

**OPEN**

As our marriages grow and mature, so do our conversations. The types of talks we have now can be deeper and more insightful than the ones we had on a first date are different. We can learn to navigate discussions with our spouses even better over time. This session is all about when not to talk.

## VIEW

Watch Session Four: *When Not to Talk* (7 MINUTES)

## REVIEW

Les talked about his small group where one of the rules is to avoid giving advice. Les and Leslie said advice should be given sparingly. **Why do you think one of our first reactions to problems is to give advice?**

Advice is like garlic—a little goes a long way. Too much of it can be overwhelming and harmful at times. Describe a time when advice was overwhelming to you. **What would have been more helpful instead?**

Giving advice should be a rare occasion, which makes it more valuable in the long run. **What's the best advice you've been given about your marriage? What made that advice significant to you?**

In the story, Ben struggled with Ashley's response to the death of their newborn son. His attempts to bolster her faith didn't work and it concerned him to see her question God. **How did he come to understand her perspective and reach out effectively to her in her pain? How did that make a difference in their marriage? What did Ben learn from Ashley about faith?**

Les and Leslie also explained how some people need time to process internally before having a conversation. If your spouse needs time to think, it's best not to press them. Instead, give them space and revisit the conversation later. **What kind of a processor are you? What does it look like for you to give your spouse space to process?**

Sometimes it's better to stop talking. Ending a conversation and revisiting it at a later time can help settle a conflict, leave room for internal processing, and strengthen your relationship. Describe a time when you stopped a conversation. **What happened? What was it like to let a discussion sit and then revisit it at a later time? What did you learn through the process?**

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

Read James 1:19–20.

These verses fall in a series of instruction from James about being wise and avoiding temptation. **What are we naturally tempted to do in conversations? Why do you think it can be more natural for us to want to speak instead of listen?**

**What does it look like to be quick to listen to your spouse? What all goes into listening?**

The underlying message of these verses is to exercise patience and self-control in our communication. **Which of the three areas mentioned in this verse (being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry) would you say is the most difficult for you? Why is it hard for you?**

Les and Leslie said there are times when it's better not to say anything. Their principle comes straight from this verse. Sometimes to avoid anger, it's best to listen, be quiet, and revisit the conversation at a later time. **What could you do this week to listen to your spouse while also being slow to speak?**

Being silent can be a great gift to your spouse. This week, make a note of how you listen and speak to your spouse. Are there times you could have been quiet? Could you listen better? Ask your spouse if there's anything you can do to listen to them better.

## **APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED**

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*Select an activity from the list below to begin applying the lessons of this session to your life.*

**Pray:** Pray with your spouse this week about being slow to speak and quick to listen to each other. Ask God to make it clear when you should hold back your words with your spouse. Pray God would strengthen your marriage, specifically through how you talk to each other.

**Read:** Read chapters 12–13 of Les and Leslie's book *Love Talk*. Talk about the chapters with your spouse.

**Assess:** Take Les and Leslie's Better Love Assessment. Discuss your results with your spouse.

**Practice:** Look for opportunities this week to hold back your words with your spouse. Try to avoid giving advice. Give your spouse space to process. Or close down a heated conversation and revisit it at a later time.