

Premarital Counseling

Session 1: A Theology of Marriage

Instructions: Be sure to finish the Scripture study, readings, and exercises *before* Session 1. Also, be sure to turn in the premarital inventory to the pastor at least a day or two *before* your first session.

Key Ideas

1. As image-bearers, men and women have equal dignity and value in God's eyes.
2. Men and women were created with different roles.
3. A husband and wife are called to leave their family of origin and to cleave to their new spouse. The two become "one flesh."
4. The relationship between Christ and the church models for husbands and wives how they are to relate to one another.

Scripture Study Guide for a Biblical Theology of Marriage

Instructions: Read Gen 1:26-28; 2: 15-25; 3:1-24; Eph 5:21-33. Below you will find a list of verses and questions that help you think about the text. For each verse, explain briefly what the verse means and how it applies to marriage. (Note that I've only included a few lines to write on because I want you to be brief!)

Gen 1:26-28

Questions: What is an image-bearer? Why is it important that man and woman are made in the image of God? What role did God assign man and woman in creation (hint: v. 26 "dominion" or "rule over")? What's the relationship between "being fruitful in number" and "ruling over"?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Gen 2:15

Questions: Before woman is on the scene, what role did God give to man?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Gen 2:18

Questions: Why does God say it is not good for man to be alone? What does it mean to be a "suitable helper"?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Gen 2:24

Questions: Why does God command man to leave his family of origin and be united to his wife? What does “one flesh” mean?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Gen 3:16

Questions: How did the curse change the way the woman relates to her husband and the way the husband relates to his wife?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Eph 5:21-33

Questions: What is Paul trying to teach us through v. 21? *Why* should wives submit to their husbands (vs. 22-24)? How does Paul describe the wife’s relationship to her husband (vs. 22-24, 33)? What can a wife learn from the church’s submission to Christ? How does Paul describe a husband’s relationship to his wife (vs. 25-32)? What can husbands learn from Christ’s love and life-giving sacrifice for the church (vs. 25-27)?

Explanation: _____

Application to marriage: _____

Exercises for a Biblical Theology of Marriage (Session 1)

Part 1. Questions about Leaving our Family of Origin

1. In what ways do you still “cleave” to your parents (Gen 2:24)? How do these things need to change before you get married? (For example, are their ways that you still relying on your parents for financial provision? How should that change? Or do you still rely on them primarily for advice? How would that change in marriage?)
2. Who in your extended family is going to struggle with your transition into marriage? What issues might arise as you get married? Will one of your parents, siblings, grandparents, etc. have a hard time adjusting? What adjustments need to be made? (For example, is there a strong-willed father or mother or sibling who will cling to you? Demand your time? Tell you what to do in marriage? Try to turn to you for help? Expect you to be heavily involved in their life?)
3. After you get married, what are your expectations for your relationship with your in-laws? What are your fiancé’s expectations?
4. After you get married, what are your expectations for your relationship with your parents? What are your fiancé’s expectations?
5. What rules, traditions, events, or other things are important to your family? How do you and your fiancé plan to be (or not to be) involved in these things?

Part 2. Meditating on Your Vows

Here is your chance to consider your wedding vows. Write a sentence or two explaining what each statement means. Then talk it over with your fiancé.

Exchange of Vows

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband/wife,

to have and to hold from this day forward,

for better for worse,

for richer for poorer,

in sickness and in health,

*(the man's vow) to lead, love, and to cherish,
(the woman's vow) to love, cherish, and to obey,*

till death us do part,

according to God's holy ordinance;

and thereto I pledge you myself.

Exchange of Rings

With this ring I thee wed,

and with all my worldly goods I thee endow,

in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Part. 3 Your Strengths & Sins and Your Future Marriage

Pursue the list of people below and ask them four questions.

- (1) What do *strengths* do I bring into the marriage?
- (2) What do you think will be some *good things* about being married to me?
- (3) What are my *primary sins or weaknesses* that my spouse needs to be aware of?
- (4) What do you think will be the *hardest part* about being married to me?
- (5) What advice would you give my fiancé based on your answers to the first four questions?

Pick two or three of the people listed below

Ask one or both of **your parents**

Their Answers: _____

Ask a **close friend** who knows you really well

His or Her Answers: _____

Ask a **pastor or elder in your church** or someone who has discipled you

His Answers: _____

Ask a current or former **mentor** who knows you really well

His or Her Answers: _____

Sermons

Try to listen to at least one sermon from this page.

From CHBC audio (www.capitolhillbaptist.org):

- Mark Dever - Gender Roles in the Family – Genesis 2:20-24
- Mark Dever - Gender Identity in Redemption – Galatians 3:28
- Mark Dever - Gender Identity in Creation – Genesis 1:27

From Desiring God (www.desiringgod.org):

- John Piper - The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission – 1 Peter 3:1-7
- John Piper - Lionhearted and Lamblike: The Christian Husband as Head – Eph 5:21-33 (pt 1 and 2)
- John Piper - Marriage: Pursuing Conformity to Christ in the Covenant – Eph 5:21-33
- John Piper - Staying Married is not about Staying in Love – Gen 2:18-25 (pt 1 and 2)

Readings

The Ricucci's *Love that Lasts*: Ch. 1-3

An Optional Reading and Companion Exercise about the Gospel

Buy a copy of Greg Gilbert's *What is the Gospel?* and his *Who is Jesus?* The guy should read one of these books and the gal should read the other. Then share with each other:

- (1) What were the most helpful parts of the book for you? Read to your fiancée your favorite lines and quotes from the book.
- (2) Talk with each other about your daily dependence on Jesus and the gospel. Where does it give you hope? How does it sustain you? How does it or can it breath life into your struggles?
- (3) Pray for each other and for your personal relationship with the Living Christ