

GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR MARRIAGE



A Marital & Premarital Workshop

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CHAPTER ONE: God's Grand Design



1) One _____

¹“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” Psalm 127:1

2) One _____ of _____

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs^{21a} and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib^{22a} he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

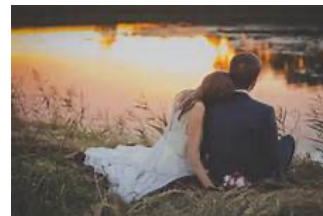
²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and holds fast to his wife, and they become one flesh.

A) _____ did _____.

B) Each spouse _____ their parent/s.

C) The _____ actually become _____.

D) _____ alone _____ (“hold fast”).



Mark 10:6-9 Jesus said: ⁶“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’⁷ ⁷‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’⁹ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

E) God’s design for marriage _____.

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of God stands forever.” Isaiah 40:8

God’s Blueprint in Genesis 2:18-24 & Mark 10:6-9

- One man and one woman as _____.
 - Marriage is about _____, not manipulation.

“A marriage bound together by commitments to exploit the other for filling one’s own needs ... can legitimately be described as a ‘tic on a dog’ relationship. Just as a hungry tic clamps on to a nourishing host in anticipation of a meal, so each partner unites with the other in the expectation of finding what his or her personal nature demands. The rather frustrating dilemma, of course, is that in such a marriage there are two tics and no dog!” (Crabb, 29)

- It’s an orientation of _____, not _____.

“Love is essentially defined in terms of preoccupation with the other’s needs.” (Crabb, 53)

- This means I am responsible for:
 - An _____ of my spouse’s needs.
 - The _____ to daily minister.
 - The _____ that God is entrusting this person to my lifelong care. (Crabb, 60-62)

“[Hence]...both partners accept an unconditional commitment to minister to the needs of the other, hoping for but never demanding reciprocal ministry.” (Crabb, 64)



Reflect Together

Are you ready to minister to your partner? How can you show it now?

CHAPTER TWO: The Foundation



A Look at God's Word

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

¹⁰ "But each one must be careful how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Matthew 7:24-27

Jesus said: ²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

1) God has already _____ the _____, the question is:

"Will you _____ it?"

"A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of marriage, giving meaning and purpose to every dimension of living." (Dobson, 50)

2) Only a marriage that is dug _____ is equipped to weather

the _____ of _____.

"My husband recently left me after fifteen years of marriage. We had a great physical, emotional, and intellectual relationship. But something was missing ... we had no spiritual bond between us. Please tell young couples that there will always be a void in their lives together without Christ. A good marriage must have its foundation in Him in order to experience lasting love, peace, and joy." ~A woman's letter to Dr. James Dobson (Dobson, 50-51)

Five Ways to Build Your Marriage on Christ



1) Become a _____ believer in Jesus Christ.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.” Mark 16:16

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38

2) _____ together.

“A recent study showed that couples who attend church together even as little as once a month increase their chances of staying married for life. Studies have also shown that churchgoers feel better about their marriages than those who don’t worship together.”

-S. T. Ortega, “Religious Homogamy and Marital Happiness,” Journal of Family Issues 2 (1988): 224-39, referenced in Parrott, 148.

- You have a unique opportunity as a couple to establish your own _____ routines and patterns together.

3) _____ together.

¹⁶ *“Is not the cup of blessing that we bless a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”*

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

4) _____ together.

⁴ *“Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*
Philippians 2:4

5) _____ together.

“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:16

“Married couples who pray together are 90% more likely to report higher satisfaction with their sex life than couples who do not pray together.” (Parrott, 151)

Reflect Together

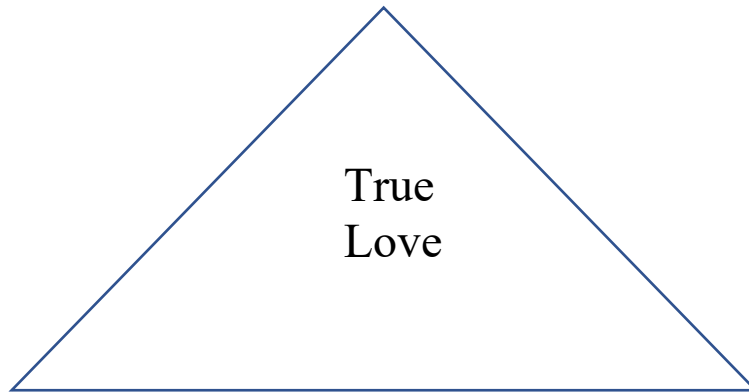
- What role would you like Jesus and the Bible's teachings to play in your marriage?
- What worship habits do you hope to form in this relationship?
- When was the last time the two of you prayed together?
- Prayers of: thanksgiving; for each other's faith; yourself as a Christian spouse; health; and for all your needs, etc.
- Ask: "How can I pray for you today?"

