

Marriage Is A Ministry

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Marriage Is A Ministry

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Session One

God's Purposes for Marriage

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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.

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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 = _____

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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.” Philippians 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.

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Session Two
*Our Greatest
Companionship Need*

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Our Greatest Companionship Need

We cannot fulfill our spouse’s unique companionship needs apart from love.

Four Basic things that motivate all humans

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

What motivated Jesus to die for you?

John 3:16 For God so *loved* the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Colossians 3:8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Respond in _____!

Proverbs 14:29 He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.

Truth means we have informed our heart and mind with the Word of God. This is our only measuring tool!

Matthew 22:36-39 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

God’s Word tells us the value of each person.

How we treat our spouse indicates the value we place on them.

Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Am I demonstrating to my spouse my choice to put on or put off love? _____

How do I demonstrate that I really want to change? _____

Description of Love – what it is and is not.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails....

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THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT LOVE IS = HATE = SIN

1. Love is not impatient – The opposite of being longsuffering.

Galatians 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, (long-suffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness.*

2. Love is not unkind – The opposite of kindness.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.*

Esteeming others above self:

- To regard or consider his/her feelings above my own.
- **Think First!** How should I share my feelings or opinions so they will not hurt or tear down our bridge of communication and my spouse will understand what I am trying to say!
- **Use wisdom, gentleness and self-control** – not harshness.
- **Be specific.** Do not speak in general terms.

Communication Destroyers: You always..., you never..., you will never change..., there you go again..., you're a 'Blank', you're just like your 'Blank!', lying, bringing up past mistakes or failures, etc...

3. Love does not envy

Envy or jealousy can exist toward:

- ◆ Each other
- ◆ Our relationship with our children – don't play favorites or put any child ahead of your spouse
- ◆ Our relationship with friends
- ◆ Hobbies, work or other interests
- ◆ A special event or opportunity comes up
- ◆ Don't provoke your spouse to jealousy or envy

James 3:16 *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

4. Love does not parade itself, brag and is not arrogant.

Arrogance is when any spouse belittles the other spouse to make him/her feel less important, or promotes oneself to appear better of more important.

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Proverbs 27:2 *Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.*

5. Love does not behave rudely or act unbecoming

- Purposefully embarrassing and/or demeaning your spouse.
- Using rude jesting or sarcasm toward one another.
- We know what hurts one another and what bothers each other.

Instead learn how to:

- Speak blessings and truth to each other.
- Pray over one another.

Wives To Husbands:

You're my man
 You are my lover
 The kids sure look up to you
 You're a good provider
 You look handsome in that...

Husbands To Wives:

You are such a great mom.
 I love the way you show affection to the kids
 Man! The house looks great
 You are so beautiful
 You are so sweet

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

6. Love does not seek to have its own way

It can be as simple as being selfish in:

1. (Communication) Spending time talking with one another
2. Working around the house together
3. Doing something with the kids together.
4. Taking care of the kids so my spouse can go do something he/she enjoys.

1 Corinthians 10:24 *Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.*

7. Love does not think evil

Never keep score of their failures...only to beat them over the head whenever we get a chance.

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Ps 139:17-18 *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.*

- Are you harboring bitterness – ignoring, pouting, and staying angry?
 - Not forgiving is a choice, not a feeling; do not wait until you feel like it.
-
-

Hebrews 12:14-15 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.*

1 Corinthians 13:5 *“Love... is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.” (TLB)*

- **Unforgiveness is a poison one takes, hoping it will kill the other person.**

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE FORGIVE?

Ephesians 4:32 *And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

8. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness

- Do you get some pleasure when your spouse gets an earful from one of the kids, a speeding ticket, or even gets hurt?
-
-

Proverbs 14:9 *Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is favor.*

9. Not rejoicing in the truth

- **Do you praise your spouse regularly?**
 - Do you point out (only or mostly) their weaknesses or failures?
 - We need to always keep this in check, remember...speak love and truth into their lives.
 - To appreciate means to acknowledge their value...if you don't know how, pray and ask your spouse how. Invest yourself into learning how.
-
-

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.*

10. Not bearing all things

Don't give up by telling yourself you can't take it anymore.

We need to commit to God's plan and purpose, putting our trust in Jesus – not our spouse.

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Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

"Bear..." = *To take up in order to carry, to put upon one's self something to be carried.*

11. Not believing or hoping all things

Are you doubting God right now?

- God wants you to put your trust in Him.
- God wants us to work towards a hopeful and trusting relationship even after previous mistakes.

A relationship without trust is no relationship at all!

Mark 3:25 *"And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*

Romans 5:5 *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you", says the LORD, "thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

12. Not enduring all things

- To endure means to last or to tolerate, to suffer patiently.

Love has an attitude that you believe and trust in an Almighty God who desires to bless you in and through your marriage.

Do you depend upon God for strength or are you relying upon your own strength?

1 Corinthians 13:8 - *Love never fails.*

Ephesians 4:29-31 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

*Marriage
Is A
Ministry*

HOMework SECTION

FOR

Session Two

*Our Greatest
Companionship Need*

SESSION TWO 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.

1. **The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation** (pages 12-15)

- Follow the steps outlined on page 14 under, *As an act of the will, we must*: Unforgiveness toward anyone in the past (father, mother, a family member, or another person) or present (spouse, children) can contaminate other current and future relationships (see Heb. 12:14-15). There is only one Biblical antidote for removing the root of bitterness or hurt that may be keeping us from trusting God. Once removed we are no longer held captive by it and are free to walk in the light of God's Word. When we put our trust in Christ and forgive another person, then the Lord can heal our heart and the grace of Christ is then poured out to help our lack of trust in Christ and/or bad habits to be broken.

2. **Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication** (pages 16–19).

- Complete these pages each time you have any unloving communication over the course of a day. You will need to make copies before you begin so you both can practice this when necessary. Pray and ask God to reveal the wrong thoughts or motives that provoked the unloving communication you used toward your spouse no matter how they treated you. Follow steps three and four on the bottom of page 18 of the worksheet each time you demonstrate unloving communication and God will help you grow to respond in love to your spouse over time. Remember, God blesses obedience.

3. **Loving Communication Self-Evaluation** (pages 19A-B)

- To see how effective a listener you are, complete this worksheet individually. It is designed to help husbands and wives identify the source of ungodly thoughts, feelings or behaviors that have been leading them in the unloving communication they have exhibited toward their spouse. Once you realize how the enemy has deceived you into acting inappropriately toward your spouse, you can follow the steps found on pages 18 and 19 for confession, repentance and reconciliation with God and your spouse. This homework should be completed each time there is unloving communication between a husband and wife until the understanding is complete and the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation becomes a regular part of the relationship. This process will enable any disciple to strengthen their walk in the spirit when communicating with their spouse everyday.
- After completing this worksheet, go to our website at www.parentingministry.org to view or download the Key To Score Your Loving Communication Self-Evaluation. Ask the Lord in prayer to help you become a better listener in the areas in which you gave yourself a low score.

