



Family Christian Center

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Family Life Development & Application {FLDA} Department

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CLASS NAME: Prep for Marriage – Enter the Marriage Garden | Lesson 1: The Master Gardner

SESSION: Sunday Feb 7, 2021 @ 11 a.m. **LOCATION:** Zoom Conference

INSTRUCTOR(S): Elders Conell and Rhonda Hollins ~ me2weministries@gmail.com

Enter the Marriage Garden.

First, You Must Remember Who the Master Gardner is!

John 15

New International Version: The Vine and the Branches

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[ⓐ] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Remember, before you can tend to your own garden, you must remember who has tended to your garden all your life...God, **the Master Gardner**. Not giving honor where honor is due or by not recognizing the spiritual ecosystem that created and cultivated you, causes all your relationships to be cut off from the branches that bear your supply of *good fruit*. God calls husbands and wives to be fruitful and multiply. By not following God's direct command your marital resources become extinct. **Do you want a fruitless marriage? What does a fruitless marriage look like to you?**

Genesis 1:28

New King James Version

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, **"Be fruitful and multiply;** fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that [ⓐ]moves on the earth."

Psalm 23:2-4

New International Version

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,^[a]

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

Is the Grass Really Greener on the Other Side?

The answer is “No!” If God is not there, then it isn’t. With the many challenges in the world today and the upheaval of society as we know it; lives have been permanently shifted. Not just our day to day lives but that of our future existence has shifted our viewpoints as well. Suddenly, all of God’s precious gifts that were once inconsequential became coveted by all again. As the conditions within our gardens became inhabitable, the world became cold and did not care about His sacrifices. Now, many of us are in prayer more now than ever, our bibles have become our compasses and our faith our road maps to eternity. But, after the disruption in the world and in society...it is scary to think of how many people, not even for a split second decided not to change; especially after experiencing all the world has endured. However, we all have a choice! That is the great thing about new beginnings. It is seeing things differently the second time around. Hindsight is 20/20...Foresight is 2021! If you are still alive and breathing God is letting you know you still have time to fulfill your purpose and you should use it. And for the love of God, Use it wisely!

Romans 13:11 English Standard Version (ESV)

“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

Follow the Son! Reset, Refocus and Zoom-In

Jesus is calling us to reset, refocus and zoom in on what we see as being valuable. Even what we value in a life mate. Premarital and Post Marital counseling is not only needed but vital. Therefore, as an individual, you should begin to question every aspect of your relationship. Ask yourselves, why are we together? What is our ministry? Is this engagement approved by God? Are you thankful not to be alone or are you thankful that there is no one else you would rather be alone with?

The Biggest Question of All Is...Where are You?

The first question attributed to God in the Bible is when God asked Adam, “Where are You”? Have you asked yourselves this...where are you in your current relationship? When speaking to your mate or to yourself do you have deeper questions such as, “What are we”? If you are asking that, then you have bigger questions at hand, and we recommend that you do not get married. However, those found in this conundrum need to ask themselves, where are you in your engagement and/or marriage? Is it fruitful? Is your relationship helping or hurting you? Is this relationship making you stronger or is it dimming your light? Then comes the tougher questions to be asked of yourself, “Is this a relationship of convenience”? Am I getting older, so I settled? Are we roommate’s? Are we Bill and Bed Buddies? Is this a lifelong engagement? Or is this a friends-with-benefits situation that we have forced into an engagement? Most importantly, have you asked yourself, are we staying together for the children? Then...ask yourself do you really want the answer? But please don’t wait until invitations are sent out for your big day or after sitting across from your spouse in divorce court to find out the truth. Ask questions of one another now but above all else...ask God first! Draw near to Him and he will draw near to

you. Our Father has a way of making crooked paths straight...if you let Him. Answer him honestly when he asks you, “Where are you”?

Genesis 3:9-10

New International Version

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “**Where are you?**”

¹⁰ He answered, “**I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid.**”

¹¹ And he said, “**Who told you that you were naked?** Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

Can I Be Naked and Not Ashamed in Marriage?

