

The Meaning of Marriage *Discussion Guide*

CHAPTER 5: LOVING THE STRANGER

Introduction

By its nature, marriage has the power of truth, the power of love, and the power of grace. It can reveal hidden truths about who we are and how we view and respond to the challenges of life. It can redeem our pasts and change the way we view ourselves. It can demonstrate the grace of what God sacrificed for us in Jesus.

Taking advantage of all that power isn't easy. In order to make the most of marriage, we must learn to love the stranger . . . and that takes a lot of effort.

Icebreaker

Have each person share his or her primary love language.

Discussion Questions

1. As you read the chapter, what stood out most?
2. This chapter is about how marriage changes us. How has marriage changed you for the better?
3. Keller writes, "Marriage does not so much bring you into confrontation with your spouse as confront you with yourself." Is there something your marriage is currently teaching you about yourself?
4. Read Ephesians 4:15. In what ways does your spouse speak truth to you in love?
5. As your flaws are exposed in marriage, how are you handling it? How is your spouse handling it?

For the Ride Home

Talk about this question on your way home:

What are some ways you feel loved by your spouse? Be specific (e.g., "I feel loved when you do or say . . .").

Exercise

[*The 5 Love Languages*](#) by Dr. Gary Chapman is a great resource for discovering specific, practical ways to love your spouse. Reading the book as a couple outside of group is a great idea (though not mandatory).

This week, complete Dr. Chapman's 30-question Love Languages Personal Profile. You can download a PDF version of the profile at:

groupleaders.org/lovelanguagesprofile

You can also fill out the profile online by visiting 5lovelanguages.com and clicking "click here to begin."

Once you've completed the profile, discuss the following questions with your spouse:

1. *Based on the profile results, which two love languages are most meaningful to you?*
2. *Explain to your spouse how he or she can best show you love through your love language.*

Moving Forward

When you married, you tied yourself in a covenantal bond with a person that is probably very different from you. Those differences can make communication difficult. They can be the source of much conflict. Our instinct is to try to improve communication and reduce conflict by changing our spouses. But doing so only causes more frustration and relational friction. It also robs us of one of marriage's greatest benefits: the ability to see ourselves deeply and truthfully through another's eyes, and to grow as a result of what we see.

Changing Your Mind

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:15

