

## Conversation Starters

- What was your vision of marriage before you were actually wed? If you are not married, what romantic vision do you have for marriage?
- How has the reality of marriage compared to that original vision you had? If you are not married, how does your romantic vision compare to what you hear is the reality of marriage?

## Discuss

Romance has such a vital presence in the beginning of a relationship, but can quickly fade once the reality of marriage sets in. Often times, most people don't see it coming, and have false expectations of marriage that sets them up for conflict with their spouse.

- Do you live or hold on to the romantic and unrealistic expectations you had from the romance stage of marriage?
- How does culture feed the lie of romance for marriage?
- How do you embrace the reality of marriage? What practical steps do you take?

You can't expect your husband or wife to make you whole. Marriage does not solve everything. Your spouse is not to meet all of your relational or emotional needs. Christ is the best thing that ever happens to anyone relationally and emotionally, meeting our foundational set of needs in life.

- Do you sometimes expect your spouse to meet needs that only Christ can meet?
- Do you sometimes expect your spouse to already know what you need? If so, in what ways?
- Do you and your spouse act as a team when you are at home together?

As a married couple, it's so easy to become completely self-absorbed and not think about your spouse's needs. It's important to learn how to serve each other – the fair expectations in a marriage. William Harley, Jr. identifies five basic needs for a man and a woman in his book, *His Needs Her Needs*.

### ***His Needs:***

1. Sexual Fulfillment – physical needs
2. Recreational Companion – someone to play and have fun with
3. Attractive Spouse – takes pride in her appearance
4. Domestic Support – peaceful and well-managed home environment
5. Admiration – strengths acknowledged and celebrated

### ***Her Needs:***

1. Affection – physical and emotional, without the expectation of sex
  2. Conversation – time to talk about dreams and emotions
  3. Honesty and Openness – building and keeping of trust; transparency
  4. Financial Support – ensure that things are cared for in this area
  5. Family Commitment – a teammate mentality and functionality; a partner, not just a husband
- Do you see these desires in yourself?
  - Do you see these desires in your spouse? (Or look for these in a potential spouse?)

## Next Steps

### *For Married Couples:*

Work to bring romance back into the marriage. Talk about what each of your needs are. When you share, talk about what the fair expectations are and how you can meet them for each other.

- Ask your spouse, what is the thing that drains you most?
- Do you know how your spouse is able to fill their tank?
- Homework: Go on a date this week!

### Date Night Ideas

#### Make

Dinner Together  
Vacation Plans  
A Fort

#### Go

On a Road Trip  
Hiking  
To the Zoo

#### Play

Twenty Questions  
Basketball  
Cards

#### Have

A Movie Marathon  
A Spa Night  
A Photo Shoot

### *For singles:*

Reflect on the expectations you may already be putting on a potential spouse.

- Are the expectations fair?
- Knowing this on the front end, what steps can you take to prevent potential future conflict?

## Pray

God, thank you for setting the perfect relational example for us. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a relationship with you and for meeting the deepest needs of our hearts. For those of us who are married, help us to learn how to serve our spouse in a fair way and with a servant's heart. For those of us who are not, help us to store these lessons away and have the vision that you have for marriage and what to look for and expect in a potential spouse. We pray for your wisdom as we learn to serve each other and that you would be honored in our relationships. In Christ's name, amen.