

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

What did you Expect?



REDEEMING THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE

DISCUSSION GUIDE

by Paul David Tripp
with Michael E. Breece, contributor

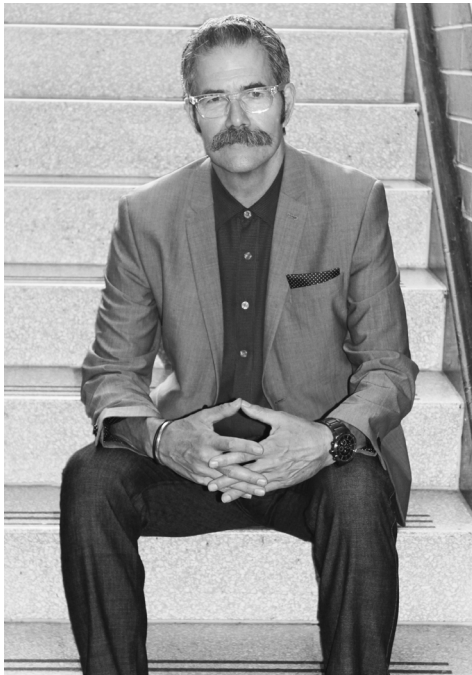
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul David Tripp is a pastor, author, and international conference speaker. He is the president of Paul Tripp Ministries and works to connect the transforming power of Jesus Christ to everyday life. This vision has led Paul to write many books on Christian living and travel around the world preaching and teaching. Paul's driving passion is to help people understand how the gospel of Jesus Christ speaks with practical hope into all the things people face in this broken world.

For additional resources, visit www.paultripp.com.



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A WORD OF WELCOME

It won't take long for you to be disappointed in marriage. It won't take long for your dreams to be dashed. The reality is, you can't escape the brokenness of this world, and you won't be able to avoid the sin of your spouse.

The Bible teaches that we all bring something destructive into our relationships – sin. Yet we buy into the delusion that our biggest problem exists outside of us. We blame our spouse and we blame our circumstances, but we rarely take seriously the nature of our own sin.

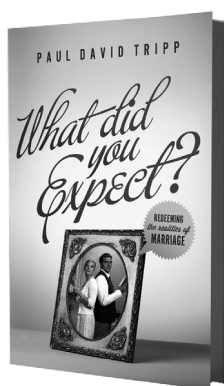
This video curriculum will help you get to the bottom of your struggles - your heart - and help you find lasting hope for your marriage. It's only when you worship God as Creator, Sovereign and Savior that you will ever love as you should. ***What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage*** will challenge you to look into the mirror of God's Word and see yourself with accuracy.

Maybe it is you. Maybe you love yourself more than your spouse. Maybe you love your little kingdom more than God's big Kingdom. When you reach that level of honesty, you're at the edge of real good things for your marriage. Would you be willing to humbly examine yourself over the course of this study?

I would encourage you to work through this curriculum with other couples or in a small group. God designed you for community, and working with others can reveal areas of weakness and blindness that would never be revealed on your own or with just your spouse. You don't have to fear being discovered; there is nothing that could be exposed about you that Jesus hasn't already covered. And, in the process, God might use you as an instrument of grace in the marriages of others.

God bless

Paul David Tripp



Even though this DVD curriculum can be used as a stand-alone resource, you may want to expand the study by reading my book, ***What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage***.

There is a significant difference between the content of the book and the content of this video curriculum, and the book helps to supplement the material taught in the video.

To order your copy of this book, visit www.paultripp.com/marriage.

1. Roots of a Good Marriage

“Romance is never the cause of a good marriage; romance is always the result of a good marriage.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 1:

1. What were your expectations prior to getting married? (*Engaged or Singles - what are your future expectations for marriage?*)
2. What is dangerous about unrealistic expectations (in general, not just about marriage)?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 6:43-45

⁴³ For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

KEY IDEAS:

1. Your life and marriage is not made up of big moments, but of small, mundane moments.
2. A marriage of unity, understanding, and love is rooted in worship, not romance.
3. Worship is first your identity before it is ever your activity.
4. Your words and behaviors are shaped by what is inside of you more than what is outside.
5. The heart is the causal core of your personhood.