4. **Improve Your Loving Communication Habits** (page 19C)

- Complete individually according to the instructions. Make sure you follow through with steps 1-4 as much as depends on you. If your spouse will not pray with you, then return to the Lord in prayer privately. This homework has **3** primary purposes: **First** to help you identify those specific areas you need to work on. **Second** to help you make a prayer list of the areas you need to daily ask God to help you improve to be a loving communicator. **And third** to provide a structure for biblical forgiveness and reconciliation for past failure toward your spouse. God is merciful when we will follow His prescription for healing past hurts and failure. His prescription heals our hearts and can heal the hearts of our spouse if they will also yield to God's will and forgive. This worksheet should be reviewed and discussed as a couple, if possible.

SESSION TWO 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.

Remember, practicing loving communication and biblical forgiveness and reconciliation are the tools God uses to break up the hardened soil of our hearts and our spouse's heart so His Word and grace can have the impact He desires. He will have victory if we will come to Him, hear Him and do what He says.

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. You may obtain a copy of the workbook, ***The Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation*** from your leader who has it on a PC disc contained in the *Marriage is a Ministry* kit.

You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

(Review and discuss as a couple)

The word, *forgive*, means literally, *to give away*. When a debt is forgiven, the rights to payment are *given away*. If someone injures me and I forgive him or her, I *give away* the freedom to continue being angry and resentful towards the one who wronged me. I absorb the loss myself. The word *pardon* is derived from the Latin word, *perdonare*, meaning to *grant freely*. True forgiveness is undeserved, unmerited, and free. It is not *just* or *fair*. In the Scriptures, *to forget* means, *to let go from one's power*.

☞ **The Cost of Unforgiveness**

When we refuse to grant forgiveness, choosing rather to maintain our *right* to demand payment for wrongs done to us, we must be willing to absorb the cost incurred by that choice. Forgiveness is free, however unforgiveness carries with it a costly price tag. Unwillingness to forgive produces *resentment*. Resentment means, *to feel again*. Resentment clings to the past, reliving it over and over. Resentment, like *picking a scab*, prohibits our wounds from healing.

In Hebrews 12:15 we learn that bitterness, like a deep root, takes a firm hold in the human heart, then grows, and produces *fruit*. However, rather than nourish others, this fruit is bitter, causes trouble, and defiles others.

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." Hebrews 12:15

Most of us do not readily admit that we have been harboring unforgiveness. However, Ephesians 4:31 teaches that there is undeniable evidence in an individual's life that the bitter tree of resentment is growing within their heart.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." Ephesians 4:31

Wrath – An outburst of a strong, vengeful anger or indignation, seeking retribution.

Anger – A state of mind marked by fretfulness and grief.

Evil speaking – Unkind words, verbal abuse against someone, slander, wounding someone's reputation by evil reports, backbiting, insult and defamation.

Malice – Hateful feelings that we nurture in our hearts. A desire to see another suffer.

"Fruits" of Unforgiveness

- Pride
- Health problems
- Self-centered
- Self-righteous
- Self-pity
- Emotional disturbances
- Judgmental & critical of others
- Anxiety, tension & stress
- Lack of trust in relationships
- Lack of peace
- Thinking you are superior to others
- Ultra-sensitive & easily offended
- Absence of peace & joy
- Eating Disorders
- Broken fellowship with Jesus

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

☪ *Why Forgive?*

Besides the before mentioned devastation that results from unforgiveness, we are indebted to forgive because:

1. God commands it!

Obedience to the Father is not optional. If we pick and choose when we will and will not obey God's commands, we will live unfruitful, ineffective, and spiritually barren lives.

"But love your enemies, and do good...and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." Luke 6:35,36

2. In forgiving, we resemble Jesus, and bear the family likeness.

The term *Christian* means *little Christ*. As Christians, we are called to carry the name of Christ to a lost world. We must be willing to bear His image; to be like Him. Christ demonstrated forgiveness. He came to this earth to bring forgiveness to the guilty. He gave the commission to the church to continue proclaiming forgiveness. We must, if we are to rightly bear His name, forgive those who have offended us!

"...the one who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner as He walked."
1 John 2:6

3. It is the only means of breaking the cycle of blame and pain.

Forgiveness offers the way out! It does not settle all questions of blame and fairness, often evading those questions altogether. It does allow a relationship to start over, to begin anew.

This truth is demonstrated in the life of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37-45. Though he was mistreated, betrayed, abandoned by his brothers, and sold into slavery, he refused to allow the root of bitterness to take hold of his life. Shortly before being reunited with his brothers, he testified of the healing work that God had done in his life during the years of separation, as demonstrated in the naming of his sons. In Genesis 41:51,52 we read:

"Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my trouble in all my father's household."

"He named the second Ephraim, "For," he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction..."

To *forget* in this sense does not mean to cease to remember, but *to let go*, to cease to let the memory of hurtful things control your present life. Joseph's *fruitfulness* was directly related to his *forgetfulness*. Remember that resentment means *to feel again*. Joseph chose to trust God with his past. Unforgiveness imprisons us to the past and locks out all potential for a fruitful life.

During Joseph's years alone in Egypt, he allowed God to heal his heart, which had been broken by his own brothers. Later, when given the opportunity, Joseph extended love, forgiveness, and grace to his brothers. Joseph speaks to his brothers in Genesis 45:5, 7, & 15.

"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life...and to keep you alive by a great deliverance...He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him."

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

There was no blaming, no explanations demanded, only the voice of mercy and forgiveness. The way was cleared for Joseph and his brothers to be reunited and begin a new relationship.

4. Forgiveness loosens the stranglehold of guilt in the offender

Joseph's brothers would have carried their grief to their graves if he had not extended forgiveness to them. Forgiveness, undeserved and unearned, can cut the cords and let the oppressive burden of guilt roll away.

"...in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7

If Jesus had not extended kindness to sinners, we would remain in the stranglehold of guilt. He made the first move toward us that made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

∞ Reconciliation

To *reconcile* is to restore to friendship or harmony, or to settle or resolve differences. It is the doing away of an enmity, the bridging over of a quarrel. Reconciliation implies that the parties being reconciled were formerly hostile to one another.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
Ephesians 4:31,32

To be reconciled, the Scripture above simply instructs us to *"Let all bitterness... be put away from you... be kind... tenderhearted, forgiving..."* But *how* do we let bitterness be put away? *How* can we change our own feelings about a wrong done? *How* do we forgive?

As an act of the will, we must

Confess our unforgiving spirit to God; ask Him to forgive us and to fill our heart with His love (1 John 1:9,10).

If possible, go to those we have wronged, share God's love and forgiveness with them, humbly make confession, and ask for their forgiveness (Matthew 5:22-24).

Spend time daily with the Lord in His Word, and in prayer (Matthew 6:33).

Ponder the meaning of the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for your sins (Titus 3:3-5).

Ask the Holy Spirit to generate His love within your heart and give you the strength to obey and forgive others (Romans 5:5).

*"Forgiveness is not an emotion...
Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function
regardless of the temperature of the heart."
Corrie ten Boom*

*"Whenever I see myself before God and
realize something of what my blessed Lord
has done for me at Calvary, I am ready to
forgive anybody anything, I cannot withhold
it. I do not even want to withhold it."
Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

*"The degree to which I am able and willing to forgive
others is a clear indication of the extent to which I have
personally experienced God my Father's forgiveness for me."
Phillip Keller*

*Six of the most powerful words
in the English language,
"I was wrong. Please forgive me."*

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

It is awfully hard to forgive. It is harder not to forgive. If we do not forgive, we deny what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Our experience of God's forgiveness is directly related to our ability to forgive. A readiness to forgive others is part of the indication that we have truly repented and received God's forgiveness. A broken heart toward God cannot be a hard heart toward others.

