

VERTICAL Marriage

WEEK TWO
COME BACK AND
fight
LIKE A MAN

Welcome back, everyone! (Read this out loud)

Whether you're married, dating, single or looking, we're glad you have made the bold step to take your relationships in a Vertical direction.

Last week, we discussed how often in our marriages and relationships we're looking in *the wrong direction* for our happiness. In the Bible, God tells his people that they have dug their own broken wells (cisterns) looking for water, when really, He is the well that quenches thirst (Jeremiah 2:12-13). It's the moment we go "vertical" towards God that our thirst is quenched, and we can go to our partner and become a giver instead of a taker.

This week, we're glad you showed up, because we are jumping into everyone's favorite topic of *conflict!* We expect you may feel a little apprehensive about this topic, but remember, the goal is not to generate more conflict, but to help create more *clarity* for *your next step* in a Vertical Marriage.

Here we go!

Flip to the next page and let's get started!

Ice Breaker

Before we get down to business, let's have a little laughter to lighten the mood!

Everybody, stand up! In your current room, label or assign each corner of the room the numbers 1, 2, 3, or 4. Have the person in the room wearing the most black read the scenarios below. As they read each scenario, they'll count to 3 and everyone else must go to the corner of the room that best describes them. Are you surprised by anyone's choice?

What type of vacation do you most look forward to?

1. Adventure
2. Relaxation
3. Purposeful
4. Stay-cation

Where is your ideal vacation location?

1. Ocean
2. Mountains
3. City
4. "Up North" (*We see you Traverse City!*)

What item do you always lose?

1. Phone
2. Wallet
3. Keys
4. Everything

What trait do you most value in a friend?

1. Loyalty
2. Humor
3. Kindness
4. Trustworthiness

In conversation, what is your biggest pet-peeve?

1. Being Interrupted
2. Not being listened to
3. Illogical Reasoning
4. Selfishness

Last question, when it comes to conflict resolution.

What is your natural style of handling conflict?

1. Win
2. Yield
3. Withdraw
4. Resolve

Answer

It's very clear that everyone has different preferences, right? Being able to navigate the conflict that arises from these differences is one of the most important indicators of the success of your marriage. Today we'll learn that there are four major ways that people tend to approach conflict:

Win: Wanting to prove you're right.

Yield: Giving in and surrendering.

Withdraw: Removing and avoiding all conflict.

Resolve: Trying to find a solution.

Excluding "Resolve", which of the other 3 categories do you most identify with?

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Not only do we need to speak the truth in *love*
but we need to be willing to hear the *truth*.

Dave & Ann Wilson



Watch the video message
then *flip* to the next page
for discussion questions



Discuss

1. Read James 1:19 and discuss:

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"

- Is your tendency to listen first or talk first?
- What do you think would happen if you chose to listen and be present with your spouse?
- What are some of the ways you believe your ability to listen could be powerful?

2. James also says to be "slow to speak". Sometimes the more words we say, the more trouble we find ourselves in. In fact, it has been said, "a wise man once said nothing at all."

- What tendency do you have with your words that can get you in trouble?
- What are some of the ways you need to think before you speak?

3. James suggests that we should be "slow to anger."

Anger can be hard to control when we feel it.

- What are some ways you could "slow down" your anger in the moment?
- What habits you could develop now to make sure that when conflict arises, anger is not immediate?

4. Read Ephesians 4:15:

"Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Some of us are "feelers or lovers" who don't want to hurt people. Others of us are "thinkers or truthers" who tell everyone what they think.

- What do Dave and Ann mean when they say, "a true friend stabs you in the front."?
- Feelers in the room, answer this: What are some ways you can tell the truth in love that makes a healthy change?
- Thinkers, what are some ways you can tell the truth in love in a way that makes a healthy change?

5. As you reflect on today's topic of conflict, what is your biggest takeaway or realization? Why?

Challenge

- As a couple schedule one dinner where you will talk about conflict in the next couple days (or after the kids go to sleep).
- Share about some of the realizations you have had in this week's dialogue about the way you navigate conflict.
- Establish what it would look like to "fight fair" in your relationship.
- Establish a word that you could use to call "timeout" to pause a conflict moment to settle hearts and minds so that you can come back to "resolve" the conflict the best.

Read More

For those of you reading along with the book *Vertical Marriage* by Dave and Ann Wilson, **Part Two: Conflict and Communication** (chapters 5-9) compliments this week.

