

WHO DOES WHAT

• TO WARM UP

☀ **To warm up:** Name one chore you genuinely do not mind doing. Then guess the other person's.

• WHO DOES WHAT

Nobody argues about dishes

They argue about what the dishes meant.

Every couple walks in with a set of rules they have never written down and could not recite if you asked. Who cooks. Who apologizes first. Whose job it is to notice the car needs gas. You do not discover these rules by discussing them. You discover them the first time one gets broken, and by then it does not feel like a rule. It feels like a betrayal of something obvious.

The rules are obvious. They are just obvious to only one of you.

Last session you learned how to have a hard conversation. This is the one to practice on, because it is specific, it is fixable, and it is coming either way.

• THE BIG IDEA

Fair is the target. Equal is not.

Most couples aim at fifty-fifty and then keep score, which turns a marriage into an accounting problem neither of you can win.

What the research actually finds is different, and more hopeful. It is not the split that predicts how happy people are. It is whether the split feels **fair**, and whether each person feels the other notices what they carry. Two couples can divide the same work identically and land in completely different places, and the difference is usually gratitude.

That is good news, because it means you are not trying to build a perfectly balanced ledger. You are trying to build an arrangement you both chose and both feel seen inside.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

PHILIPPIANS 2:4

• WHAT YOU ARE EACH ASSUMING

Answer these on your own, in writing, **before** you compare. This matters more than it sounds. When couples talk it through first, the more certain voice tends to become the plan, and both of you walk away believing you decided together.

Without asking them: name three things you assume will be your job, and three you assume will be theirs

One unwritten rule from my life that I did not know I had until recently

• THE INVENTORY

Do not settle this from memory. Go through it out loud, item by item, and write the name.

COOKING, GROCERIES, AND THE WEEKLY PLAN

CLEANING, LAUNDRY, AND THE DEEP STUFF NOBODY SEES

BILLS, BUDGET, AND NOTICING WHEN WE ARE LOW

CARS, REPAIRS, AND THE THINGS THAT BREAK

CALENDAR, BIRTHDAYS, GIFTS, AND STAYING IN TOUCH WITH BOTH FAMILIES

CHURCH, PRAYER TOGETHER, AND KEEPING US IN IT WHEN LIFE GETS LOUD

Look at that last column of names. If one of you appears in most of them, that is not automatically wrong. It is only wrong if neither of you chose it.

• THE TWO THAT GET DECIDED BY ACCIDENT

Most couples never decide these. They just wake up inside them.

If we each got a good offer in a different city, how would we decide? Say the actual process, not 'we'd talk about it'

If we have children and one is sick on a workday, whose calendar clears first, and why that person?

• WHEN YOU GENUINELY DISAGREE

Here is the part most books either dodge or turn into a fight.

Ephesians 5 is the passage, and it is worth reading together rather than around. Sincere Christians who love the same Bible land in different places on what it requires structurally, and pretending otherwise helps nobody. What almost nobody disagrees about is the shape of it: a husband is told to love his wife the way Christ loved the church, which is to say, by laying himself down. Whatever authority is in that passage exists to serve, not to win.

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

EPHESIANS 5:21

You two need to find out, before the wedding, whether you actually hold the same view. Most couples assume they do because neither has ever said it plainly.

But the question that will shape your daily life is smaller and more practical than the theology:

When we disagree and a decision has to be made this week, what is our actual process?

Think of the last big decision we made. Whose preference actually won, and did it feel mutual to both of us?

That second question is the honest one. Couples who are certain they decide together are often the least likely to notice when they do not.

• COUPLE CONVERSATION

1. Compare your two lists from the start. Where did you assume the same thing? Where were you not even close?
2. What is one job you would gladly take off the other person if you knew it mattered to them?
3. What does it look like, concretely, for each of us to say thank you for the invisible work? Not in general. This week.
4. Is there anything on the inventory neither of us wants? Decide now who owns it, or decide to pay someone.

• KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✦ The rules are obvious. They are just obvious to only one of you.
- ✦ Felt fairness predicts happiness. A fifty-fifty ledger does not.
- ✦ Feeling appreciated does more for fairness than moving the split does.
- ✦ Whose career leads and who flexes for a sick child get decided by accident unless you decide them on purpose.
- ✦ Find out whether you actually agree about Ephesians 5, rather than assuming.

GO DEEPER — OPTIONAL

For couples who want to linger. Skip it if you'd rather keep things light.

1. Whose voice do you hear when you think about what a husband or a wife is supposed to do?
2. What work did someone in your family do that nobody thanked them for?
3. Where might you be agreeing to something now that you would resent in five years?
4. If your arrangement had to be explained to a friend, would both of you describe it the same way?

• **THIS WEEK**

Trade lists, then take one thing. Each of you pick one job off the other person's column, out loud, and own it for a month. Then say thank you for something the other person does that you have never once mentioned.

• **A PRAYER TO CLOSE**

“Lord, keep us from keeping score. Teach us to serve each other without counting, and to notice what the other one carries. Where we assume, make us ask. Where we disagree, make us kind. Let our home be a place where the work is shared and the thanks are said out loud. Amen.”