Pride and fear keep us from forgiveness and reconciliation. Refusing to give in, or be broken, insisting on our rights, and defending ourselves are all indications that our selfish pride is ruling our life, rather than the Lord. If fears of *what-ifs* are consuming and controlling you, you need to pray for the faith to trust and obey God. Enemies are very expensive to keep. Matthew 18:21-35 warns that an unforgiving spirit will put us in an emotional prison.

"The first and often the only person to be healed by forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving... When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner we set free was us."
Lewis Smedes

You can go to our website at www.parentingministry.org to download a 13 page Workbook that may help you or someone you know further in this area.

Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication

Step One: Each night get alone with the Lord and ask Him to soften your heart and to speak to you on what you could have done differently in your discussions, arguments or situations with your spouse on this day.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Ask the Lord: Was there something I could have said or done with or to my spouse that would have glorified God better and/or stopped a situation from turning into an argument?

Step Two: Read the following verses and let the Lord reveal to you your part in this situation.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NKJV) Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away.

1: Were you impatient? Suffering long means you exercised the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 (NKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Or did your flesh rise up and want justice or your own way?

2: Were you unkind? The opposite of kindness is unkindness. Did you provoke your spouse? Did you get angry, yell, say hurtful/mean things? Did you judge them, ignore them or were you resentful towards them?

Romans 12:10 (NKJV) Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

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3: Was jealousy the motive behind your actions toward your spouse?

Romans 13:13-14 (NAS) Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

4: Were you haughty or arrogant? Did you belittle your spouse or make them feel unimportant?

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV) Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.

5: Were you rude or act unbecoming? Did you embarrass your spouse or say something bad about them in front of someone else? Did you do something rude toward them that they have asked you not to do?

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

6: Were you only thinking of your position or side and not considering your spouse's view? Did you become defensive and try to defend your position and/or excuse your actions?

Philippians 2:3 (NKJV) Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

7: Were you harboring bad thoughts toward your spouse minutes, hours, or days before this situation occurred? God has told us not to harbor bad thoughts but to forgive.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

We need to take responsibility when we allow our mind to be consumed with bad or evil thoughts toward our spouse. If God knows us, all our sin, past, future, and yet His thoughts toward us are only good – **Psalm 139:17-18** – then how can we justify evil thoughts toward our spouse?

8: Have you been allowing discouragement and hopelessness toward your marriage overwhelm you? Have you been doubting God and His almighty power to intercede for you? “Love hopes all things.” Not doubts all things. If you doubt God and focus on your past problems and not on the loving all-powerful God, you will become discouraged and you will act this out to or in front of your spouse.

Romans 5:5 (NKJV) Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Step Three: Pray & ask for God's forgiveness.

Step Four: Pray now and ask God for the humility and the strength to sit down with your spouse and admit your faults and ask for forgiveness. Then pray together with your spouse and together ask God for His strength to break these ungodly and sinful habits that have been practiced for so long.

Remember: Understanding how to meet each others companionship needs as a husband and wife takes time and loving communication. It also takes an attitude and willingness of wanting to learn and change.

- Q: Do you agree? Yes No
Q: Are you finished learning? Yes No

LOVING COMMUNICATION SELF-EVALUATION

Complete the *Loving Communication Self-Evaluation* to help you become more aware of your listening habits. Answer each question thoughtfully and honestly, then discuss as a couple.

Communicating Knowledge and Attitudes

#	Do You...	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
1	...tune-out your spouse when you don't agree with him/her or don't want to hear?				
2	...concentrate on what is being said even if you are not really interested?				
3	...assume you know what your spouse is going to say and stop listening?				
4	...repeat in your own words what your spouse has just said?				
5	...listen to your spouse's viewpoint, even if it differs from yours?				
6	...remain open to learning something from them, even if it seems insignificant?				
7	...find out what words mean when they are used in ways not familiar to you?				
8	...form a rebuttal in your head while your spouse is still talking?				
9	...give the appearance of listening when you are not?				
10	...daydream when your spouse is talking?				
11	...listen for main ideas, not just facts?				
12	...recognize that words don't always mean the same thing to different people?				
13	...listen to only what you want to hear, blotting out your spouse's whole message?				
14	...look at your spouse when he/she is speaking?				
15	...concentrate on your spouse's meaning rather than how he/she looks?				
16	...know which words and phrases you tend to respond to defensively or resentfully?				
17	...think about what you want to accomplish with your communication?				

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Communicating Knowledge and Attitudes

#	Do You...	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
18	...plan the best time to say what you want to say?				
19	...think about how your spouse might react to what you say?				
20	...consider the best way to communicate (written, spoken, and/or the timing)?				
21	...always care about your spouse's emotional condition when speaking to him/her (if he/she is stressed, sad, worried, hostile, disinterested, rushed, angry, etc.)?				
22	...adjust your communication to your spouse's personality?				
23	...assume that your spouse knows and understands what you are communicating or have communicated to him/her?				
24	...allow your spouse to respectfully vent negative feelings toward you without becoming defensive?				
25	...regularly make efforts to increase your listening efficiency?				
26	...take notes, when necessary, to help you remember.				
27	...listen closely without being distracted by surroundings and/or children?				
28	...listen to your spouse without judging or criticizing?				
29	...restate instructions and messages to be sure you understand correctly?				
30	...listen to your spouse with preconceived assumptions or attitudes?				
31	... take responsibility for your part in the unloving communication by asking the Lord and your spouse to forgive you?				
32	... discuss with your children any difficulties you're having with your spouse?				

Note: Make sure you complete both pages of this self-evaluation as we will be using it in our next discipleship class.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Improve Your Loving Communication Habits

(complete individually, then discuss as a couple)

Review pages 8 - 11 of your workbook and write out, by priority, any unbiblical communication habits you have been practicing in your home that you need God's strength to change.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

If you believe that you have not been demonstrating loving communication to your spouse, I strongly recommend that you follow the following steps to reconciliation.

- 1) Confess this to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you for not communicating love to *His* son/daughter.

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

- 2) Ask God to fill your heart with renewed love for your spouse.

Romans 5:5 *"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

- 3) Go to your spouse and confess your sin. For example, *"I love you, but I know that I have not been showing you that love with my words. I have been very impatient (unkind, etc.) and I apologize. Please forgive me. I love you and I am so glad to be your husband/wife."*

- 4) Pray with your spouse.

Write out a prayer of commitment to seek the Lord to empower you to change in these areas and to become the husband or wife that God desires you to be.

Marriage Is A Ministry – Self-Evaluation Scoring Sheet

To be used to score the homework on pages 19A & 19B

Effective Listening Self-Evaluation Scoring Index
--

Circle the number that represents the category you checked on each item of the *Effective Listening Self-Evaluation*.

