

# Marriage: Foundations & Principles

## INTRODUCTION

We want to be salt and light in all areas of our lives. We want to hold to the standards that the Bible teaches. In the area of marriage, a Christian perspective can make us shine like a city set on a hill.

Unfortunately, the statistics are showing very little difference between marriages by believing Christians and unbelievers. We have all heard sad stories in our communities where sincere Christians leave their spouses. How does a marriage fail? It usually is not from an individual catastrophic event, like a sudden flood. It is not by planning for the marriage to fail. Marriages fail when the trickle of water flows and the erosion continues, unchecked. To weather the years, we need a healthy dose of skepticism about ourselves and our intentions. It requires close attention to our attitudes, thoughts and actions in the most routine areas of life.

There is much confusion about marriage today in our society but marriage is God's idea. We have to train ourselves to know and understand the difference between man's view and God's view of love and marriage. This quarterly examines the biblical view, God's view, of the husband and wife's roles in marriage.

Before we even start talking about marriage from the Christian perspective, we must first examine our relationship to God. A Christian marriage begins with each partner having a relationship with God. Marriage is not like a straight line that connects husband and wife. It is instead an equilateral triangle whose lines connect husband and wife with God and, under God, connect one with the other. Both partners need that vital relationship with God. If one of the partners is an unbeliever and does not walk and talk and look at things from a God-centered perspective, then the relationship will be built on a wrong foundation. The relationship will look like a line...the peak of the triangle will be missing.

Do you believe that God created the universe and that he sent his son to bear our sins so that we might live and have eternal life (John 3:16)? Does your partner believe the same? That needs to be the first step. Once that foundation is established, with both partners believing in God for their salvation, then we look at God's plan for marriage. Then we build our marriage partnership after God's plan for marriage. Marriage is not man's idea. The Bible, God's holy word, describes the origin of marriage. From it, we begin to understand the purposes of marriage.

*Steve Boone, 2016*

## Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Lesson 1: What Is Marriage?.....	2
Lesson 2: Driven by Purpose.....	3
Lesson 3: The Role of the Husband.....	4
Lesson 4: The Responsibility of the Husband .....	5
Lesson 5: The Need of the Husband .....	6
Lesson 6: The Role of the Wife .....	7
Lesson 7: The Responsibility of the Wife .....	8
Lesson 8: The Need of the Wife.....	9
Lesson 9: Biblical Communication .....	10
Lesson 10: The Sexual Union .....	11
Lesson 11: Parenting.....	12
Lesson 12: Money .....	13

# Lesson 1: What Is Marriage?

**Scripture Verse: Genesis 2:18-25.**

## **Introduction:**

In its perfect and purest form, marriage is the uniting of two souls into one; it's two people becoming together what they can never be alone. This unity is a miraculous, spiritual experience beginning with the words "I do" and ending with the death of a husband or wife. Nothing exists on earth comparable to the beauty and joy of marriage. But adjectives describing the benefits and results of marriage do not provide an adequate definition,

Clearly and simply defined, marriage is a covenant of companionship. In marriage, two people covenant with God and one another to be lifelong companions, fulfilling one another's spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and sexual needs.

God deliberately created man with a need for community. Alone, a man is incomplete; by himself, a deep longing wells up for companionship. Scripture testifies to this when God said in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone." We were created for community and companionship. And while humans thrive living in community with many others, the surest evidence of our need for companionship lies in the institution of marriage.

The foundation of society rests on the delicate shoulders of marriage. Diminish the necessity and importance of marriage and society will erode as easily as a sandcastle in the rising tide. Reinforce the necessity and importance of biblical marriage and society will remain virtually timeless and undaunted.

We need to understand marriage because it not only changes our society and world, it changes us. Unlike any other earthly institution, marriage reveals who and what we are, what we are becoming, and what we must do to please the Lord.

## **Lesson Questions:**

1. For what reasons does Scripture say marriage was created? Genesis 2:18-25; 1:28.

**Note:** Verse 18 sums up the key reason for marriage: "It is not good that the man should be alone." Intimate companionship is the reason God created marriage.

2. Discuss the significance of the woman being taken from the man's side and how it relates to the man and woman becoming one flesh.

**Note:** If this supernatural operation had never taken place, Adam would not have been able to say, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Because Eve was taken directly from Adam's side, husbands and wives can be one flesh.

3. Should the marriage relationship be viewed as the man and woman completing one another spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically? Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:28-32.

**Note:** In the one flesh relationship, the husband and wife compliment one another's strengths and weaknesses, enabling each to grow in ways they wouldn't be able to grow individually.