CHAPTER THREE: The Framing



I. What is love?

[Dr. Robert Sternberg, Psychologist, Yale University, quoted in Parrott, 37-40]



“Three doctors who studies six thousand marriages and three thousand divorces concluded, ‘There may be nothing more important in a marriage than a determination that it shall persist. With such a determination, individuals force themselves to adjust and to accept situations which would seem sufficient grounds for a breakup, if continuation of the marriage were not the prime objective.’ Commitment is the mortar that holds the stones of marriage in place.” (Parrott, 55)

A Closer Look at your Wedding Vows:

“I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy will; and I pledge to you my faithfulness.”

“A friend loves at all times.” Proverbs 17:17a

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son....” John 3:16

“The success of marriage comes not in finding the ‘right’ person, but in the ability of both partners to adjust to the real person they inevitably realize they married.” ~John Fischer

One True Story

- In 2001, Keith & Mary Korstjens had already been married for more than 40 years. Shortly after their honeymoon in 1957, Mary was stricken with polio and became a quadriplegic. The doctors informed her that she would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life. It was a devastating development, but Keith never wavered in his commitment to Mary. For all these years he has bathed and dressed her, carried her to and from her bed, taken her to the bathroom, brushed her teeth, and combed her hair. Obviously, Keith could have divorced Mary and looked for a new, healthier wife, but he never even considered it.

[Dr. James Dobson's Bulletin, February 2001]

NOTE: Not just big tragedies, but even _____, when accumulated over time, can threaten your marriage. There'll be times when you don't feel love for your spouse; emotions shift. There'll be times of blandness when you can only generate a yawn for each other. Yet in every season, what will keep your marriage going? (Dobson, 54-55)

How to cultivate physical affection in your marriage:

- Practice meaningful _____.
- Plan mutually enjoyable _____.
- _____ each other daily.

How to cultivate emotional intimacy in your marriage:

- Spend _____ together; don't stop _____!
- Truly listen to each other's _____; share hearts, not just _____.
- _____ one another's imperfections.

How to cultivate commitment in your marriage:

- Prize your partner's _____.
- Minister to each other's _____.



"Love is like a tennis match; you'll never win consistently until you learn to serve well."

~Dan P. Herod

- Mean your _____.

(Adapted from Parrott, 50-56)

II. How to Keep Love Burning

Dr. Dorothy Tennov concluded that “the honeymoon” lasts from six months to three years.
(Chapman, 30)

“...refuse to settle for distant parallel lives in a functional but cold, lonely marriage.”
(Driscoll, 210)

“Love never ends.” 1 Corinthians 13:8a

Learn to speak each other’s primary _____ language!

“We give and receive love differently.” (Parrott, 41)

The 5 Love Languages (by Gary Chapman)

- Words of Affirmation
- Quality Time
- Receiving Gifts
- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch



“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11

Answer: “I feel most loved by you when _____.” (Chapman, 68)

“Love is a choice and cannot be coerced.... Each of us must decide daily to love or not to love our spouses.” (Chapman, 100)

- One way I will speak your primary love language this week is...