#	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost Never
1	1	2	3	4
2	4	3	2	1
3	1	2	3	4
4	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
6	4	3	2	1
7	4	3	2	1
8	1	2	3	4
9	1	2	3	4
10	1	2	3	4
11	4	3	2	1
12	4	3	2	1
13	1	2	3	4
14	4	3	2	1
15	4	3	2	1
16	4	3	2	1
17	4	3	2	1
18	4	3	2	1
19	4	3	2	1
20	4	3	2	1
21	4	3	2	1
22	4	3	2	1
23	1	2	3	4
24	4	3	2	1
25	4	3	2	1
26	4	3	2	1
27	4	3	2	1
28	4	3	2	1
29	4	3	2	1
30	4	3	2	1
31	4	3	2	1
32	4	3	2	1
Total				

GRAND TOTAL _____

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| 110-120: Superior Listener | _____ |
| 99-109: Above Average Listener | _____ |
| 88-98: Average Listener | _____ |
| 77-87: Fair Listener | _____ |
| <77: Poor to Very Poor Listener | _____ |

*Marriage
Is A
Ministry*

Session Three
*The Husband's
Companionship Needs*

Marriage Is A Ministry

The Husband's Companionship Needs

Marriage was created by God for His will and purpose – not ours.

Hebrews 13:20-2 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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."

God knows you better than you do and He knows what each of you needs better than you do because He is your creator.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

Don't trust your heart. **Trust God's Word!**

God's Word reveals our companionship needs.

Ephesians 5:21 ...submitting to one another in the fear of God.

- 1) We are equal in value to God.
- 2) A yielding and submissive spirit ready to fulfill the will of God toward our spouse motivated by our desire to please God.

When you do not surrender to fulfill God's will in your marriage, or you attempt to do so for selfish motives, you will personally experience one or more of the Three D's:

D _____

D _____

D _____

Wives to Husbands

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

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Ephesians 5:33 ...and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Hurts from the past can become strongholds hindering a wife from accepting the authority structure God designed for the family.

Submit = A voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.

God's word instructs a wife to put her trust in Christ and yield to His perfect plan for fulfilling her husband's companionship needs.

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

God's influence in your marriage must be greater than the influence of anyone or anything else.

Hate = To love less or to love God less.

A husbands companionship need is continual affirmation to his headship or leadership over the family.

Remember that this is God's plan, not your husband's plan. God has called and anointed your husband.

Romans 8:6-8 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

See your husband through the eyes of Christ, as Christ sees him.

A wife is to be a tool of God to help her husband become what God has called him to be, not in her own way but in God's way.

Most men did not observe a godly example of how to be a godly husband and father as he grew up.

Therefore, what if he is not doing things right or is not following God's word?

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1 Peter 3:1-6 *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 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. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.*

...that even if some do not obey the word: this applies to non-believers and believers.

...without a word: not nagging, demeaning, mean, harsh, judging or bad mouthing.

...by your conduct: by your obedience to God in how you submit to your husband.

Your husband should be 2nd only to God in your life, not because he deserves it, but God commands it.

Proverbs 18:22 *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*

Proverbs 27:15 *A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike;*

A contentious wife is unwilling to trust and obey the Lord by affirming her husband's leadership role.

Husbands need to be affirmed in their leadership role by their wife - ALWAYS!

Common disaffirming practices:

- ◆ Bad mouthing about your husband to others
- ◆ Correcting him in front of the children and others
- ◆ Refusing to put older children to work ahead of your husband
- ◆ Not supporting him in the disciplining of the children
- ◆ Telling him how to _____ without him asking for your help.
- ◆ Unwilling to serve him in public
- ◆ Unwilling to cooperate with him on the financial matters of the home
- ◆ Unwilling to surrender to him physically

Our bodies are not our own they belong to our spouse – see 1Corinthians 7:4-5 and Proverbs 18:20

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

“...as is fitting in the Lord.” Means unless your husband is asking you to do something that is against His Word, not against your will, but His Word, you are to submit to him. To try, in the power of the Holy Spirit (not your power), to fulfill his companionship needs...even physically.

Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled;*

*Marriage
Is A
Ministry*

HOMEWORK SECTION

FOR

Session Three

*The Husband's
Companionship Needs*

SESSION THREE 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.

Brief Exhortation: The purpose and spirit of the homework is Ephesians 5:21 *"submitting one to another in the fear of God"*. This means that in order for us to receive the help we need to live a truly fulfilled marriage life together, we must have an open mind and a willing heart motivated by a real desire to receive God's grace and instructions above all else to fulfill God's commands as a wife or husband. Only when we commit ourselves to intimacy with and obedience to Christ is our bondage to sin toward our spouse unlocked from holding us captive as a tool of the devil.

HOMEWORK for SESSION THREE

1. Worksheet - Husbands, do you feel affirmed by your wife? (page 23)

The purpose of this worksheet is to give structure and bring clarity in specific areas in which a husband was designed by God to receive affirmation from his wife. When a husband privately and prayerfully assesses his wife's level of affirmation in each of the prescribed areas, he is able to provide her with an honest evaluation in accordance with his perspective. This process will reveal areas of struggle the wife is having fulfilling God's will for her life as it relates to her marriage. This will also provide the husband with a new or renewed understanding as to why he may have been experiencing difficulty with pursuing intimacy and companionship with his wife. Oftentimes when a husband is not affirmed by his wife in some area his flesh and/or the enemy brings confusion to him resulting in the husband seeking his affirmation elsewhere. Many men today, due to this problem, are not investing themselves thoroughly in their relationship with their wife and possibly the rest of their family. This may result in their failure to provide the companionship need their wife has that we will learn about in the next session. This can become a destructive downward spiral if not met with trust and confidence in the Word and power of God.

Read the instructions and example at the bottom of page 23 to learn how to incorporate this worksheet with the worksheet found on page 23A.

2. Worksheet - Specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions for your wife (page 23A).

- Read the instructions on the top of page 23A before completing this worksheet.

The purpose of this worksheet is for the husband to prayerfully write out specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions his wife can do to improve her affirmation of him in specific areas in which her affirmation toward him is less than what God desires. It will be important for the husband not to overwhelm his wife with too much to start by working on every area that is not perfect. Instead the husband should give 1 or 2 suggestions for the areas in which he graded his wife less than a 4. Some men may have difficulty completing this worksheet. We exhort you men not to abandon the activity, but to pray for God to influence your suggestions. Be specific and not general. Make the suggestions practical so implementation is possible and tangible, and non-judgmental so as not to discourage your wife. Seek additional help from a church leader, an assigned marriage mentor or your pastor, if necessary. Encourage your wife to review sessions 1 and 2 this week and to be praying for you through this week.

- Continue in your daily abiding relationship with Jesus Christ and continue to build your strong foundation.

SESSION THREE HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

- Continue to use the Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication worksheet each time there is unloving communication.

If you are in a small group discipleship class, husbands are to prayerfully complete these pages and do not discuss them with their wives until directed to do so during next week's class. It is important that the husbands complete both worksheets before the next class because these suggestions will be the focus of the next week's homework review.

If you are completing this exercise as an independent study, make sure your wife has a writing pad to write out in her own words her responses to your specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions for her to affirm you.

