



◦ ————— *Premarital* ————— ◦

WORKBOOK

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Ministry Mission Statement

The Premarital Ministry seeks to make disciples of couples who desire a lifelong marriage relationship. Our goal is to equip couples with a biblical foundation through teaching, counseling, and mentoring. We also desire to educate couples with planning and conducting the practical aspects of a godly wedding.

Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale

2401 West Cypress Creek Road
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
954-977-9673
CalvaryFTL.org/Premarital

GOD CREATED MARRIAGE . . .

Although this statement sounds simplistic, it's a truth that is commonly overlooked or completely ignored. God, the master architect, sat down at the drafting table and carefully designed marriage. This blueprint that He etched out was not done with numbers, lines, and drawings. No, the master planner put His ideas down on paper in written form. We call it the Bible.

The One that thought it out and designed it is also the One that engineered the institution. The Scriptures not only teach us about the will of God concerning marriage, but also reveal to us how we're to execute His will. It's one thing to say, "I love my spouse." However, it's a different story to say, "I know how to love my spouse" in the way intended by the Lord. The strength of your relationship with your spouse will be directly linked to the intimacy of your relationship with Jesus. Why? Because the Bible says, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16 NKJV). When the Bible says, "all things," it includes marriage. Therefore, not having a personal relationship with the Creator means that you will not be able to fulfill all that the Lord has designed for your marriage.

If you're unsure of where you stand with God, you can receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior and have the assurance of heaven if you:

Recognize you need Jesus in your life (Romans 3:23).

Repent of (turn away from) your sins (Mark 1:15).

Receive Jesus by opening your heart up to Him (John 1:12).

Living your life for Jesus will be the foundation upon which your marriage will be built. Jesus said, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matthew 7:24–25 NKJV).

DIGGING DEEPER: SUGGESTED READING

Getting Married:

12 Questions to Ask Before You Marry by Clayton and Charie King

Saving Your Second Marriage by Les and Leslie Parrott

Passion and Purity by Elizabeth Elliot

Marriage Enrichment and Communication Helps:

The Meaning of Marriage by Timothy and Kathy Keller

What Did You Expect? by Paul Tripp

Covenant Marriage by Gary Chapman

Rock-Solid Marriage by Robert and Rosemary Barnes

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas

Love and Respect by Emerson Eggerichs

Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch in Marriage by Lee and Leslie Strobel

Romance, Intimacy, Contraception, and Sexual Issues:

Intended for Pleasure by Ed and Gaye Wheat

Love Life for Every Married Couple by Ed Wheat and Gloria Perkins

Intimate Issues by Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus

Sheet Music by Kevin Leman

Blended Families:

Winning the Heart of Your Stepchild by Bob Barnes

The Smart Stepfamily by Ron Deal

Finances:

The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn

Financial Freedom by Dave Ramsey

LOOKING AT SEXUAL INVOLVEMENT BEFORE MARRIAGE

When you're together, read 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 and Hebrews 13:4. Talk about these verses with each other.

Why do you think it's best to wait until after marriage for sexual involvement?

Consider the following benefits of waiting:

- You build trust which is necessary for intimacy; it eliminates suspicion.
- You develop the godly qualities of patience and self-control.
- You affirm the worth of the person. It shows you care more about them than your sexual drives.
- There's no fear of rejection. Within marriage, you have the freedom to fail. You will not be judged for your performance. There is security. There is no guilt.
- You make your wedding night much more special.
- You can instruct your children one day from your example.
- You have the blessing of God.
- You're protected from God's judgment.
- You will not sin against God, which cuts off fellowship and communication with Him.
- You're protected from emotional trauma should you break off your relationship.
- Your thinking is not clouded. You can evaluate other aspects of your relationship more clearly.
- Communication continues and deepens. Anyone can kiss, but not everyone can carry on a meaningful conversation.
- You avoid sexually transmitted diseases.
- You avoid unexpected pregnancy.
- You're stronger at resisting extramarital affairs after marriage.

Do you need to seek God's forgiveness and each other's forgiveness?

To reestablish trust and mutual respect, what guidelines do you need to establish for sexual purity?

Consider the following:

- Become accountable to someone you respect and trust.
- Don't put yourselves in situations that lead to failure, such as:
 - Being alone too much
 - Lying down together
 - Viewing sexually stimulating material
 - Arousing sexual desires in your future spouse you can't fulfill in a godly manner until marriage

HOMEWORK

Congratulations! By taking premarital counseling classes, you're taking an important step toward a successful, lifelong marriage.