Are you and your mate hiding in plain sight? Many of us yearn for a time where we can walk the earth freely without masks. But what if we were wearing mask all along? A facade, not being our true selves until the world around us forced us to. It is vital that with whomever you marry or have married that you can be your entire self. Please know, that it is okay to ask difficult questions. Likewise, in return, it is okay to receive difficult answers.

The Serpent in Your Marital Garden:

The Father of all False Narratives

*There are certain pest, that will attempt to enter your marital garden. It is vital that you are alert and aware not to self-sabotage by self-introducing these intruders into your marital garden bed. False narratives or lies, corrupt, and contaminate the soil of your marriage garden-killing the growth of your Marriage. It is vital, to make sure that you do not “**get into the weeds**” or an entanglement of lies before your marriage even starts! ALWAYS remember, where False narratives and lies come from...*

John 8:44

New International Version

⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. *When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

In art, scandal is a false narrative, a smoke screen that camouflages rather than reveals. When we don't know what, we're seeing, we overreact. Author: Jerry Saltz

False Narratives are created with the intent to deceive by limiting the number of narratives provided to the observing mate, misleading the observer to complete the bulk of the narrative themselves, thereby causing the observing mate to take ownership of the false narrative, by personalizing it. This can be accomplished by the False Narrator, by limiting the scope of information available. So, in the end no single narrative is completely true or false.

False narratives that often, self-sabotage the ability to be Naked and Not Ashamed in Marriage.

- If you really knew me, then you may not love me the same.
- I am embarrassed by my past.
- I sabotage my relationships.
- I am damaged goods.
- If I am my true self no one will want me.
- If I do not marry him/her then I may not ever get married.
- I can fix her/him.
- I do not deserve real love.
- The truth is, I keep moving to keep from slowing down to identify the real problem.

Remember, you are in this together. It is a rough world out there to be joined to someone and not know your perceived marital value to them. Think about it...if you do not know your worth, why would they?

"The strongest relationships are the ones in which both partners can be themselves. Intending to change the other person or dramatically changing yourself to fit someone else's ideals dooms couples to failure. When two people have beliefs or habits that differ too much, it creates friction. For example, if one partner is devoutly religious and the other is an all-out atheist, it might be

difficult for the couple to find common ground on the way that the universe functions. When a neat freak has to put up with the habits of a slob, there will be arguments.”

How to Stay Together When You Are Different From Each Other ~ Anna Chui

- What needs to be “true” in your relationship for your marriage or future marriage, to make an impact on you? In life? To God? In your happiness?

Is Your View of Happiness the way God Views Your Happiness?

John 10:10 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

What is An Abundant Life?

This word “abundant” in Greek is perisson, meaning “exceedingly, very highly, beyond measure, more, superfluous, a quantity so abundant as to be considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate.”

You must understand that what God has planned for you and your life is far more than you could ever imagine!

1 Corinthians 2:9 English Standard Version (ESV)

⁹But, as it is written,

**“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—**

What if You and Your Mate See Happiness Completely different?

- ***If your relationship is as good as it is ever going to get, would your relationship, be the definition of living life abundantly...as God described?***
- ***Rate your current or previous relationships on a scale to 1-10 on God’s “abundant” scale.***

What is your standard for love?

Are your standards too high or too low?

Isaiah 59:19

New King James Version

¹⁹ So shall they fear

The name of the LORD from the west,

And His glory from the rising of the sun;

When the enemy comes in like a flood,

The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him

Does a lack of agreement mean you are not a good match for one another?

Amos 3:3-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

³ **Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**

⁴ Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?

Will a young lion ^[a] cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?

⁵ Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no ^[b] trap for it?

Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?

The Art of Weighing the Value of Your Relationship.

*By now you should know exactly what you love about your relationship with your significant other. Equally, you should also know the unfavorable tendencies your mate has and if you can live with them or without them. We encourage you to look at your relationship objectively and weigh the value of your relationship. **Take your emotions, children, age, soul-ties or your pending nuptials out of the equation and allow truth to prevail.***

Due Sunday Feb 14th

PRO'S	CON'S

Now...Make a Decision!