CHAPTER FOUR: The Dining Room – Communication



A Look at Scripture

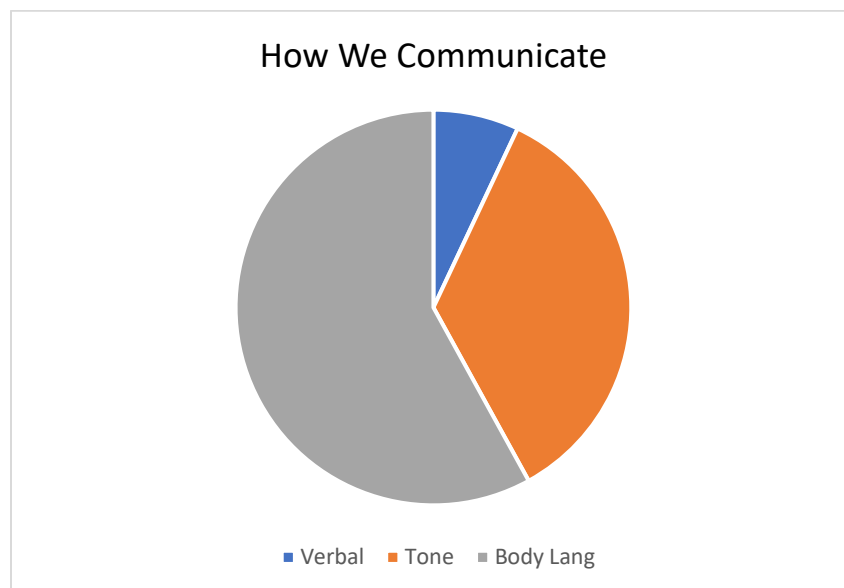
“Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”
Proverbs 16:24

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”
Proverbs 19:21

²⁹*“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up, as it fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”*
Ephesians 4:29

_____% of problems between a husband and wife are communication based. (Garwood, 43)

“Whether a marriage sinks or swims depends on how well partners send and receive messages, how well they say what they mean and understand what they hear.” (Parrott, 78)



Five Levels of Communication

- 1) Clichés - Hi, how are you? Have a nice day.
- 2) Facts – It's cold in here. Go Cubs/Sox.
- 3) Ideas/Opinions – I think our relationship is good.
- 4) _____ – I love you. That comment really hurt me.
- 5) _____ – Could you just hold me? I need you to just listen.



Seven Tips for Healthy Communication

- 1) Both must learn _____ to improve the relationship.
 - 2) Practice Reflective _____ – “What I hear you saying is...”
 - _____% of good communication is listening. (Parrott, 88)
- “Let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak.” ~James 1:19*
- Reflective listening lets your partner know that you’ve heard what they’ve said and that you understand their message. (Parrott, 89)
- 3) Listen with the goal of _____, not _____.
 - 4) Replace _____-Statements with _____-Statements
 - NOT: “You always/never...”
 - BUT: “I feel neglected when you spend the evening on your phone.”
 - XYZ Formula: “In situation X, when you said/did Y, I felt Z.”
 - 5) Remember: Guys = R _____; Gals = R _____
(According to linguistics expert Deborah Tannan)
 - 6) Be _____: willing to _____ and _____.
 - 7) Apply _____, genuineness, and _____.

“Love is patient and kind.... it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.... Love bears all things...endures all things.” 1 Cor. 13:4-7

Reflect Together

- How would you describe communication patterns growing up?
- How does this affect the way you communicate now?
- What are some positive ways that you communicate?
- What are some negative ways that you communicate?
- When was the last time you mis-communicated about a simple thing?
Why do you think communication broke down between you?

CHAPTER FIVE: The Kitchen – Conflict



Three Kinds of Marriages

- 1) _____ -to- _____ - “faking it” at best
- 2) _____ -to- _____ - functioning
- 3) _____ -to- _____ - flourishing (Driscoll, 33)

Divorce Busting

- In the 1930s, 1 in ___ marriages ended in divorce.
- In the 1960s, 1 in ___ marriages ended in divorce.
- In the 2000s, 1 in ___ marriages end in divorce. (Parrott, 14)

Every good marriage has _____, yet every disagreement presents an opportunity for _____ or _____. (Driscoll, 78)

Some Sources of Conflict

- Unspoken _____.
 - No dirty dishes in the sink; don't talk about your feelings; leave the butter out; don't drive fast; birthdays are a big deal; no laundry on bedroom floors, etc.
- Unconscious _____.
 - The planner, shopper, comedian, cleaner, navigator, money manager, cook, gift-buyer.
- Unrealistic _____.
 - Are you expecting your spouse to play a specific script in your marriage or to live up to certain expectations?
- Unmet _____.
 - Where will you live after you're married?
 - Both work? For how long?
 - Hoping for children? How soon? How many? How far apart?
 - How will the children be disciplined? Fed? Bathed?
 - What church will you attend?
 - Are there theological/religious differences to be reckoned with?
 - How will your roles vary?
 - How will you respond to each other's in-laws?
 - Where will you spend Thanksgiving and Christmas?
 - How will financial decisions be made? Who will keep track?
 - How will you relate to each other's friends?
 - What expectations do you have for your fiancé?
 - How will cooking, cleaning, grocery-ing, etc. get done?

