

The Five Love Needs of Men and Women Book Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTION:

What do you think about the concept of men and women having differing love needs? Is this a new idea for you? Why or why not?

Before reading this chapter, what would you have said are the five biggest love needs for men? For women? Did your list differ from the Rosbergs' list? If so, how?

What are some of the benefits of trying to meet your spouse's legitimate love needs? What are some the dangers of *not* meeting them?

Discuss the difference between a "50/50" marriage and a "100/100" marriage. Which kind of marriage do you think you have? Which kind do you want?

THE #1 LOVE NEED FOR MEN: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Questions for Both Husbands and Wives:

Does it surprise you that unconditional love and acceptance is the #1 need for both men and women? If so, why?

Describe your understanding of what unconditional love and acceptance means.

What do you think it means to be "God with skin on" for your spouse?

Questions for Wives:

Review Gary's story about losing half his yearly income due to standing up for an ethical principle. Has anything similar ever happened in your marriage? If so, describe the situation.

Barb responded to Gary in a way that said, "No matter what, I am here with you. I am proud of you." How was this response helpful to Gary?

What might have happened if Barb had *not* responded to Gary with grace and encouragement?

Explain what Gary means when he says that unconditional love starts with God. Why is the love of God in first place, even before the love of your spouse?

What are some things you do to meet your husband's need for unconditional love and acceptance? Think of some practical ways that you can:

-show grace with his weaknesses

- affirm him
- make him feel safe
- take time to connect with him
- study him: his likes and dislikes, his moods, etc.

THE #1 LOVE NEED FOR WOMEN: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Questions for Husbands:

Review Barb's story about Joe and Leslie. In what ways did Joe exhibit unconditional love to Leslie?

How can your unconditional love help make a difference to your wife when she feels these vulnerabilities that are common to women:

- Fear of change
- Desire to please others
- Fear of failure
- Comparing herself with others

Explain what it means to love your wife at her greatest point of failure. How can you choose to love her in spite of her flaws, even if she doesn't change?

What might happen to a woman if her need for unconditional love and acceptance isn't met?

What are some things you do to meet your wife's need for unconditional love and acceptance? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- encourage her
- stand with her
- compliment her
- respect her opinion
- talk with her, and listen
- be tender with her
- spend time with her
- serve her

THE #2 LOVE NEED OF MEN: INTIMACY (spelled S-E-X)

Questions for Wives:

Do you agree that men tend to “compartmentalize” their lives, while women do not? Why or why not? Can you think of examples of this from your own marriage?

Why is sex so important to men? Does it surprise you that sex actually begins in the brain?

What can be result when a wife withholds sex, is overly critical, or compares her husband unfavorably to other men?

What are some signs that a husband might be feeling rejected?

What is the emotional reward for the *wife* when she is careful to meet her husband’s need for sexual intimacy?

Think about some practical ways that you can:

- be honest with God about the sexual aspect of your marriage
- look at your own heart for things that might be keeping you from enjoying a healthy sexual relationship (such as unresolved emotional pain)
- study your husband and learn everything you can about his needs and how you can meet them

THE #2 LOVE NEED OF WOMEN: INTIMACY (spelled T-A-L-K)

Questions for Husbands:

Do you agree that women don’t tend to “compartmentalize” things the way men do? Can you think of any examples from your marriage?

What are some elements of the emotional intimacy that women crave?

Why must emotional intimacy be in place before a woman desires sexual intimacy?

What can happen when a wife’s need for intimacy is not met?

What are some self-protective behaviors that a wife might exhibit if her need for emotional intimacy is not being met?

What are some things you do to meet your wife’s need for emotional intimacy? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- listen to her
- show her an understanding heart
- give her attention and affection
- build rapport with her
- safeguard your relationships

THE #3 LOVE NEED OF MEN: COMPANIONSHIP

Questions for Wives:

Describe the ways in which your husband needs all three kinds of biblical love: agape, eros, and phileo.

