



2025 | Week 10

# “Beginnings” as a Couple

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*There’s something special about the beginning of marriage that puts a smile on our faces. However, if we think about it, marriage is a continuous journey that presents many “beginnings.” In those “beginnings,” we learn more about our spouses and the reality of marriage.*

*This week, we’ll reflect on how we are adapting and progressing through the learning experiences brought to us by starting or facing new seasons in our marriage. Most importantly, when a couple decides to commit to having God at the center of their marriage, what kind of “beginning” is that?*

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## DAY 1

Do you still remember the first day of being married?  
Do you still remember the first day of officially moving into the first house you both purchased?  
Do you still remember the first day of being parents?  
Do you still remember the day your first adult child moved out?

The moment we said the phrase “I do” to someone marked the beginning of my “first days.” In those “first days,” the bond of being husband and wife is tested. These new seasons bring new changes and challenges, which can be overwhelming or seen as opportunities for growth in the relationship.

As we reflect on those many “first-times,” let us consider how the relationship has grown. Think of the various responses you both shared and how those have evolved over time. As you and your spouse embraced this new season, has your understanding of each other also evolved? It may seem like a lot to ponder, yet this process can be incredibly helpful in understanding your spouse and establishing healthy self-awareness.

Since the day we met in the Middle East and decided to be together, we’ve started collecting our “first-times.” Many of these moments brought smiles to our faces as we reminisced. However, we cannot ignore those seasons that remind us more of pain and struggle. For many years, as we continued to embrace the various seasons of our marriage, we responded in ways that we thought were right. We made decisions based on what we believed would provide security in our lives and marriage, as well as for our family. Until one day, God intervened, leading to an awakening experience that could not be understated. We started losing those things we thought secured our lives and marriage, and we almost felt we were losing each other as well. This was a moment when we could no longer ignore the genuine realizations that were coming to us, as well as the need to make serious choices that would not only impact that particular season but also the rest of our marriage years (and subsequently, our children).

This is how we began sharing our story in our first authored book, “Couple’s Journey: Restore, Relearn, Rejoice.” We enumerated a list of various factors that greatly influenced us and our view of life. Unbeknownst to us at the time, these factors comprised a collection of unprocessed pain and struggle that had built up in our inner core even before marriage. We eventually realized that these factors were adding constraints that overshadowed the overwhelming “first-times,” causing us to miss the “supposedly” wonderful opportunities for personal and couple growth.

Our response to “first-times” is anchored in how we view life. For a married couple committed to journeying together, our responses to these “first-times” are influenced not only by our perception of life but also by our understanding of marriage. If we allow these perspectives to drift away from God and are unwilling to

restore our connection with Him, we will find ourselves repeatedly experiencing “first-times” driven by factors that only temporarily offer security and happiness. There is nothing permanent in this world; the only constant since yesterday, today, and tomorrow is Jesus Christ. In Him, we can find genuine security, joy, and peace that withstand any changes or trials we face in the upcoming seasons. Therefore, if we desire for our marriage to endure many “new beginnings” or “first-times,” we must anchor it to Jesus Christ and not to the temporary things we typically seek in the world.

***'Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. '***  
**Hebrews 13:5-9**

Keep Journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Couple,

**Rey & Annie**

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## DAY 2

In yesterday's blog, we highlighted how we view life through the lens of “first times.” Today, we'll dig a little deeper into this statement by exploring the perception of contentment in life. Whenever we approach a new season, it's a test of how we perceive contentment. Whether it's the painful beginning of losing something or someone or an exciting beginning that opens up various opportunities, it presents an opportunity to grow in the area of contentment. Are we going to let ourselves be overwhelmed by dismay, finding it difficult to move forward because of the loss? Or will we embrace the potential, taking advantage of numerous opportunities,

even if it feels overwhelming? Will we overcome our fleshly weaknesses and desires by depending on a strength that leads to genuine contentment?

Before we committed ourselves and our marriage to Jesus Christ, we were unaware of how many desires we had and that we were pursuing opportunities far beyond our capability. It began with a simple desire for a better life and to raise our children in a way that was very different from how we grew up. Without being grounded in God's truths, we relied on various means and definitions of what a “good life” meant. We looked to many success stories and modeled ourselves after the lives we thought would work for us and align with our desires. Then God intervened, and we discovered that we couldn't define a “true good life” apart from God—apart from Jesus Christ. This realization was not easy; it involved many losses and temptations to dwell on temporary comfort. Even today, the temptation persists, and the weaknesses of our flesh await any opportunity to lead us astray. It's only by God's grace that we maintain our alertness and can respond according to His will and purpose. In moments when we stumble, God is there to offer comfort and guidance toward restoration.

