

*Marriage
Is A
Ministry*

Session One

God's Purposes for Marriage

Marriage Is A Ministry

God's Purposes for Marriage

What changed in the Webster's dictionary definition of marriage between 1944 and 1996?

What has changed in God's definition of marriage since the beginning of time? _____

What Are The Right Expectations For Marriage?

What or who taught you how to be a husband or wife? _____

John 6:38 *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*

Marriage requires continual _____

Who Created Marriage?

Genesis 2:18 *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

It would be a dirty trick for God to create something so wonderful and complex as a marriage and not give us clear instructions on how to do it right and the grace to fulfill His instructions.

Am I A Minister?

What is a minister?

One who acts under the orders of another, or who is employed by another to execute his purposes.

Who are we under and from whom do we receive our instructions? _____

A disciple of Jesus Christ is a minister under and unto Jesus Christ. *Minister = Disciple*

Jesus set the best example.

Matthew 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."*

As Christians, our disposition must be to fulfill His will and purpose, not our own.

Not selectively pick and choose which parts of His Word are applicable, but wholly embrace His Word.

Marriage Is A Ministry

1. God's Glorification – In us and Through us

1 Corinthians 6:20 *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Glorify means to reflect. We are to reflect the image of Christ.

Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

Ephesians 5:22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

God's Glorification begins with Our Transformation

God gave you your spouse to be one of His tools for your transformation.

1 John 2:5 *But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

Perfected = to make complete, a process, transformation.

Who have I blamed for the mistakes I've made in my past trials?

James 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

John 6:38 *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*

2. Meeting Each Other's Companionship Needs Through Love

God desires a unique relationship in marriage as one spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and sexually as companions to our mate fulfilling the companionship needs of each other.

Genesis 2:18 *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

Helper = one who surrounds, protects, aids and helps another.

Comparable = similar, but not identical.

God wants to make us a matched pair that meets the needs of one another according to His Word.

Matthew 19:5-6 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

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Our Greatest Companionship Need Is Love

Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

1 Peter 3:3-4 *Do not let your adornment be merely outward-- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel--rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

3. To Multiply or Raise Children

Genesis 1:27-28 *...male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;..."*

The Key to Marital Success – A Strong Foundation

Matthew 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Our first priority should be?

Luke 6:46-49 *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."*

1. Comes to Me = _____

2. Hears my sayings = _____

3. Does them = _____

Marriage Is A Ministry
Personal Inspection of Our Foundation

Lamentations 3:40 *"Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;"*

(Answer question #1 either Yes or No. Questions 2 & 3 give yourself a grade of A, B, C, D, or F)

1. "...comes to Me..." – To receive Christ

Have you come to Him and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?

Yes No

If you have not received Christ, but would like to, the Commitment worksheet (6B) will assist you in making your commitment.

2. "...hears My sayings..." – To abide in Christ

My prayer and devotional life - A B C D F

How is your prayer life? Is it growing and a daily part of your life? Do words like intimate, worship, listening or relationship describe your prayer life? Do you as, a husband and wife, pray together daily? Do you pray with your children that live with you daily?

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Philipians 4:6

How often do you spend time reading the Word of God? Do you spend time meditating over what you read in your devotional time?

"...when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples." Mark 4:34

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

3. "...does them..." – To obey Christ

My priorities - A B C D F

How are your priorities with God, spouse, children, work, church, leisure time and fellowship? Are they in the proper order and does your spouse agree? Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13. How does God prioritize your marriage in these Scriptures?

"Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Corinthians 14:40

My practices - A B C D F

Are you practicing godly principles daily in your own home? Are you glorifying Jesus Christ before your spouse and family? Is His fruit evident in your life personally and in how you treat your spouse?

*"Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."
Galatians 5:22-23*

My finances - A B C D F

Do you trust God with your finances? Do you give tithes regularly?

"Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase. So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." Proverbs 3:9-10

The power to obey is derived from our coming to Him and hearing from Him daily.

Our dependence upon Christ is the conduit for us to receive His daily strength and grace.

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**HOMEWORK SECTION
FOR
Session One**

God's Purposes for Marriage

SESSION ONE HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Each piece of the homework is important to the progress of any disciple. Remember, a true disciple of Christ is not simply trying to acquire intellectual knowledge; a true disciple invests himself/herself to learn and to live according to the principles God teaches in His Word. Your investment in learning and living according to the principles God reveals to you through this material will transform your life as God desires.

The first piece of homework on page 5, **Expectations of Each Other In Marriage**, is designed to contrast your thoughts before learning God's truth with the new understanding you have after learning God's truth. The completion of all parts of question 4 will provide you with the understanding of where you previously walked apart from God's plan in your marriage relationship. Armed with this new understanding, you can begin the journey to repentance, reconciliation and walking in God's grace.

