

# TWO ORIGINALS

Chapters 7 & 8 • Based on *The First Few Years of Marriage* by Jim Burns and Doug Fields

## THE ARC OF THIS SESSION

From a **marriage fighting each other and drifting apart** → to a **marriage that fights the fear together and pursues real intimacy**

### In One Paragraph

Every marriage has to navigate two things almost no one talks about openly: conflict and intimacy. Session 5 reframes both. Conflict, Jim and Doug argue, is rarely about the surface topic — money, chores, schedules. It’s about relational fear: the fear of being rejected, of failing, of being unwanted. When a spouse pushes a “hot button,” the awakened fear leads us to explode or implode, which triggers our spouse’s fear in turn — the “Fear Chase.” The way out is to fight the fear instead of each other and to choose forgiveness, the only response that truly heals. Intimacy follows the same logic: the sexual relationship is an emotional thermometer, and a good physical connection is usually the outcome of a good emotional one. Conflict is inevitable, the authors say, but misery is optional.

### Anchor Scriptures

*“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”*  
Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)

*“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*  
Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

*“I belong to my beloved, and my beloved is mine.”*  
Song of Songs 6:3 (NIV)

### Four Core Shifts

From	To
Fighting each other	Fighting the fear together
Exploding or imploding on autopilot	Choosing an honoring response
Repressing or holding onto offenses	Forgiving — a choice, not a feeling
Chasing physical intimacy first	Building emotional connection first

### Key Language You'll Hear Jim and Doug Use

**"Relational fear."** The real engine under most arguments — fear of rejection, failure, disconnection, or being unseen. The topic is rarely the point.

**"The Fear Chase."** The cycle where one spouse's fear-driven reaction triggers the other's, around and around. Break it by fighting the fear, not each other.

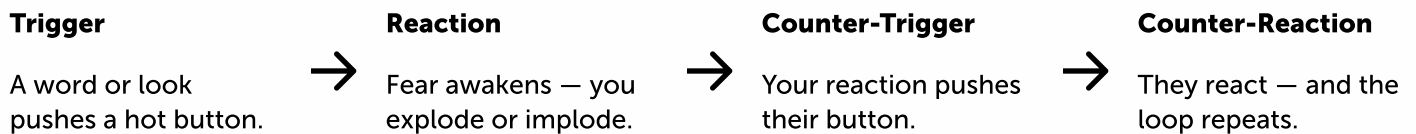
**"Explode or implode."** The two default reactions when a hot button gets pushed: attack outward, or withdraw and shut down.

**"Conflict is inevitable, but misery is optional."** Happy couples don't fight less — they've learned to resolve conflict in mature, constructive ways.

**"Emotional thermometer."** The sex life reflects the health of the whole relationship. Emotional intimacy precedes physical intimacy — "foreplay starts in the morning."

### The Fear Chase

When fear gets triggered, two people can spiral without ever touching the real issue:



Option	What it does to the marriage
Forget	Impossible for deep wounds — the hurt doesn't actually disappear.
Repress	Stuffed down, it leaks out later as dysfunction.
Hold On	Builds a self-imposed prison of resentment.
Forgive	The only option that truly heals — a choice, not a feeling.

### Story Snapshot: The Crazy Chicken

It started over a chicken order at a fast-food place after a long day — a small face, a sharp reply — and within minutes Tomas and Elena were in a cold, jaw-clenched fight about nothing. Instead of going to bed angry, they tried to find the fear under the chicken. Tomas admitted, “When you made that face, I felt like I can’t get anything right with you.” Elena said, “I went quiet because I felt like you didn’t even want to be there with me.” His fear: I’m not good enough. Hers: I’m not wanted. The chicken was never the point — it just pushed two very old buttons. Now, when a fight flares over something dumb, one of them says “this is a chicken,” and it’s the signal to stop and fight the fear instead of each other. Why it matters: name the fear, and the argument loses its power.

### Why This Session Matters

Conflict and intimacy are where marriages either deepen or quietly die. Left unexamined, the Fear Chase trains two people to wound each other in the same predictable ways, and unforgiven offenses harden into distance that drains all closeness. Session 5 gives couples a better script: see the fear beneath the fight, take full ownership of your own reaction, forgive as a deliberate choice, and rebuild emotional connection as the foundation for everything else. None of it requires your spouse to move first — which is exactly what makes it powerful.

Fight the fear, not each other. Forgive as a choice. Connect emotionally first — and don’t let the sun go down on your anger.