4. Why is it important to recognize marriage as a covenant, rather than a revocable agreement? Matthew 19:3-6; Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:1-3.

5. Why is it dangerous to believe marriage is a "50-50" agreement? Ephesians 5:22,25; I Peter 3:1,7; I Corinthians 10:31.

**Note:** Marriage is not a "50-50" agreement, with both partners making up half of the relationship. Correctly put, marriage is a "100-0" agreement, with both partners responsible to commit everything, regardless of their spouse's commitment or response. Our obligation and ability to serve faithfully as a husband or wife doesn't depend on our spouse. It depends only on our reliance upon Jesus Christ.

6. Genesis 2:24 says a man must leave his father and mother. What does this mean and how is it accurately applied? Exodus 20:12; 18:13-22; Mark 7:9-13.

7. How do we reconcile Paul's statement about marriage in I Corinthians 7:8-9,38 with the narrative in Genesis 1:28 and 2:18-24?

## Lesson 2: Driven by Purpose

**Scripture Verse: Proverbs 29:18.**

### **Introduction:**

They sit across from each other at the dinner table night after night, wondering what life is all about. He doesn't know why the marriage has become dull and lifeless; she doesn't know why he's reluctant to spend time with her. Frustration builds and, after months of agony, he asks finally asks the question: "What is our marriage all about? Where are we going and how do we know if we've arrived?"

Every marriage needs purpose. Without it, husbands and wives drift aimlessly in a sea of confusion and frustration. Yet, the solution isn't for every couple to arbitrarily decide what their marital purpose is and pursue it with a passion. This could be just as disastrous as having no purpose at all.

True biblical purpose isn't created. It's discovered. From fervent prayer, meditation, and bible study, God's purposes are revealed to Christian families. We shouldn't place a random purpose at the forefront of our life simply for the sake of having a purpose. Our responsibility is to discover the everlasting purposes of God, and keep our eyes focused on them through Him.

Some might say the individual purpose of each spouse unites to form a sufficient marital purpose. Not so. The individual purpose of a man and woman can be drastically different and, therefore, husbands and wives must faithfully discover the will of God together. If they don't, true unity will always be elusive.

Will the purpose of every marriage be identical? In some respects, yes, and in some respects, no. Yes, in the sense that all marriages should be founded upon the principles of God's Word. On the other hand, God's call upon each couple is unique, and their marital purpose should reflect His calling on their united life.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Having a clearly established personal purpose is necessary in our individual walk with Jesus Christ but why is it necessary that every Christian marriage have a biblically-based purpose? Proverbs 29:18; Matthew 6:33; Philippians 3:13-14.

**Note:** Notice the clearly defined purpose of Jesus in Matthew 5:17, Luke 4:43, Luke 12:49, John 3:17, John 10:10, and I Timothy 1:15. As His life was filled with the of purposes of His Father, ours should be, too.

2. What pitfalls can be expected when a marriage lacks purpose? Matthew 6:22-23; Proverbs 29:18; II Peter 1:5-10.
3. How can tangible goals help a husband and wife fulfill their calling and their ultimate responsibility of obedience to God? Proverbs 13:12; 13:19; 14:23; I Corinthians 9:24-27.
4. How does marriage help prepare people for true selflessness? I Corinthians 13:4-8; 7:3-5; Matthew 20:28.
5. Discuss the following statement: "A husband's job is to make his wife a success in the Kingdom of God and a wife's job is to make her husband a success in the Kingdom of God." Is this statement true? Why or why not?

## Lesson 3: The Role of the Husband

**Scripture Verse: Ephesians 5:23; I Peter 3:7.**

### **Introduction:**

Have you ever worked for a company that didn't define your role as an employee? Confusion and disappointment were most likely every-day occurrences because you didn't know what you were supposed to do. Believe it or not, the same confusion and frustration is present in many marriages because husbands and wives don't know their job definition. Successful performance is hindered by ignorance. Therefore, it's important to specifically define the role of both the husband and wife.

The husband's role encompasses a variety of things but narrowed to concrete tangibles, he is a leader and a lover. As a leader, a husband is called to figuratively wash his wife's feet, as Jesus did his disciples' feet; he is called to protect her from the spiritual, emotional, and physical wolves of this world; he is to give her all she needs to be successful in the Kingdom of God. Ordained by God to leadership and authority, every husband carries the burden of making decisions in times of hardship and disagreement. Even so, wisdom charges husbands to seek the counsel of their wives on every issue.