What qualities say “friendship” to you? Do you think your husband’s definition of friendship is different? If so, in what ways?

Discuss this statement: Your husband is not your girlfriend.

What are some things you do to meet your husband’s need for companionship? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- maintain realistic expectations
- speak the truth in love
- be forgiving
- be honest
- join him in his hobbies and interests
- make your relationship a safe place
- show a Christlike love

THE #3 LOVE NEED OF WOMEN: SPIRITUAL INTIMACY

Questions for Husbands:

Discuss the concept of “the cord of three strands.” How can you weave God into your marriage?

In what ways are you a spiritual leader in your home? Do you strive to model a Christlike love to your family?

Do you tend to be a controlling leader, a passive leader, or a servant leader? Are there any changes you’d like to work toward in your leadership style?

What might happen if your wife’s need for spiritual intimacy is not met?

What are some things you do to meet your wife’s need for spiritual intimacy? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- help her grow in her relationship with Christ
- encourage her to be in fellowship with other Christians
- encourage her to express her spiritual gifts
- pray for and with your wife
- be a spiritual leader in your home

THE #4 LOVE NEED OF MEN: ENCOURAGEMENT

Questions for Wives:

Why is encouragement so important for men?

What happens when a man doesn't get encouragement at home?

Do you think there are any differences in the way women like to receive encouragement, and the way men like to receive it?

What are some things you do to meet your husband's need for encouragement? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- encourage him to "hear the applause"
- encourage him to hear God's voice
- remind him of God's work in his life
- encourage him to be accountable to other godly men
- encourage him to connect with his children

THE #4 LOVE NEED OF WOMEN: ENCOURAGEMENT

Questions for Husbands:

Do you think that the way men like to receive encouragement is any different from the way women like to receive it? Explain.

What are some of the benefits of actively encouraging your wife?

What might happen if you don't encourage your wife?

Explain the difference between letting your wife express herself after a hard day, and trying to fix her problems. When might be the appropriate time to offer concrete solutions?

What does it mean to be a "Barnabas" to your wife?

What are some things you do to meet your wife's need for encouragement? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- have good, deep conversations with her
- reflect her love language to her
- have a love affair with her

THE #5 LOVE NEED OF MEN: SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

Questions for Wives:

Discuss why it's so important for your husband to keep growing spiritually.

Why is spiritual leadership a tough role for a man to fulfill? Explain how being a spiritual leader is countercultural in today's society.

What are some things that can knock a man off-track as spiritual leader? Is your husband being affected by any of these things?

Are you ever guilty of trying to be your husband's "junior Holy Spirit"? Explain.

What are some things you do to meet your husband's need for spiritual connection?

Think of some practical ways that you can:

- encourage him to read the Bible
- encourage him to pray
- encourage him to be in fellowship with other Christians
- encourage him to be the spiritual leader in your home

THE #5 LOVE NEED OF WOMEN: COMPANIONSHIP

Questions for Husbands:

How does a woman's need for companionship differ from a man's need?

Finish the following sentence: My wife needs me to be the kind of friend who...

Even if your wife has a female "best friend" or two, what qualities make *you* the ideal best friend for her?

What are some of the benefits of meeting your wife's need for companionship?

What are some of the risks of not being a friend to your wife?

How do you want your friendship with your wife to look ten years from now? Twenty years from now?

What are some things you do to meet your wife's need for friendship? Think of some practical ways that you can:

- do enjoyable things together
- create a secure place for her
- support your wife in her dreams and goals
- create "benchmark" times in your marriage
- be a friend in the tough times

WRAPPING IT UP

Questions for Both Husbands and Wives:

Having read this book, what do you think is the key to nurturing unconditional love in your marriage?

What's the difference between "hoping" for a good marriage and "deciding" to have one?

Think of one new thing that *you* can do differently to meet each of your spouse's top five love needs. Choose a time to start, and do it!