Important Questions

- What hot topics have surfaced already? What patterns do you detect? Themes? Repeats?
- How did your home/parents handle conflict?
 - Yell, blame, pout, sarcasm, avoidance, cry, threat, slam, throw, other?
- Do you have a tendency to interrupt the conversation before the other person finishes; raise your voice and begin shouting; be verbally aggressive; quickly angered; use cruel/defensive words; appease; tune-out; stop listening; avoid talking about the issue?
- Have you been open and honest about your baggage?
 - Dangerous habits? Past relationships? Traumatic events?



The Four Horsemen (by Dr. John Gottman, University of Washington)

- 1) _____ belittling remarks/putdowns that attack the person vs. the problem
- 2) _____ name calling, hostile humor, mockery that psychologically abuse your partner and lead one to actually despise the other person
- 3) _____ excusing one's behavior, blaming the other, playing the victim, refusing to take responsibility in the matter. *"It's not my fault. If you hadn't..."*
- 4) _____ one or both shutdown, w/draw, tune out, disengage and begin to distance themselves physically and emotionally from the other.

"When words are many, sin is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."
Proverbs 10:19

"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Proverbs 15:1

"Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly." Proverbs 14:29

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

Wisdom to Defuse and Work Through Conflict



1. Deal with it _____!
“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Ephesians 4:26-27
2. Choose your battles carefully.
3. Separate the _____ from the _____.
 - Ask: What is bothering me? When did this begin? What is it that I’m feeling?
4. Initiate a _____ to _____.
- 5.
6. Try to feel and understand _____.
7. Uncover the “_____” – define it clearly.
 - **What are we really quarreling about here/the source of our disagreement?
 - 1) Money: values, priorities, spending, power/control? 4) Children: roles? Goals?
 - 2) Sex: unmet needs, past baggage, communication? 5) Work stress
 - 3) In-laws: loyalty, expectations, etc.? 6) House work
8. _____ and _____ the intensity of your feelings.
 - Remember to use I-Statements and the XYZ Formula so that neither gets hurt.
 1. I’m not enthusiastic, but it’s no big deal to me.
 2. I don’t see it the way you do, but I may be wrong.
 3. I don’t agree, but I can live with it.
 4. I don’t agree, but I’ll let you have your way.
 5. I don’t agree and cannot remain silent on this.
 6. I do not approve, and I need more time.
 7. I strongly disapprove and cannot go along with it.
 8. I will be so seriously upset I can’t predict my reaction.
 9. No possible way! If you do, I quit!
 10. Over my dead body!
8. Own your _____ of the _____.
 - Extend sincere apologies and forgiveness!
9. Establish a specific _____ to move forward together.
 - I commit to ____ (what) by ____ (when).
10. Have Regular Sit-downs Together
 - What are you concerned about?
 - What do you wish?
 - What can we do about this?



Reflect Together

- Do you know what's "off-limits" during an argument?
- Are you able to admit you're wrong? Describe the last time you admitted you were wrong.
- What are your current strengths/grow-areas with conflict?
 - Do you raise your voices during a disagreement?
 - Does the argument turn into a shouting match?
 - How could you prevent this?
 - During a disagreement, does either of you become silent and avoid talking about the issue?
- What conflict/s have you already constructively worked through that you can celebrate and use as a model moving forward?

Remember, it takes _____ to each other AND the marriage to make it work!



CHAPTER SIX: The Garage – Forgiveness



A Look at Scripture

³¹ “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:31-32

How much has God in Jesus Christ forgiven you your sins?

Forgiveness is NOT denying, diminishing, managing, excusing, or blame-shifting my sin or my spouse’s sin!