It's not easy to be content in a world that loudly advocates for materialism. The strong campaigns promoting distorted definitions of “true life” are widely spread through social media, culture, and even among those who attempt to incorporate God's name into a skewed understanding of life. Even with our sincere desire to change the course of our lives and embrace every opportunity for “first-times” that lead to genuine contentment, we will undoubtedly encounter rough roads ahead that will test our faith and address the brokenness of this world.

We need a constant anchor that can withstand the brokenness of this world, the existence of evil temptations, and the weaknesses of our flesh. That anchor is Jesus Christ! He is the changeless One who will never desert us nor forsake us. Imagine entering a new season with confidence because we have a restored relationship with Christ, and our contentment is anchored in the ways He's guiding us.

We can appreciate how the author of Hebrews not only detailed the guidelines for living life (Hebrews 13:1-4) but

also provided a clear reminder that our character should be free from the love of money. Such love drives us to distorted perceptions of blessings and fosters sinful covetousness in our hearts, which ultimately affects our understanding of “true life.” Money is the root of many tangible distractions in this world that can lead us to lose focus on the reality of the spiritual realm. Not in the sense of instilling fear to underscore its purpose, but the Bible encourages us to manage tangible blessings with honor directed toward God, rather than promoting selfishness or greed (Proverbs 3:9-10, Luke 12:15).

True contentment, anchored in Christ, views every new season as an opportunity to grow in faith and Christlikeness.

So, keep journeying with Christ!

***'Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"' Hebrews 13:5-6***

Your Fellow Couple,

**Rey & Annie**

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## DAY 3 | For Husbands

It was while reading the Bible that I fully experienced the lessons about contentment and realized how far I'd been from it for the past many years. Many of us hear that the message of contentment in life is rooted in our relationship with God through preaching and teaching. However, the learning and realization experience is different when we encounter the reality of this message through His words. The complete learning experience made a significant impact that drove me to make radical changes in my life, my marriage, and even my family. Initially, I thought this would just be a one-time, big change. Later on, Annie and I realized that it's a continuous process of learning and growing. Of course,

the initial encounter with the truth and the radical response play a significant role in the transformation that follows, but it doesn't stop there. As we face more “new beginnings” in life and our marriage, it's a continuous battle of learning and growing in the area of being content.

Recently, Annie and I faced another tough decision-making process that will drastically change our lifestyle. We sought God before taking our initial steps and continue to seek His guidance and wisdom as we move forward. Some instances truly test our confidence, but we hold on to God's promises and rest in His comforting words. A significant part of this change is our return to the workforce. Eventually, I was the one who received the initial responses. We didn't anticipate the level of difficulties, but God's grace has helped us view every turn of events as an opportunity for God's redirection. The initial job offer was much lower than our target income rate, and the schedule was not what we expected. Still, I took it and embraced whatever path God led me on. Every day, Annie and I look forward to what God is trying to show us. Eventually, we both adapted to the system and transitioned to the new flow of income and schedule. Little did we notice how many months had passed, but I received an increase in my pay rate, which surprisingly coincided with other changes we had to make. I shared with Annie how much I've learned during this first year in my job position. Now that I have received an email that might open doors to the original job position I applied for, I can only express my gratitude for God's orchestration—not just in the aspect of work but as yet another learning experience to truly be content in God.

This world may offer various definitions of contentment, but in God's truth, contentment involves accepting and being at peace with Him in whatever state we might be. Whether we're experiencing wealth or poverty, losses or difficulties, and reputations or afflictions, we can find true rest and confidence in God. Understanding this biblical contentment enables us to genuinely acknowledge and appreciate the blessings and mercies we receive, regardless of the situation. Furthermore, we can wholeheartedly accept God's will and providence in every aspect of our lives, trusting that He is indeed in control and has a purpose.

When we face every “new beginning” in life and in our marriage, our real battle is not about the events and circumstances we encounter. Our real battle is being content with God and resting in His authority, sovereignty, and promises. As we face this battle, we realize our own shortcomings—not in a narcissistic way—but such realizations lead us to the truth that we need great help and hope through Jesus Christ. My heart will forever be grateful for how God has intervened in my life, in my marriage, and in my family. He saved me (and us), and He continuously guides me (and us). Truly, He will never desert us nor forsake us.

