



MARRIAGE: THRIVING THROUGH THE SEASONS

with Steve and Barb Trader

▶ FOCUS VERSES

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

Ecclesiastes 3:1

▶ DISCUSSION

- 1. Steve and Barb were challenged early on in their marriage when they saw all their friends having children while they were struggling with infertility issues. (See *Psalm 23*.)**
 - a. Have you and your spouse ever felt like you're lacking something your friends and other couples all have?
 - b. Has it caused conflict in your relationship?
- 2. How do you typically respond when your spouse presents you with a difficult problem or negative feelings? (See *Proverbs 18:2* and *Proverbs 18:13*.)**
 - a. Do you automatically try to solve the problem, even in situations when there's really no good solution?
 - b. Think about the times you've said something like “I know how you feel”—was that true?



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- 3. Think about a time you and your spouse/family had to make a major life change.**
- How did you handle it?
 - Looking back, do you see any signs of God “providing” for you and making the transition a little easier, like Barb quickly finding a job to compensate for some of the income they lost when Steve started his ministry? *(See 2 Corinthians 9:8.)*
- 4. Steve and Barb both talk about the importance of having other couples who can serve as “prayer warriors” and whom they can turn to when they have something difficult they need to talk about. (See Proverbs 18:11 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.)**
- Do you and your spouse have any couples in your life who are like that, or are your circles of friends very separate?
 - Are there any couples you both know who could be that kind of couple if you spent more time with them and got to know them a little better?
- 5. If you have children who’ve already “left the nest,” how have your life and marriage changed since then?**
- If your children are younger, have you and your spouse given thought to how your lives and relationship will change when they’re out of the house?
 - What are the easy things in your marriage in this season?
 - What are the hard things in your marriage in this season?
- 6. Which hobbies/interests do you and your spouse share, and which ones do you keep just for yourself?**
- Do you ever feel pressured to get involved in things that your spouse likes but that you aren’t very interested in?



- b. Have you ever tried to get your spouse to like something you like but met resistance?
- c. Why was it important for you that your spouse get interested in it, and why do you think that didn't end up happening?

7. When Barb's sister died, Steve had to love Barb "the way she wanted to be loved," whether that involved him being there or not.

- a. In the wake of a family tragedy or other unfortunate life event, has your spouse ever asked you to do something or treat her a certain way that you didn't understand?
- b. In retrospect, why might she have asked you to do things that way?

8. If you've re-entered the dating world or just started dating for the first time, have you given much thought to what kind of person you're looking for?

- a. If you are divorced, do you find you are looking for someone very similar to your ex-spouse, or someone completely different?