Read Carefully:

This work must be completed in order to get married at Calvary or to have one of our pastors officiate an off-site wedding.

You must both submit a completed questionnaire and a photo of the two of you together.

Complete the following homework assignment based on Ephesians 5:

- Read Ephesians 5:22–33 and write a one-page, double-spaced essay (due by week three) about the following:

Bride: What does it mean to “respect and submit myself to my husband as to the Lord?”

Groom: What does it mean to “love my wife the way Christ loves the Church?”

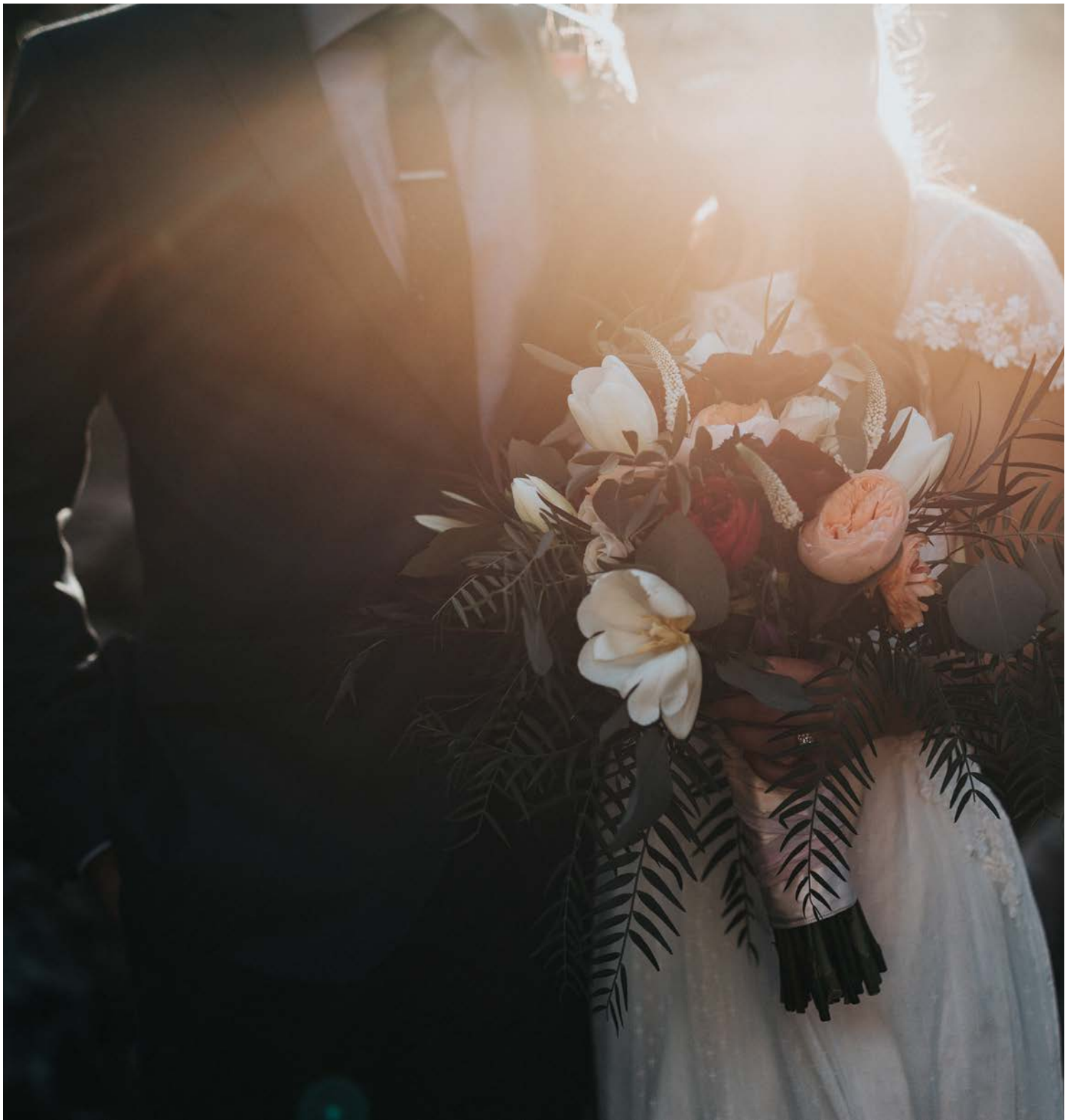
Complete estimated budgets—a “his” budget, a “her” budget, or a combined budget. Complete the financial homework using the budget form found on page 22 of this workbook.

