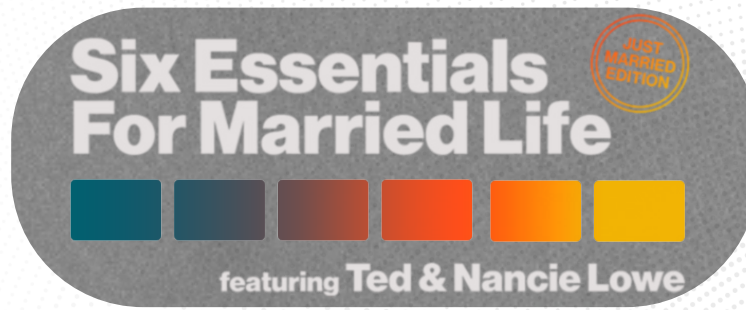




PART 1: CULTIVATE COMMUNICATION AND CELEBRATE DIFFERENCIES

CONNECT

Take a few minutes to discuss this question in your group:

What's one of your spouse's habits you didn't discover until after the wedding?

LEARN

Before watching the video together and discussing the questions provided, we suggest taking a few moments to pray. Here's a simple prayer you can use:

Heavenly Father, thank you for every couple in this group. Help us build a strong foundation by learning to understand and listen to one another. Show each of us how to celebrate the differences our spouse brings to our marriage. Amen.

After praying, watch the video for Part 1.

APPLY

After the video, discuss the following questions as a group:

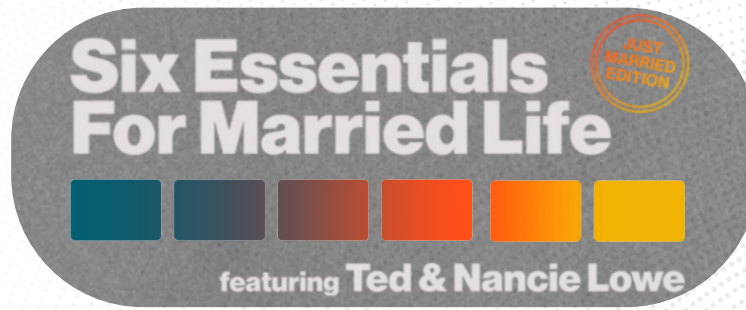
1. What's one lesson you've already learned about communication in your marriage?
2. Read **James 1:19**.

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Which part of this verse is most challenging for you? How does making assumptions about your spouse impact how quick you listen to your spouse?

3. Ted and Nancie talked about the importance of pausing before reacting. What makes it difficult to pause in the moment? Practically, what could pausing look like for you?
4. Review the five stages couples often experience with their differences: **fascination, irritation, toleration, appreciation, and celebration**.

When you were growing up, how did the couples around you handle their differences?
What habits can you implement to move toward appreciation and celebration?



5. Being a student of your spouse means remaining curious rather than assuming you already know what they think or how they'll respond. Why is curiosity so important in a healthy marriage?
6. Ted shared this advice: "Find the best possible explanation for your spouse's behavior, and believe it with all your heart." What benefits does believing the best bring?

MOVING FORWARD

This week...

Act

Look for an opportunity to pause before reacting to your spouse. As you pause, ask God to help you listen first and respond with love.

Ask

Ask each other:

"What's one difference between us that actually helps our marriage?"

PRAY

We suggest ending your group with prayer. Here's a simple prayer you can use:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of marriage. Help us build a strong foundation by listening well, speaking with grace, and celebrating the unique ways you've wired our spouse. Teach us to assume the best, pursue understanding, and build a marriage that reflects your love for years to come. Amen.