WHERE YOU CAME FROM

SESSION 5

TO WARM UP

☼ **To warm up:** When something went wrong in the house you grew up in, what happened in the first ten minutes?

WHERE YOU CAME FROM

You learned marriage before you knew you were learning

Nobody sat you down and taught you how two people are supposed to treat each other. You watched. For eighteen years you watched, in the one house you could not leave, and everything you saw got filed as normal.

That filing is quiet and it is durable. Of all the things that can be measured about a couple before the wedding, what each of them absorbed at home is one of the few that still shows up years later, in how they fight. Not whether they fight. How.

You are not doomed by any of it. But you cannot decide about something you have never named.

> This session is not about blaming anyone's parents. It is about seeing clearly what you were handed, so you can choose what to keep.

THE BIG IDEA

Your normal and their normal are both just normal to you

Two people walk into a marriage each certain they know how a disagreement goes, because each has watched hundreds of them. One learned that raised voices mean the room is honest. One learned that raised voices mean someone is about to leave.

Neither is being difficult. Both are running the only program they were given. The trouble starts when each assumes the other is choosing their reaction rather than repeating it.

> *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."*
> EXODUS 20:12

Honoring is not pretending. You can tell the truth about a home and still honor the people in it. In some ways honoring it well means refusing to pass on the part that hurt.

THE HOUSE YOU GREW UP IN

Answer these on your own first. Do not soften them for the other person to read.

When my parents disagreed, what I actually saw was...

After a fight, how did the house get back to normal? Who moved first, and what did they do?

How did people in my home show love? What was said, and what was only done?

SOMETHING FROM THAT HOME I WANT IN OURS

SOMETHING I AM DETERMINED NOT TO REPEAT

WHERE THEY ARE ALREADY SHOWING UP

The point of naming a pattern is catching it in the room you are actually in.

A moment in our relationship when I reacted the way someone in my family would have

Something the other person does that I have never understood

HOW EACH OF US GOES QUIET OR GOES LOUD

WHEN I AM HURT, MY FIRST INSTINCT IS TO...

- Go quiet
- In between
- Raise my voice

AFTER A DISAGREEMENT, I...

- Fix it now
- In between
- Need time first

> If you landed at opposite ends of either scale, you have found something worth an hour of conversation. Opposite instincts are not a mismatch. Unnamed opposite instincts are.

COUPLE CONVERSATION

1. Read each other's answers about conflict. What surprised you most?
2. Which of our two houses is closer to how we want ours to run, and in what specific way?
3. When one of us goes quiet and the other needs to talk, what will we actually do? Decide it now, not at eleven at night.
4. What is one thing from each of our families that we want our home to be known for?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- You learned how people treat each other before you could evaluate it.
- What you absorbed at home is one of the few things measurable before a wedding that still shows years later, in how you fight.
- Your normal and their normal both feel like normal. That is the whole problem.
- Naming a pattern is not blaming anyone. It is what makes choosing possible.

GO DEEPER — OPTIONAL

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

1. Which parent do you resemble more under pressure? How do you feel about that?
2. Was there something in your home that was never talked about? What did its absence teach you?
3. What would the family you grew up in say about the way the two of you handle conflict now?
4. Is there anyone you need to forgive before you carry this into a marriage?

THIS WEEK

Trade your answers about conflict and read them slowly. Then name one pattern each of you brought that you would like the other's help catching. Say what "help" looks like, so it does not become a weapon.

A PRAYER TO CLOSE

"Lord, thank you for the homes that made us, the good in them and the hard. Give us honesty without bitterness, and honor without pretending. Let us keep what was faithful and lay down what was not. Make our home a place someone will one day want to come back to. Amen."