- Find a private place and time where the husband can carefully present to his wife 1 to 2 suggestions from page 23A for each category from page 23 in which the husband gave a rating of 4 or lower. Remember, you are to communicate about these areas in ways that glorify Christ. Seek help from a church leader, marriage mentor or your pastor if things become difficult, but do not abandon this exercise.
- We suggest that the husband begins this discussion in prayer with his wife asking God for grace and gentleness in his communication, for God to grant his wife a receptive heart without becoming defensive, and for God to grant them protection from the attacks of the enemy and his attempts to discourage their obedience to Christ.
- We encourage the wife to resist the enemy's attacks to tempt her to become defensive. We suggest for the wife to first repeat back to her husband what she heard him say before writing out her practical response. Wives should be as specific as possible when writing in her own words her understanding of her husband's suggestions for her to affirm him.

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.

Remember, practicing loving communication and biblical forgiveness and reconciliation are the tools God uses to break up the hardened soil of our hearts and our spouse's heart so His Word and grace can have the impact He desires. He will have victory if we will come to Him, hear Him and do what He says.

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. You may obtain a copy of the workbook, ***The Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation*** from your leader who has it on a PC disc contained in the *Marriage is a Ministry* DVD kit.

You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Husband: for the list below, use a scale from 0 to 5 (*0 being not at all; 5 being very affirming*) and rate how you feel your wife is affirming you. This is not a time to be vindictive but to begin to bring clarity and healing to these areas. See *Forgiveness & Reconciliation* on page 12, if needed. Do not share this with your wife yet. Read the instructions at the bottom of this page after you have prayerfully completed this worksheet.

Husbands, do you feel affirmed by your wife in these areas?

Write in your number (0-5)

Spiritual

- Going to Church _____
- Praying with Children _____
- Discussing Personal Devotion _____
- Praying Together _____
- Bible Study with Children _____
- Accepting your leadership _____

Communication

- Caring about the day's events at the office or job _____
- Able to share honestly how you feel about all subjects _____
- Discussing finances _____
- Always speaks with a loving, affirming tone _____
- Makes herself available each day to talk _____
- Feel safe to share deepest needs or emotions with her _____
- Feel free to laugh and/or cry with her _____
- Always speaks honorably to you _____
- Always speaks honorably about you to others _____

Physical and/or Sexual

- Tells you she loves you often _____
- Regular sexual relations _____
- Able to share openly your desires for physical fulfillment _____

Non-sexual touching

- Cuddling _____
- Holding hands _____
- Hugging _____
- Massaging _____
- Kissing _____

Parenting

- Willing to trust your decisions in discipline _____
- Supports you when disciplining children _____
- Supports rules that have been set by you _____
- Always speaks honorably about you in front of children _____

After you have completed this worksheet, **do not discuss this with your wife.** Instead, write on page 23A specific, non-judgmental, practical suggestions for ways your wife can improve in affirming you in the areas you gave your wife a mark of less than 5. For example: if you gave your wife less than a mark of 5 for regular sexual relations, your suggestion might be for your wife to have a more cooperative attitude throughout the week, that his wife would initiate a couple of times per month, and that they would engage in intimacy 2 – 3 times per week minimum.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

(Complete individually, but do not discuss with your wife until directed to do so by the leader)

Specific, Practical, Non-judgmental Suggestions for Your Wife

Remember, the purpose of this exercise is for you to try to be prepared to lovingly communicate to your wife, without attacking or condemning, giving specific, practical suggestions for your wife to do to improve at meeting your unique companionship needs. Your wife's concept of your unique companionship needs may be very different from yours or God's. So it is very important that your suggestions are as complete as possible using specific explanations and positive encouragement, but also as brief as possible. Consider how your suggestions might sound if someone else was giving them to you. Don't compromise, but be gentle and considerate of your wife.

Spiritual

Communication

Physical and/or Sexual

Non-sexual touching

Parenting

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Session Four
*The Wife's
Companionship Needs*

Marriage Is A Ministry

The Wife's Companionship Needs

Ephesians 5:25-31 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*

Security through the love of Christ flowing through her husband – not based upon what she does or does not do, but based upon the example of Jesus and the Word of God.

1. Love your wife as Christ loved the Church and give yourself for her:

The opposite of security is fear.

1 John 4:18-21 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

Philippians 1:6 *...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

This reminds husbands to trust in Christ and reminds wives that her husband is a work in progress.

Jesus is our example to follow. Only His example and His Word are to be our measuring tools.

2. Sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word:

- ◆ We all fail, we're human – we need to take ownership, repent, and ask for forgiveness daily.
- ◆ When God's Word is our guide for how we treat our wife we will not excuse ourselves when we are sinful or harsh toward them.
- ◆ We can't excuse ungodly behavior in our homes toward our wife or children – this makes our wife feel insecure.

This verse also includes the importance of discipling our wife, sharing biblical truth and growing together – church, mid-week study, personal devotion, prayer and example.

Marriage Is A Ministry

Wives: what if you are married to an unsaved or unwilling husband?

Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

3. Vs. 28-30 “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.”

Your wife needs to be treated as an extension of your own body by adapting to the uniqueness of her personality.

Leading in the training up of the children and the peace keeping of the home.

Ephesians 6:4 “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Tending to her as you do your own body.

Learning to tend to your wife takes:

1. Time: _____
2. A Willingness - A desire to learn and adapt: _____
3. Communication – both listening and communicating in love: _____

If communication is strained, consider writing letters to one another.

Your wife’s unique companionship need is security:

1. Security that you are looking to God and His Word for direction in all areas of your marriage and family.
2. Security in knowing you have answered the call to be the priest in your family – to lead in spiritual matters...prayer...disciplining and discipling your children...church.
3. Security in knowing that it is your desire to see her and treat them as you treat yourself and willing to learn how to adapt to their uniqueness – to learn how to communicate to them and treat them with love & gentleness always.

Marriage Is A Ministry

How do I provide loving security for my wife when she struggles with God’s plan for leadership within our home?

2 Timothy 2:24-26 *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. “*

1. Not quarrel = _____

2. Gentle = _____

3. Able to teach = _____

4. Patient = _____

5. In humility = _____

6. Correcting = _____

When you desire to consistently love her this way, then she will feel more secure and find it easier to trust you and embrace your authority over your family.

“It’s not hard to understand God’s Word and His instructions to us. The hard part is us denying our flesh and yielding to His Spirit and His will, and humbly taking responsibility each and every day when we fail.”

Place 2 commas in the sentence below wherever appropriate to give the sentence meaning.

Woman without her man is lost.

Without changing any words, this sentence can have two distinct meanings depending upon where you placed the commas. In marriage, both of these answers are equally true.

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HOMEWORK SECTION

FOR

Session Four

*The Wife's
Companionship Needs*

SESSION FOUR 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.

Brief Exhortation: The purpose and spirit of the homework is Ephesians 5:21 *"submitting one to another in the fear of God"*. This means that in order for us to receive the help we need to live a truly fulfilled marriage life together, we must have an open mind and a willing heart motivated by a real desire to receive God's grace and instructions above all else to fulfill God's commands as a wife or husband. Only when we commit ourselves to intimacy with and obedience to Christ is our bondage to sin toward our spouse unlocked from holding us captive as a tool of the devil.

