



## Two Churches, One Marriage

### Communication: Opening the Door to Understanding



### Application

1. The intent of this exercise is to have you and your partner discuss a problem in the relationship while practicing the communication skills discussed here. The problem that you and your partner discuss should be of moderate difficulty. If you were to rate your problems on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being a very minor problem and 10 a very severe problem, you should choose a problem in the 4-6 range for this exercise. As you become more practiced at using the skills, then you can apply the communication skills on more difficult problems. For this exercise, don't try to solve the problem, but simply share with one another your thoughts and feelings around the problem. The goal is to deepen your understanding of one another's perspective using the skills. You will have the opportunity to problem-solve in the next unit after some additional skills are introduced.
2. Each of you should share with your partner what your typical response is when you become "flooded." Do you tend to have "fight or flight" response? Do you tend to pursue an issue seeking resolution (fight response), or do you try to withdraw to avoid conflict (flight response)? What type of couple interaction do you and your partner have based on both of your preferred responses when flooded? Do you both have a "fight" response, leading to mutual escalation? Do you both have a "flight" response, leading to conflict avoidance? Or, does one of you have a "fight" response while the other has a "flight" response, leading to a pursuing-distancing pattern?
3. For this exercise, you and your partner should negotiate how to take a time out when one or both of you become flooded. What are possible signs that you or your partner may be getting flooded and need a time out? What type of verbal or non-verbal signal will you use with each other to communicate that a time out is being requested? How long will the time out last? What will each person do during the time out? What are the rules for re-initiating a discussion of the issues?