



**Battle of the Sexes- Session 5
Dealing with Expectations in Marriage
February 7 and 10**

Introduction

What was one thing about marriage that you grew up expecting to be true and found out later that it wasn't?

How did you respond to it not being true? What changed about your expectation?

1. Marriage is God's idea but takes place in a broken world and with two people still in process.

1 John 4:7.

What's the connection between one's status and experience as a beloved child of God and John's frequently repeated counsel that his readers must love one another (3:11, 3:14, 4:7 and 4:11)? How does this relate to marriage?

2. Marriage is a tool used to help us get over being self-centered.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) and Galatians 5:17.

Has there ever been a time that you did something that looked nice to everyone else but on the inside it was merely for personal pride? What does it look like to be humble in your marriage? What is one way that you can look for the interest of your spouse over yourself this week?

What are ways that we live for the flesh in our marriages? How can these expectations come to light? How is living for someone else hard? What are ways to help focus on living for Jesus in your marriage?

3. Marriage is a tool used to teach us to love like Christ and display Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV) and Ephesians 3:20-21.

What are things that can control our marriage? How can these impact our marriages both positively and negatively? What does it mean to live in a marriage controlled by the love of Christ?

What does it mean that God can do more in your life than you think or imagine? What does that look like in your marriage? How does having the right perspective impact how you pray for your spouse (or future spouse)?

4. Marriage is a tool used to remind us where hope is found.

John 16:33 (ESV).

Why is it not possible to have the love of the Father and not love your spouse? What should be the appropriate response to the love of God? How are these words from Jesus comforting for the marriage that has struggles and trials? How can they be challenging?

Application

1. Spend some time praying specifically for your spouse (or future spouse). Ask God to make sure that you do not put false expectations on your spouse. Make sure as well that you ask God to give you a love for your spouse like He has for you!
2. Find a way to encourage your spouse this week through a note, date, or some significant act. Help them to see that you aren't doing these things to receive love back but to demonstrate love to them.
3. If any of the discussion today challenged your expectations of your spouse and you realize a need to ask forgiveness for false expectations, spend time discussing with your spouse about these false expectations and find ways to help you grow together.