Read *12 Questions to Ask Before You Marry* by week six.

Essays, photos, and budget forms can either be brought to class or e-mailed to LindaN@CalvaryFTL.org.

Write your name on all paperwork and photo.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Linda at LindaN@CalvaryFTL.org or call 954-556-4244.



THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

Introduction:

Ask yourself why you'd like "the church" to be part of your wedding day? The typical answer is to receive a blessing from God. But the church can't bless a marriage, only God can—and God will only bless a marriage that is able to be blessed!

As you consider making this covenant, you should ask the following questions:

1. Are we living lives worthy of being blessed? Are we . . .
 - living together and engaging in premarital sex
 - abusive to one another
 - experiencing excessive debt
 - struggling with addictions
 - dealing with unresolved issues from the past
2. Have we really thought about what we're about to vow to God and to man?
 - promise to love (agape)
 - for better or for worse
 - for rich or for poor
 - in sickness or in health
 - till death do us part

3. Have you considered your wedding vows?

In the counseling office, we hear all kinds of reasons why married couples end up in trouble. Based on most of their reasonings, here are a few 'vows' couples should have made based on their philosophies:

- Husband: "I promise to love you with all of my heart, as long as I have the feeling of love in my heart."
- Wife: "My love, you're the leader, the shepherd of our home. I promise to follow you wherever you lead our family, just as long as you direct us to where I tell you to go."
- Husband: "I promise to give you all that I have. What's mine is yours, except for the 20% of my monthly salary that goes towards my hobby."
- Wife: "I promise to love you always, but if you keep letting my calls go to voicemail or if you neglect to text me back, there won't be much loving for you when you get home."

In short, God cannot bless a mess. Marriage is **not** 50%–50%, it's each of you giving 100%.

THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

Part One: Language of Covenant in the Bible and Marriage

There are many covenants in the Bible. Marriage is one of them!

- Covenants comes with authority. Husbands and wives are under the authority of Christ.
- Marriage is not what each one wants, but what God wants.
- God created marriage. It's a divine institution (Genesis 2:18).
- What God has joined together, let no man separate (Mark 10:9). Marriage is a private union, but a public commitment.
- In a marriage covenant, God expects fidelity; a monogamous relationship.
- God hates divorce, but loves marriage (Malachi 2:16).
- Each one leaves their father and mother to become one with their spouse (Ephesians 5:31–33).
- A man is called to love his wife as himself, which can only be done in a healthy way through the Holy Spirit. It takes humility and submission to learn how to love your spouse the way God commands.

“Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”—Malachi 2:14 (NKJV)

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”—Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”—Ephesians 5:33 (NKJV)

Part Two – Covenant Love

The love spoken in marriage vows is a love of a promise, NOT A CONTRACT!

Contracts protect you and your assets only. What does it mean to “promise to love your spouse till death do you part?”

- One can't ‘fall out’ of this kind of love.
- This type of love is not dependent on emotions or how you feel.
- This type of love is not based on your spouse's performance.
- Regardless of how often your spouse fails to meet your expectations, covenant love is *not* conditional.

THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

Husbands, love (agape) your wives just as Christ loved (agaped) the Church and gave Himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).

Here are four biblical Greek words for love:

- Storge: the love of a parent to a child
- Eros: erotic, sensual love
- Phileo: the love of a friend or brother
- Agape: unconditional, undeserved, unmerited love—the love of God!

Marriage is the only legitimate way to experience all four types of biblical love!

The world has given its own definitions to the words love and marriage. The world has lied to us and told us that love equals feelings of happiness. But when we consider what biblical love is all about, we see it's more profound than the world's definition.

When two people love each other with 1)_____ love, it means they 2)_____ to love regardless of how they 3)_____.

In a godly marriage, spouses *choose* to love their spouse even though there will be days when he/she may not be 4)_____. This is how God loves us! God's love for us is not contingent upon our performance; it's 5)_____!

Marriage is all about making an unconditional commitment to a flawed person.

Our heart for you is to enter into marriage with “agape love”—the same love Jesus displayed when He endured the cross. Husbands and wives are called to agape one another even when someone doesn't deserve it. This is the vow one must make at the altar of marriage.

Part Three – Covenant Help

The Lord promised to send us a supernatural “helper” (John 16:7–14), which is the Holy Spirit!

- As the Lord ascends into heaven, He promises to send us a helper.
- At salvation, the Holy Spirit guides, speaks, comforts, and dwells in us.
- The Holy Spirit rescues us from ourselves as we decrease and He increases.
- As the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit helps us to focus on truth, not our thoughts or emotions. He helps us with self-control.

