

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 1: THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE**

# THINK.

**We never intended to scare the engaged couple, but that is exactly what happened.**

Their faces said it all. No longer were they excited about the prospect of marriage, but they were frightened concerning the impending storm awaiting them. In perfect tandem, my wife and I sat across the table and barraged them with all the possible marriage landmines awaiting them after the honeymoon.

As soon as I finished warning them concerning traps regarding sexual intimacy, she hit them with the dangers of financial missteps, and then I explained how in-laws can become outlaws very quickly. We continued until they were up against the ropes too exhausted to maintain their defenses. We had experienced in our own marriage and in other marriages how issues can quickly onslaught a couple, and we were going to enlighten these young whippersnappers in order to heighten their senses.

After we removed the blinders from this young couple concerning unrealistic marital expectations, we calmly reassured them,

**“Don’t forget – next to salvation, marriage is the greatest gift God will ever give you.”**

They just stared in disbelief. While they didn’t admit it, I had a suspicious feeling that they thought we were a couple of lunatics who lied to them concerning our "Christianese" conclusion.

As we drove off that night, we realized we needed to work on our delivery. We did not change the content of our counsel but we did change the order of our counsel. We still address the same issues but tackle them in a different way. Next to salvation, marriage *is* the greatest gift God gives us, but if not careful, we can mishandle this glorious offering from the Lord.

## Preparing for Marriage

I have been privileged to officiate many wedding ceremonies in my time as a pastor. I feel the weight of such a pivotal and precious responsibility. While I try to share as much information as possible during premarital counseling sessions, I always want to give more.

In one sense, you are never prepared for marriage. On my wedding day, I woke up in my empty house and thought, "I can't get married. I still like to play video games." Certain aspects of marriage must be learned via experience. Books and podcasts can only teach you so much, but once you are married, you begin to earn advanced degrees or flunk out at rapid rates. In many regards, you won't be fully prepared for marriage until you are married.

In another sense, you *must* prepare yourself for marriage. Every effort invested in preparation will reap extreme benefits for you and your spouse.

**If experience is the only teacher for marital bliss, then all marriages are doomed for failure.**

I simply refuse to believe that. You must be aware of the potential marital strife without causing it to handicap your initial efforts. There is a fine line between awareness and fear but it is important to determine it.

Experience is not the greatest teacher. God is the greatest teacher. If God created marriage, we should assume that his perspective would be superior to the perspective of any other. Rejoice that he has not kept his perspective quiet. He has provided his thoughts in the Bible. Scripture is promised to make us complete and mature, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). What is the greatest way to equip for marriage? God has promised that the Bible will help us know what a right marriage looks like and how to obtain it. This is a

good work, and thanks be to God, we know his perspective on how to discover it.

As I think through components that helped new marriages thrive, many of them worked on four key areas during the engagement.

- 1 Work on Sanctification for God's Glory and Your Fiancé's Benefit.** Sanctification means that you are growing in Christ. It is the process of becoming more like him (Rom. 6:18; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 2:20; 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Phil. 1:6). Your fiancé will benefit if you are more like Jesus. What are you currently doing to draw closer to Jesus?
- 2 Prepare More for the Marriage Than the Wedding.** Once engaged, most couples use the majority of their time together planning details for a 25-minute service and a 90-minute party while neglecting to cultivate the union that should last for a lifetime. You won't enjoy the photo album of that day if the marriage it represents goes down in flames. Commit to working on the details, but carve out time where you nurture the relationship during your engagement. Don't miss the one to whom you are engaged during the engagement. Make your desire for each other (Song of Sol. 7:10) and not just a good ceremony.
- 3 Surround Yourself with Friends Who Love Marriage.** If all of the influential people in your life are negative about marriage, your perspective will change (Ps. 1:1; Prov. 13:20). I recommend that you join a discipleship group within your church as individuals or as a couple that will help spur you on to love and good deeds during this time (Heb. 10:24-25). If you choose a co-ed group, ensure that you have some outside accountability (Prov. 27:17) to protect yourselves from sin that can easily beset you during engagement (Heb. 12:1).
- 4 Learn from an Older Couple Whose Love Is Evident.** Scripture commands for older generations to teach the younger generations (Titus 2:3-5; Ps. 145:4; 2 Tim. 2:2; Ps.

71:18; 1 Cor. 11:1). Oftentimes, our churches segregate age divisions to all of our detriment. Find a couple who has been married for a while and are obviously still thrilled by the union. Avoid older naysayers who demean their spouses in public. Seek out a couple who love marriage like Jesus loves marriage and take them out for dinner. Ask them questions and glean insight from their wisdom.