PRINCIPLE 1:
A marriage of unity,
understanding, and love
is not rooted in romance,
but in worship

LUKE 6:43-45

THE HEART
The heart is the causal core
of your personhood

REVIEW:

1. Why are the small, mundane moments of everyday life so critical to your marriage?
2. What does it mean to be a “worshiper”? What does worship in marriage look like?
3. Why can't you build a strong marriage on the foundation of romance?

DISCUSSION:

1. What small and mundane moments have had a big impact in your marriage?
2. What things, other than God, have a tendency to capture your heart in marriage?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

Take time in between Session 1 and Session 2 and use these assignments as personal homework.

ASSIGNMENT #1a - Evaluating Romance

Set aside quality time by yourself and evaluate the romance in your marriage. Has there been a lack of romance recently? Are you trying to build a healthy marriage on the foundation of romance instead of worship? How can you be a better worshiper in your marriage? *After you have personally reflected on these questions, consider coming together with your spouse to discuss your findings. Approach these important, yet potentially difficult, conversations with a humble, confessing, forgiving, patience, gentle, and peaceful spirit.*

ASSIGNMENT #1b - Evaluating Conflict

Set aside quality time by yourself and evaluate the conflict in your marriage. Has there been a lot of conflict recently? On the surface, what seems to be the reason for the conflict? However, knowing that Jesus says conflict comes from within, what is the deeper reason for the conflict? *After you have personally reflected on these questions, consider coming together with your spouse to discuss your findings. Approach these important, yet potentially difficult, conversations with a humble, confessing, forgiving, patience, gentle, and peaceful spirit.*

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 1 & 4
Psalm 139
Psalm 51



PERSONAL REFLECTION:

If I were to watch a video recording of my life, would I be saddened and surprised by how I treat my spouse in small moments?

What, or who, do I blame for my sinful behavior? Do I take seriously Jesus' diagnosis that my heart is the problem?

In the privacy of my marriage, where no other Christian friend can see, what do I worship with my time and money and emotions?

2. The Biggest Problem

“My deepest, longest, most significant problem exists inside of me, not outside of me.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 2:

1. What are the biggest and/or most common problems in marriage? How do you fix them?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 6:43-45

⁴³ For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

KEY IDEAS:

1. Threat, manipulation, and guilt will not change the heart of your spouse.
2. All marriage problems are heart problems.
3. Lasting change in your marriage will always travel through the pathway of the heart.
4. You are your biggest marriage problem.

ILLUSTRATION:

The Apple Tree

ILLUSTRATION:

Stuck In Traffic

IMPLICATION 1:

All marriage problems are heart problems

IMPLICATION 2:

Lasting change in your marriage will always travel through the pathway of the heart

IMPLICATION 3:

I am my biggest marriage problem - it's me!

LISTEN FOR YOU

Don't listen for your spouse

REVIEW:

1. What is the illustration of the apple tree and how does it relate to marriage?
2. Why do threat, manipulation, and guilt fail to solve marriage problems? How might they actually increase the problems?
3. Why are all marriage problems heart problems?

DISCUSSION:

1. How have threat, manipulation, and guilt revealed themselves in your marriage?
2. Why will it be tempting, in following sessions, to listen for your spouse instead of for yourself?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #2 - Breaking Down Conflict (Part 1)

At some stage during your day, you will face conflict with your spouse. Using the three implications from Session 2, review your own heart and why you started or entered into conflict.

1. All marriage problems are heart problems: Conflict happens not primarily because of situation, location, or communication, but because of idolatry and worship. What did this conflict reveal about your idols? How could your response have been different if your heart was ruled by worship of Christ?

2. Lasting change in your marriage will always travel through the pathway of the heart: It's typical to try to find a solution after a conflict arises or make steps to avoid the same conflict in the future. What "apple-nailing" solutions looked enticing? Why would those solutions eventually fail? What needs to be the ultimate solution for change?

3. I am my biggest marriage problem - it's me: Without a doubt, you will be sinned against in your marriage, but you still bring your own sin into conflict. How did you sin in this conflict, and how could you have responded differently, in a Christ-like manner, regardless of the sin of your spouse?

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapter 5

Luke 18:9-14

Luke 19:1-10



PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Do I tend to blame my spouse and examine their heart more than I own my sin and examine my idolatry and motives?

What makes me angry in everyday life? What does this anger reveal about my idolatry and worship?