Six A-s of Confession

- 1) A _____ the person/s involved
- 2) A _____ specifically
- 3) A _____ the hurt
- 4) A _____ the consequences
- 5) A _____ for forgiveness.
- 6) A _____ the behavior



[www.peacemaker.net]

Four Promises of Forgiveness

- 1) I will not _____ on this incident.
- 2) I will not bring up this incident again or _____ you.
- 3) I will not _____ others regarding this incident.
- 4) I will not let this incident _____ us or hinder our personal relationship. [www.peacemaker.net]

¹⁴ “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” ~Jesus, Matthew 6:14-15



CHAPTER SEVEN: The Laundry Room “Roles & Responsibilities”

Male/Female Roles in Marriage

Based upon your distinctive family backgrounds and previous marital relationships, you and your partner will come into this marriage with many unspoken ideas for how a family should operate. In particular, each of you has an idea of how the husband and wife roles, respectively, are to be played out. Your unveiled pictures of these roles—often flowing from your idea of gender differences—are a reflection of how we did it in our home, or how a parent/s may have modeled life for you.

The following list contains common household and life management tasks.

- 1) Work through them in an honest fashion.
- 2) Compare your answers with your partner’s responses.
- 3) Where you have a different opinion, try to work toward a solution acceptable to both of you, and then indicate your joint decision.

****The Key is a sense of _____ and _____ !!!****

Household: Who will do the following?

Wash windows	Service vehicles
Plan the menu	Sort mail
Grocery shop	Make phone calls
Cook	Home repair
Set/clear table	Remodel
Clean up kitchen	Home maintenance
Load/unload dishwasher	Redecorate
Take out trash/recycling	Pick furniture
Do laundry/fold/put away	Yard work
Vacuum	Plan travel
Clean: sweep/mop/dust/wipe down	Get ready for guests
Make beds	Work on photos/albums
Straighten/rearrange	Equipment maintenance

Finances: Who will do the following?

- Pay the bills
- Balance checkbook
- Determine spending priorities
- Invest
- Retirement planning
- Will/Estate Planning
- Plan major purchases
- Set up/maintain accounts
- Taxes

Children: Who will do the following?

- Decide "when"
- Buy gifts
- Buy/organize clothes
- Take to school/daycare
- Pick up from school/daycare
- Meals
- Hygiene
- Well visits/sick visits
- Dental
- Help with homework
- Stay home when sick
- Teacher conferences
- Birthday parties
- Lessons
- Discipline

In-Laws:

- Call in-laws
- Visit in-laws
- Set boundaries with in-laws
- Entertain in-laws
- Coordinate events with them
- Purchase gifts for
- Plan events with

Relationship/Communication

- Plan vacations/getaways
- Schedule dates
- Hold the remote
- Make decisions
- Ask about the day
- Initiate cuddle
- Pick movies
- Decide worship day/time
- Choose restaurants
- Keep a monthly calendar
- Schedule time with friends
- Hobbies
- Fitness
- Recreation
- Control hot/cold settings

[Adapted from Dr. John Gottman]

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Master Bedroom “Godly Sex”



A Look at Scripture

²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”* Genesis 1:28

♥ What was God’s first command to Adam and Eve?

¹⁸ *“Rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ A lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.”* Proverbs 5:18-19

Song of Solomon 4:1-7 (the husband describes his wife’s body)

Song of Solomon 5:10-16 (the wife describes her husband’s body)

“Take a good look at male and female anatomy and it becomes obvious that we were crafted to ‘fit’ together.” ~Dr. James Dobson, 38.

What’s God’s design for sexual oneness/intercourse?

²² *“Then the Lord God made a woman ... and brought her to the man. ²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”*
Genesis 2:22, 24

⁴ *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”* Hebrews 13:4

Marred by Sin

1) Pornography – the Silent Killer

- Porn is not about love, romance, empathy, respect ... there’s no holding hands, kissing, snuggling, going on dates.
- Porn reduces the other to an object of personal gratification: “use ‘em & lose ‘em.”
- Porn creates neural paths that get wider and take deeper root with each exposé.
- Porn Impotence – some men have such a porn rut hardwired into their brains that they can no longer maintain an erection and make love to their wives without it.
(Driscoll, 140-154)

²⁸ *“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” ~Jesus, Matthew 5:28*

“Do not deny the truth because it is embarrassing. Do not minimize the truth as if it were no big deal. Do not normalize the truth as if it were okay because it is so common. Do not rationalize the truth with excuses like “It’s not as bad as adultery” or “I’ve got it under control.” Do not celebrate it as a freedom when it is in fact slavery.... If your history includes such things as porn, the worst thing you can do is bring along your spouse on your path to death by having her or him watch porn with you, tolerate you watching porn alone, or re-lusting porn images in your mind when together. Instead, the two of you need to carve a new path together.” (Driscoll, 152-54)