All of these four steps honestly come down to working on four relationships:

1. Jesus
2. Fiancé
3. Friend
4. Mentor

If you are preparing for marriage, I pray you begin to focus in on cultivating these relationships.

**Marriage is a great gift. Work hard so you can enjoy it fully.**

# OPEN.

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. Think of a couple you know who has been married for a long time. What are some characteristics that make that marriage stand out to you? What are some characteristics you admire in him as a husband and in her as a wife?
2. List some differences between an average marriage and a great marriage.
3. How differently would marriages look if couples began to see marriage and commitment through the eyes of God's Word rather than through the eyes of society?
4. How would you answer the question: What is God's purpose in creating marriage?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. Marriage is a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ public, legal agreement between a man and a woman to share part of your life with the other person.
  
2. God's \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage is for one man and one woman to come together until \_\_\_\_\_ would separate them.
  
3. Marriage is first and foremost a \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
4. You not only love this person but you \_\_\_\_\_ this person.
  
5. One day after you are married, you will \_\_\_\_\_ out of like with that person.
  
6. Marriage is not about \_\_\_\_\_ .

7. The power to keep that commitment in marriage is the power of the .

8. The gospel is all about .

GOD -

REBELLION -

ATONEMENT -

CONVERSION -

ETERNAL LIFE -

9. The gospel shows how to use what I used to make about and make it about .



10. The gospel reminds us that we have been .

11. Marriage is a of the gospel.

## **DISCUSS.**

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. What is the difference in falling out of like and falling out of love?
2. It has been said that “marriage is really a reenactment of the gospel.” What does the power of the gospel have to do with the success of your marriage?
3. If marriage was created for God and by God, do you believe God has the ultimate authority over your marriage? How so?
4. How does the gospel story help you stay committed for life and help you keep your wedding vows?
5. Genesis is the beginning of God’s story. On your wedding day, you and your spouse will begin a new story as well. How does

inviting God into your story change everything about your story together?

6. How does the power of the Gospel make your marriage a story within God's much larger story?

## APPLY.

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Answer the questionnaire separately. Just answer the "Me" column. After completion, share your answers with each other and compare for fun.
2. Discuss your similarities and differences, likes and dislikes, and answers to the questions. Share some way you believe God can use you together for his Kingdom purposes.

	Me	Fiancé
<b>Favorite season</b>		
<b>Favorite sports Team</b>		
<b>Favorite snack</b>		

	Me	Fiancé
<b>Favorite book of the Bible</b>		
<b>Favorite sport to play</b>		
<b>Favorite type of music</b>		
<b>Favorite restaurant</b>		
<b>Favorite movie</b>		
<b>Beach or mountains?</b>		
<b>City or country?</b>		
<b>Morning or night person?</b>		
<b>Organized or messy?</b>		
<b>Healthy or junk food?</b>		
<b>Movies or books?</b>		
<b>Would you bungee jump?</b>		
<b>Other than your fiancé, who do you call or text the most?</b>		
<b>First thing you notice about people</b>		
<b>Greatest strength</b>		
<b>Greatest weakness</b>		

	Me	Fiancé
<b>What musical instruments do you play?</b>		
<b>How old were you and where were you when you became a Christian?</b>		
<b>What is your ideal date?</b>		
<b>What trait do you most admire in others?</b>		
<b>What trait really irritates you in others?</b>		
<b>What is a time waster?</b>		
<b>Something your fiancé might be surprised about you</b>		
<b>How has God gifted you for the work of the Kingdom?</b>		

3. What is one thing that you learned from Session 1 that made an impact on your view of marriage?

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 2: SUITABLE HELPER**

# THINK.

To say that God and Adam were close is an understatement. Adam experienced a level of intimacy in the Garden that no other human has ever fully experienced. There was no sin. There was no separation. There was no Fall, curse, or corrupt nature. God strolled through the Garden that Adam tilled. We are talking face to face, eye to eye, life to life interaction.

And yet, amidst this intimacy, God says one of the most shocking statements concerning the only creature he formed in his very image: “It is *not* good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). The rolling rivers were good. The berries on the tree were good. The curiously formed duckbilled platypuses were good, and yet Man, made in God’s own striking image, was not good.

Adam was alone.

Genesis 2:18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make a helper fit for him.”

Pre-Fall, God believes that his creation, Adam, who he is walking and talking with in the Garden is simply alone and he dislikes the scenario so much that he does something about it. Scanning the animal kingdom, it is obvious that the hippopotamuses and the likes are unable to make a good helper for one that was replicated from the image of the LORD. Instead of giving something that is already created, he gives Adam something new and unique and beautiful.