***'Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" ' Hebrews 13:5-6***

Keep journeying with Christ Jesus.

Your Fellow Husband,  
**Rey**

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## DAY 4 | For Wives

I never realized how similar I am to Eve in that fruit incident in the Garden of Eden until I had the chance to dig deeper into a story from a woman's perspective. Reflecting on my behavior, which has developed and evolved over various seasons of life, has illuminated this connection.

You may be wondering how I opened this week's “wifey input” with a direct reference to Eve and that fruit incident in the Garden of Eden. Throughout the years Rey and I have been together, trying to live a so-called “good” life and raise our children in the best way we can, I've come to realize how much influence I have contributed to the decisions and processes involved when we embark on a new season. My husband, Rey, is generous in giving me space to express my thoughts and consider my input regarding whatever circumstances we are about to face. I only recently realized that the foundation of my previous perspectives and understandings was far from God's

design, will, and purpose. So, when the time arrived and a genuine realization clearly revealed my shortcomings, I could only express my gratitude that Jesus Christ saved me—and saved us.

We often do not realize how much this world has taken root in our hearts and minds until we learn the significant difference between navigating life in this world alone versus being anchored in Jesus Christ. Until we grasp the definitions of “world” and “true life” and view them through the lens of God's truth, we will only then come to a profound realization of how heavily influenced we are. Such influences impact our perceptions and decisions about every opportunity that presents a “new beginning.”

We may find great similarities with Eve that affect how we perceive every “first-time” opportunity in this life:

- Falling into the serpent's crafty deceitfulness can shake our connection to God and His truths (Genesis 3:1-5).
- We can easily be attracted to options that are appetizing (thinking they will meet our needs), delightful to the eyes (attractively beautiful), and seemingly wise (options that make us feel smart and filled with life wisdom) (Genesis 3:6).

It is not until we open ourselves to understanding these three important factors—(1) the brokenness of this world, (2) the existence of the devil, and (3) the weakness of our flesh—that we will grasp the complete message of the gospel. Furthermore, we will hold a skewed understanding and response to the roles that God has entrusted to us, from the clear purpose noted in the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:18) to the important teachings of Apostle Paul regarding marriage, like that of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-24).

In Chapter 4 of our book, “Couple's Journey: Restore, Relearn, Rejoice,” [1] Rey and I detail the various hindrances to losing such an anchor in Christ. In Chapter 5, we describe our journey of learning about spiritual warfare, which impacts our perceptions of life and influences our decisions, causing us to miss the path to genuinely following Christ.

I used to believe that the Gospel was only needed at the beginning—transitioning from being an unbeliever to becoming a believer in Jesus Christ. Today, I embrace the

message of the Gospel as my everyday anchor in this life. It is only through Jesus Christ that I can move forward and respond to every new beginning with great hope. My constant journey with Christ is a continuous remembrance of growing in grace, mercy, and His love. He is the reason I perceive new beginnings with hope. He is the reason I am able to stand firm despite my shortcomings and when struggles remind me of my weaknesses.

Keep journeying with Christ!

Your Fellow Wife,

**Annie**

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## DAY 5

In this life journey, we encounter seasons that open doors to “first times.” However, the journey is quite different when we navigate those “new beginnings” alongside our spouses.

This week, we reflected on those “first times” through the lens of the message in Hebrews 13:5-6. Three major points that could impact our responses and are significant to our journey are:

Whenever we face the opportunities of “new beginnings,” we also face the temptation of covetousness.

We can overcome covetousness when we find contentment in life.

Such contentment should be anchored in Jesus Christ because He alone can truly sustain us, help us, and will never forsake us.

As shared in the Day 3 post, the real battle when facing “new beginnings” is not about the turn of events or circumstances; rather, the real battle is being content with God. This contentment is resting in His authority, sovereignty, and promises. We acknowledge the challenge of becoming content, particularly in a world that loudly promotes materialism (see Day 4 blog post). Therefore, learning and adapting to Biblical contentment is not something we can achieve overnight; it’s a process. It’s a journey of growing in trust and faith in God, which is

directly opposed to materialism. It involves embracing the reality of the spiritual realm.