The Holy Spirit is your helper and He will reveal the truth!

Answers:

1. AGAPE 2. CHOOSE 3. FEEL 4. LOVEABLE/DESERVING 5. UNCONDITIONAL/UNDESERVED

THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

“And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever.”—John 14:16–18 (NKJV)

Allow the Lord to walk with the two of you as it yields a stronger marriage. “Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NKJV).

Love each other with wisdom. “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy (James 3:17 NKJV).

Part Four – Covenant Blessings

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord.”—Proverbs 18:22 (NKJV)

This verse is a biblical truth. When you find a godly spouse and honor your marriage vows, God blesses you in countless ways:

- friendship
- a lifelong companionship
- children and added family
- memories in a marriage

Marriage is a picture of the gospel; it’s a portrait of God’s relationship with us!

The role of the church in your life is to coach and guide you towards having a blessed marriage based on what the Bible says. Even if things in your relationship aren’t perfect, remember what Jesus says in Revelation 21:5 (NKJV): “Behold, I make all things new!” Begin obeying Him in every aspect of your relationship and allow Him to make new things that may not be aligned to His Word.

Part Five – Purpose of Marriage

“And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’ . . . Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”—Genesis 2:18–25 (NKJV)

THE COVENANT AND PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

Purposes of Marriage:

- companionship
- pleasure/intimacy
- oneness (unity)
- witness; a testimony of the intimate union between Jesus and His bride—the Church (Ephesians 5:32)

Much to Consider: Table Talk/Group Time

1. Commit yourself to someone who is fully committed to Christ first! Read 2 Corinthians 6:14 and ask yourself, “Does he/she love the Lord more than me?”
 2. Plan a marriage, not a wedding! Don’t rush your relationship or your premarital preparation.
 3. Pray for a Christian mentor couple who can help you with your premarital journey.
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Next Steps/Homework

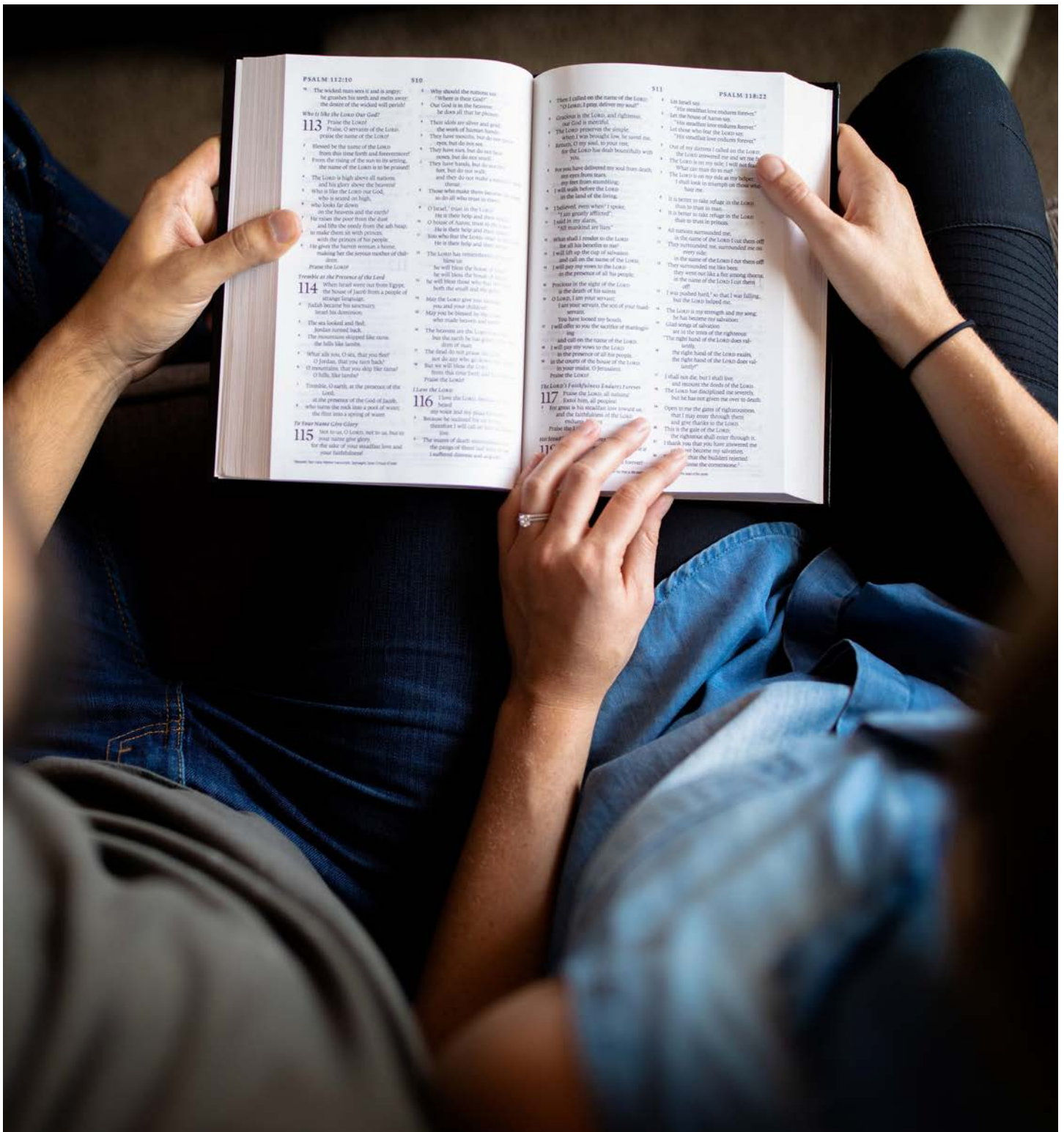
Read Genesis 2:23–24 and Ephesians 5:22–33.