God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, procures one of Adam’s ribs that he gave him, and fashioned something similar to him yet with striking distinctions (Gen. 2:21-22). As Adam wakes from his slumber, he beholds a woman for the first time, and he is quite giddy with the Garden’s recent development. The couple was both naked

and yet unashamed (Gen. 2:25). The two of them together became one.

As this relationship buds, they are not described as a pair, couple, or a team. They are one. Linked together physically, sexually, spiritually, and emotionally, these two entered into a unique covenant that should be shared with no other.

As Creator, God reveals himself early on as able to do anything he desires. If he can make the galaxies upon galaxies by mere words dancing from his lips, he should be able to meet the simple needs of this Adam creature.

Yet, while apparently he could meet Adam's need for loneliness, he decides not to meet that need solely by himself.

He creates Eve ("woman") to be a helper for Adam. They will be one together. While they were both made to enjoy the fellowship with the LORD, he has also purposed that they enjoy the fellowship with one another. They can relate to one another. While God will prove time and time again to empathize with Mankind throughout Creation's harrowing story, he also provides a helper for Adam in order to navigate through this good place in which he has landed.

Walking face to face with God in the Garden of Eden, God deemed that Adam was alone. He needed a helper. But in this sinless utopia, what exactly did Adam need help with? To determine that, we need to see what did Adam have before he had Eve.

## **1. Relationship with God**

Adam had a relationship with God.

Before Adam had a relationship with Eve, he had a relationship with God. Therefore, the relationship with the first takes precedence over the second.

If you are looking for a life-partner, you need to ensure this person helps you grow closer in your relationship to the Lord. If you are dating someone right now, you need to ask this question:

**Is the person I am interested in more of a helper or a hindrance in my relationship with God?**

In a great relationship, the two can serve as accountability by sharpening one another (Prov. 27:17) and encouraging each other to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:25).

## **2. Role from God**

Adam had a role given to him from God.

Adam's job was to take care of the garden God had planted (Gen. 2:15) and to name the animals (Gen. 2:19). This calling (vocation, purpose, role) was given to him by God. Therefore, anyone who was to help Adam was to help him in fulfilling God's calling on his life.

If you are interested in dating or marrying someone, ensure that he or she can help you fulfill God's calling on your life.

Too often I see people walk away from what God has called them due to a romantic infatuation with another.

I understand you may like someone or love someone, but if God has called you to something, make sure that person helps you fulfill that.

Before you pick your traveling companion for life, make sure you two are heading in the same direction.

## **3. Rule from God**

Adam had a rule given to him by God.

God allowed Adam to eat from all types of trees but one (Gen. 2:17).

God gave this command to Adam, and he was to share it with his bride.



A God-given companion should help you fight temptation and obey God. A God-given companion should help you follow God's commandments more than his or her wishes. Does the person you are interested in help you obey or disobey? I am not talking about perfection, but is there a desire for holiness and obedience?

## **Suitable Helper**

God has placed a void in our heart that he alone can fill, but this passage reveals that he has also placed a void in our hearts that he chooses not to fill.

He designed us to need a helper.

This helper who is like Adam is someone who can identify with his hurts, his weaknesses, his insecurities, and all of his successes and failures. While God would love Adam and provide an example for Adam, God knew that Adam was going to need someone beside him that was like him. God is so not like us, we needed someone to walk beside us to help follow him.

The temptation is to ask if your fiancé or spouse is a suitable helper to you.

**The more pertinent question is are you a suitable helper for him or her?**

Instead of looking at their issues today, what would happen if you sought to be a better helper to your spouse? How could you help your spouse today – physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

## **OPEN.**

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. As the wedding day approaches, couples can become far more focused on planning the one-time wedding event than on preparing for the actual marriage relationship. What are some ways you can take advantage of your engagement time and begin now planning for your lifetime together as husband and wife?
2. How can these things result in making the wedding day even more significant and memorable?
3. The statistics of divorce among both Christians and non-Christians continually rise. What does an example of a beautiful, strong, and godly marriage offer to the world?
4. How does a biblical marriage honor God?
5. How does a biblical marriage honor your spouse?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. God's very nature is \_\_\_\_\_ so it makes sense that all of his creations would be \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In \_\_\_\_\_, we see a quick glance at Creation week.
3. In \_\_\_\_\_, God allows us behind the scenes on day six to give us greater insight on the Creation of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Man is the only creation that is made in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
5. Man is the only creation that God describes as not good because it is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Before sin corrupts Mankind, God walks with Adam and still says he is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. No other created thing was deemed \_\_\_\_\_ enough to help Adam.

8. To meet the needs of Adam, God designed something completely unique – a .

9. This “helper” will supply strength in what is for the one being “helped.”

10. This helper is like him but not exactly the as him.

11. This helper is not meant to him but to him.

12. How to Help:

#1.