“The weapons of our warfare...have divine power to destroy strongholds.” 2 Cor. 10:4

2) Sexual Abuse

- 1 in ____ women & 1 in ____ men (Driscoll, 123; MinistrySafe)

“Abused people may experience many feelings, including anger, shame, fear, confusion, condemnation, despair, anxiety, decreased sex drive, panic attacks, sleep disturbance, denial, guilt, and embarrassment.” (Driscoll, 131)

-Is there anything you need to disclose to your spouse? Professional help is available.

Concealment from your spouse hampers intimacy and prolongs the journey of healing; it can also prevent you from allowing your spouse to get close.

“The LORD is near to all who call on Him.” Psalm 145:14

3) Cohabitation

- Couples that cohabit before marriage increase their odds of divorce by 50 percent. Researchers found that only 15 out of every 100 cohabitating couples were married after a decade. (University of Wisconsin)
- One-sixth of cohabiting couples stay together for only three years; one in ten survives five or more years.
- Cohabiting men are four times more likely to be unfaithful than husbands.
- Cohabitation leads to unhappier marriages. (National Council on Family Relations)
- Cohabitants do not experience the best sex. (Dr. Evelyn Duvall and Dr. Judson Landis; Family Research Council)
- The poverty rate among children of cohabiting couples is fivefold greater than the rate among children in married-couple households. Children ages 12–17 with cohabiting parents are six times more likely to exhibit emotional and behavioral problems and 122 percent more likely to be expelled from school. (2007 New Oxford Review, Dr. A. Patrick Schneider II)
- For US children up to 12, the breakup rate in cohabitating homes is 170% higher than married ones. (Newsweek, August 2011)

Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” Luke 11:28*

If THE GOAL is a till-death union, and God's Word (and modern research) reveal that the single best thing you can do now to make that happen is NOT to cohabit, then are you willing to honor God's design and give your marriage the best chance to last before it even starts?

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." Lamentations 3:22-23

⁹ *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* 1 John 1:9



More About Sexual Intimacy

Men focus on the _____; women focus on the _____.

You have a lifetime to enjoy each other, so don't _____ too much too soon or _____ too much too soon. (Dobson, 86)

God's desire for marital intimacy is a monogamous, loving, caring, romantic, mutually satisfying sexual union – settle for nothing less, but don't expect to achieve this on your honeymoon. (Dobson, 92)

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal (married) rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Reflect Together

- How will you respect your/your spouse's sexual drive?
- What boundaries does Scripture give to both enjoy and contain sexual passion?
- What does it mean in marriage that your bodies belong to each other?
- Why should you not deprive one another sexually in marriage?



CHAPTER NINE: The Living Room “Gender Differences & Dealing with Stress”

“Male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27

“But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female.” ~Jesus, Mark 10:6

Men are motivated by _____, women by _____.
(Parrott, 104)

Men enjoy _____ with wives; women enjoy ____ - _____
with their husbands.

Confession of a Husband

“I, like most men, didn’t feel the need to have lengthy discussions about our relationship. I was content to know that she loved me, I loved her, and that we were on our way to a happy life together. What’s to discuss?” ~Les Parrot, 103

A Wife’s Most Basic Needs

- 1) To be _____
- 2) To be _____
- 3) To be _____ (Parrott, 105-110)

“Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.” Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”
Ephesians 5:25

A Husband’s Most Basic Needs

- 1) To be _____
- 2) To have _____
- 3) To enjoy _____ (Parrott, 115)

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Colossians 3:18

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church.... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.” Ephesians 5:22-24

“You have no idea how damaging a critical statement is to your man’s personal power. He responds to not being admired the same way you do when he invalidates your feelings. It is demoralizing.” ~Leslie Parrott, 111

Reflect Together

- From these verses, what other relationship is marriage symbolic of? In what ways?
- Men: how do you feel about God’s standards for husbands?
- Women: how about the standards for wives? In practical terms, what does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? Does submission mean that a wife can never say “no” to her husband?
- How does the modern-day view of marriage compare to these passages?
- What have you admired about your grandparents’, parents’, or another couples’ marriage?