Set a date next week so you can both discuss the following:

1. What is your stance on divorce? Why do you want to get married? _____

2. What is agape love? _____
3. What are some practical steps you can take now in your relationship to work towards having a marriage worthy to be blessed? _____

4. Write down John 14:21 in the space below: _____



EXPECTATIONS AND BIBLICAL ROLES

EXPECTATIONS AND BIBLICAL ROLES

Great Expectations

- _____ has them. However . . .
- Some are _____, others are not.
- Some are _____, others are not.

Expectations of the Husband

Expectations of the Wife

What Happens When Our Expectations Go Unmet?

EXPECTATIONS AND BIBLICAL ROLES

Husbands and Wives

Equal in _____ and _____, different in _____

and _____.

Husband

Spiritual _____

Ephesians 5:23

P_____

1 Corinthians 7:3

1 Timothy 5:8

P_____

1 Peter 3:7

Wife

S_____

Genesis 2:18

M_____ of the home

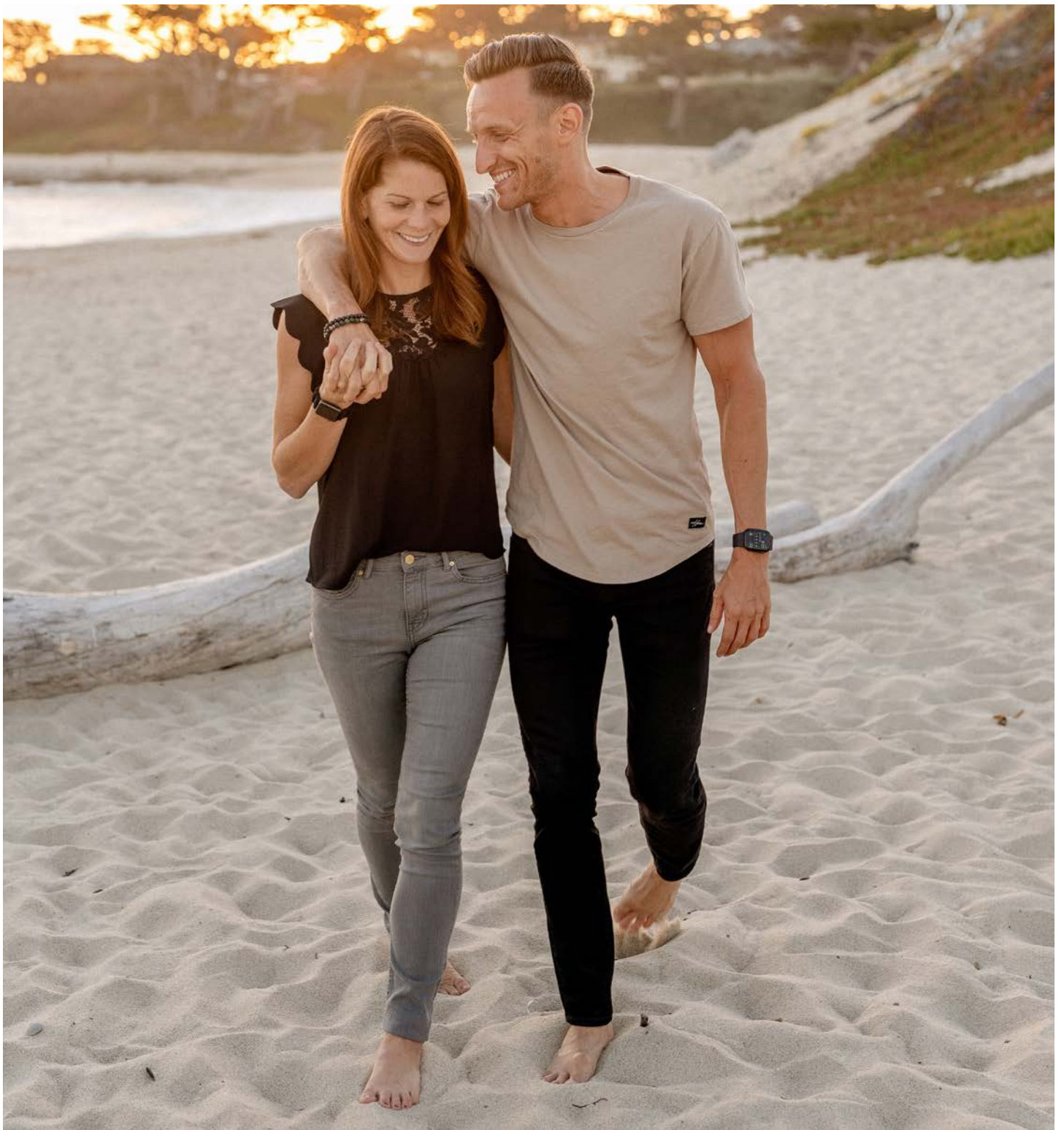
Titus 2:4–5

1 Timothy 5:14

N_____

Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 31:10–31



FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

Part One: The Power of Money

“Many people spend more time in planning the wedding than they do in planning the marriage.”—Zig Ziglar

Money is like radioactive material: When harnessed correctly, it can power entire cities, but when harnessed incorrectly, it's toxic.

Although every couple takes the vow “for richer or for poorer,” many people are financially unprepared and experience “for poorer” far too quickly.

Part Two: Six Steps

“I promise if you do these six things, if you're responsible on your part . . . not once, not twice, but consistently in your life from this day forward, you'll definitely reduce the financial blow-outs.”—Ron Collins

Knowledge

What's your attitude about money? Is it mine or His?

“For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.”—Psalm 50:12b (NKJV)

In most relationships, you'll find a union between one “nerd” and one “free spirit.”

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . .”—Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)

Don't make it difficult. Find a couple who handles their finances well and become their apprentice.

Goals

“If you don't have a goal, you'll never hit it! So make sure you plan and talk about your future and what you want it to look like.”—Lynn Ellen