#2.

#3.

# DISCUSS.

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. God could have met all of Adam's needs by himself. Why do you think God chose not to meet all of Adam's needs without Eve's help?
2. How does cultivating a deeper relationship with God lead to a deeper relationship with your spouse?
3. God created man and woman of flesh and blood, yet He made them separately and uniquely. He intentionally created them with their own spiritual, physical, and emotional needs and personalities. How can these differences cause friction in a marriage?
4. How can these differences compliment one another in a marriage?
5. A spouse either helps or hinders. Name some attitudes or actions that hinder rather than help a spouse in his/her relationship with God.

6. How does this ultimately hinder the growth and maturity of a marriage?
7. How can a couple accomplish even more for the Kingdom of God when they work together than when they work separately?

## **APPLY.**

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Share with your fiancé some of the strengths you see God has given him/her. How do these strengths provide help to you in areas where you may feel weak?
2. What are some practical ways you can support and encourage one another:

In your personal relationship with God?

In the individual roles God has given you?

In helping you stay faithful to God in everyday life?

3. What is one thing from Session 2 that impacted how you view the assigned role God has given you in marriage?

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 3: LEAVE & CLEAVE**



# THINK.

To say that God and Adam were close is an understatement. Adam experience

# OPEN.

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. What obstacles do couples face when trying to leave the family in which they were raised to begin a new family?
2. Have you ever witnessed a marriage that was hurt because someone was unhealthily dependent upon a relationship outside of the marriage? How did it affect the marriage?
3. A marriage matters to every member of both families. How does a healthy marriage relationship enrich both families?
4. How does an unhealthy marriage bring discouragement to family members?

5. How can one gospel-centered couple have a positive influence on an entire family?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. For this reason, a man shall \_\_\_\_\_ his father  
and his mother and shall \_\_\_\_\_ to his wife  
and the two of them shall become one flesh. -Ephesians 5:31
  
2. It doesn't mean that I am to \_\_\_\_\_ the needs  
of my parents.
  
3. It doesn't mean that we fail to \_\_\_\_\_ the  
advice of our parents.
  
4. Scripture commands us to shift that \_\_\_\_\_  
relationship and that \_\_\_\_\_ relationship from  
our parents and to our mate.
  
5. To cleave means to be \_\_\_\_\_ – the two are  
becoming \_\_\_\_\_ .

6. NEEDS

1)

2)

3)

7. This commandment is one meant to  
the marriage relationship above every other relationship in

8. Marriage supersedes the relationship that we have with our

9. can hinder the marriage relationship.

10. It becomes easy to justify a great amount of time spent on

11. can take away time and attention from  
your mate.

12. To leave and cleave, you must:

1)

2)

3)

13. Most women need \_\_\_\_\_ and most men need \_\_\_\_\_.

14. 5 Levels of Communication

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## **DISCUSS.**

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. God commands in Scripture that we are to honor our father and mother, yet He also commands us to leave our father and mother and cleave (or cling) to our spouse. How does a couple leave and cleave while continuing to fully honor their parents?
  
2. What are some ways a husband or wife, consciously or unconsciously, fails to “leave” a father and mother and then “cleave” to his/her spouse? What problems can creep into a marriage when we fail to follow God’s command to leave and cleave?
  
3. What relationships other than “father and mother” can take priority over the spouse in a marriage?
  
4. Every person is designed with three different types of needs. Describe how parents meet each of these needs for their children? How does God intend for a couple to shift and begin meeting and receiving those needs through a marriage relationship?

1. Physical needs:

5. Spiritual needs:

1. Emotional needs:
6. Since God intended marriage to fulfill the deepest level of intimacy possible among human relationships, the deepest level of communication is required to build that intimacy. Discuss each level of communication. How does a relationship become more intimate with each level?
7. 1. Clichés
8. 2. Facts
9. 3. Opinions
10. 4. Feelings
11. 5. Needs
12. Why are the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> levels of communication so pivotal for a marriage?





# APPLY.

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Are there any relationships in your life that will seem difficult for you to leave in order to cleave one hundred percent to your spouse? Share the closeness of this relationship with your fiancé and discuss how you can work together to transition together into a marriage relationship that honors God and one another.
  
2. Your past experiences have a direct influence on how you build your marriage, home, and family. Answer the following questions and share with your fiancé how you hope to use your experiences as (1) a model for your marriage or (2) a place of change for your marriage?
  1. What were the deep beliefs of your family growing up?
  