Dictatorial rule isn't the model of leadership. Christ's wondrous love for the Church is a husband's model for leadership. A humbling but necessary question for every husband is this: "Am I leading my wife and children as Christ leads the Church?" This is the only standard by which husbands have been given to judge their performance.

Not only called to lead, a husband is called to love. There is no end to the love Christ has for the Church, as there should be no end to the husband's love for his wife. Without doubt or hesitancy, a wife should be able to say she knows her husband loves and adores her more than any other person on earth.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Examine the comparison between Christ as Head of the Church and the husband as head of the wife. Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3.
2. True authority is founded upon servanthood and submission. How is the husband called to serve his wife? Ephesians 5:28-29; Philippians 2:3-8; I Samuel 1:8; Ruth 4:10-13.

**Note:** In John 13:1-15, the model Jesus established for true leadership is servanthood. True leaders carry a towel and basin, not a scepter.

3. Christ was sacrificed so that the Church might be pure and holy. Discuss the husband's responsibility to crucify his desires for the welfare of his wife and family. Ephesians 5:25-27; Mark 10:45; Ephesians 1:22-23.

**Note:** Just as Christ does everything for our good and our best interest, so too must husbands do everything for their wives' best interest.

4. Scripture teaches Christ is the Savior of the Body. Since the husband's position is compared to Christ's, should the husband be considered the "savior" of the wife? Ephesians 5:23-27; Isaiah 54:5.

**Note:** Salvation is available to all, regardless of gender or marital status. This principle speaks to the husband's responsibility as the family priest, called to lead his wife and children into a familial relationship with Jesus Christ.

5. Why did God make husbands the spiritual leader of the family? I Corinthians 11:8-12; Genesis 2:21-25; I Timothy 2:13-15.
6. The husband's authority is derived from what source? Genesis 3:16; Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:1.

**Note:** In the above verses, wives are commanded to be in subjection to their husbands. Since they are commanded by God, it is God who gives husbands the authority to lead the family.

## Lesson 4: The Responsibility of the Husband

**Scripture Verse: Ephesians 5:25-28.**

### **Introduction:**

What specific responsibilities does the role of loving leader carry? To begin, a husband is commanded to know his wife. Since Christ is the husband's model, a husband should endeavor to know his wife as Christ knows the Church; his heart and soul should be poured into the enormous task of intimately understanding and ministering to his wife. A second responsibility of a husband is to nourish and cherish his wife. In his arms, she should find loving acceptance, encouraging words, and personal ministry. Time spent with him should be a haven of security, peace, and protection. Even more, we need to realize that nurturing and cherishing includes the husband's responsibility to his wife's spiritual growth. Placed as the priest of his family, a husband is called to faithfully examine, exhort, teach, and train his wife and children, just as Christ does the Church.

Another area to consider is that of honoring wives as joint heirs of the Kingdom. God works mightily through women and they need to be seen in this light. The wisdom, insight, and discernment of a wife is invaluable and the man who despises or ignores these attributes in his wife, despises and ignores the gift of God.

Like no other area, husbands struggle with leadership in the home. Even though husbands are called and enabled to lead their families, this responsibility seems to repel them like nothing else. Our society is crumbling under the weight of broken families and divorce. Causes are examined and discussed by everyone from politicians to Christian leaders to single mothers. In the end, the ultimate responsibility lies with the husbands and fathers. As a collective group, husbands have ushered in the death of the family by refusing to accept the call of God to lead their families.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. I Peter 3:7 establishes three foundational responsibilities for husbands: living with wives according to knowledge, honoring wives as fragile vessels, and honoring wives as joint heirs of the Kingdom.
  - a. How does a husband live with his wife according to knowledge? **Note:** The word "knowledge" is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning knowledge which is sought after, as a judicial review would seek after facts. This word also speaks of a knowledge that isn't known innately, but rather is acquired from experience.
  - b. How does a husband honor his wife as a fragile vessel?  
**Note:** In the King James translation, the word "weaker" is used to describe the way women should be viewed. Weaker doesn't imply inferiority. It implies fragile, like a fine porcelain vase.
  - c. What implications does the wife being a joint heir of the Kingdom have on a husband's responsibility and leadership?
2. Husbands are specifically commanded to love their wives three times in Ephesians 5:22-33. Does it seem logical, then, that this is an area most husbands struggle with? Why?
3. What attitude should a husband have toward marriage and his wife? Ecclesiastes 9:9; Proverbs 5:18; 18:22; Psalm 128:3; Isaiah 62:5.
4. To what lengths should a husband go to please his wife? Ephesians 5:25-29; Deuteronomy 24:5; Esther 2:17-18.  
**Note:** The length husbands go to please their wives should be no less than the length Christ went to bring salvation to the world.
5. How does a husband lead spiritually? Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 1:1-3; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 4:6-9; Romans 12:10-21.
6. Are the wife and children's testimony to the world indicative of the husband's spiritual leadership? I Timothy 3:4-5, 11-12; Proverbs 22:6; I Samuel 8:3; 2:12, 22-26.

