Maintaining and Repairing Discussion Questions

1. There is no relationship that exists without conflict. As long as two fallen human beings are in relationship there will be differences. Although our differences can be the cause of destroying intimacy, discuss the ways that our differences in gender, culture, life experiences, and upbringing can grow our intimacy.
2. Differences mean that conflict is inevitable. Often in marriages or new friendships, our conflicts might be less, but you can only be on your “best behavior” in a marriage or friendship for so long. When cracks occur in our relationships, it’s usually because the connection is breaking. What are reasons that cause our connections to weaken in our intimate relationships/friendships?
3. An attempt to repair a relationship is *“any action or statement that prevents negativity from escalating out of control”*. Discuss a time when you were able to de-escalate a situation that was going to damage your connection. Examples include communicating a frustration to another person through a joke that made you both laugh, etc.
4. One way of measuring the health of a relationship is how quickly a couple moves to repair the connection when they experience a rupture.

*“ ‘Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.  Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.’” Leviticus‬*

**The remedy to secret hate is open repair.**

* What are some of the challenges of trying to repair a relationship in the midst of conflict? Share advice with one another about best practices of trying to address issues before they get worse.

1. Love doesn’t magically disappear, but it can slip away when a couple chooses not to fight for it over and over and over. There are 4 things that were spoken about that keep us from doing deeper damage and move us in the direction of reestablishing connection.
2. **STOP SIGN -Anytime I feel my emotions flooding and my pulse racing, it’s time to stop and shift my internal gears.**

I’m choosing to not react out of anger, but to have productive conversations. Best practices are to stop and switch to a setting where I can wait to gather my thoughts and calm down my emotions.

1. **Ask 2 Questions: “Why am I angry?” And “What do I want?”**

Anger is usually a secondary emotion with roots in our previous experience—often the result of being hurt, frustrated, or afraid. So if I want to deal constructively with my anger, I first need to step back and ask what lies underneath it. Otherwise, I’m just dealing with the surface emotion, not the root cause.

Process a time that you realized you were in conflict about something that really was not as a big of an issue that you were making it out to be. How were you able to move past that conflict?

1. **Caution**- This sign indicates that you are entering a potential hazard zone. You need to proceed with care. This is especially important in regard to how you bring up sensitive topics.

Share ways in which you were able to navigate through a sensitive situation through precautions that you took to ensure you overcome the challenge.

1. **YIELD -** In a healthy relationship, yielding doesn’t mean pretending to agree with the other person when we really don’t. Nor does it mean always giving in and letting others have their way. It means slowing down enough to recognize and acknowledge what the other person is experiencing in the conversation.

What are ways you can try to establish a better understanding of the position of the person you are in conflict with?

As we see in the life of Jesus, in which He drew near to us, by taking flesh and living among us, He chose to take the step of moving closer to us in our conflict with Him rather than pulling away. Reflect on the perfect model of Jesus through His Incarnation in which the middle walls were broken down between us and Him. How can we model our lives and friendships after His perfect example?

Conclude in a prayer asking for the spirit of love to having the patience and long-suffering to overcome conflicts in our relationships with wisdom through Christ, and the Holy Spirit’s power to discern and truly repair the cracks that take place.