  2. Did your parents have a notable relationship with Jesus Christ?
  
  3. How important was attending church to your family?
  
  4. Did your parents pray together? Did they pray with you?

5. Did your family serve in the church or community?
6. Did your family have holiday traditions? What were they?
7. How did your family celebrate birthdays?
8. Did you attend family reunions growing up?
9. What was your favorite vacation memory?
10. How involved in your life were each of your parents?
3. What is one thing you would want to repeat from your parents' marriage?
1. Fiancé's answer:

4. What is one thing that you would want to reject from your parents' marriage?

1. Fiancé's answer:

5. It takes wisdom to follow God's wisdom. What is one thing you learned in this week's session that challenges you to implement God's wisdom into your marriage?

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 4: NAKED & UNASHAMED**

# THINK.

To say that God and Adam were close is an understatement. Adam experienced

# OPEN.

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. Everything God created is good. God designed a physical, intimate relationship for a husband and wife as a covenant celebration of love, commitment, and oneness. List some ways society has cheapened and exploited what God intended for good?
2. How would a marriage relationship full of mutual love, trust and understanding actually enhance sexual intimacy in a marriage?
3. How do harsh words, criticism, disrespect, and roots of bitterness cripple the sexual joys in a marriage?
4. A God-honoring marriage grows in intimacy as a couple journeys through the seasons of life together. What do you think could make it possible for a couple to have a more

fulfilling sexual relationship decades into a marriage than they have at the very beginning of marriage?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

## 1. The Fourfold Purpose of Sex in Marriage:

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

4. 4.

## 2. Barriers to Sexual Intimacy:

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

3. Overcoming the Barriers:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the barrier.

2. Be committed to work on this  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Seek wise \_\_\_\_\_.



# DISCUSS.

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. What is the significance of the following benefits of sexual intimacy as they relate to God's purpose in marriage?
  1. Procreation
  2. Pleasure
  3. Protection
  4. Praise
2. When you fully embrace God's perfect design for marriage, how is sex not about you?
3. It has been said that "the most crowded place in the house is in the bedroom." What overcrowds a bedroom?

4. How do honesty, transparency, and open communication help reduce the crowd?

5.

6. Expand on the following statements about how to overcome barriers to sexual intimacy:

1. Both partners must open up to one another at a soul level.

2. All problems are “our” problems.

3. The bedroom is a great place for the gospel.

4. Wise counsel trumps privacy.

# APPLY.

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Everyone enters marriage with a story that matters. Hurts, scars, betrayal and mistakes all matter, but they can also produce baggage for a marriage. Does your story have any emotional, spiritual, or physical baggage that you need to share openly with your spouse before your wedding day?
  
- 2.
  
3. Identify a godly marriage that you admire. Ask the couple to meet with you to give you some insight into what makes their marriage work and what they have learned through the years. Together, make a list of questions you would like to ask them? Below are examples of possible questions:  
  
- 4. Has God always played a major role in your marriage?
  
- 5. Was there ever a season where you drifted apart? Why?
  
- 6. How did you weather the hard seasons of marriage?

7. How did you keep their sex life exciting?

8. Do you remember your main arguments in the first years of marriage? How did you solve those conflicts?

1. What is the best way you have found to communicate when you disagree?
2. How did you make decisions about careers, children, and your home?
3. Have your parents played a big role in your marriage through the years?
4. Who did you go to for advice?
5. How did your marriage change when you had children?
6. What is the most practical advice you can give us?

9. What is something from this week's session that is a new way of how you look at sexual intimacy within a marriage?

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 5: DID GOD ACTUALLY SAY?**

# THINK.

To say that God

# OPEN.

1. From where do most couples in our culture get their relationship advice?
2. What advantages does a couple who sees God and His Word as an authority in their marriage have over a couple who lives independently from God and His Word?
3. Satan's first tactic was to cause God's children to doubt what He said by asking, "Did God actually say that?" Why does this tactic remain Satan's powerful tactic today in luring men and women outside the boundaries of marriage that God has given?
4. What are the main areas today in which Satan tries to lure people away from a biblical lifestyle?



# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word  
ultimately leads to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ will use the  
same tactic on your marriage that he used on the  
\_\_\_\_\_ marriage.
3. Are you sure that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ still speaks to  
marriages?
4. 1. Does the Bible say that I should have  
\_\_\_\_\_ figured out?
- 5.
6. 2. Did God actually say that women must  
\_\_\_\_\_ to men?

7.

1. Submission has nothing to do with \_\_\_\_\_, but it has everything to do with \_\_\_\_\_.

8. 3. Did God actually say that it was better for a man to live on the \_\_\_\_\_ than with a \_\_\_\_\_ wife?

9.

1. There's a whole lot of things in life that's worse than being \_\_\_\_\_.

10. 4. Did God actually say that your \_\_\_\_\_ is not your \_\_\_\_\_?

11.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is God's idea.