HOMEWORK for SESSION FOUR

1. Worksheet – Wives, do you feel secure? (page 27)

The purpose of this worksheet is to give structure in specific areas in which a wife was designed by God to receive security from her husband. When a wife privately and prayerfully assesses her husband's level of providing loving security for her in each of the prescribed areas, she is able to provide her husband with an honest evaluation in accordance with her perspective. This process will reveal areas of struggle that her husband is experiencing in fulfilling God's will for his life as it relates to his marriage. This will also provide the wife with a new or renewed understanding as to why she may have been experiencing difficulty with pursuing intimacy and companionship with her husband. Often times when a wife is not experiencing loving security from her husband in some area her flesh and/or the enemy brings confusion causing many to seek false loving security elsewhere and not invest herself thoroughly in her relationship with her husband. This may result in her failure to provide the affirmation her husband needs by treating him as a lower priority in her life compared to the children, a career or outside activities. This can become a destructive downward spiral if not met with trust and confidence in the Word and power of God.

Read the instructions and example at the bottom of page 27 to learn how to incorporate this worksheet with the worksheet found on page 27A.

2. Worksheet - Specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions for your husband (page 27A)

- Read the instructions on the top of page 27A before completing this worksheet.

The purpose of this worksheet is for the wife to prayerfully write out specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions her husband can do to improve his providing loving security to her in specific areas in which his provision is less than what God desires. The wife should give 1 or 2 suggestions for the specific areas in which she graded her husband less than a 4. Some women may have difficulty completing this worksheet. We exhort you women not to abandon the activity, but to pray for God to influence your suggestions. Be specific and not general. Make the suggestions practical so implementation is possible and tangible, and non-judgmental so as not to discourage your husband. Seek additional help from a church leader, an assigned marriage mentor or your pastor, if necessary.

- Continue in your daily abiding relationship with Jesus Christ and continue to build your strong foundation.
- Continue to use the Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication worksheet each time there is unloving communication.
- Husbands should review sessions 1 and 2 this week and to be praying for your wife through this week.

SESSION FOUR HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

- Wives should continue to work on the suggestions your husband previously gave to you from session #3.

If you are in a small group discipleship class, wives are to prayerfully complete these pages and do not discuss them with their husbands until directed to do so during next week's class. It is important that the wives complete both worksheets before the next class because these suggestions will be the focus of the next week's homework review.

If you are completing this exercise as an independent study, get a writing pad and write in your own words your responses to her specific, practical, non-judgmental suggestions for you to provide her with loving security.

- Find a private place and time where the wife can carefully present to her husband 1 to 2 suggestions from page 27A for each category from page 27 in which the wife gave a rating of 4 or lower. Remember, you are trying to practice communicating about these areas in ways that glorify Christ so you can learn to communicate this way for the rest of your lives. Seek help from a church leader, marriage mentor or your pastor if things become difficult, but do not abandon this exercise.
- We suggest that the couple begins this discussion in prayer with his wife asking God for grace and gentleness in her communication, for God to grant her husband a receptive heart without becoming defensive, and for God to grant them protection from the attacks of the enemy and his attempts to discourage their obedience to Christ.
- We encourage the husband to resist the enemy's attacks to tempt her to become defensive. We suggest for the husband to first repeat back to his wife what he heard her say before writing out his practical response. Husbands should be as specific as possible when writing in his own words his understanding of his wife's suggestions for him to provide godly security for her.

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.

Remember, practicing loving communication and biblical forgiveness and reconciliation are the tools God uses to break up the hardened soil of our hearts and our spouse's heart so His Word and grace can have the impact He desires. He will have victory if we will come to Him, hear Him and do what He says.

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.

You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Wife: for the list below, use a scale from 0 to 5 (*0 being not at all; 5 being very secure*) and rate how your husband helps you feel secure in these areas. This is not a time to be vindictive but to begin to bring clarity and healing to these areas. See *Forgiveness & Reconciliation* on page 12, if needed. Do not share this with your husband, yet. Read the instructions at the bottom of this page after you have prayerfully completed this worksheet.

Wives, do you feel secure in these areas?

Write in your number (0-5)

Spiritual

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| • Going to Church | _____ | • Praying Together | _____ |
| • Praying with Children | _____ | • Bible Study with Children | _____ |
| • Discussing Spiritual Things | _____ | • Providing godly leadership | _____ |

Communication

- Caring about the day's events. _____
- Able to share honestly how you feel about all subjects. _____
- Discussing finances _____
- Always speaks with love and gentleness. _____
- Makes himself available each day to talk. _____
- Feel safe to share deepest needs or emotions with him. _____
- Feel free to laugh and/or cry with him. _____
- Always speaks honorably to you. _____
- Always speaks honorably about you to others _____

Physical and/or Sexual

- Tells you he loves you often. _____
- Regular sexual relations. _____
- Able to share openly your desires for physical fulfillment. _____

Non-sexual touching

- Cuddling _____
- Holding hands _____
- Hugging _____
- Massaging _____
- Kissing _____

Parenting

- Willing to lead in the discipline of the children. _____
- Supports you when disciplining children. _____
- Cares about and participates in the children's interests. _____
- Always speaks honorably about you in front of children. _____
- Willing to show proper affection to children. _____

After you have completed this worksheet, **do not discuss this with your husband.** Instead, write on page 27A specific, non-judgmental, practical suggestions for ways your husband can improve in providing security to you in the areas you gave your husband a mark less than a 5. For example: if you gave your husband one of the lower marks for discussing finances your suggestion might be for your husband to be willing to calmly discuss an income and expense budget together and that he will commit to a joint monthly review.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

(Complete individually, but do not discuss with your husband until directed to do so by the leader)

Specific, Practical, Non-judgmental Suggestions for Your Husband

Remember, the purpose of this exercise is for you to try to be prepared to lovingly communicate to your husband, without attacking or condemning, giving specific, practical suggestions for your husband to do to improve at meeting your unique companionship needs. Your husband's concept of your unique companionship needs may be very different from yours or God's. So it is very important that your suggestions are as complete as possible using specific explanations and positive encouragement, but also as brief as possible. Consider how your suggestions might sound if someone else was giving them to you. Don't compromise, but be gentle and considerate of your husband.

Spiritual

Communication

Physical and/or Sexual

Non-sexual touching

Parenting

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Session Five

What Is Godly Leadership?

Marriage Is A Ministry

What Is Godly Leadership?

Jesus called you knowing everything about you (see Psalm 139:1-18 & Mat 10:30)

2 Timothy 1:9 *“who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,”*

He saved you: _____

He has called us all unto a Holy calling: _____

Not according to our works: _____

But according to His own purpose and grace: _____

Not in our own power but in His power: _____

Philippians 1:6 *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”*

Being confident means: _____

Mark 11:22-24 *So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”*

The key to being a leader/overseer of your family is by believing the promises of God yourself, denying who we were in the past (our own ways) and abiding in Jesus daily.

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

Ephesians 1:3-4 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,”*

He chose you and promises to give you all you will need to fulfill His calling upon your life.

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

Ephesians 2:10 *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

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.”*

A helper = an assistant. This is God's design.

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God established the authority in our family.

1 Corinthians 11:3 *“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”*

Colossians 3:18-21 *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”*

God – Man – Woman – Children

How Has God Told Us To Lead?