Do I need to call a Christian brother or sister for marriage help? Why might I be afraid to reach out for help?

3. The DNA of Sin

*“If the heart is the problem in a marriage,
what is the problem with the heart?”*

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 3:

1. Name three things that, if you had, would result in a peaceful, pleasurable, and comfortable day.
2. How could those three things potentially become destructive idols in a marriage?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

KEY IDEAS:

1. The power of sin has been broken (justification), but the presence of sin still remains and is being progressively eradicated (sanctification).
2. Sin causes us to shrink our lives down to the size of our lives.
3. The DNA of sin is selfishness.
4. Sin is anti-social in its fundamental form.
5. Sin will cause you to dehumanize the other person in your marriage.
6. You have been born into a world that, by its very nature, is a celebration of Another.

PRINCIPLE 2:
**Sin causes us to shrink
our lives down to the size
of our lives**

IMPLICATION 1:

The DNA of sin
is selfishness

IMPLICATION 2:

Sin is anti-social in its
fundamental form

IMPLICATION 3:

Sin will cause you to
dehumanize the other
person in your marriage

**IT'S NOT
YOUR PARTY!**

REVIEW:

1. For the believer, what is the difference between the power of sin and the presence of sin?
2. What is the DNA of sin, and how does sin reveal itself most frequently in marriage?
3. How can one person dehumanize another person in marriage, or in any relationship?

DISCUSSION:

1. Does your culture try to persuade you that life is your party? What are some of these lies that they communicate?
2. In what ways do you buy into the lie that your life - and marriage - is all about you?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #3 - Breaking Down Conflict (Part 2)

At some stage during your day, you will face conflict with your spouse. Using the three implications from Session 3, review your own heart and why you started or entered into conflict.

1. The DNA of sin is selfishness: Sin is all about selfishness of the sinner - their wants, their desires, and their self-described needs. How did this conflict reveal the selfishness of your heart? What desires were you chasing after, what did you want, or what did you tell yourself you needed?

2. Sin is anti-social in its fundamental form: We were created to live an outward and an upward life; upward in worship to God and outward in self-sacrificing love toward a neighbor or spouse. Sin does the opposite. How did this conflict reveal your love for you? In your quest to get what you wanted, did you forget that you were in relationship with other people? How did your words and actions affect them?

3. Sin will cause you to dehumanize the other person in your marriage: In our quest to get what we want, we will reduce the other person to a vehicle or obstacle. They either help us get what we want or get in the way of what we desire. How did you try to use the other person to get what you wanted? If they interfered with your plans, how did you respond to them?

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 6-8
Philippians 2:1-15



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

When I look back at those three things that I listed in the **Opening Discussion**, am I at risk of turning them into idols?

How can I view my spouse - or anyone in my life - more as a person to be loved instead of a vehicle or object to be used?

What can motivate me to love others more?

(HINT: remembering God's love and grace for me - 1 John 4:19)

4. "I Need Help"

"Jesus came to do the one thing you can't do for yourself - rescue you from you."

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 4:

1. What little things do you make a big deal over in your marriage?
2. What happens to the health of your relationship when you make a big deal over little things?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

KEY IDEAS:

1. We make big deals over little things because we are full of ourselves.
2. Jesus didn't die only for our past sin and future eternity - He died for the here and now.
3. Because of 2 Corinthians 5:15, there is no such thing as a hopeless marriage.
4. The doorway to hope is hopelessness.

**2 CORINTHIANS
5:14-15**

THERE IS HOPE!

REVIEW:

1. Why do we make big deals over little things in marriage?
2. Why is the doorway to hope hopelessness?
3. Why do we have confidence to reveal personal sin and marital weaknesses to others?

DISCUSSION:

To end Session 4, it is recommended to break up into gender-specific groups for this discussion; husbands and wives should be separated.

1. Knowing that there is nothing that can be exposed about you that hasn't already been covered by the Cross of Jesus Christ, be fully honest and transparent with those in your gender-specific group: how have you failed to create an environment of love, protection, and safety for your spouse? How have your words and behaviors been critical, harsh, and condemning?
2. When you go home from this Session, will you be committed to spending personal time with your spouse and confessing to the things you revealed in the previous question? What specific sins do you need to repent of to your spouse?
3. If and when your spouse confesses to you, will you struggle to forgive? Why might it be difficult to forgive quickly and freely?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #4 - Committed To Confession

Hopefully the **Discussion** for Session 4 served as a catalyst for confession, repentance, and forgiveness between you and your spouse. However, you will still struggle with the same things you repented of. Keep a journal or take notes below of what you repented of, and how and when you still struggle with them.