12. 5. Did God actually say that he  
\_\_\_\_\_ divorce?

13.

1. God unites a marriage,  
\_\_\_\_\_ tears it apart.

14. 6. Did God actually say that  
\_\_\_\_\_ are a  
blessing?

15.

1. Children are not a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ – they are a  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Take every area concerning the family under the  
\_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

16. Conclusion:

# DISCUSS.

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. Men need significance and women need security.
1. What are some things that make a woman feel secure?
2. What are some things that make a husband feel significant?
2. Why is it important that you seek to fully know your spouse and to be fully known by your spouse?
3. Adam was passive in the Garden. In what ways do men tend to be passive in marriages today?
4. What makes a good leader in a marriage and home?
5. How does a wife's willingness to submit to God and to her "own" husband directly affect the atmosphere and temperature of a home?

6. What does the Bible mean when it says in 1 Corinthians that your body is not your own? How does remaining available to your spouse safeguard your marriage from unfaithfulness?
7. Divorce impacts all areas of life. What and who are affected when a marriage breaks down?
8. James 3:17 says: *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.* How do all the qualities of wisdom that James lists work together to create a strong and fulfilling marriage?

## APPLY.

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Following God's Word and His ways requires knowing God through His Word. Do you feel you have a good understanding of what God's Word says about love, life, marriage, and family? What are some things you each of you can put in place to learn and grow?

2. Where do each of you go for wise counsel? Do you have individual friends, couple friends, or family members who have the potential to affect your marriage in a negative way?
3. How can you work together to safeguard your marriage from negative influences?
4. Have you ever considered children as a “blessing from the Lord?” What does it mean for you as a couple when a child enters the picture in your home? What are your dreams and plans for a family?
5. *Proverbs 23:3-4 says: By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.* How can you build your home with godly wisdom?
6. How does knowledge fill your home with rare and beautiful treasures?
7. Share and dream with one another about ideas on building, establishing and filling your home with treasures from day one and into the future.

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 6: SHAME & BLAME**



# THINK.

To say that God an

# OPEN.

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. How would you define “unconditional love?”
2. How is the gospel a beautiful picture of unconditional love?
3. Read Psalm 128: 1-4: *How joyful are those who fear the Lord —all who follow his ways! You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How joyful and prosperous you will be! Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home. Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table. That is the Lord’s blessing for those who fear him.*
4. What are the benefits for a man when he fears and walks with the Lord in the areas below?
5. His work:

6. His wife:
7. His home:
8. His children:
9. His own life:
10. Read Proverbs 31:10-11; 17-30: *Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is more precious than rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*
11. What are the benefits when a woman fears and lives for the Lord in the areas below?
  1. Her work:

2. Her husband:

3. Her home:

4. Her children:

5. Her own life:

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ marriage  
and every marriage after that was great until  
\_\_\_\_\_ entered the  
picture.
  
2. Satan caused Eve to \_\_\_\_\_ the truth of  
God's Word.
  
3. It seems as if \_\_\_\_\_  
was not present, but he was there the entire time sidelined by  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  
4. Once they sin, they begin the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ game used in  
every marriage since.
  
5. SHAME

1. The shame of their sin causes them to cover up and \_\_\_\_\_ from one another and from God.
  
2. Trying to cover up guilt through our own \_\_\_\_\_ will never be able to cover ourselves \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. You may attempt to hide your \_\_\_\_\_, but God knows just where to find you.
  
4. Sin encourages us to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves from those we \_\_\_\_\_ the most.
  
6. BLAME
  
1. Blaming others for our sin is an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_.

2. If I am not the \_\_\_\_\_,  
there is no \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. Blaming God, the Devil, or my spouse for my  
\_\_\_\_\_ does not bring  
about \_\_\_\_\_.
  
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ admission  
in your marriage is to acknowledge your  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## **DISCUSS.**

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. When Eve was confronted by Satan in the garden, Adam took a passive role. How should Adam have responded?
  
2. How should Eve have responded?
  
3. How does disobedience lead to sin, sin to shame, and shame to blame?

4. How did the atmosphere in the garden change when sin entered the garden?
5. What signs of a strained relationship do we see in the garden that reflects what we see in a strained relationship today?
6. How do couples compound sin on one another?
7. Sin and shame led Adam and Eve to cast blame. Why is blaming such a common reaction to sin?
8. How does accepting immediate and full responsibility for our sin bring about healing to a relationship?

## **APPLY.**

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. What is one thing from this week's session that was a new way of looking at Adam and Eve's story? How does the story of Adam and Eve relate to your own story?
2. The strongest admission in your marriage is to acknowledge your weakness. Do you find it difficult to confess your wrongs and ask for forgiveness? Do you harbor wrongs and hurts against you?
3. How can you work together to create an open door for both admission and forgiveness?
4. How do you know if a heart is pure in an apology? Typically, how different is a response to a sincere apology and an apology with a justification?
- 5.