1. **2 Timothy 2:24-25** *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,”*

As a servant: _____
Gentle to all: _____
Able to teach: _____
With patience: _____
In humility: _____
Correcting those in opposition: _____

God’s judgment for not embracing His authority structure is clear.

Romans 13:1-2 *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.”*

2. As overseers we are priests also.

Ephesians 5:26 *“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”*

A father is to lead in the training of his children. _____

Ephesians 6:4 *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

1 Timothy 3:4 *“one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence”*

To Rule = To Manage

Marriage Is A Ministry

Ephesians 5:25-26 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

Have you ever considered yourself a priest? Your family is your congregation.

- 1) Daily devotion _____
- 2) Being an example _____
- 3) Prayer with your wife and children at home daily _____
- 4) Discipling your children _____
- 5) Family is in church _____
- 6) Financial stewardship _____

3. A Provider

1 Timothy 5:8 *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.*

Let your Lord set your priorities, not your flesh.

Matthew 6:24 *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

It takes time to be a godly leader.

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

2 Peter 1: 1-4 *“Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

Hebrews 13:20-21 *“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

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Is A
Ministry*

HOMEWORK SECTION

FOR

Session Five

What Is Godly Leadership?

SESSION FIVE 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.

1. **Worksheet for the husbands only on pages 31 – 32, *Helping You Become A Godly Leader*.**

Many husbands find themselves willing to step into the role of leader in their home only when their wife is in agreement and only in those areas she permits. Many husbands are ignorant to God's plan and promises for them so they are not convinced that God really has called them to lead, especially when they have a wife that is resistant to such leadership. This worksheet will clear up any confusion about God's plan and promises, but a husband must believe in order to receive. He must be willing to follow God's plan, resting in His promises, executing God's will growing in the character of Jesus Christ even if his wife is slow to adapt to God's plan. A husband must trust God's Word in order to properly lead his family, not his own emotions, beliefs or the temperament of his wife.

2. **Worksheet for all disciples on pages 33 – 34, *Common Reasons We Fail*.**

Many husbands are unaware of the reasons they fail to lead as God commands, or to love their wives and meet her unique companionship needs. Many wives are unaware of the reasons they fail to accept God's plan for leadership in the home, or to love her husband and meet his unique companionship needs. This worksheet will help expose the tactics of the enemy and the possible strongholds that have hindered many disciples from accepting God's purposes for marriage. In either case the result is disciples not diligently investing themselves in fulfilling God's plan thereby permitting their flesh to reign in particular circumstances. The conclusion of this exercise will reveal to each disciple that God will test and refine us by bringing or permitting trials in our lives to both reveal our sin and transform us.

3. We encourage wives to review once again the principles taught on page 22 for affirming her husband without regard to his following the Word of God. Remember, unless a husband is asking something of his wife that is in direct conflict with a specific scriptural command she needs to prayerfully comply.

4. Everyone to continue in his or her daily abiding devotion to Jesus Christ and continue to build his or her strong foundation.

5. Continue to use the Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication worksheet each time there is unloving communication.

6. Both husbands and wives should be praying about and diligently working toward improving on meeting their spouse's companionship needs. They should continue referring back to the worksheets on pages 23, 23A, 27 & 27A in order to be intentional about meeting each others companionship needs. When they have improved in the first areas of focus, they should work on the other areas that were graded less than a 5 by their spouse until there are no grades less than a 5.

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.

SESSION FIVE HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Remember, practicing loving communication and biblical forgiveness and reconciliation are the tools God uses to break up the hardened soil of our hearts and our spouse's heart so His Word and grace can have the impact He desires. He will have victory if we will come to Him, hear Him and do what He says.

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. You may obtain a copy of the workbook, ***The Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation*** from your leader who has it on a PC disc in the *Marriage is a Ministry* DVD kit.

You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

Read the verses below and answer the following questions.

2 Peter 1:2-11 *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

1. Do you believe God has given you exceedingly great and precious promises? List the promises God has given you. *Example: Salvation, all your sins forgiven, etc.*

Here are some verses to help you.

Psalms 73:23-24 ♦ Psalms 91:1-2 ♦ Psalms 103:8-18 ♦ Proverbs 3:5-6 ♦ Matthew 11:28-30 ♦ Romans 8:28-39 ♦ 1 Corinthians 10:13 ♦ 2 Corinthians 5:17 ♦ 2 Corinthians 9:8 ♦ Ephesians 6:10-12 ♦ Philippians 4:6-7 ♦ Titus 3:4-6 ♦ James 1:2-4 ♦ 1 Peter 5:6-7

2. By His divine nature we are courageous, victorious, and able to do His will and become the leaders, husbands, and fathers He has called us to be (*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phi 4:13*). Not by our power for there is nothing good in us (*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5*). It is by His grace alone are we able to do this (*So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21*). Use the lines below and thank the Lord for this promise.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

3. In 2 Peter 1:5 it says that we are to *add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge*, etc. This word: add is our part. We have to make a decision and commit to learning the things of God.

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Write out your prayerful commitment to begin this pursuit.

4. The attributes mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7 are gifts of the Holy Spirit for you: *faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love*. These things will manifest themselves in and through us as we daily abide in Him. Tell the Lord how you desire these precious gifts using the lines below.

5. Is there anything that is hindering you from embracing God's calling upon your life to be the leader, husband and father that God has called you to be? Yes No
If yes, please explain. _____

6. Are you willing to invest yourself to be disciplined by another brother that is willing to spend the time necessary to teach you to walk as leader and priest in your home?

Yes No If no, please explain: _____

If yes, please write your name and telephone number on a separate piece of paper and give it to your small group discipler so someone from our fellowship can contact you to begin.

7. Thank the Lord in prayer for His provision of a capable discipler and ask Him to give you the grace to invest yourself and apply yourself to learning to become the leader and priest He has called you to be. You may wish to review *How to Develop Intimacy With God Through Daily Devotions* on page 6 of the first weeks handouts.

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

The Bible tells us that there are some common reasons that men do not lead as God desires or women do not affirm their husbands as God desires. Their stumbling block or stronghold can be one or more of those listed below. If the Lord speaks to you in any of these areas, take time to confess it to Him and ask Him to strengthen you to abide in Him to fulfill His call upon your life. Write your confessions and prayers in the space provided in each area, if applicable.

1. Unforgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Forgiveness does not mean:

- That the offender agrees with you that what they did was wrong.
 - That the offender asks for your forgiveness.
 - That the offender accepts your forgiveness.
 - That the relationship has to be or will be restored.
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-
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2. Deception - Satan attacks our minds to get us to disobey Christ and doubt who we are in Him

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"*

Satan uses these common weapons against us:

- He lies to get us to doubt the promises of God - Read John 8:44
 - Condemnation or accusations against others or ourselves - Read Revelation 12:9,10
 - Looking back at our past instead of who we are in Christ - Read 2Corinthians 5:17-21
-
-
-

3. Persecution - Are you ready and willing to be patient with your spouse as you and your spouse work toward making these changes?

Matthew 5:43-48

- _____ your enemies.
- _____ those who curse you.
- _____ to those who hate you.
- _____ for those who spitefully use and persecute you.

