

Laying The Foundation For Marriage – Session 1A

Read Romans 8:28-29 – Marriage is to help us be like Him, not just happiness!

Welcome & Introductions:

- Your names?
- Location you attend & How long?
- When & Where you met?
- Seriously dating or Engaged?... Wedding date set?

Ice-Breaker:

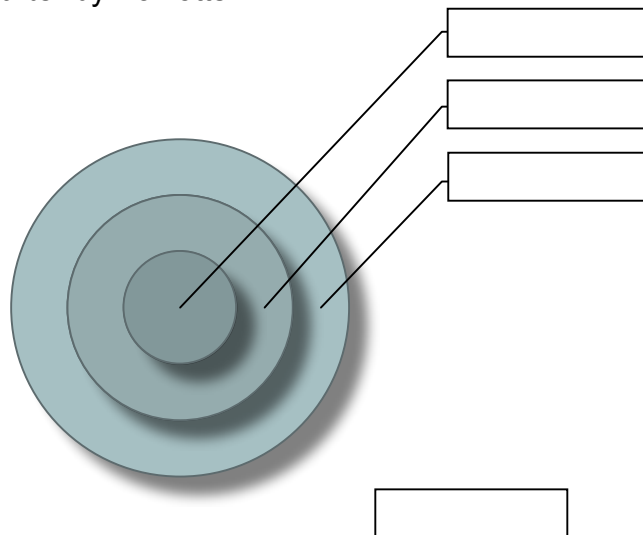
Break down into pairs of couples (4 ppl)... Go around & have each person share:

- 1) Your first impression of your significant other (or “SO”)...
- 2) Why you signed up for this class? What you hope to get out of these next 10 weeks?

Where are you aiming?

“Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts” by Parrotts

What’s *YOUR* marital target?
(your goal...)



What makes 2 people Soul-Mates?

³¹“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³²This is a **profound mystery**—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph 5:31-33

There are 4 Dimensions to a human being:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Your spiritual dimension is _____ for a GREAT marriage!

You **cannot** be _____ if you are **not** both committed _____!

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?
¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. 2 Cor. 6:14-15

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Psalm 127:1

Is your _____ based on God’s Words & Jesus Christ?

¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:11

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matt 7:24-27

#1 question: WHAT IS YOUR _____?

Is Jesus Christ the savior & Lord of your life?

I write these things to you who believe in the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13

⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:9-10

(If you're not sure about your relationship with God & Jesus Christ – please ask for a DAIGRAM DVD from your pastor or instructor!!!)

You CANNOT be SOUL-MATES and enjoy a great marriage that will go the distance if you do NOT both have the same rock-solid foundation as CHRISTIANS!

Please read the letter from our pastors in the *Rock Solid* manual's front cover....

HOMEWORK, Session #1A:

- Do both couples' projects (Homework assignment 1A-1 & 1A-2)...it will take 2 nights.

Couple's Project

(Homework 1A-1)

Read, discuss and answer each question together as a couple

LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR MARRIAGE

"In an effort to draw on the experiences of those who have lived together successfully as husbands and wives, we asked married couples to participate in an informal study. More than six hundred people agreed to speak candidly to the younger generation about the concepts and methods that have worked in their homes... The panel first suggested that newlyweds should establish and maintain a Christ-centered home. Everything rests on that foundation. If a young husband and wife are deeply committed to Jesus Christ, they enjoy enormous advantages over the family with no spiritual dimension."

James Dobson, "Love For a Lifetime"

Do you agree or disagree with the need to have a Christ-centered marriage?

GETTING TO KNOW GOD:

1. If you were to die tonight and stand before God and he were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you tell Him?

2. How sure are you that if you died tonight, you would spend eternity with God the Father in Heaven? (on a scale from 0=*not sure* to 100=*positive*)

3. In what church do you want to worship once you are married and how frequently would you like to attend?

4. How do you feel about these things...
 - a. Reading the Bible together and having family devotions?

- b. Having a personal quiet time?

- c. Praying together?

d. Being involved in a small group within Evergreen?

5. How are we going to continue to develop spiritual oneness in our marriage?

6. What are our goals in marriage in these areas:

a. Spiritual: _____

b. Physical: _____

c. Personal: _____

d. Career: _____

e. Financial: _____

f. Family: _____

Couple's Project

(Homework 1A-2)

Read, discuss and answer each question together as a couple

TWO SOULS ONE FLESH?

Fifteen questions to help you share your spiritual history

A strong marriage involves much more than just physical or emotional intimacy- it requires spiritual intimacy as well. Yet it's often difficult to see clearly who your mate is on a spiritual level. These questions can help you discover more about the development of your partner's faith.