Evaluate your notes and try to find any patterns of sin. Consider reaching out to a mature brother or sister and asking for their guidance, counsel, and accountability for patterns of sin and weakness.

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 8-10
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
1 Peter 5:5-7



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Do I struggle to accept the reality that I am my biggest marriage problem? Do I self-righteously argue against Jesus' verdict?

Do I struggle to accept the reality that I have no hope in myself for marriage? Am I trying to do what only grace can do?

Do I struggle to allow other people to know the true me, riddled with flaws, weaknesses, and failure?

5. Treasure (I)

“Marriage, this side of eternity, is always a war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of self.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 5:

1. What are some things that you treasure in your everyday life?
2. How do you respond if those treasures are stripped from you?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:19-33

¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

KEY IDEAS:

1. Marriage, this side of eternity, is a war.
2. Everyone lives for some kind of treasure; we don’t live by instinct.
3. The thing that is your treasure will control your heart.
4. What controls your heart will control your words and behavior.
5. It’s very difficult to keep what God says is important important in our life.
6. Your marriage will always be victimized by, or enhanced by, what you treasure.
7. A desire for even a good thing becomes a bad thing when it becomes a ruling thing.

PRINCIPLE 3:

Marriage, this side of eternity, is always a war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of self

TREASURE PRINCIPLE 1:

Everyone lives for some kind of treasure

TREASURE PRINCIPLE 2:

The thing that is your treasure will control your heart

TREASURE PRINCIPLE 3:

What controls your heart will control your words and behavior

IMPLICATION 1:

This side of eternity, it's very hard to keep what God says is important important in your heart

IMPLICATION 2:

Your marriage will always be victimized by, or enhanced by, what you treasure

IMPLICATION 3:

A desire for even a good thing becomes a bad thing when that desire becomes a ruling thing

REVIEW:

1. What is treasure?
2. Why is it difficult to keep what God says is important important in our lives?
3. What can the pursuit of treasure do for your marriage?

DISCUSSION:

1. How can good treasures become bad treasures when they become ruling treasures? Be specific.
2. What are some things to treasure, according to the Bible?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #5 - On A Treasure Hunt

Review your answers to the **Opening Discussion** and **Discussion** sections of Session 5. Then, during the week, journal or take notes below after an incident when you pursued your treasure or when someone or something interrupted your quest for treasure.

What treasure were you seeking? Why was that treasure so important to you? How did you respond when your treasure quest was interrupted? How does that treasure victimize or enhance your marriage? Is that treasure more affiliated with the kingdom of God or with the kingdom of self?

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapter 3
Luke 12:13-21
1 Kings 10:14-11:10



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

When I evaluate my schedule and bank account, what are some treasures that reveal themselves?

How can I transfer my time and my money and my abilities from the kingdom of self to the kingdom of God?

If I'm consistently and severely struggling with specific treasure problems, where can I seek help in the body of Christ?

6. Treasure (II)

“All the beautiful things of earth are meant to point you to the God who alone can satisfy your heart.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 6:

1. Think about this statement: “If only I had _____, my life would be better.” Or, “If only I didn’t have to deal with _____, then my life would be better”. How would you fill in the blank?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:19-33

¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

KEY IDEAS:

1. Earth-bound treasures have no capacity to satisfy your heart.
2. In your pursuit of impermanent earth-bound treasures, you risk neglecting your marriage.
3. “Need” is one of the most overused words in human culture, if need means *essential for life*.
4. Wives don’t *need* husbands who love them and husbands don’t *need* wives who respect them (watch the entire session before making a conclusion about this statement!)
5. Christians shouldn’t use theological terms they don’t understand - spiritual platitudes deny reality and are rarely helpful.

**EARTH-BOUND
TREASURES**

**ANXIETY-BOUND
NEEDS**

**What does it look like
to seek God's kingdom
in your marriage?**

REVIEW:

1. What is the primary reason marriages fail?
2. Why are earth-bound treasures potentially dangerous?
3. What are the three things that happen when you name something as a need?