The second piece of homework on page 6, **How to Develop Intimacy With God**, is designed to help the person who has not previously had a personal devotion time with the Lord each day. It is also for those who have never truly understood the connection between their daily devotion and the power to walk in the will of God each day. This worksheet will explain some of the mechanics of spending time alone with the Lord to help you learn to know God and grow in His grace day by day.

A suggestion for anyone that does not yet practice daily devotions is to use a workbook that interacts with the Bible, like **The Biblical Principles For A Strong Foundation**. This topical workbook teaches from the Bible using a structure that encourages daily reading of the Word and journaling. It challenges the disciple using scriptural references and quotes from well known Bible teachers whose lives exemplify their messages. Your own copy of The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation is included on the PC disc contained in your Marriage Is A Ministry DVD or CD kit. If you do not have your own DVD or CD kit, ask your discipler for a copy of this workbook.

The **Discussion Worksheet** on page 6A is designed as a review of the critical principles taught in the first session. These principles are the basis of understanding God's design, our role within His design, and the key to a successful marriage. You must understand these basic principles very well if you are to have God's wisdom for addressing the circumstances you will face in your marriage. Without understanding these basic principles, you will find the rest of the instruction is difficult, if not impossible to properly execute.

Your **Commitment To Put Jesus First In Your Life** on page 6B addresses both Christians and non-Christians. If you are already a Christian, this worksheet is for writing your commitment that now places Jesus as Lord of your life in how you will love and interact with your spouse from now on; to seek His grace daily through daily devotions, prayer and investing yourself to develop spiritual maturity. If you have not yet committed your life to Jesus Christ, you can use this worksheet as a guide to be escorted through surrendering your life to your Savior and commit to making Him Lord of your life forever more.

The **Goals For Building A Strong Foundation** on page 6C is designed to be completed individually. Your goal should be to abide in Christ in all of these areas whereby you would give yourself a grade of A in each area. After completing the grading portion of this form, examine your own ways and write down in the spaces provided below each category practical steps you can make to learn more and practice these principles. After you have completed this sheet individually, you should discuss with your spouse the condition of your foundation and the practical steps you will take to make any necessary changes. If you need more help with understanding these principles or deriving practical biblical changes to make, we encourage you to seek discipleship in these areas by asking your pastor for help. You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

SESSION ONE HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Remember:

- God blesses obedience.
- Our faithfulness in completing all of the homework is the beginning of a truly wonderful relationship with our spouse in Christ.
- Our transformation happens only as we abide in Him. This means our daily devotions and our obedience to His Word, including confession and repentance of our mistakes, are critical to this process.
- To see Jesus work miracles, the disciples had to follow Him.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Expectations of Each Other in Marriage

Try and use only the space provided and answer the following questions.

1. What do you think is God’s plan and purpose for marriage?

2. What do you think God’s plan is for “you” in your marriage?

3. What are the expectations you have toward your husband/wife in your marriage now?

4. Read the following verses and write one sentence on how you can respond to your spouse in a practical way in light of each of these scriptures:

A. **Mark 8:34** *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

Example: I should surrender to Christ and be willing to deny my selfish desires.

B. **Matthew 6:33** *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

C. **2 Corinthians 3:18** *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

D. **Ephesians 4:29** *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

E. **1 John 3:16** *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

How did your responses to each of these scriptures measure up to your answer to question 2?

Write out a prayer that you can share with your spouse asking Jesus to help you fulfill these scriptures toward your spouse.

How To Develop Intimacy With God Through Daily Devotions

Intimacy – *Marked by very close association, contact, or friendship developing through long association; very familiar; suggesting informal warmth or privacy; of a very personal nature.*

1. Choose the best time of day (morning or evening) to commit to setting aside devotional time. Don't set yourself up for discouragement by setting a goal that you will not be able to keep. Start small, and then add time as you grow. Begin with 15 minutes.
 2. Choose a book of the Bible. Read one chapter, or less if it is a long chapter or verses that you want to ponder. In addition, you may also want to read a daily devotional. See suggestions listed below.
 3. Pray. Specifically pray over the truths you have read, asking God to speak to you about how you can obey; what you should do or what you should change in your life in order to obey.
 4. Spend a few minutes in quiet listening. This may be uncomfortable for you at first. Living in a noise-filled world, most of us are not accustomed to sitting quietly. Persevere and God will be faithful to speak to you. Remember that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in your heart and mind and can minister to you in your thoughts!
 5. Journal. Write out what these verses mean to you, and record what the Lord speaks to your heart.
- **Journal** – *A record of experiences, ideas or reflections kept regularly for private use.*
6. Pray. Use the following to help you pray effectively:

Adoration – Worship and praise God
Confession – Confess and repent of any known sins
Thanksgiving – Expressing gratitude for God's blessings in your life
Supplication – Humbly make requests for your needs and the needs of others
 7. Pray that God will help you to know and acknowledge His presence throughout your day.