6. 1 Corinthians 13 is often referred to as the “love chapter” or a “hymn of love” because it focuses on the importance of unconditional love in a Christian’s life. Each of you read 1 Corinthians 13 on your own and make three lists:

1. What love is and does
2. What love is not and does not do
3. Any insights you gain about what unconditional love looks like.
7. This week, share your lists with one another. Share the areas you find it easy to love as well as the areas you struggle most.

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 7: TRUTH & CONSEQUENCES**

# THINK.

To say that God

# OPEN.

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. What is one of the most helpful things you have learned through this course so far?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you think are the top 5 danger areas for a newlywed couple? Write your answers down individually and then share with the group.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
1. Your Top Five:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Other Answers from the Group:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Although marriage is the most beautiful human example of the Gospel, it remains true that marriage is work and sometimes difficult. How is the marriage relationship a place where you must face your own selfishness?

4. How is marriage a tool that helps you become more like Jesus?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. After Adam and Eve sinned, God confronted Satan's \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. THE WOMAN'S PUNISHMENT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ will now be \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An ongoing \_\_\_\_\_ will exist between the woman and the man concerning \_\_\_\_\_ within the home.
3. Concerning leadership, men will struggle to \_\_\_\_\_ lovingly. Instead, many will \_\_\_\_\_ carelessly.

## 3. THE MAN'S PUNISHMENT

1. Given based upon his decisions to \_\_\_\_\_ to the voice of his \_\_\_\_\_ over the voice of his God.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ will now be \_\_\_\_\_.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is promised.

4. THE GOOD NEWS

1. While Satan will continue to torment Mankind, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the woman is promised who will end Satan's \_\_\_\_\_ once and for all.

2. God covers up their \_\_\_\_\_, but in order to do so, something has to \_\_\_\_\_.

3. All couples will long to experience marital \_\_\_\_\_ while learning to exist outside of the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. How is \_\_\_\_\_ to work as a result of this truth and these consequences?
1. Understand that your spouse has and will continue to be \_\_\_\_\_ against.
2. Understand that your spouse has and will continue to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Understand that your spouse is \_\_\_\_\_ by God.
4. Do not \_\_\_\_\_ that reality in your relationship.

5. Wives, do not \_\_\_\_\_  
to \_\_\_\_\_ to your  
husbands.

6. Husbands, do not \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_ your wives.



# DISCUSS.

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. Adam listened to his wife more than he listened to God. What are areas that you think this can happen in a marriage relationship?
2. God covered Adam and Eve after they sinned. How is this a picture of what Christ did for us on the cross?
3. What can you gain when you continually look at your spouse as a saint rather than a sinner?
4. Why is it good to sometimes love your spouse more than you love their happiness?
5. Christ loves us in spite of our imperfections and mistakes. How does a Christ-centered marriage invite you to love your spouse in spite of flaws and disappointments?

6. Without exception, Satan works through lies whereas God works through truth. How do Satan's lies cloud God's truth in our minds?
7. How does God's truth give clarity when we fall for Satan's lies?

## **APPLY.**

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. Ephesians 5 can serve as a great model for marriage. This week read Ephesians 5 together and make a list of everything you learn about marriage from the text. Discuss your roles and responsibilities in marriage. Talk about how you can apply God's view of marriage to your own. What do you find difficult about Ephesians 5?
- 2.
- 3.

4. How would you like your marriage described at your 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary?
5. How would you like to be described as a husband? A wife?
6. What is something from this week's session that broadens your thinking on the importance of respecting your husband and loving your wife?

# **JUST [ABOUT] MARRIED**

## **SESSION 8: WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER**

# THINK.

To say

# OPEN

Discuss in a group or journal answers on your own.

1. In Mark 10:9, Jesus said, “*What God has joined together, let no man separate.*” This statement is made at most weddings, however statistics show that 1 in 3 marriages will end in divorce. Why do you think divorce has become a viable option for couples?
2. God created marriage as a lifelong covenant. What is the difference between a covenant and a contract?
3. Do you believe that God intended for your spouse to be your best friend for a lifetime? Why or why not?
4. What are some qualities of a good friend? Why is it important for your spouse to be your closest friend?
5. Why do you think the practice of marriage may sound fairly simple in theory, but may be quite difficult in application?

# STUDY.

Watch this session's video and take notes as you go.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is for your marriage.
- 2.
3. 1. Keep Up with Whom Your Mate is  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.
5. 2. \_\_\_\_\_ One Another
- 6.
7. 3. Be Intentional About Making Your Marriage a  
\_\_\_\_\_

8.