1. What did your parents believe about God, Jesus, prayer and the Bible?
2. What is your definition of being spiritually alive?
3. Which of your parents do you feel was more spiritually alive?
4. What did each of your parents teach you, both directly and indirectly, about spiritual matters?
5. Where did you first learn about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
6. What was your best church related experience as a child?
7. What was your worst experience in church as a child and as a teenager?
8. How would you describe your conversion experience?
9. How would you describe your baptism experience (If you were old enough to remember it)? What did it mean to you?
10. When you went through difficult times as a child or teenager, how did that affect your faith?
11. Which pastor or Sunday school teacher influenced you the most? In what ways?
12. As a child, what questions did you have about your faith? Who gave you the most helpful answers?
13. When you were growing up, did anyone disappoint you spiritually? If so, how has that affected you as an adult?
14. If you could ask God any question, what would it be?
15. What has been the greatest spiritual experience of your life?

Adapted from What Men Want, H. Norman Wright. 1996 by H. Norman Wright

God's Purpose For Marriage – Session 1B

I. Reflect God's image

- Genesis 1:26-27

God created mankind to mirror His image on earth.

- a. God made two distinctly different humans (male and female) so that _____ they would reflect the image of God.
- b. Oneness is necessary in order to _____ the image of God.
 - i. A demonstration of oneness with your mate reflects the unity of the Trinity.
 - ii. Walking in oneness defeats the enemy's strategy.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
-Genesis 1:27*

II. Multiply a godly heritage

- Genesis 1:28a

- a. God created men and women as his _____ who would glorify Him on earth.
- b. Through this line of godly descendants, Satan's kingdom would be _____.
- c. Oneness is necessary in order to _____ a godly heritage.
 - i. For children to appreciate their sexual identity, they must see a harmonious marriage modeled by their parents.
 - ii. The roles of the husband and wife can best be understood by children as they observe the modeling of these roles in the home by their parents.
 - iii. A child's best hope for understanding unconditional love is oneness demonstrated between the husband and wife in the home.

III . **Manage God's creation.**

-Genesis 1:28b

- a. God gave mankind _____ over His creation to manage it and make it a productive reflection of Him.
- b. Couples that are living by God's principles threaten Satan's power; therefore Satan concentrates his major _____ on them.
 - i. Oneness is necessary in order to effectively manage the creation.

IV . **Mutually complete one another** (to experience companionship)

-Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 11:11

- a. _____ fulfills aloneness needs.
- b. Oneness is necessary in order for a man and wife to _____ one another.
 - i. Self-centered individuality destroys oneness and companionship.

*The LORD God said,
"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."
-Genesis 2:18*

V . **Model Christ's relationship with the church**

-Ephesians 5:31,32

- a. Marriage is a _____ of Christ's relationship with His bride, the church.
- b. The bible refers to this as a _____.
- c. Oneness is necessary in order to _____ the relationship of Christ and His church.
 - i. Christ heads, loves and serves His church.
 - ii. The church is reverently subject to Christ.

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,
-Ephesians 5:25-26*

- iii. Both roles must be properly fulfilled to demonstrate oneness.

VI. Conclusion

- a. God has established marriage for at least _____ purposes:
- i. Reflect God's image
 - ii. Multiply a godly heritage
 - iii. Manage God's realm
 - iv. Mutually complete one another
 - v. Model Christ's relationship to the church
- b. Our _____ in marriage comes from pursuing God's purposes.
- c. Marriage is far more _____ than you may have thought.
- i. Marriage affects God's reputation.
 - ii. Marriage is God's smallest battle formation.
- d. Recognize that your marriage is taking place on a spiritual _____.
- i. To be in opposition to your mate is to be in opposition to the very purposes of God. God's purposes can only be accomplished by following His plan.
 - ii. God's Word demands a response: Will you fulfill His purposes for your marriage?

*That is the way holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands
-1 Peter 3:5 NLT*

HOMEWORK, Session #1B:

Complete and turn in (next week) the following assignments:

- Homework 1B-1 (both independent of each other)
- Homework 1B-2_MAN (Man only)
- Homework 1B-2_WOMAN (Woman only)
- Homework 1B-3_MAN (Man only)
- Homework 1B-3_WOMAN (Woman only)

God's Purpose For Marriage

(Homework 1B-1)

Complete the following questions

1. Share one thing you felt that you *learned* about “The Purpose Of Marriage”.
2. God had at least five purposes for creating marriage. Which one of these purposes do you think will be the most exciting to live out? Why?
3. Genesis 2:18 states that it was not good for the man to be alone and this statement occurs before the “fall of man” in Genesis 3. So, in essence, we were created with an “aleness need” that God said was “not good.” What does this tell you about your needs and your spouse’s needs? How does this affect how you approach your spouse’s needs?
4. Can you completely reflect God’s image as an individual? What does God need to completely reflect Himself in the world?
5. How does recognizing that God created your spouse specifically for you change your marriage?

God's Purpose For Marriage

(Homework 1B-2_MAN)

FOR THE MAN

Name: _____

Please answer the following questions honestly and openly, independently of your fiancé/spouse.

1) What is your definition of marriage?

2) Why do you believe that you are in love?

3) I feel that now is the time for me to marry because...

4) I desire to marry _____ because...

5) I believe that being married will be better for us than living single because...

God's Purpose For Marriage

(Homework 1B-2_WOMAN)

FOR THE WOMAN

Name: _____

Please answer the following questions honestly and openly, independently of your fiancé/spouse.

1) What is your definition of marriage?

