



STUDY GUIDE

Solve Any Marriage Conflict in Five Minutes or Less

I. Marital Relationships

A. Regular marital conflict is *not* normal.

1. This is a cultural deception. *Conflict-free* marital relationships should be what's normal.
2. **Example:** Jan and Craig have not had marital conflict the last several decades.

B. **Our story:**

1. Our first seven years of marriage were full of conflict.
2. **We received three revelations**, enabling us to resolve every marriage conflict in less than five minutes.

C. **The revelations:**

1. The spiritual forces of darkness set us up for conflict using **Ephesians 6:11 schemes** on a daily basis. (Ephesians 6:10–12)
 - a. Picture this: A Hidden Arms Dealer who took the first shot that started the American Revolutionary War (the shot heard around the world).
 - b. **Your spouse is not your enemy.** Your spouse is being **used by** the enemy.

2. The Ephesians 6:11 scheme works through our **blindness to Level 2 relational communication.**
 3. **The two levels of communication:**
 - a. Level 1 communication: Topical communication.
 - b. Level 2 communication: Relational communication.
 4. Most people are totally blind to Level 2 communication messages.
- D. Resolving the Level 2 marital conflict can only be accomplished when one person is willing to UNILATERALLY apologize and ask forgiveness.
1. Both are caught in bear traps, but one must be willing to unilaterally spring the bear trap of the other.
 2. Treat your spouse the way you would like to be treated. If your spouse behaves like an enemy, love him or her. (Matthew 7:12; Matthews 5:43–44)

II. Springing a Bear Trap

- A. Springing a bear trap involves asking two questions and doing one action.
- B. The **questions** to ask:
 1. “By the tone of your voice, I sense that I’ve hurt you. Is that true?”
 2. “Could you please share with me how I made you feel when I did / said, “...”?
- C. **Action:** Tell your spouse, “I didn’t see that at the time. Now I do. I now see how I hurt you. Will you please forgive me for hurting you that way?”

III. Questions the Course Will Answer

- A. **How can I use these principles to resolve conflict in other relationships?**
Examples: Parents and children, siblings, conflict in business with coworkers or a boss, employees, church conflicts with a pastor, church members, or

other friendships?

B. Why is it sometimes so hard to apologize?

1. When I take the high road and apologize first, why is it that my wife/husband still won't forgive me?
2. Six steps to an effective apology.
3. Most of us have never been taught how to apologize and actually make it worse when we try to do so.

C. **Ephesians 5:33 tells me to love my wife.** When I go out of my way to bless her and do nice things for her, why is it that I don't get credit for that and she still tells me I don't love her?

1. You may not know how she perceives love, what love actually means to your wife.
2. There are three components of love, for most wives.

D. **Ephesians 5:33 tells me to respect my husband.** What does respect actually mean to my husband?

1. Does it mean to tacitly obey everything he says?
2. Does it mean I need to agree with him even on points on which he is wrong?
3. Could it be that I don't know how he perceives respect, or know what respect means to your husband?
4. The three components of respect, for most husbands.

E. How can I use five specific strategies to quickly move any conversation from Level 1 to Level 2 and resolve any relational conflict in less than five minutes?

F. How do I get my husband to make me a priority in his life and to stop defending and justifying when he has done something hurtful or wrong?

G. How do I get my wife to stop criticizing me, trying to change me, and making me feel like a failure if I don't conform to her agenda?