Suggested Devotionals

Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation, by Craig Caster
Daily Experience with God, by Andrew Murray
My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers
Streams in the Desert, by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman
The One Year Book of Psalms, by William J. Peterson and Randy Petersen
Meet the Bible, by Philip Yancey and Brenda Quinn
Everyday With Jesus, by Greg Laurie
Drawing Near, by John F. MacArthur
The Power Of A Praying Wife, by Stormie Omartian (for women)
On the Other Side of the Garden, by Virginia Ruth Fugate (for women)

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Session #1 Discussion Worksheet

(husbands and wives answer accordingly, then discuss as a couple)

1. What has changed from God's perspective about marriage since He created it?

2. What did you learn about the *ministry* of marriage? See page 1 to review "Am I A Minister?".

3. How often do you think your spouse sees Jesus in you as a husband or a wife?

Always Mostly Sometimes Rarely Never

4. As a husband or a wife, how does each purpose for marriage apply to you personally in the role God created you to fulfill toward your spouse? See pages 2 & 3 to review "God's Purposes for Marriage".

God's Glorification _____

Meeting Each Other's Companionship Needs _____

To Multiply or Raise Children _____

5. What is the key to marital success? See page 3 for help with your answer.

6. What are the ingredients of a strong foundation? See page 3 for help with answers.

1) _____ - _____

2) _____ - _____

3) _____ - _____

7. On page 3 we reviewed Luke 6:46-49. Briefly summarize what you learned from these verses as they pertain to marriage in the space below.

8. What does Lamentations 3:40 exhort you to do and why do you think the Holy Spirit exhorts us to do this?

Commitment To Put Jesus Christ First In Your Marriage

Perhaps you have struggled in some areas of marriage and have come to realize that your struggles are a result of a weak or inconsistent spiritual life. God promises to bless, encourage and strengthen us as we submit to His lordship in our life.

“The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace.” Psalm 29:11

Write a prayer to the Lord, committing to put Him first in your life and asking Him to help you to fulfill the role He has given to you in your marriage.

Perhaps you have never surrendered your life to Christ. Know that God loves you and has provided the way for you to have a relationship with Him. You must simply,

1. Recognize and admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 3:23 *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

2. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and that He is the only way for sinners to be forgiven and reconciled to God.

John 14:6 *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Acts 4:12 *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

3. Confess your sins to Jesus and repent (be sorry), asking Him to forgive you.

Acts 3:19 *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*

Romans 10:9 *“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

4. Ask Jesus to come into your heart and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

John 1:12 *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”*

Repeat the following prayer,

“Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sin. Thank you for dying on the cross for me and paying the price for my sin. Please come into my heart. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to be your disciple. Thank you for forgiving me and coming into my life. Thank you that I am now a child of God and will one day follow you to heaven.” Amen

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Goals For Building A Strong Foundation

1. "...comes to Me..." – To receive Christ

Have you come to Him and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?

Yes No

If you have not received Christ as your Lord and Savior, but would like to, the Commitment worksheet will assist you in making your commitment.

For parts 2 & 3 below, **discuss together what steps you will take** toward achieving your goal of building your marriage on A Strong Foundation. **Write your answers in the spaces below.**

2. "...hears My sayings..." – To abide in Christ

My prayer and devotional life - A B C D F

How is your prayer life? Is it growing and a daily part of your life? Do words like intimate, worship, listening or relationship describe your prayer life? Do you as a husband and wife pray together daily? Do you pray with your children that live with you daily?

Do you spend time daily reading the Word of God? Do you spend time meditating over what you read in your devotional time? Do you share what you hear from the Lord?

3. "...does them..." – To obey Christ

My priorities - A B C D F

How are your priorities with God, spouse, children, work, church, leisure time and fellowship? Are they in the proper order according to 1Timothy 3:1-13 and does your spouse agree? _____

My practices - A B C D F

Are you practicing godly principles daily in your own home? Are you glorifying Jesus Christ before your spouse and family? Is His fruit evident in your life personally and in how you treat your spouse? _____

My finances - A B C D F

Do you trust God with your finances? Do you give tithes regularly? Are you unified in managing your finances? _____

If you would like additional help with any of these areas, ask your discipler or pastor.

The power to obey is derived from our coming to Him and hearing from Him daily.

Our dependence upon Christ is the conduit for us to receive His daily strength and grace.