9. 4. Resolve Today's \_\_\_\_\_ Today

10.

11. 5. Catch the Little \_\_\_\_\_

12.

13. 6. Display Contagious \_\_\_\_\_

14.

15. 3 RELATIONSHIPS TO CULTIVATE

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.



# DISCUSS.

Discuss these questions as a group or journal your answers.

1. Time, circumstances, and life bring about changes in people and relationships. Why is it so important to keep up with who your mate is becoming?
2. How can you work together in moving toward Christian maturity individually and together?
3. What are some questions that you can ask your husband/wife that will show interest in who they are becoming?
4. What are some practical ways you can “out-serve” your spouse?
5. How can the following statements practically apply to marriage? What are some ideas to implement this?
6. Divert daily

7. Withdraw Weekly
8. Abandon Annually
- 9.
10. What are some good “fight rules” in a marriage?
11. What are some “little foxes” that can destroy an entire vineyard in a marriage?
12. How can this group pray for you as a couple after this study concludes?

## **APPLY.**

Complete this section and share answers with your fiancé.

1. What are some acts of service that mean a lot to you? What makes you feel most loved?
2. Are there any “little foxes” that you need to eliminate now that have the potential to become larger issues in your relationship?
3. How do the six areas discussed in this week’s session have the power to enhance your friendship with your spouse?
- 4.

5. Together, look at the Bible verses below. Underneath each verse, write out some application points as they pertain to marriage.
1. Proverbs 17:17 - A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
  2. Proverbs 27:9 - Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel
  3. Exodus 33:11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.
  4. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him —a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
  5. John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

6. Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 - Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
8. Proverbs 27:10 - Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away
9. Proverbs 18:24 - A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
10. 1 Corinthians 15:33 - Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals.
11. Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

12. Job 6:14 - He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
13. 1 Peter 4: 8-10 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
14. John 15:12-14 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.
15. Romans 1:12 - That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.
16. Proverbs 27:19 - in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.
17. Proverbs 17:9 - Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

18. Proverbs 16:28 - A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.
19. Hebrews 13:5 - 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."
20. Psalm 55:12-14 – For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.
21. Proverbs 27:5-6 – Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
22. Romans 12:10-11 - Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.
23. Ephesians 4:1-6 - I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience,

bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ...

24.   Philippians 2:3-4 - Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
  
25.   James 5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
  
6.    Discuss what you have learned from this study. How has it changed or enhanced your view of marriage?



# ONE MONTH BIBLE READING PLAN

## WEEK 1

### MENTAL

#### Day 1: Definition of Marriage

- Genesis 2:18-25
- Ephesians 1:28

#### Day 2: Leave and Cleave

- Genesis 2:24
- Ephesians 5:31

#### Day 3: Suitable Helper

- Ephesians 5:21-33

#### Day 4: Suitable Helper

- 1 Peter 3:1-7

#### Day 5: Suitable Helper

- Proverbs 31:10-31

#### Day 6: Finances

- 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12
- 1 Timothy 6:6-10
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- Hebrews 13:5

## WEEK 2

### EMOTIONAL

#### Day 1: Love

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

#### Day 2: Friendship

- Proverbs 18:24
- John 15:12-13
- Proverbs 27:9

- Proverbs 27:17

#### Day 3:

#### Communication

- Exodus 33:11a
- James 1:19-20
- James 3:8-10

#### Day 4:

#### Communication

- Proverbs 10:19
- Proverbs 11:13
- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 15:28
- Proverbs 17:9
- Proverbs 21:9

#### Day 5: Serving

- Romans 12:9-11
- Philippians 2:3-4
- 1 Peter 4:7-11

#### Day 6: Needs

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- James 3:17

## WEEK 3

### PHYSICAL

#### Day 1: Sex

- Song of Solomon 1-2

#### Day 2: Sex

- Song of Solomon 3-4

#### Day 3: Sex

- Song of Solomon 5-6

#### Day 4: Sex

- Song of Solomon 7-8

#### Day 5: Children

- Genesis 1:28

#### Day 6: Children

- Deuteronomy 7:13-14
- Psalm 127:3-5

## WEEK 4

### SPIRITUAL

#### Day 1: Grace

- Colossians 1:16
- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 5:8
- Romans 10:9
- John 17:3

#### Day 2: Grace

- Acts 3:19
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Matthew 6:14-15

#### Day 3: Conflict

- Ephesians 6:10-18

- James 5:16

- James 1:19

#### Day 4: Conflict

- James 4:1-3
- Matthew 19:3-6

#### Day 5:

#### Encouragement

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18

#### Day 6: Fear the Lord

- Psalm 128:1-6