## Lesson 5: The Need of the Husband

**Scripture Verse: Proverbs 31:11-12.**

### **Introduction:**

A husband has certain roles and responsibilities, but he also has specific, unique needs. Leading a family according to God's will in the war zone of today's society is no small task. Standing for righteousness and purity beckons a flurry of criticism and rejection. To withstand the fiery darts of the world and Satan, a husband needs his wife's support, encouragement, and trust.

Family life grants us the opportunity to know others in an undisguised way. Virtually every wife in the world could reveal her husband's weaknesses, failures, and inconsistencies. Within these things, though, lies a husband's greatest need. In spite of his broken promises and failures, a husband wants nothing more than his wife to be proud of him, to follow him, and to encourage him when others criticize.

Wives play an integral part of their husband's success. In becoming one flesh, who he is forever changes. He's no longer a single man but a person in need of his wife for completion. The fact that the woman was created to be her husband's unique helper gives us a picture of the man's incompleteness. If men weren't half-made, would there be a need for marriage?

Speaking of the man's need is truly meaningful when men admit their need. Confessing reliance upon a wife isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of great strength and humility. Husbands who limit or refuse reliance on their wives reject the intended intimacy God planned for marriage, reject the opportunity God has given them to be completed by a wife, and, worst of all, reject God and His sovereign will.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Why is it important to the husband that his wife is committed to his leadership? Matthew 12:25; Amos 3:3; II Samuel 6:20-23; Genesis 27:5-17.
2. How can a wife minister to her husband's needs in a way no one else can? Proverbs 31:12,29; I Peter 3:1.
3. Explain why a wife's support and encouragement is much more crucial to a husband than anyone else's. Proverbs 12:4; 31:11.
4. How can a wife's criticism wreak havoc on her husband's role as spiritual leader? Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 12:18; 29:20; 15:1b.
5. Even though the husband is the head of the family, should he accept constructive criticism and rebuke from his wife? Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16; Proverbs 19:20; 31:26.
6. Discuss the significance of Proverbs 31:10-31 being written to a man.

**Note:** Examine Proverbs 31:2 and you'll notice King Lemuel was writing to his son, not his daughter.

## Lesson 6: The Role of the Wife

**Scripture Verse: Genesis 2:18.**

### **Introduction:**

The confusion surrounding a husband's role is equaled, if not surpassed, by the confusion surrounding a wife's role. In an age struggling with the concept of a biblical family, understanding a wife's role is not an easy task. The "Barefoot-and-pregnant-slave-of-the-husband- babysitter" definition offers no more than bad theology and unreasonable expectations. On the other hand, the "I-am- woman-do-it -all- corporate-executive-who-needs-men" attitude isn't a viable alternative either. Women need a sound, theologically correct definition of what it means to be a woman and wife.

Wives have two foundational roles - completer and companion. Genesis 2:18 says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." As completer, wives have been designed to perfectly compliment their husbands. Who a wife is and what she can do is exactly what her husband needs. Her highest call is to minister to her husband as his helper and completer. The honor attached to this role should never be diminished by the husband or wife. No one can replace or compare a wife's ability to complete not only her husband, but her family.

Beyond a completer, she is to be a companion. God determined it was not good that Adam was alone. The result of this determination wasn't a bunch of guys to pal around with, a dog to go hunting with, or a hobby or job to keep him entertained. The result was the creation of Eve and the need for companionship was fulfilled. This is an exciting testimony of the woman's call and ministry.

Unfortunately, society is all too ready to lament and criticize this concept of a woman's role. Nevertheless, true peace is found not in societal conformity but in genuine obedience to God's Word.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. What is a wife's primary role? Genesis 2:18b; Proverbs 31:11-29.
2. Christ died for the Church and, in response, the Church is called to live for Christ. Discuss the responsibility of the wife to live unto her husband, as the Church lives unto Christ. Ephesians 5:22-24; I Peter 3:1.
3. What benefits does a wife have being under the authority and covering of her husband? I Corinthians 11:1-12; Proverbs 12:4; 31:30.
4. Why is it important to understand that the wife's primary ministry is to her husband, and that she is to be her husband's unique helper? Genesis 2:18-22; Proverbs 31:10-12; Psalm 128:3; I Corinthians 11:11.

