

## CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR COUPLES

Before your conversations each day, read Ephesians 5:21-33.

**Sunday:** When your parents lived *outside* the “peace zone” in their marriage, which “war zone” did they tend to live in? How do you think that has influenced the way you approach your role in marriage?

**Monday:** When we are tempted to live outside the “peace zone” in our marriage, which “war zone” do we tend to live in? What wounds or losses have you experienced that cause you to drift from living in the “peace zone”?

**Tuesday:** (The husband asks the wife) What does “yielding with strength” look like to you? What makes it difficult for you to “yield with strength” to me?

**Wednesday:** (The wife asks the husband) What does “leading with tenderness” look like to you? When it comes to me, what makes it difficult for you to “lead with tenderness”?

**Thursday:** (The husband asks the wife) What are some practical ways that I can call love, nurture, and cherish you?

**Friday:** (The wife asks the husband) What some practical ways that I can show you respect?

**Saturday:** If people were to evaluate the relationship between Christ and the church by looking at our marriage, what would they see? What are some next steps that we can take in order to reflect better the relationship between Christ and His church?

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## CONVERSATION STARTERS TO ENHANCE YOUR COMMUNICATION AS A COUPLE WITH THE LORD

**Adoration:** God, I love you because... (Recognize the greatness and the goodness of God.)

**Confession:** Lord, I am sorry for... (Confess something that you have said or done that has done damage in your marriage.)

**Thanksgiving:** Thank You for forgiving me for... Thank You for this quality in my spouse’s life: \_\_\_\_\_ (Thank God for the gospel which means we receive forgiveness and fresh starts. Thank God also for some unique character quality you see in your spouse’s life.)

**Supplication:** Lord, help us to... help me to... (Ask the Lord for something specific that you know will benefit your marriage.)

## A Gospel Prayer based on Ephesians 5:22-33

O holy God of love,

Long ago, in eternity past, You planned great good for Your people. Your intention all along has been to create a new community called the church that would stand before You in shining-greatness, in blameless holiness. Your purpose has been to create a people – to bring out their best – free from spots, wrinkles, or any other disfigurement.

Yet as I look at my life, I see darkness, shame, impurity, and uncleanness. And the people around me – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow believers – are full of faults, blemishes, and unholiness, too.

It is impossible for an unholy person, like me, and an unholy people, like us, to experience intimacy with You, a holy God. Apart from grace, we are doomed to miss out on a good and glorious future.

You, however, are full of grace. In spite of our faults, You sent Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to love us and to save us. He gave Himself up for us so we could become the church, His new community. On the cross, Jesus sacrificed Himself with a love marked by giving, not getting. His love makes us whole. Jesus nourishes and cherishes us. His love sanctifies the church and cleanses us by the washing of water with the word. His word brings about our beauty.

One day, Jesus will present the church as a bride to Himself in splendor, beauty, and glory. Until that day, Lord God, You have made marriage to be a profound, mysterious picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.

May husbands and wives leave their fathers and mothers and be joined together so that the two become one flesh. May husbands and wives be filled with the Spirit, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. May wives respectfully yield to their husbands with a passionate strength just as the church submits to Christ. May husbands lovingly lead their wives with a sacrificial tenderness just as Christ loves the church. May our marriage relationships be so blessed by You so that husbands will help their wives and wives will help their husbands stand before You in holiness one day and hear You say, "Well done."

Father, You have made the marriage relationship to be a great mystery that speaks of something profound – the marriage of Christ and His Church. Thank You that Your love through Christ will fulfill Your plan, Your intention, and Your purpose by creating a new community. You will make Your church an altogether glorious bride in Your eyes.

Amen.

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This prayer has been inspired by Ephesians 5:18b, 21-33. Some of the words and phrases in this prayer have been taken directly from the English Standard Version, J.B. Phillips New Testament, The Message, New Living Translation, and the New Life Version.