A budget can help you determine if something is God's plan for you.

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”—1 Corinthians 9:24 (NKJV)

Live on Less

The most important thing to remember: If you don't need it, don't buy it.

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”—1 Timothy 6:6 (NKJV)

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

Avoid Debt

“You miss God’s hand of provision if you don’t tell yourself ‘no’ sometimes.”—Lynn Ellen

Debt is simply a way to get what you want now when God hasn’t provided it yet.

“The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”—Proverbs 22:7 (NKJV)

Save

The Bible says that the wise often store up wealth, while fools spend their money as fast as they get it (Proverbs 21:20).

Give

Our riches amount to nothing if we're not rich toward God.

Nerd vs. Free Spirit

Which term best describes you? _____

Which term best describes your fiancé? _____

Budgeting: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Track your spending.

Step 2: Set a monthly spending plan.

Step 3: Set short-term goals.

Step 4: Set long-term goals.

Make sure your goals are SMART

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-Bound

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

How to manage money in marriage so it doesn't manage you!

"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."—1 Corinthians 4:2 (NKJV)

The most important thing you must know about your money: GOD OWNS IT _____!

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."—Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

The overriding principle of Matthew 25:14–30 is that we're stewards of God's resources, not the owners.

Five Principles of Biblical Money Management

1. Make _____ your first priority. Put God first and do good.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. _____ me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.'"—Malachi 3:10 (NIV)

If you have wealth, be generous and use it to do good. Our management of wealth is a test of our faithfulness (1 Timothy 6:17–19).

2. Spend less than you _____ (trust God, not money).

"The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down."—Proverbs 21:20 (NIV)

Put your hope, faith, and trust in God, not in your money. Trust God to provide your needs as you seek His kingdom (Luke 12:16–34).