DISCUSSION:

1. What are some earth-bound treasures that you pursue in everyday life?
2. Share any experiences you have had with these treasures and how, even though pleasurable and created by God for his glory, ultimately didn't satisfy your heart.

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #6 - Define The Kingdom of God

For the **Opening Discussion** of Session 7, be prepared to do two things: first, share your definition of the kingdom of God, and second, explain (with specific examples when necessary) how you can seek the Kingdom of God in your marriage.

Don't get "*intensely academic*" with your definitions. In other words, keep your answers short, simple, and applied to everyday life. They should come out of your own struggles and experiences, not out of a doctrinal statement or theological textbook.

1) What is the Kingdom of God?

2) How can you seek the Kingdom of God in your marriage?

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapter 15
1 Timothy 6:6-19



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Where have I been pursuing earth-bound treasures
and neglecting my spouse?

What am I telling myself that I *need* in life, when it's
simply just a desire?

If I don't receive something that I named as a *need*,
do I get angry with God?

7. What Is Love?

*“A good marriage is a good marriage because people say
“No!” - not to one another - but “No!” to themselves.”*

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share your definitions from Assignment #6 BEFORE watching Session 7:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE 1

Galatians 5:13-15

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE 2

1 John 4:7-11

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

KEY IDEAS:

1. Indulging the sinful nature is destructive to your marriage.
2. You have the ability to say “No!” to sin because the Holy Spirit resides inside of you.
3. Marriage problems are always fixed vertically before they are ever fixed horizontally.
4. When we don’t love God enough, we insert ourselves in his place and fail to love our spouse in the way we should.
5. Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not demand reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving (*a cruciform definition of love*).

**INDULGING THE
SINFUL NATURE**

**A CRUCIFORM
DEFINITION
OF LOVE**

Below is intentionally left blank for additional notes on cruciform love:

REVIEW:

1. How is indulgence destructive in marriage, and, in all areas of life?

2. Why are marriages fixed vertically before they are ever fixed horizontally?

3. Review each of the elements from the cruciform definition of love, rephrasing it, if necessary, in a way that has personal application and meaning for you. Share one element with the group:
 - 1) **Willing:**

 - 2) **Self-sacrifice:**

 - 3) **For the good of another:**

 - 4) **Reciprocation / Deserving:**

DISCUSSION:

1. If it's true that "love best grows out of the soil of gratitude," how can you find practical ways to "water the soil" of gratitude and celebrate the love of God in your life?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #7 - A Cruciform Definition of Love

“Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not demand reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.”

Use this definition to intentionally look for ways to love and serve your spouse. Journal or take notes below about how you did or did not serve, how you struggled, and how the Holy Spirit gave you victory, even just once, to become a person of cruciform love.

1) Willing:

2) Self-sacrifice:

3) For the good of another:

4) Reciprocation / Deserving:

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 11-12,16
Luke 7:36-50



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Am I humble enough to confess that I don't love God as much as I claim I do?

How can I grow in my love for God? How can I remember his love for me and water the soil of gratitude?

What elements of my schedule do I need to give up in order to deepen my relationship with God and my spouse?

8. A Better Way

“The fruit of the Spirit describes God’s kingdom purpose for every one of His children.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 8:

1. How does the fruit of the Spirit apply to marriage?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Galatians 5:19-23

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

KEY IDEAS:

1. The works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) are driven by the kingdom of self.
2. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) are driven by the kingdom of God.
3. The fruit of the Spirit describes God’s kingdom purpose for every one of His children.
4. The character qualities described in the fruit of the Spirit make relationships beautiful.

GALATIANS 5:19-23

**THE FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT**

Below is intentionally left blank for additional notes on the fruit of the Spirit:

REVIEW:

1. How are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) driven by the kingdom of self? Each person should pick a work of the flesh and describe the selfish pleasure motivating that work.
2. How are the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) driven by the kingdom of God? Each person should pick a fruit of the Spirit and describe the Christ-centered motivation for that fruit.
3. Why is a relationship, specifically marriage, most beautiful when both people are pursuing the Kingdom of God and living out the fruit of the Spirit? Be specific in your examples.