1 Peter 2:20-21 *"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps"*

Marriage Is A Ministry - Homework

4. Selfishness – Remember it is not our way, but His. Not our timing, but His. Press on!

1 Corinthians 13:5 “...does not seek its own...”

Luke 9:23 “Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

Satan desires to derail your focus and attention from the priorities of God to things not of God; your past failures, the world or yourself and your wants.

God Tests Us

1 Thessalonians 2:4 ‘But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.”

God Refines Us

Malachi 3:3 “He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.”

God tells us that He tests our hearts and He will refine us through the process of purification. He tells us that this is a process, not a one-time event. As His testings reveal the sin in us, and our spouse, He desires that we would confess our sin to Him and commit ourselves to abide in Him daily as we deny our sinful ways and learn from Him to follow Him. Our part is to daily commit ourselves to Him and His Word, and to humbly come to Him in prayer to ask Him to transform us as we abide in Him. As we walk in obedience to His word, He will do the work of transformation in us so we can glorify Him by loving our spouse and meeting his/her unique companionship needs as He designed us to do.

God does not say that we are perfect because we do everything perfectly, but we are perfect when walk with a heart perfectly fixed on Him.

Psalms 101:2c “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”

A “perfect heart” is a heart firmly directed toward God and motivated by love to walk in a manner pleasing to Him in all our ways. In this we glorify Him. Write a prayer to ask the Lord to give you a “perfect heart” to walk within your house as He has called you to walk.

Be patient. Don’t get discouraged. Commit yourself daily to be transformed by His Word and His Spirit. Take responsibility when you fail and watch what God does.

Marriage Is A Ministry

Appendices

- ***Starting Over (Session #6)***
- ***Disciple Self-Evaluation Checklist (Session #7)***
- ***Comment Form (Session #7)***

APPENDICES HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Everyone should start over with God's antidote for healing their own heart, casting down strongholds and destroying the deceptions of the enemy.

1. Turn to pages 12 – 15 of session #2 for the Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Previously these principles were reviewed in the context of loving communication. Now review these principles in light of God's purposes for marriage, unloving communication, meeting our spouse's unique companionship needs as ordained by God and godly leadership in the home.
2. Review of the main points:

The Cost of Unforgiveness

- What did you learned about the cost to yourself in light of what you have learned over the previous weeks studying Marriage Is A Ministry?

Why Forgive?

1. God commands it!
 2. In forgiving, we resemble Jesus, and bear the family likeness.
 3. It is the only means of breaking the cycle of blame and pain.
 4. Forgiveness loosens the stranglehold of guilt in the offender.
- Discuss together where you have been stuck in unforgiveness in the past?
 - How has God revealed to you from the above list why you must forgive your spouse in order to grow in Christ?

Reconciliation

- Review the steps for reconciliation with one another found on page 14.
4. If we choose not to forgive, what does this indicate to ourselves (see page 15)?
 5. What keeps us from forgiveness and reconciliation with our spouse (see page 15)?
 6. When we refuse to forgive who or what is lord of our lives? Who should be lord of our lives? (see page 15)
 7. What should you do if fear is keeping you from forgiving and reconciling with your spouse? (see page 15)
 8. What does Matthew 18:21-35 tell us are the consequences of unforgiveness?

Turn to appendix page 1 and follow the three steps for starting over using biblical forgiveness and reconciliation if this has not already been done.

Review together the **Four Points Of True Forgiveness.**

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.

APPENDICES HOMEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Continue practicing loving communication, forgiveness and reconciliation, and diligently working on meeting each others companionship needs under the guidelines of godly leadership in your home.

Before you panic due to disorder and confusion in your home, review **Appendix page 2** and answer each of the points as it pertains to you personally. Remember, transformation is a process that is realized by consistent obedience to God's Word, not by living according to our own desires. If you continue to have struggles that you cannot resolve, seek counsel from your pastor.

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. You may obtain a copy of the workbook, ***The Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation*** from your leader who has it on a PC disc contained in the *Marriage is a Ministry* DVD kit.

You may also email us at www.parentingministry.org with your questions.

May God richly bless you as you walk in obedience to His Word.

Marriage Is A Ministry

STARTING OVER

Step One - Confess Your Sins To The Lord

Proverbs 28:13 *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."*

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

Step Two - Ask For Forgiveness From Others

Matthew 5:23-24 *"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

Step Three - Forgive Others

Colossians 3:12-14 *"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."*

Four Points Of True Forgiveness:

1. No longer keeping a record of wrongs suffered.

"Love ... keeps no record of wrongs" **1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV**

2. Do not gossip to others about your spouse's sin.

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

3. Do not dwell on the offenses of others. But restoring fellowship with the forgiven person, as far as is biblically possible.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things." **Philippians 4:8;**

"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." **Romans 12:18**

4. Forgiveness is to be granted without limitation.

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." **Matthew 18:21-22**

Marriage Is A Ministry
Marriage Discipleship Self-Evaluation Checklist
(Review and discuss as a couple before you give up)

Now that you have learned God's plan for your marriage, you may experience difficulties that lead you to believe that God's plan is not working or you may experience frustration because your spouse is not doing their part. If this happens, don't panic or look to the world's methods! Don't fall back on old habits! Instead, use the following evaluation checklist to discern the true source of the problem.

Your Spiritual Foundation

- How is your devotional life? Read Psalm 1:1-3. Would you use words like worshiping, listening, thanking, confessing, interceding, etc. to describe your daily communication with God?
- Do you read and meditate upon God's Word in a daily quiet time?
- Are you trusting God with your finances and giving tithes regularly?
- Are your priorities in accordance with God's desires for you and your family? Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your life?

Remember: You must depend upon The Lord! The key is not in your methods, but a relationship with God!

Communicating In Love

- Take the Effective Listening Self-Evaluation in *Loving Communication* (pages 19A-19B).
- Have you been reacting in the flesh to your spouse or responding to them in love?
- Take a moment and review *What Love Is Not* on pages 8-11. Are there areas where you need to improve in your communication or apologize to your spouse?
- Have you been using the Breaking the Cycle of Unloving Communication worksheets provided on pages 16-19 in session #2 of your Marriage Is A Ministry workbook?

Remember: Your communication with and toward your spouse reflects the value you have placed upon him/her.

Meeting the Companionship Needs of Your Spouse

- The best way to lead or submit is by personal example. How are you doing?
- Are you and your spouse working together and supporting one another? How is your management style?
- Do you need further discipleship in parenting, financial management, or other subject?
- Are you praying regularly for and with your spouse? Have you followed through with your commitment to have a weekly family Bible study in your home?

Remember: God loves you and He loves your spouse. You must trust Him. He has not given you a task beyond your ability to accomplish as you trust in Him and obey His will.

Has God revealed areas in your family relationships where you have drifted off-course? If so, follow the steps outlined below to get your home back on course.

1. Confess to God, acknowledging your weaknesses, mistakes, or failures.
2. Receive God's forgiveness. Allow Him to embrace you in His arms of love and grace.
3. Repent by turning away from your error and commit to walk in obedience to His will.
4. Ask for forgiveness from your spouse, if necessary.
5. Be willing to forgive your spouse just as God in Christ has forgiven you.

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