**Note:** This does not mean or imply that the wife's life and energies are solely dedicated to her husband. Proverbs 31 makes it clear that women should be allowed to minister in powerful ways, both inside and outside the home.

5. Proverbs 31:10 asks a rhetorical question: "Who can find a virtuous woman?" In the Hebrew, the word "virtuous" literally means power or strength, and is used of armies, riches, and war. How should wives be perceived in light of this truth?

**Note:** Examine the influence and leadership of such women as Miriam, who assisted Moses and Aaron in the leadership of Israel; Deborah the Judge; Esther, who led the children of Israel in fasting and prayer, which routed a slaughter of the Jews; and Priscilla, who helped her husband lead Apollos to a greater understanding of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

6. Within what ministries does scripture confirm women can operate? Acts 2:17; 18:26; 21:9; I Corinthians 11:5; Romans 16:1-5; I Corinthians 12:8-11; Romans 12:3-8.

## Lesson 7: The Responsibility of the Wife

**Scripture Verse: Ephesians 5:22-24.**

### Introduction:

A wife's role is a completer and companion but how is this lived out in a practical way? What does she do to fulfill this calling? Excluding her ministry to the Lord, a wife's primary ministry is to her husband. In successfully ministering to her husband, she becomes the completer and companion he needs. While not popular nor easy, this ministry can be summed up in the word "submit."

Misunderstanding surrounds submission. Many people think submission applies only to wives; or that the wife becomes a slave to her husband; or that she's to keep her mouth shut and her gifts stifled; or that she is inferior to her husband. None of these misconceptions are true. Men must be in submission (Ephesians 5:21), the wife isn't her husband's slave (Ephesians 5:25-28), she isn't to keep her mouth shut or her gifts stifled (Proverbs 31:11-31), and she isn't inferior to her husband (Philippians 2:3-5; I Peter 3:7). Her ministry of submission is accurately seen in the relationship between Christ and the Church. It is a place of honor and ministry, a freedom to grow and serve under God's ordained covering.

Something often overlooked is that Scripture speaks of a wife's submission as her responsibility. Nowhere does it indicate that the husband should make her submit through force, manipulation, or guilt. She is to willingly offer herself to her husband as unto the Lord. Husbands have a responsibility to encourage and exhort their wives in this area, but ultimately, she stands before God.

Wives have been divinely enabled to minister to their husbands' needs and willingly submit themselves to their husbands' leadership. Scripture never speaks of this as an easy task. Rather, it speaks of this as a noble call to which every wife should aspire.

### Lesson Questions:

1. In what ways can a wife support her husband's leadership, spiritually and otherwise? Proverbs 31:11-12; Ephesians 4:2; 4:25; Philippians 4:6-13; I Corinthians 13:4-8.
2. Discuss this significance of the wife's attitude toward her husband in light of I Peter 3:3-6, Philippians 2:14, and Proverbs 27:15. Also see Proverbs 31:12,26,28.
3. To what lengths should a wife go to please her husband? Explore the principles of Proverbs 31:12,16,20-21,23,25,27.
4. Discuss the following statements about the wife's submission.
  - Submission is to be complete and extensive-Ephesians 5:24.
  - Submission is spiritual-Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:17-18.
  - Submission has limits-Acts 5 :29.
  - Submission is mandatory-I Peter 3:1. Also see Luke 2:51. **Note:** Bill Gothard says a wife's submission is "the freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority."
5. Since the wife is specifically commanded to reverence her husband and submit to him, is it reasonable to conclude this can be an area of struggle for many wives? Ephesians 5:22-24; I Peter 3:6.

**Note:** Scripture confirms this is a unique area of struggle for women. Genesis 3:16 states, " ... and thy desire shall be to thy husband."

6. Why is submission in marriage seen so negatively today, especially in light of it being one of the key elements in converting the non-Christian husband? I Peter 3:1-2; II Timothy 3:1-5.
7. Paul instructs Timothy in I Timothy 5:14 to train young women to do certain things. Is a wife still under the same obligation in our day and culture? What principles does this verse teach that can be applied to us today? Consider this in light of Proverbs 31:10-31.

**Note:** Any wife who stays home works as hard, or harder, than anyone in the workforce. And, the ministry she performs with the children is more important than any job in the workforce.

