

VOLUNTEER TO OPEN IN PRAYER

BREAKING ICE (20 min.)

How did the love and respect thing work between your parents?

What could either partner have done better?

Are you bugged by all this men and women stuff?

Men.... share some good things about women in general... or be specific.

Women... share some good things about women in general.... or be specific.

LOOK TO THE BOOK:

PART 1 (20 min)

(Once again I am giving you guys a tough passage to talk through... in love. Please be open to hearing what everyone thinks... everyone is allowed their own opinion. Let's just not share it (or defend it) so passionately that we stifle openness. Let's hear from as many as we can on this sensitive subject!)

Wives

3 In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands, even those who refuse to accept the Good News. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words. They will be won over ² by watching your pure, godly behavior.

³ Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. ⁴ You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

⁵ That is the way the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. ⁶ For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, when she called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

Husbands

⁷ In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard." 1Peter 3:1-7

1. In regard to beauty what is precious to God?
2. In God's kingdom will women be stronger, weaker, or equal? (see Mark 12:20-27; Gal 3:26-28).
3. In this fallen world in what ways might women be considered weaker than men? In what ways are women stronger? Can a man and a woman be stronger together?
4. How are women to win over their husbands who do not believe?

Part 1A/ Instruction on Marriage 1 Cor. 7 (20 min)

Now about the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life. 2 But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. 3 The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. 4 The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. 5 So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control.

6 This is only my suggestion. It's not meant to be an absolute rule. 7 I wish everyone could get along without marrying, just as I do. But we are not all the same. God gives some the gift of marriage, and to others he gives the gift of singleness. 8 Now I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. 9 But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

10 Now, for those who are married I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. 11 But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else go back to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. 12 Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a Christian man has a wife who is an unbeliever and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. 13 And if a Christian woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. 14 For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not have a godly influence, but now they are set apart for him. 15 (But if the husband or wife who isn't a Christian insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is not required to stay with them, for God wants his children to live in peace.) 16 You wives must remember that your husbands might be converted because of you. And you husbands must remember that your wives might be converted because of you. 17 You must accept whatever situation the Lord has put you in, and continue on as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches. NLT

5. What does Paul say about a spouse who comes to faith while the partner doesn't? Should they stay married? Why? How should she treat an unbelieving husband (see back to 1Pet 3:1)?
6. What does Paul personally think about being married or single which is better? Talk about the pros and cons of each.

PART 2 (20 min) (split into groups of men and women)

1. If married... what could you do better in regard to loving or respecting?
2. What are your plans for Valentine's Day?
3. What is the biggest relational problem that men and women face today?

PART 3 (10 min) (back together)

Share your response to question 3 Part 2

OPEN PRAYER FOR MARRIAGES AND SINGLE PEOPLE