



session
one

Notes







Session One: Video Notes

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In **Matthew 22:34-39**, Jesus summarized all of the law and prophets in just two relationships: your relationship with _____ and your relationship with your _____.

By definition, a relationship is just a _____.

There are three laws of relationships:

Law #1: _____

Law #2: _____

Law #3: _____





Discuss as a group:



1. Go around the room and share what you **hope to gain** out of this series.
2. Dr. John and Dr. Morgan shared that a common misunderstanding is that relationships should just run themselves. Why do you think so many people have this misconception about marriage?
3. Relationships take effort. The Apostle Paul encouraged the Christians in Philippi to **work hard** at their relationships.

Philippians 2:2-4 (NLT) Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

What would your marriage look like if you practiced the attitudes and actions described in these verses (you could replace the word, "others" with the name of your spouse)—identify some specific ways you can **express these attitudes** in your relationship.

4. You learned that relationship bonds fluctuate and can easily become out of balance. We want you to

become comfortable interacting with the RAM (Relationship Attachment Model) chart, so take it out and adjust how you think each bond would be affected by the following life events. Hold it up for the group to see after the host reads each one out loud:

- a. You get **married** and head off on your honeymoon
- b. You have your **first baby**
- c. Your **kids** are all at home and busy with many activities, while job demands keep **increasing**
- d. You become **empty nesters** as your youngest goes off to college

5. Jesus said, *“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33 NIV). But it is equally true that *“in your marriage”* you will have troubles and trials of many kinds!

You can apply what is written in James 1:2-5 (NIV) to your marriage relationship: *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

And you can be sure that **God will give you wisdom in your marriage** to navigate through these challenges, and will use difficulties to make your marriage stronger. So, what are some other NORMAL things that happen in the course of a marriage that will create fluctuations/imbalances? Depict those on the RAM.

6. Now talk about and use your RAM chart to portray the fluctuations/imbalances that are the **most challenging** for your current stage of life.

Why?

7. How do you keep your marriage from getting stuck in a relationship imbalance?

8. What will help you to **regularly talk** about any fluctuations or imbalances in your relationship, and positively move toward strengthening those areas in the immediate future?

 **Add some spark**

Write him/her a love letter!

Send it via snail-mail.



Session One: Summary

Jesus said that all of the law and prophets hang on two relationships – your relationship with God, and your relationship with your neighbors (people).

The **RAM** provides a visual and interactive portrayal of the specific bonds or connections that comprise your relationship. These connections are the major contributors to your feelings of closeness and will naturally fluctuate. They are definitely “two-way streets.” They are:

KNOW: the facts and specific details you know and understand about your spouse; **TRUST**: the feelings of confidence that result from what you think and trust about your spouse; **RELY**: the ways that you rely, depend on, and meet the needs of your spouse; **COMMIT**: the degree of your commitment, investment in and perseverance with your spouse; and **TOUCH**: the extent and meaningfulness of your physical touch and sexual intimacy.

♥ *There are three laws of relationships:*

Law of Diminishing Returns: There is a limited shelf life to each of the bonds in your relationship. Life will naturally deflate one or more of them, so it is normal that they will drop and become imbalanced. Take it to heart, it is normal to become imbalanced in your relationship!

Law of Slow Leaks: Slow leaks will either flatten your relationship or set you up for a big blowout! Relationships do not run themselves, and as a result, they are not self-correcting. The danger is not that you become imbalanced in your relationship, but that you stay imbalanced.

Law of Frequent Realignments: The one real key to a successful marriage relationship is to regularly rebalance any imbalances ... to identify where your relationship has naturally become a bit deflated and intentionally strengthen that bond. The RAM works like your relationship GPS so that you can recognize the fluctuations in the bonds of your relationship, have a common language to talk about them and work together to make a plan to strengthen them during your couple huddles.



Relationships are two-way streets, even between you and God (**Philippians 2:12-13**). And, in marriage, as in all relationships, you must run your relationship; it doesn't run itself. This entire series is about helping you to understand your relationship and to intentionally and actively run it, while relying on God who is empowering and directing you!

#RelationshipGrowth: Session One

The Apostle John gave the church at Ephesus relevant advice on how they could recapture their “first love” for the Lord. **Revelation 2:4-5 (ERV)** instructs us: “But I have this against you: You have left the love you had in the beginning. So, remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do what you did at first ...”

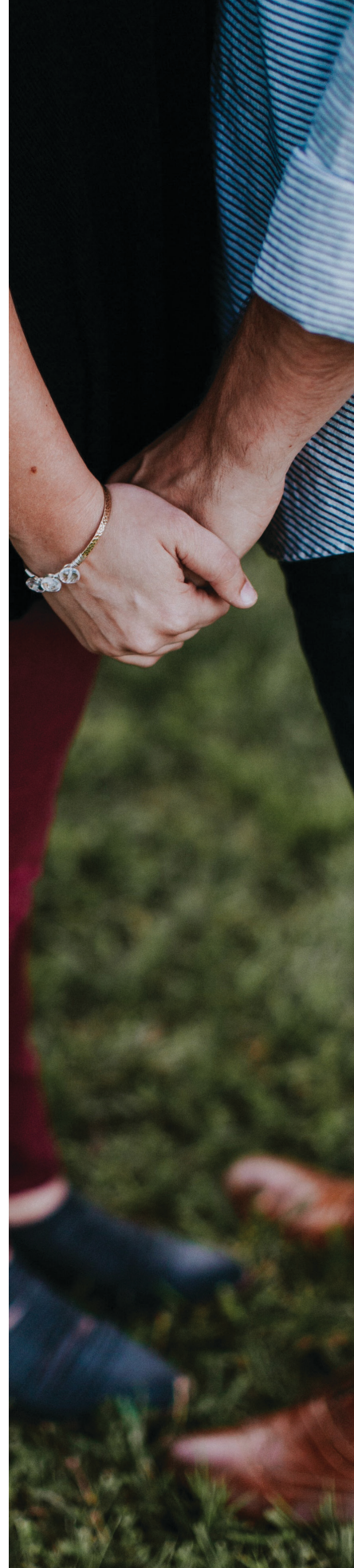
This advice is equally good for how married couples can **regularly reignite their feelings of being in love**. First, it goes along with what Dr. John and Dr. Morgan shared about how normal it is to lose some of your closeness. But, second, it is vital for couples to identify what has dropped in their relationship (“remember where you were before you fell”) and to set a time to do the things that would strengthen the bonds of their relationship (“do what you did at first”).



1. Discuss the times in your marriage when you felt the **closest**. Take out your RAM chart and try to portray that closeness. Talk about what you were doing during that period of time that helped bring about this closeness.

2. Explain what you used to do that either you have stopped doing, or just do not do **enough**. How long has this been going on?

3. What have you done at other times in your marriage to **strengthen** the closeness in your relationship, and how did those choices impact the five bonds in your relationship described in the RAM chart?



4. What would you like to see happen in your relationship now that would help to strengthen and **increase** the bonds of your relationship?

5. Make some practical goals for accomplishing these **changes**. Set some dates, put them on a calendar and write yourself a reminder note.

6. End your time together with a brief prayer ... a **moment** of holding each other and an expression of your love for each other.