## Lesson 8: The Need of the Wife

**Scripture Verse: I Peter 3:7.**

### **Introduction:**

Husbands are given an interesting command in I Peter 3:7:

"Dwell with them according to knowledge." In essence, Peter is telling husbands that they can understand their wives. To many men, this might sound like an impossible challenge. Yet, the fact that husbands are commanded to understand their wives means they can. So, what does a wife need?

First and foremost, a wife needs to be loved. More than anything else, husbands are told to love their wives. This indicates not only a struggle on the husband's part but a need on the wife's. As the Church desperately needs the sacrificial love of Christ, the wife needs the undying love of her husband.

Wives not only need to be loved, they need to be honored. With the exception of Christ, a wife should be more important to her husband than anything. To most wives, a husband's heart is far more important than anything the world has to offer. His words should encourage her, his actions cherish her, his thoughts contemplate her beauty, and his heart continually desire to be near her.

As she needs his understanding, love, and honor, so too does she need his trust. It can be a devastating blow when a husband harshly calls his wife's motives into question, when he sharply criticizes her judgment, or when he quickly believes what another has said about her. Trust is especially important when it comes to children. If he won't trust her ability and judgment, the children will see this and a spirit of distrust will permeate the family.

Finally, wives need protection. As the shepherd protects the sheep, the husband must protect his wife from the things of this world that would drive them apart from Jesus Christ or one another.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Based on I Peter 3:7, women are to be seen as fragile, due the honor we normally give to kings and magistrates. How can a husband show his commitment to nurturing, cherishing, and honoring his wife? Discuss the following examples.
  - Providing for her needs - I Timothy 5:8; I John 3:17.
  - Protecting her - Ephesians 5:28.
  - Helping her fulfill her responsibilities - Romans 12:10.
  - Sacrificing for her - Philippians 2:5-6.
  - By sharing his life - I Peter 3:7 (notice "heirs together").
  - Refusing to compare her unfavorably to others. - I Corinthians 7:3
  - Demonstrating she is second only to Christ. - I Corinthians 11:3
  - Giving her tenderness and respect - I Corinthians 13:4-5.
  - Praising her and showing appreciation for her. - Proverbs 31:28.
2. Husbands are specifically commanded to love their wives. Could one of the reasons be that the wife has a great need for love from her husband? Discuss.
3. Proverbs 31 was written by King Lemuel to his son but was based on the instruction King Lemuel received from his mother. Discuss the significance of this passage being taught by a mother to her son.
4. Why is it necessary that the wife have her husband's trust, especially in the area of ministry? Ecclesiastes 4:9-11; Amos 3:3.
5. In I Timothy 5:8, husbands are commanded to provide for their families financially. How important is financial provision to a wife?

## Lesson 9: Biblical Communication

**Scripture Verse: Ephesians 4:29.**

### **Introduction:**

Outside of a commitment to Jesus Christ, there is nothing more crucial to the life of a marriage than communication. Money, children, intimacy, spiritual growth, sexuality, and unity all depend on the lifeblood of communication. By the words we speak, we can bring life or we can bring death; we can encourage or discourage; we can build up or tear down; we can promote unity or we can ensure division. This is especially true in marriage.

In considering communication, every husband and wife needs to examine their motivation and heart attitude. In Matthew 12:35-37, Jesus tells us the heart of a man is revealed by his words. We must begin our search for righteous communication in our heart. What is our motive? Why do we say what we say? Are we telling the truth? Does the desire of our heart want to build up or tear down? Is God's will more important than the last word? Among others, these questions must be asked and answered before truly intimate communication can take place between a husband and wife.

Communication also takes time. Anyone believing the essence of communication is quality, not quantity, should consider this alternative - the essence of communication is quality *and* quantity. Speaking from personal experience, it sometimes takes an hour just to wade through the small things and begin communicating on an intimate level. Both husbands and wives should be prepared to spend large amounts of time talking and sharing.

One of the difficult areas in communication is vulnerability. Revealing who we actually are isn't easy, nor is it comfortable. But, if a husband and wife can learn to open themselves to one another, fear will subside and be replaced by genuine intimacy and growth.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. What should be the primary topic of conversation in a marriage? Joshua 1:8-9; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Malachi 3:16; Psalm 145:11; Ephesians 5:19.
2. Discuss what happens when people don't communicate effectively. Matthew 5:23-26; Proverbs 18:13,17; Amos 3:3.
3. Why is it necessary to understand that our heart attitude is just as important as our words? Matthew 7:17-19; 12:34-37; Ephesians 4:22-24.
4. What should be the tone of communication between a husband and wife? Ephesians 4:15,25,29; Proverbs 15:1; 16:24; 25:11; I Corinthians 13:4-8; Philippians 2:3-5.
5. Do husbands and wives have a responsibility to rebuke and admonish one another in love? Ephesians 4:16; Romans 15:14; Proverbs 27:6.
6. How important is it for husbands and wives to take responsibility for their words, especially when they're sinful words? Galatians 6:5; James 1:13-15.
7. Why is it necessary to deal with current problems and not past arguments? Ephesians 4:26; Philippians 3:12-14; Isaiah 43:25.
8. What value is there in addressing problems one at a time? Matthew 6:34.
9. Discuss the principles of Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:35 and how they relate to marriage.

