

How They Do It

DISCUSSION GUIDE | September 7, 2025

BIG IDEA

Healthy couples know they owe each other nothing.

Message title: “Expectations”

Scripture Reading: James 4:1-2, John 13:34 NIV

We all carry an invisible box of hopes, dreams, and desires into relationships. When we hand that box to someone else it often feels like pressure—turning love into expectations and creating conflict. Envious relationships flourish when both partners choose gratitude and unconditional love, expecting nothing in return.

1. What’s in your “box”?
2. How does the shift from something you wish for to something you expect change the dynamic in a relationship?
3. This week, Brady said that expectations create a “you owe me” relationship. How have you seen that play out—in your own life, friendships, or marriage?
4. Of the three common responses to unmet expectations—leave, win, or compromise—which one do you tend to lean toward, and why?
5. Why do expectations tend to choke out gratitude and make it harder to recognize love? How can we break that cycle in our closest relationships?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Take time this week to write down what’s in your box—your personal hopes, dreams, and desires about relationships, family, money, holidays, roles, etc. Then ask yourself: “Am I expecting someone else to carry these for me?”