

MONTH 1

LESSON 3: NORMAL VS. HEALTHY

Is a “normal” marriage the same as a healthy marriage?

Instructions: After watching the video, take a few minutes by yourself to think deeply and answer questions 1-4. Try to be as open and honest as possible about your experiences. Once you're both finished, share your answers with each other. Remember that these answers can be difficult to talk about, and that there are no wrong answers.

1. How often did you witness conflict between family members growing up? What did that conflict look like? How did it end? Were the issues resolved, buried, or stewed on until later? Did you ever see or experience abuse?

2. How close were the relationships between members of your immediate family? You may have different types of relationships with different family members, and these definitions may not fit perfectly, but use them as a starting point to share with your spouse.

- a. Distant--we lived in the same house but emotions were rarely talked about, if ever.
- b. Neither distant nor close--we talked sometimes but it wasn't always very deep. I knew I was supported and cared for, but I didn't experience a deep connection
- c. Close--we talked through things and valued each other's feelings. We didn't always agree, but we still understood and respected each other.
- d. Too close--some relationships made me feel uncomfortable and wish for space. I was regularly given advice I didn't want, and made to do or say things I didn't want to do.
- e. Abusive--I witnessed or experienced physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse

3. How might your family relationships and patterns impact your marriage? In good ways? In bad ways?

4. Where do you see your marriage and family relationships as compared to your family as you were growing up?

After you've shared your answers from questions 1-4 with each other, work through the rest of the questions together.

5. Where do you see patterns you want to continue? How can you work together to continue these?

6. Where do you see patterns you want to break? How can you work together to break these?

7. What goals do you have for your marriage relationship? For other relationships in your family?

8. What areas will need continued focus and prayer? How can you support each other in these areas?