## Lesson 10: The Sexual Union

**Scripture Verse: I Corinthians 7:3-4.**

### **Introduction:**

Differing views regarding sex have confronted Christians, especially in recent years. Some say sex is simply for procreation; others say it's for pleasure; others say it's a primitive instinct that can't be helped. As Christians, we should be concerned with God's view of sex, and how His view affects our lives. We need to first realize that sex, in the context of marriage, is good. Since the time of Christ, Christians have had to deal with the lie that sex is bad because it appeals to our physical desires. In I Corinthians 7:3-5, Paul commands married couples to consistently and unselfishly serve the sexual needs of one another. God wants His children to experience blessings, one of which is the sexual union.

Not only are sexual relations good, they are a significant part of the man and woman becoming one flesh. When a man and woman truly share their lives together, it not only includes the emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life, it includes the sexual. The primary picture of a man and woman becoming one flesh is the sexual union, as seen in I Corinthians 6: 15-20. This is why adultery is so devastating. Two people who have become one flesh are literally ripped apart when one spouse commits adultery.

One of the most disturbing issues related to sex is that most Christians don't see it as a spiritual experience. For most, it's a deeply emotional experience, but it's not spiritual. Removing or ignoring the spiritual aspect of sex relegates it to a pleasurable act, rather than a spiritually unifying experience. The intimacy between a husband and wife, which includes the sexual union, is so spiritually significant, God deliberately chose it to symbolize the loving relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. What are the three purposes for sexual relations in marriage, as found in Genesis 1:27-28, Proverbs 5:15-19, and I Corinthians 7:3-5? Can it be concluded that having children isn't the only reason for sex?
2. What do the following verses teach about the sexual union in marriage? Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 5:15-19; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Deuteronomy 24:5; I Corinthians 7:3-5; Acts 20:35; Malachi 2:13-16.

**Note:** The husband's primary purpose in pursuing sexual relations should be the fulfillment of his wife's needs; and vice versa. Husbands and wives need to take each other's temperament into account when serving one another sexually. For instance, women tend to be stimulated over a period of time; men tend to be stimulated in a very short period of time. These differences should be kept in mind.

3. Based on Song of Solomon 4:1-7 and 5:10-16, is it good to enjoy, anticipate, and be excited about sexual relations with one's spouse?

**Note:** True sexual unity and fulfillment is simply an outworking of the intimate spiritual and emotional relationship between a man and woman. Sexual fulfillment shouldn't be the goal of marriage, but should be seen as the result of a godly marriage.

4. What kind of marital and personal problems can interfere with the sexual relationship? Ephesians 4:31; Matthew 5:23-24; Colossians 3:8-10; James 1:19-20; 3:5-6; Psalm 32:3-4.
5. Paul seems to refer to sexual relations as an obligation for both husbands and wives in I Corinthians 7:3-5. Are sexual relations an obligation in the Christian marriage? Should they be regular and continuous?
6. How does God view adultery, in action and in attitude? What devastating consequences can result from this terrible sin? Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 5:27-30; II Samuel 12:10-15; Judges 16:16-18.
7. What does King David's example in II Samuel 11:2-4 teach us about adultery and the man's responsibility to guard himself? Answer the same for Bathsheba. Also consider the following verses: I Corinthians 6:15-20; I Timothy 5:2; I Peter 3:3-6.
8. What role does Scripture play in sex education? Titus 2:3-6; Proverbs 31:1-2; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; II Timothy 3:16-17.

## Lesson 11: Parenting

**Scripture Verse: Deuteronomy 6:6-9.**

### **Introduction:**

Few things in life compare to the joy of children. In them, we see who we are, and the potential for so much more; we see the reality of what we are, both good and bad; and we see the prolonging of our lives through our children and grandchildren. The seriousness and magnitude of being a parent is brought into focus when we realize they really aren't our children. They're on loan from God. He's placed His children in our care.

