



## Sharing Your

# Wishes

During your next Marriage Staff Meeting, try this exercise. It will help you identify and share areas in which you think your relationship could be improved.

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### 1. On your own, list up to six wishes relative to your relationship

Be specific and positive.

*Examples: I'm hoping you can become more comfortable initiating affection with me.*

*I wish we would not criticize one another in front of others—particularly our children.*

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### 2. Share your lists with your spouse, with loving words

Sharing wishes helps avoid the destructive cycle of:

- Having expectations and anticipations (i.e., wishes) of another person.
- Not communicating these wishes.
- Becoming hurt or angry when these expectations aren't met! This isn't fair to either person.

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### 3. Exchange lists.

It will help you remember your partner's wishes. Begin working on areas that your spouse wants changed.

#### Encouraging Vulnerable Communication—Make it safe for your spouse to share

*"...perfect love casts out all fear" (1 John 4:18–19).*

The *perfect* love of this passage is God's love...sacrificial, giving and filled with initiative. As believers, we have received His divine love.

Much of what hinders vulnerability is rooted in FEAR...fear of being rejected or misunderstood, fear of inadequacy or retaliation. As we share His agape love with spouse, children and others, it ministers freedom from fear.

A very practical experience of this freedom comes as we engage in intimate communication.

Since God's perfect love is sacrificially given and takes initiative, one way to encourage deepened communication is by ministering *reassurances* such as:

- I want to reassure you of my commitment to listen to your heart, your feelings, and your needs—in order to better know you and love you.
- I will make our sharing times a *safe place* for you to express your most intimate feelings. I commit not to withdraw, reject or criticize.
- I'm committed to keep our conversation times confidential...just between you and me, and to never use what you share against you.
- I see the importance of sometimes needing to agree to disagree.



- You don't need to "be me." I want you to have the freedom to *be you* and all God desires for you to be.
- As I identify barriers within me during our sharing, I'm committed to address them, resolve them and remove them so they'll no longer be a hindrance to our sharing.
- Realizing my need to be responsible for my emotions and behavior, I will not blame you or rationalize my behavior.
- When I let you down in some way and hurt you, I'm committed to bring healing and resolution as God sorrows my heart and I seek forgiveness.
- I want to reassure you of my commitment to better love you unconditionally. This is best demonstrated when, even though I may be disappointed or hurt in some way, I still lovingly give to you anyway.
- I'm committed to you and our relationship, and want to more consistently verbalize and demonstrate my care and love for you.



## YOUR WISH LIST

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