3. Avoid the use of _____. Bondage is bad.

"The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender."—Proverbs 22:7 (NIV)

"The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously."—Psalm 37:21 (NIV)

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

4. Set _____ goals.

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
—Philippians 3:14 (NKJV)

5. Don't try to keep up with the _____ because they're in debt! Be content with God's provision.

Do not pursue material wealth, but be content with God's provision, pursuing “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11 NIV).

“Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’”—Luke 12:15 (NIV)

Thoughts for the Wife

Proverbs 31

Verse 11 – Her husband has full confidence in her.

Verse 13 – She works with eager hands.

Verse 14 – She brings her food from afar.

Verse 15 – She gets up while it's still dark; she provides food for her family.

Verse 16 – She considers a field and buys it; she plants a vineyard.

Verse 17 – She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

Verse 18 – Her trading is profitable, and her lamp doesn't go out at night.

Verse 25 – She's clothed with strength; she can laugh at the days to come.

Verse 27 – She watches over the affairs of her household.

Spending Triggers: “Retail Therapy”

1. _____ spending.

2. _____ spending.

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

Thoughts for the Husband

“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”—1 Timothy 5:8 (NKJV)

The Three R's:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

10 Practical Steps to Financial Freedom

1. Start the recovery process by _____.
2. Save money _____ for emergencies.
3. Get on a monthly _____.
4. Start a _____ envelope system.
5. Pay off _____ using the snowball method (credit cards, cars, student loans . . . everything except the mortgage).
6. Increase savings to _____ living expenses.
7. Invest _____ of your household income into retirement and college funding.
8. Pay off your home _____.
9. Begin saving for _____ purchases (home, auto, etc.).
10. Build _____ and increase _____.

Our Financial Goals for Marriage

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

“For I have learned to be _____ whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being _____ in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”—Philippians 4:11–13 (NIV)

Practical Suggestions

If you're having financial struggles, the Financial Freedom Ministry at Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale offers:

- One-on-one financial counseling. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call the church office at 954-977-9673.
- Financial Peace University, a life-changing program that teaches you how to make the right decisions with your money. Dave Ramsey teaches how to save money, live on a budget, communicate about money, eliminate debt, find bargains, and experience the joy of giving. For more information, please visit CalvaryFTL.org/Ministry/Financial-Freedom.

Additional/Suggested Resources

Financial Peace Revisited by Dave Ramsey

The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn

Debt Free Living by Larry Burkett

Answer Key:

All	Aggressive	Recognize	Cash	Major
Giving	Jones's	Respond	Consumer Debt	Wealth
Test	Emotional	Giving	3-6 months	Giving
Make	Impulsive	\$1000	15%	Content
Credit	Reflect	Budget	Mortgage	Content

ESTIMATED BUDGET | SPENDING PLAN

Monthly Income

Gross Monthly Income _____
 Salary _____
 Interest _____
 Dividends _____
 Other Income _____
 Less _____
 Tithe/Giving _____
 Taxes (Federal, State, FICA) _____
 Net Spendable Income _____

Monthly Living Expenses

1. Housing _____
 Mortgage/Rent _____
 Insurance _____
 Property Taxes _____
 Electricity _____
 Gas _____
 Water _____
 Sanitation _____
 Telephone _____
 Maintenance _____
 Cable TV _____
 Other _____

2. Food _____

3. Transportation _____
 Payments _____
 Gas and Oil _____
 Insurance _____
 License/Taxes _____
 Maint./Repair/Replace _____
 Other _____

4. Insurance _____
 Life _____
 Health _____
 Other _____

5. Debt _____

6. Entertainment/Recreation _____

Eating Out _____
 Babysitters _____
 Activities/Trips _____
 Vacation _____
 Pets _____
 Other _____

7. Clothing _____

8. Savings _____

9. Medical Expenses _____

Doctor _____
 Dentist _____
 Prescriptions _____
 Other _____

10. Miscellaneous _____

Toiletries/Cosmetics _____
 Beauty/Barber _____
 Laundry/Cleaning _____
 Allowances _____
 Subscriptions _____
 Gifts (including Christmas) _____
 Cash _____
 Other _____

11. Investments _____

12. School/Child Care _____

Tuition _____
 Materials _____
 Transportation _____
 Daycare _____

Total Living Expenses _____

Income versus Living Expenses

Net Spendable Income _____
 Less Total Living Expenses _____
 Surplus or Deficit _____



COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

—Matthew 19:4–6 (NIV)

Part One: Communication Differences in Men and Women

Differences matter!