DISCUSSION:

1. What fruit of the Spirit have you seen grow the most in your life as you matured in Christ?
2. Conversely, what fruit of the Spirit has seen the least growth in your life? Why do you think you still struggle with this fruit, and how can you get help?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #8 - Fruit of the Spirit

Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-Control.

For this assignment, pick three (3) fruits of the Spirit and be intentional to monitor them as best as you can during the week. Journal or take notes below of instances or incidents where you struggled to produce a specific fruit. Identifying struggles and building awareness can help you plant specific roots by the streams of grace for growth.

1) _____:

2) _____:

3) _____:

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 13,14, 17
John 15:1-17



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

In the 10,000 little moments of everyday life, how am I motivated by the kingdom of self and what does that do to my marriage?

In those same moments, how should I be motivated by the Kingdom of God and what will that do for my marriage?

What fruit of the Spirit do I intentionally need to monitor?
Do I need to seek out help from the body of Christ?

9. Rooted in Worship

“A marriage of unity, understanding, and love, is rooted in the worship of God as creator, sovereign, and savior.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following *BEFORE* watching Session 9:

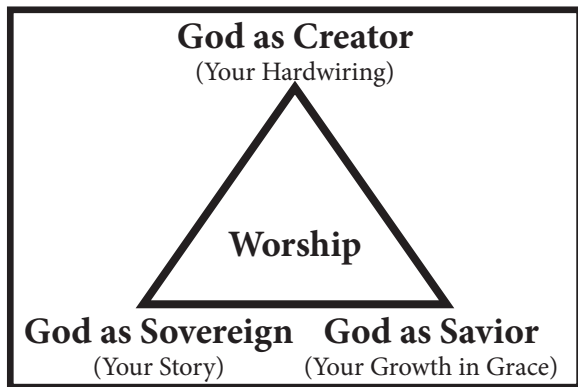
1. How are you and your spouse different? Examine the physical, emotional, and spiritual differences that separate you (*preferences, abilities, weaknesses, personalities, and so on*).
2. How do those differences affect your marriage?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

There is no Scripture passage for Session 9

KEY IDEAS:

1. Often, the differences that were attractive in courtship become irritating in marriage.
2. Spouses fall into thinking that they would make a better creator than the Creator.
3. God has ruled over all the past situations that have formed the way your spouse lives.
4. The ultimate purpose of marriage is not personal happiness; it is redemptive holiness.
5. Marriage will reveal that your spouse is a sinner - how will you react to that revelation?
6. If you ever see or hear the sin of your spouse, it's never an interruption - it's always grace!



REVIEW & DISCUSSION:

1. What would happen (or has happened) if you didn't worship God as Creator in your marriage? Conversely, how will your marriage improve when you worship God as Creator?

2. What would happen (or has happened) if you didn't worship God as Sovereign in your marriage? Conversely, how will your marriage improve when you worship God as Sovereign?

3. What would happen (or has happened) if you didn't worship God as Savior in your marriage? Conversely, how will your marriage improve when you worship God as Savior?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #9 - Appreciating Differences

For this assignment, monitor the three different types of worship related to marriage. Journal or take notes below of instances where you failed to worship God in this way, and how that affected your marriage. Conversely, monitor instances when you chose to worship God in these ways and how those decisions affected your relationship. Be prepared to briefly share your experiences at the beginning of Session 10.

1) Worship God as Creator:

2) Worship God as Sovereign:

3) Worship God as Savior:

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 12-13
Romans 15:1-13
Galatians 5:13-15



END OF SESSION

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Why do the differences of my spouse irritate me so much?
What does the irritation reveal about the idols of my heart?

Why might the life story (upbringing, culture, etc) of my spouse irritate me? Why should I be worshipful instead?

Why does the sin of my spouse irritate me so much?
Am I unwilling to love, even though He first loved me?

10. The Marriage Bed

“You always carry the true character and quality of your marriage relationship into the marriage bed.”

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share your experiences from Assignment #9 BEFORE watching Session 10:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

There is no Scripture passage for Session 10

KEY IDEAS:

1. You always carry the true character and quality of your relationship into the marriage bed.
2. Sex, by its very nature, is an act of worship - you either worship God or you worship self.
3. If sex is only about your pleasure, it will be very easy to replace your spouse with pornography.
4. God empowers weak people to do amazing things by His enabling grace.
5. God is in the business of painting His grace on the canvas of human souls; will you be a soft-bristled brush in His redemptive hands?