As a married couple, we have had genuine realizations that led us to seek God and commit to a journey anchored in Jesus Christ. Adapting to this new lifestyle was a process, and even today, we’re still learning on this journey. Over the years, we’ve developed habits that help ground us in this commitment and embrace Biblical contentment.

### ***Understanding True Life and Committing to It***

We all came into this world without any possessions, and we’ll leave in the same way. Understanding this basic truth fosters humility and acceptance that our life stages are part of a journey impactful in our eternal lives. Our restored and personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ has provided us with a new living hope that changes the course of our life journeys. So, when we find ourselves in difficult situations that test our unity as a couple and our commitment to this faith, we both know that we need to submit ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ and surrender any pains or concerns we have. (1 Timothy 6:17; Hebrews 13:5-6)

### ***Keeping Up in Our Quiet Time***

Our progression as a united couple isn’t possible if our hearts and minds aren’t consistently immersed in our own individual communion with God. In the mornings, we each have a schedule to spend some time reading the Bible and praying. Throughout the day, we shared how we encountered God and the messages that resonated with us that morning. We also use those opportunities to relate God’s messages to our current situations and marital seasons. (Colossians 3:16; Philippians 4:6-7)

### ***Consistent Family Prayer Time***

By God’s grace, we’ve developed a habit of praying as a family in the evening before going to sleep. Even when we’re out of town and the children are back home, we use technology to maintain this habit. This year, we’ve made changes by having everyone kneel while we pray. It helps us enter into the solemnity of prayer and set aside any difficulties we encountered during the day. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Ephesians 6:18; Psalm 55:17; Matthew 18:20)

### ***Continuous Intentional Conversations About God and Life***

As husband and wife, along with our children, it has become a regular practice in our household to relate God's truths to practical applications in our lives. Even when neither of us is going through a difficult season, our small family processes situations together through the lens of Biblical truths. We hold a weekly Family Discipleship Session with a grandparent. It is only by God's grace that we can maintain this habit with the attendance of all three generations in our family. We have also extended this practice to a small circle of trusted friends, and our gatherings are spent not only in fellowship but also in sharing learnings and recent encounters with God. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25)

There are still instances when we find ourselves surprised by certain turns of events, particularly when immediate change is required. Yet having these habits helps ground us in Christ's foundation and improves our responses to every "new beginning" that comes our way. As we come to know God, Christ, and the importance of the Holy Spirit, we are gaining a stronger grip on His promises.

***'so that we confidently say, "the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" 'Hebrews 13:6***

Your Fellow Couple,

***Rey & Annie***

## **NOTES**

[1]Abarca, R., & Abarca, A. (2024). *Couple's Journey: Restore, Relearn, Rejoice*. Independently Published.



Let's embark on a comprehensive learning experience with this week's topic by following the **D.R.A.S.H. - 5 Steps of Learning Method!**

### ***Step 1 | Discover the Truth***

- From the shared Biblical truths, Biblical perspectives, and testimonies, what struck you most about the "beginnings" season?

### ***Step 2 | Reflect and Meditate on the Truth***

- How does this week's topic relate to your current season in marriage? Or family relationships and friends?

### ***Step 3 | Apply the Truth***

- After this week's discussion about contentment, are there any changes you plan to make based on the insights you gained from this week's topic?

### ***Step 4 | Share***

- Using a storytelling concept, compose a short story about how you will share the truths you discovered in this week's topic with your spouse or other married individuals journeying with you. You may want to consider a 1-minute or 5-minute storytelling technique
- You can use the following guiding questions in your composition:
  1. What truths did you discover and reflect on in this week's topic?



2. How are these truths and reflections related to yourself and your current marital status?
3. What actions do you plan to take in the coming days that relate to this week's learning?

### **Step 5 | Help in Navigating the Truth**

- Besides your spouse, identify another person (or member/s of your small group) who will journey alongside you as you take intentional actions based on this week's learning. Consider what additional help you may need, such as further discussion or a regular prayer partner.

We pray that you encounter God through this week's topic. May His grace turn your learning experience into a transformative journey, leading to testimonies of breakthroughs that further strengthen your walk with Christ Jesus!

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## **Let us know how this guide has helped you!**

May this study tool be effective and helpful for every fellow seeker and believer who is intentionally journeying with Jesus Christ. We would be grateful to hear how this tool has significantly impacted your journey and your relationships with your spouse and others. Please share your feedback or experiences through this [link](#) (or scan QR Code)



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Couples' Journey with Christ Jesus

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