- God made us different!
 - Men and women process and communicate differently.
 - Good communication is key to the longevity and quality of your marriage. It takes a lot of WORK (e.g. female vs. male brain, movies, colors, etc.)!
-
-
-

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 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. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."—Romans 12:9–12 (ESV)

Part Two: The Five Love Languages

The Five Love Languages

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

What is your love language? _____

What is your partner's love language? _____

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer each person."

—Colossians 4:6 (ESV)

Part Three: Power of the Spoken Word

Your words matter!

- Words can build up or destroy your marriage.
 - Protect each other. Don't talk negatively about each other, especially to family members.
-
-

Part Four: Five Levels of Communication

Five Levels of Communication

- Level 5: Small Talk
- Level 4: Nightly News
- Level 3: Cautious Disclosure
- Level 2: High-Risk/High-Reward
- Level 1: Truth in Love

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”—James 1:19–20 (NIV)

- Good communication is like a healthy muscle!
- Your marriage won't grow deep if you stay at levels 5-3 (superficial).
- Pick the right time and place for level 2-1 conversations.

Part Five: Pitfalls When Arguing

Avoid doing these when arguing:

- not really listening (on phone or watching TV)
- speaking before thinking
- raising your voice
- negative non-verbal communication
- speaking in superlatives
- playing the blame game
- seeking always to be right
- bringing up the past

Your words have the power to crush or uplift. It's how these differences are handled that separate successful marriages from the failures. Why? Because marriage is the best testimony anyone can give to a dark world; they can be salt and light!

Next Steps/Homework:

Read Proverbs 12:18, 17:27, 18:13, and 20:19.

Set a date next week and take the time to have a level 1 conversation. Remember to choose the right location and the right time.



PARENTING

PARENTING

“As long as we have breath, it’s never too late to change our legacy.”—Priya Ramsaran

What are some of the characteristics of a godly man or woman?

.....

.....

.....

Parenthood is a spiritual role, because every parent plays a part in shaping tomorrow’s leaders.

Parenthood gives you a chance to create a legacy for your family.

Part One: The Impact of a Father

“You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

—1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NKJV)

A dad is the single greatest influence on the success or failure of a family.

What is the most important thing a father can give his son? Identity.

What do girls need most from their fathers? Security.

The question to ponder now is what kind of an impact are you going to make?

Part Two: The Influence of a Mother

“Our identity in Christ moves on into eternity. Everything else is subject to change.”—Priya Ramsaran

What is the most important thing a mother can give her son? Security.

What is the most important thing a mother can give her daughter? Identity.

PARENTING

A mother can build up a healthy sense of identity in her daughter by knowing her own identity in Christ.

The question to ponder now is where does your identity lie?

Part Three: Purposeful Parenting

“Before you teach it, you have to be it.”—Pastor Reuben Ramsaran

Training, discipline, boundaries, and consequences are of extreme importance. As a parent, your job is to correct bad behavior. As for corporal punishment, spanking removes the guilt and shame of rebellion and time-outs redirect a child to allow for self-examination. The most important key for raising godly children is modeling (James 1:22 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9). When all else fails, depend on the grace and mercy of God.

Tips for Blended Families

“It’s better for you to be unified than for one of you to be right.”—Pastor Reuben Ramsaran

1. Never speak negatively about the other parent in front of the children.
2. Always encourage your children to have a relationship with the other parent, unless it’s unhealthy for them.
3. Realize that relationships take time to build, so be patient—especially if you're a new stepparent.
4. Remember that when a child loses a parent through divorce, it's parallel to experiencing the death of a parent.
5. Give age-sensitive responses to difficult questions.
6. Always be conservative when disciplining a stepchild. And always be unified with your spouse, especially concerning corporal punishment.



ROMANCE AND INTIMACY

A Look at Intimacy

- Into-me-see
- Intimacy with God | (Psalm 139, John 17:23, and John 15:15)
- Intimacy with one another | (Psalm 133 and Proverbs 5:18-19)

Obstacles to a Healthy Sexual Relationship

- Lack of spiritual leadership | (Hebrews 13:4)
- Unrealistic expectations
- Unhealthy alternatives
- Fatherly figure
- Issues of the past (pain, partners, and pregnancies) | (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
See *Intimate Issues* by Dillow and Pintus.
- Selfishness | (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

The Romantically Intimate Marriage

S — (Romans 15:6)

E — (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

R — (Song of Solomon 2:15)

V — (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

I — (Song of Solomon 2:10)

N — (2 Peter 3:18)

G — (Genesis 2:25)

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