Below is intentionally left blank for additional notes on Session 10:

DISCUSSION:

1. How have you grown in knowledge and understanding over these 10 sessions? In other words, how have you expanded your “theology” of the heart, worship, and marriage? Write down some specific and concrete examples before sharing aloud:

2. Remember that the purpose of Scripture is not just informational, but transformational. What selfish and sinful tendencies have been exposed to you about yourself during these 10 sessions? What new hope do you have for your marriage? Write down some specific and concrete answers before sharing aloud:

3. Remember that you are not only called to be a recipient of grace, but a participant of grace as well. What have you learned about marriage that you can bring to others? Write down specific people to whom you can be an instrument of grace (respecting confidentiality if necessary):

FOR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY:

These questions are intended for personal review only, not group discussion. If these questions reveal sexual addictions or sinful tendencies in your life, seek help from the body of Christ or a trained professional counselor.

1. What pleasure motivates you in the bedroom: the pleasure of God or your own pleasure?

2. How might you be using your spouse as a tool for your own sexual pleasure, instead of caring for them by worshiping God in the act of sex?

3. What sexual struggles are you experiencing in the marriage bed? What might these struggles reveal about your character outside of the bedroom?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MARRIAGES

SEX & MONEY



**PLEASURES THAT LEAVE YOU EMPTY
AND GRACE THAT SATISFIES**

If you were convicted in the tenth and final session regarding your sex life, a helpful resource might be my book and DVD, “Sex and Money: Pleasures That Leave You Empty and Grace That Satisfies.”

In *Sex and Money*, I try to pull back the curtain on the lies of our flesh and the ways we distort God’s good gifts, examining the insanity of our culture and exposing our tendency to fall prey to the hollow promises of this world.

In exploring how God’s grace frees us from futile pursuits, this material will direct you to the wisdom of God in Scripture and the liberating power of the gospel, offering practical guidance on finding true joy and enduring satisfaction.

Visit www.paultripp.com/sexandmoney for more information.

*What did
you
Expect?*

STRENGTHENING MARRIAGES IN YOUR CHURCH

Marriages have needs. Two sinners reside together in a fallen world, and while the power of sin has been broken, the presence of sin still remains. This comprehensive, life-long relationship will require spiritual care. And no matter the size of your church, there will never be a staff large enough to provide for each marriage. Will many marriages be left unattended? Will the spiritual needs of couples go unnoticed?

In this training series, curriculum, I build upon principles from *What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage* to equip mature couples to minister to struggling couples within the body of Christ. With the Gospel, you can help others to radically change the direction of their marriage.

Visit www.paultripp.com/marriage for more information.

APPENDIX A: CONCRETE DESCRIPTIONS OF LOVE

1. Love is being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of your husband or wife without impatience or anger.
2. Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise.
3. Love is the daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.
4. Love is being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding, and being more committed to unity and love than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.
5. Love is a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the blame.
6. Love means being willing, when confronted by your spouse, to examine your heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus.
7. Love is a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to your husband or wife is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.
8. Love is being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged but to look for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good.
9. Love is being a good student of your spouse, looking for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support them as they carry it, or encourage them along the way.
10. Love means being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the problems that you face as a couple, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response.
11. Love is always being willing to ask for forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness when it is requested.
12. Love is recognizing the high value of trust in a marriage and being faithful to your promises and true to your word.
13. Love is speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack your spouse's character or assault his or her intelligence.
14. Love is being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt your spouse into giving you what you want or doing something your way.

Continued on next page...

15. Love is being unwilling to ask your spouse to be the source of your identity, meaning and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of his or hers.
16. Love is the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to do as a husband or a wife.
17. Love is a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your marriage.
18. Love is staying faithful to your commitment to treat your spouse with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when he or she doesn't seem to deserve it or is unwilling to reciprocate.
19. Love is the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of your marriage without asking anything in return or using your sacrifices to place your spouse in your debt.
20. Love is being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm your marriage, hurt your husband or wife, or weaken the bond of trust between you.
21. Love is refusing to be self-focused or demanding but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.
22. Love is daily admitting to yourself, your spouse, and God that you are not able to love this way without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.



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