**Marriage Enrichment Group - EVBC**

**THE HEALTH OF OUR MARRIAGES AS BELIEVERS WILL ALWAYS BE ABOUT MORE THAN US.**

**Purpose:** To contribute to the health of Christian couples as they continue together in their faith journey.

**Goal:** Find at least one significant addition and one significant subtraction for each partner to make within your relationship. **Eph 4:22-24**

**Week I -Attachment and the Christian Couple**

**I-THINK ABOUT IT –** Value of healthy attachment and explored types and effects of relationship insecurities.

**II-WORK ON IT – C.L.E.A.V.E. –** for building intimacy and attachment.

**III-HOMEWORK –** Vow Making exercise. (Did you share?)

**Week II- Communication and the Christian Couple**

**I-THINK ABOUT IT –** Value of good communication and explored types of destructive communication patterns.

**II-WORK ON IT –** Addressed destructive communication patterns by identifying and working to develop healthy patterns.

**III-HOMEWORK –** A reflective exercise where we shared a time of personal examination with our spouse.

**Additional communication thoughts regarding the art of listening.**

**A-Attending –** We communicate out of a sense of need – that need begins to be met by being “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” We convey our presence (or lack of presence) largely through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**S.O.L.E.R. – for building connection**

**1-S – Square sitting (expresses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

**2-O – Open posture (expresses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

**3-L – Leaning (expresses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

**4-E – Eye Contact (expresses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

**5-R – Relaxed (expresses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

**B-Reflecting –**

**1-Use attending skills to promote healthy communication.**

**2-Reflect the communication \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**3-Affirm the reflecting.**

**Week III – Conflict and the Christian Couple**

**I-THINK ABOUT IT**

**1-Conflict occurs because of our sinful nature (Jas 4:1).**

**2-Conflict *will* occur within relationships (and, therefore, marriages).**

**3-It is appropriate to desire resolution of conflict (Amos 3:3).**

**4-It is appropriate to have strategies for resolving conflict (Matt 18:15-17, examples – Acts 11:1-18, Acts 15:1-21)**

**A-Understanding causes of conflict:**

**1-Poor Communication –**

**2-Unrealistic Expectations –**

**3-Unmet Needs –**

**4-Culture –**

**5-Finances –**

**6-In-Laws –**

**7-Parenting Styles –**

**8-Lack of Intimacy –**

**B-Understanding dimensions of conflict:**

**1-Spiritual –**

**2-Relational –** our conflict is “interpersonal conflict” – “an expressed struggle between two interdependent parties who ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.” **William Willmot and Joyce Hocker**

**i-misunderstanding**

**ii-different goals**

**3-Mental and Emotional**

**i-there are physiological responses and reactivity during conflict.**

**ii-the “fight or flight” stress response occurs through release of hormones into the body in preparation to “fight or run.”**

**iii-the perceived threat is your spouse.**

**II-WORK ON IT**

**C-Resolving and Managing Conflict:**

**1-Spiritual**

**i-Engage in Self-Examination – Matt 7:5**

**ii-Have a Christ-Like Attitude – Phil 2:3-4**

**iii-Promote grace filled interactions Prov 19:11**

**2-Relational**

**i-Working to align \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy communication resolves misunderstanding.)**

**ii-Working to align \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**L.O.V.E. – for problem solving**

**L-Listen and Repeat –**

**O-Observe Effects –**

**V-Value Partner –**

**E-Evaluate Common Interests –**

**AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST**

**-Security (economic, psychological well-being)**

**-Belonging (bonds)**

**-Recognition (attention, valuing, “mattering”)**

**3-Mental and Emotional -engage in psychological self-soothing.**

**III-CARRY IT**

**Not everyone deals with high amounts of conflict. Great! Many healthy, growing believers enjoy the presence of biblical principles being organically employed within their relationship communications. They resolve disagreement lovingly, selflessly, and come to agreement as a team. However, a lack of conflict is not always a good thing—it may be an indication of poor attachment, relationship insecurities, or destructive communication patterns. It is previously unresolved conflict that may create an unhealthy environment where there is no conflict because there are no meaningful efforts toward communication. Healthy attachment is built, in part, by yielding in recognition of the need for help and the use of tools to make progress.**

**Whether a couple is actively struggling with conflict resolution or putting “tools” in their marriage “tool kit” in preparation for a possible time in the future, a clear, familiar system can only be helpful in continuing toward relationship goals. (Remember, for believers, the grand picture is about putting the magnificent love of Christ on display through their marriage.)**

**1-Review the 10 steps for resolving conflict worksheet.**

**2-Discuss where you (using “I” statements) would have the biggest challenges.**

**3-Discuss how you both (using “we” statements) could overcome those challenges.**

TEN STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

All couples have differences and disagreements. Studies show the amount of disagreements are not related to marital happiness as much as how they are handled. Happy couples do not avoid disagreements; they resolve them while remaining respectful of each other, thereby strengthening their relationship. This Ten Step Model is a simple, but effective way to resolve conflict while avoiding the common and destructive patterns. Use this model with an ongoing issue in your relationship, as well as future issues.

1. Set a time and place for discussion.

2. Define the problem. Be specific. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. List the ways you each contribute to the problem.

Partner 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Partner 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Brainstorm 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do not judge or criticize any of the suggestions at this point.

6. Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions. Be as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each suggestion feels for resolving your issue.

7. Agree on one solution to try: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Agree how you will each work toward this solution. Be as specific as possible.

Partner 1:

Partner 2:

9. Set up another meeting to discuss your progress. Place:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10.Reward each other for progress. If you notice your partner making a positive contribution toward the solution, praise his/her effort.