" (Malachi 2:14), it is a good idea to let her know repeatedly of my devotion to her and to God.

- Do I look for ways to express my loyalty to her alone, or do I tend to think, "She knows I love her. I don't have to remind her constantly"?
- In this "swimsuit issue" world, do I openly admire pretty women because I know my wife is secure and can handle it, or do I save my admiration for her alone?
- My wife is a one-man woman, but is she absolutely sure I am a one-woman man?
- Do I understand that assurance of my loyalty calms her soul like few things can?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-O-U-P-L-E: A Checkup for Husbands

Esteem - Because a husband is to grant his wife "honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7), it behooves me to express appreciation for her God-given value as my equal.

- Does my wife feel treasured, like the most loved woman on earth, or is there work for me to do in this area?
- Do I take my wife's efforts with the family for granted, or do I often let her know "Thanks for everything you do for me and the kids. I could never, ever do your job!"
- Do I always remember how important birthdays and anniversaries are to my wife, or do I sometimes get busy and forget?
- Do I remind myself how energizing it is to her to be referred to as my equal?

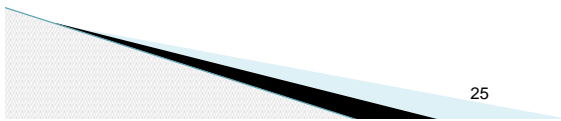
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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

If a wife applies just one C-H-A-I-R-S principle each day, she takes giant steps toward making her husband feel unconditionally respected. Remember the word *unconditional*. Husbands don't need to earn or deserve respect; wives are to extend it graciously and unconditionally. Simply stated, a wife is to show respect for her husband's desires related to C-H-A-I-R-S, not his performance.

To check herself on how well she is showing her husband respect for his desires, a wife can ask herself the following questions on a regular (at least weekly) basis:



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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Conquest - Because "God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15), I need to grasp why and how all men feel obliged and drawn to work.

- Does my husband know I am behind his desire to work?
- Do I support him in his field of endeavor?
- Do I really understand how important my husband's job is to him--that it is the very **warp and woof of his being**?
- Do I realize that my recognition of the significance of my husband's work energizes him and how fond feelings of affection for me arise in him in response to this recognition?



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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Hierarchy - Because he is called by God to be "the head of his wife, as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23), my husband needs to hear my gratitude for his willingness to protect, to provide, and even die for me.

- Do I express my respect and appreciation for his sense of responsibility for me, or do I either openly or subtly resent the biblical concept of the husband's headship, feeling that my husband views headship as a right over me, not a responsibility for me?
- Am I willing to send my husband a card or note to tell him how much I respect him?
- What would I say to thank him for his desire to take care of me?
- Do I fully understand how such a statement of respect for his commitment to protect me can touch him deeply?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Authority - Because Scripture tells wives to "*submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:22), I need to place myself under his protection and provision, and when stalemates arise, I need to let him know I am willing to defer to his decisions, trusting God to guide him.

- Do I let my husband know that, because he has the responsibility to protect and provide for me, I recognize he also has primary authority in our family, or do I insist on an "egalitarian" marriage where we both have equal authority, yet I contradict "egalitarianism" by expecting him to be primarily responsible?
- Do I recognize my husband's desire to be the leader in relationship to me?
- Do I allow my husband to be the leader, or do I take the lead because, frankly, I am better at a lot of things than he is?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Insight - Because the Bible teaches that it was Eve who was deceived (1 Timothy 2:14; 2 Corinthians 11:3), I should be very aware that there will be moments when I can be misled by my feelings and want to ignore my husband's counsel.

- Do I tend to turn to him for his opinion and analysis, or do I tend to depend more on my intuition?
- Do I realize that we are a team--that our marriage needs my intuition *and* his insight?
- Do I regularly ask for my husband's advice? Do I follow it?
- If my husband offers ideas or opinions that are contrary to mine, am I open to changing, or do I reject out of his hand his wish to offer insight?
- Do I often see my husband as wrong, sinful, and in need of correction and myself as right, good and correct?
- Do I sometimes try to be my husband's Holy Spirit?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Relationship - Because the Bible clearly speaks of how a wife should be her husband's friend as well as his lover (see especially Song of Solomon 5:16), I should recognize the value of just being with him.

- How much shoulder-to-shoulder time do I spend with my husband?
- Do we do things together as friends and companions?
- Do I ever just sit with him--to watch a ball game or a TV program--because I understand his desire for me to be with him?
- Do I ever just sit and watch him work on something without having to talk?

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The Energizing Cycle: C-H-A-I-R-S: A Checkup for Wives

Sexuality - Because a husband should have eyes only for his wife (Proverbs 5:19), a wife blesses her husband when she understands his vulnerability and meets his sexual needs (1 Corinthians 7:5).

- Do I understand that my husband's need for sex is really an indication of his deeper need for respect?
- Do I sometimes deprive my husband of sex because I don't feel he meets my need for intimacy and love?
- Do I think we need to be close before we can share sexually, or do I see having sex with him a way to feel close?
- Am I willing to give my husband the sexual release he needs even when I am not in the mood?

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The Rewarded Cycle: Reaching Your Ultimate Goal

Sometimes a wife will not show unconditional respect for her husband no matter how hard he tries to show her love. Sometimes a husband will not show love for his wife no matter how hard she tries to unconditionally respect him. When this is the case, you are on the Rewarded Cycle, which is summed up like this:

**HIS LOVE BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HER RESPECT.
HER RESPECT BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HIS LOVE.**



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The Rewarded Cycle: Reaching Your Ultimate Goal

The Rewarded cycle means that God blesses a husband who loves his wife regardless of her level of respect for him, and God blesses a wife who respects her husband regardless of his level of love for her.

These blessings are the rewards God gives to those who love or respect a mate because of their own love and reverence for Christ.

Christ Himself becomes the motivation for such action.



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The Rewarded Cycle: You Always Have a Choice

You may be experiencing disappointment, frustration, or anger, but *you always have a choice*. A wife can choose to be disrespectful *or* respectful. A husband can choose to be unloving *or* loving.

To realize that you are free in Christ and not a slave to the same old negative reactions that lead straight to the Crazy Cycle is a source of real power.

Winning or losing during conflict is not the goal – oneness is the goal.



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The Rewarded Cycle: God's Reward

Keep doing your part because, in God's economy, no effort to obey Him is wasted. God intends to reward you even if your spouse is unresponsive. When you love or respect unconditionally regardless of the outcome, you are following God and His will for you. **This is the Rewarded Cycle.**

Have you thought much about God's intention to reward you for what you do?
Do you believe what Scripture says applies to you personally?



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Conclusion

Take time over the next two weeks to go over Session #3's Questions and spend time talking about them

Next Session (#4): February 2nd

Breaking Down the Walls



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A Prayer of Commitment.

Dear Father, I need you. I cannot love or respect perfectly, but I know You hear me when I ask You for help. First, please forgive me for the time I've been unloving or disrespectful. And help me to forgive my spouse for being unloving or disrespectful toward me. I open my heart to You, Father. I will not be fearful or angry at You or my spouse. I'm seeing myself and my spouse in a whole new light, and I will appreciate my spouse as being different, not wrong. Lord, I also ask You to fill my heart with love and reverence for You. After all, this marriage is ultimately about You and me. It isn't about my spouse. Thank you for helping me both understand this truth and realize that my greatest reward will come from being a spouse as unto you.