

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK 5

Us In



Mind

by Ted Lowe

HOW CHANGING YOUR THOUGHTS
CAN CHANGE YOUR MARRIAGE

Intentional Thought: Pause

SOMETIMES MARRIAGE IS LIKE AN OLD

WESTERN MOVIE: an argument is brewing, and it feels like whoever can draw the fastest, wins. We try to beat our spouse to the punch by getting on the offensive first.

But you don't have to have been married for very long to know that's a fast track to an unhappy marriage. Still, what we know to be true, and how we live don't always line up. We can know that a slowness to speak and get angry is best for our relationship, but that doesn't mean we aren't spewing venom the next time we've taken offense.

This week, guide your group to begin to think through what one small step in the right direction might look like for them in their marriage when it comes to conflict. None of us are perfect in our relationships, but we all have the capacity to get better. Encourage your group to make "better" the goal and not "perfection."

IN CLOSING

This week, when you notice you are being triggered by something that typically leads to a conflict with your spouse, pay specific attention to what is happening in your body. Does your heart rate increase? Does your face flush? Do your muscles clench? Does your mind race? As much as possible, be an observer of yourself at that moment. Then, do what you can to turn the emotional temperature (and physical responses) down. Intentionally relax your muscles, take five slow, deep breaths, and so on. Think through how your approach to that brewing conflict was affected by your slowing down and recalibrating. Talk with your spouse about how intentionally making this a regular habit could help the two of you handle conflict in a healthier way.

Response

Ice Breaker

What is one piece of advice you would give your newly married self?

Discuss

1. What's the stupidest fight you've ever gotten in?
2. What kind of confrontation style did you observe the most, growing up? How do you think that impacted the way you address confrontation now?
3. When it comes to arguing styles, what do you relate to the most? Do you tend to confront, ignore, or run away?
4. As a couple, what are some of the triggers that lead to conflict in your relationship?
5. Read James 1:19 NIV together as a group. What do you wish you could do better when it comes to addressing conflict? Be quick to listen? Slow to speak? Or slow to get angry/take offense?
6. How do you think your ability to handle conflict in your marriage would change if you worked on these ideas from James?