2) Why do you believe that you are in love?

3) I feel that now is the time for me to marry because...

4) I desire to marry _____ because...

5) I believe that being married will be better for us than living single because...

God's Purpose For Marriage

(Homework 1B-3_MAN)

Please honestly and objectively review these questions over the next week. It may be helpful to seek the counsel of a trustworthy married couple to address any concerns that arise as a result of looking at them.

For the MAN...

1. Is this the one woman for whom you desire to be responsible and caring for the rest of your life? Why her?
2. Is she the right partner for you 5 years from now? Ten years from now? When you are 40? In the years ahead, how do you see her supporting the goals you have?
3. Is she the person you want to raise your family?
4. Are you ready to accept for a lifetime the weaknesses she now displays in her relationships with others? (e.g. friends, roommates, family)
5. Why do you think you will be a good head for this woman?
6. Are you willing and able to take financial responsibility for your wife and future children?
7. Has this person demonstrated control or lack of control over her own financial affairs? Do you think she will be happy with the material lifestyle you will provide?
8. Does she respect you? Do you think she will be happy with you as her leader?
9. Is there anything you can think of that you do not accept about her – emotions, habits, personality, family, beliefs, goals, appearance, etc?
10. Why do you expect your relationship to grow stronger over time?

God's Purpose For Marriage

(Homework 1B-3_WOMAN)

Please honestly and objectively review these questions over the next week. It may be helpful to seek the counsel of a trustworthy married couple to address any concerns that arise as a result of looking at them.

For the WOMAN...

1. Why do you think you will be a good lifetime helpmate for this man?
2. Why do you want to submit "as unto the Lord" for the rest of your life to this man as opposed to someone else?
3. Are you ready to accept for a lifetime the weaknesses he now displays in his relationships with others? (e.g. friends, roommates, family)
4. Would this man be a good father? Why?
5. Does he have a sense of direction and purpose that will make him a good leader for your family? What do you see in his life that indicates that?
6. Will he be a good financial provider and manager for your family? What makes you think so? Are his financial prospects such that you would be able to raise children at home?
7. Who do you want to be and what do you want to be doing 5 years from now? Ten years from now? Is this the person who can help you get there? Where do you want to be when you are 40, and whom do you want to be with?
8. Do you think this man will be the spiritual leader God wants you to have in a husband? What do you see that indicates that?
9. Is there anything you can think of that you do not accept about him – emotions, habits, personality, family, beliefs, goals, appearance, etc?
10. Why do you expect your relationship to grow stronger over time?

Expectations & Past Baggage – Session 1C

Expectations:

“Uncommunicated or unrealistic _____ are leading causes of disillusionment and unresolved conflict early in marriage.”

“For I know the plan I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

Expectations are the _____ each of us makes about the things a spouse _____ or _____ do in order to have a happy marriage.

These assumptions guide the way we *treat* one another.

Basic Needs of MEN:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Basic Needs of WOMEN:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Men, what’s at the top of your list? Women, what’s at the top of your list? Discuss.

Two important sources of expectations for marriage are:

- 1) _____ and 2) _____

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

Consider this 3-part process for managing your expectations:

- #1 Start by _____ your expectations clearly;
- #2 Then, _____ your views with each other;
- #3 Finally, _____ to an agreement on how to bridge the differences.

It is not necessary that you have _____ agreement on everything before you get married, but it is important that you _____ the process by revealing your expectations early.

Possible areas for discussion: How to divide chores? When will we have children? How many kids? Whose career will we follow? Will we rent or buy? Where live?

Past Baggage:

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” Gal. 6:7

Emotional 'baggage' that you bring into a marriage are those _____ things (such as feelings, circumstances, or beliefs) that get in the way, or impede, progress and growth of your relationship.

There are many types of baggage that we can bring to our marriage:

Emotional baggage from past life experiences:

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

What baggage tops your list? Which ones do you feel could most easily bring conflict?

Share this list with your partner. Ask yourself: “Would I be able to accept him/her if he/she never changed their mind about _____?”

In order to deal with the past you need to learn how to give and receive _____ (Mark 11:25)

Learning from the past and releasing it are never easy, but _____ 😊

“I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.” Philippians 3:13-14

HOMEWORK, Session #1C:

Complete and turn in (next week) the following assignments:

- Homework 1C-1 (Couples project)

Expectations & Past Baggage

(Homework 1C-1)

Please honestly and objectively review these questions over the next week. It may be helpful to seek the counsel of a trustworthy married couple to address any concerns that arise as a result of looking at them.

Couple's Project

I. Expectations

Sit down quietly at home and complete the details of your family “*portrait*.” Share with your partner. Note the differences and come to a preliminary agreement on how to bridge the differences.

II. Past Baggage

With your partner talk about your mom and dad, respectfully and honestly:

1. What is one thing that your mom or dad did that you swore you would never do as a spouse?
2. What is one thing that your mom or dad did that you swore your future spouse would never do to you or others?

Pray together: “*God, I forgive (parent) for (action/attitude). And, God, please forgive me for judging (parent). God, please break this vow in my life that my marriage may honor you!*”