CHAPTER TEN: The Study – Finances



A Look at God's Word

⁹ "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;
¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."
Proverbs 3:9-10

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters, for ... he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Matthew 6:24

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

Why are Finances So Important?

____% of couples seeking divorce state the focus of their disagreement is money. (Dobson, 71)

Sound Financial Wisdom



- 1) Be very disciplined with _____.
- 2) By all means: _____.
- 3) Live _____ your _____ - spend less than you earn and save/invest the rest.
 - 10-10-80 Rule or even 10-10-10-70 Rule
- 4) Use the _____ - _____ System.
- 5) Try _____.

³⁸ "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." ~Jesus, Luke 6:38

6) _____!

"Money is either the best area of communication in a marriage or it is the worst."
(Dobson, 71)

7) Consider taking Financial _____ . (Dave Ramsey)

“Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we can’t take anything out of it. Therefore, if we have food and clothing we will be content. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin...for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Reflect Together

- 1) Are you comfortable with the amount of savings and income you’ll have as a couple?
- 2) Have you been transparent with your debt-load?
- 3) Are you going to maintain joint savings and checking accounts?
Why or why not?
- 4) Who is going to manage your finances? One or both of you?
- 5) How are your shopping, spending, and saving styles the same?
How are they different?
- 6) How will you decide and communicate purchases?
- 7) Prepare a monthly budget together, talking about goals for tithing, savings, and retirement.



Basic Budget

INCOME

Job One	\$ _____
Job Two	\$ _____
Additional	\$ _____
Total Income	\$ _____

OUTGOING

Tithing/Giving	\$ _____
Savings (bank, retirement, etc.)	\$ _____
Loans (college, personal, 2 nd mortgage)	\$ _____
Credit Card Debt	\$ _____
Child Support	\$ _____
Insurance (health, life)	\$ _____
Housing (rent or mortgage plus taxes & insurance)	\$ _____
Home Maintenance/Repair/Upkeep	\$ _____
Services (yard, snowplow)	\$ _____
Gas	\$ _____
Electric	\$ _____
Water	\$ _____
Sewer	\$ _____
Trash/Waste	\$ _____
Phone	\$ _____
Cable	\$ _____
Internet	\$ _____
Car Payment One	\$ _____
Car Payment Two	\$ _____
Auto Insurance	\$ _____
Tolls	\$ _____
Auto Maintenance/Repairs	\$ _____
Gasoline	\$ _____
Groceries	\$ _____
Clothing/Cosmetics	\$ _____
Entertainment (dining out, movies, memberships)	\$ _____
Vacation	\$ _____
Christmas Presents	\$ _____
Personal Allowance	\$ _____
Pet Care/Supplies	\$ _____
Miscellaneous	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Total Outgoing	\$ _____

+ or - _____

CHAPTER ELEVEN: The Fence – Boundaries



Affair-Proofing Your Marriage

1) Don't live _____.

"There is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins."

Ecclesiastes 7:20

2) Stay clear of _____ relationships.

"Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house." Proverbs 5:8

3) Never be _____ with someone of the opposite gender.

"Keep your heart with all vigilance.... Ponder the path of your feet." Proverbs 4:23-26

"Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well." Proverbs 5:15

4) Be completely honest and transparent with electronic communication
– social media, texts, emails, etc.

5) Turn _____ into friends: those who pull for your marriage!

Common Marriage Erode-ers

1) Over-commitment and exhaustion.

2) Excessive credit, spending, and debt issues.

3) Selfishness.

4) Interference from in-laws.

5) Unrealistic expectations.

6) Substance abuse and addictions, including porn and gambling.

7) Excessive hours at work.

8) Other? _____

"Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom." Song of Solomon 2:15

Boundaries with Both Families

1) T _____

2) M _____

3) W _____

4) H _____

5) H _____

**The KEY: A U _____ F _____

Reflect Together

- Why do you think romance typically declines in marriage?
How will you handle this in your marriage?
- How are each of you going to “affair-proof” your marriage?
- What “fence” or “fences” have you put up around your relationship already?
- What “fence” or “fences” do you need to establish as a couple?
Which will be the hardest or take the most work?



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COUPLE INFORMATION

How did you meet and how long have you been together?

What excites you about marriage?

What concerns you about marriage?

What role do you see Christ, faith, and worship playing in your marriage?

Other than love, what do you see as the most important component of a lasting marriage?