Scripture speaks of children as a blessing, not a curse. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them [children]," says Psalm 127:5. The blessing of children is too often seen as a curse. For fathers like Eli and Samuel, it was a curse. But, God's plan for parenting is one of joy, peace, and contentment. Why is it so often more negative than positive? God has a specific plan for children and when parents don't follow it, misery is the result.

God's plan is founded upon two principles-training and discipline. Before children can even understand knowledge, reason, and discipline, they can be trained. A six-month old baby has different cries; one will be because he's hungry or hurt and one because he's mad or wants something he doesn't have. In the latter case, he must be trained. As they grow, children need to be trained by verbal instruction, by parental example, and then given the choice to choose right or wrong.

When the choice is wrong, God's plan is discipline. Just as He disciplines His children, God wants parents to lovingly and humbly restore their children to righteousness. Discipline is never to punish, but to bring about repentance and restoration.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. What can be concluded about children from the following verses? Psalm 127:3-5; 128:3; Genesis 33:5; Matthew 19:14.
2. Why is it important to recognize the generational aspect of raising children? Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Proverbs 17:6.

**Note:** As Christians, we shouldn't raise our children to be good Christians. Raising children goes far beyond them and ourselves. The goal of our parenting is godly great, great-grandchildren. If this generational aspect isn't taught, obedience to God will fade as quickly as each generation.

3. Are there specific guidelines listed in Scripture for training children? Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 6:4; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; I John 5:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 6:20-21; James 1:22-25; Psalm 1:1- 3; I Corinthians 13:4-8.
4. Discuss the scriptural goal of disciplining children. Hebrews 12:9-10; Galatians 6:1; Proverbs 22:15a.

**Note:** In Hebrews 12:10, the word "chasten" literally means disciplinary correction. The goal of discipline isn't punishment, it's correction, restoration, and character development consistent with the Word of God.

5. Are both parents to be involved in training and correcting children? Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; I Timothy 5:10. Why does Scripture speak directly to fathers in Ephesians 6:4?
6. What promise is made to parents in Proverbs 22:6? Is there any reason to believe this isn't true in every Christian home?
7. How can differences in raising children drive a wedge between a husband and a wife? Amos 3:3; Matthew 12:25.
8. Do children have specific responsibilities to their parents? Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 23:22; Ecclesiastes 12:1.
9. Should the "Rod of Correction" be used in a Christian home? Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13. Is it true that if we don't use the rod of correction, we hate our children? Explain.

## Lesson 12: Money

**Scripture Verse: I Chronicles 29:11-12.**

### **Introduction:**

He wants to spend money on dinners and entertainment but she wants to save it for their retirement; she wants a new car but he thinks they can get along without it; he thinks overtime and a second job is great because of the money but she wants him to spend time at home with her and the kids. For some reason, money is more divisive than almost any other issue in marriage. Some studies have even concluded that the number one factor in divorce is finances. But, what does the Word say?

To begin, money and wealth is never to be considered "ours." God gives us what we possess and it's His, not ours (I Chronicles 29:11-12). What we own and what we earn is God's and He's given it to us to preach the Kingdom of God and bring glory to His name. When we spend money, we're not spending our money, we're spending God's; when we don't give as the New Testament requires, we rob God of His own money.

Money can be extremely divisive because it brings power; it appeals to the hidden covetousness we don't want anyone to discover; it fulfills the sinful desire to have what we want when we want it, whether it's owning a new vehicle, buying a business, or controlling other people. In the context of marriage, money's appeal for power isn't any different. We begin to think our priorities for the paycheck are more important than our spouse's.

The bottom line with money is that it needs to be spent for the glory of God, whether it's spent on the phone bill, our tithes, an entertaining night out, or home improvements. God didn't ask that we give Him ten percent and spend the rest on our desires. He called us to be good stewards with every cent we earn.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Why is it important to recognize God gives man the ability to make money and that everything we own belongs to God? Deuteronomy 8:18; I Chronicles 29:12.
2. Should Christians see finances as an integral part of godly stewardship? I Timothy 6:17-18; Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 4:2.
3. Is the husband specifically responsible to provide financially for his family? I Timothy 5:8; Genesis 30:30.  
**Note:** This verse addresses the husband's *responsibility* to provide for his family, not necessarily his *ability*. If a man is disabled in an accident, he may lose the ability to provide for his family, but not the responsibility.
4. How important is saving for future emergencies and retirement? Proverbs 30:24-25; 13:22; 21:20.
5. Discuss the importance of establishing a budget and spending only what is earned. Romans 13:8; Proverbs 27:23-24; Luke 14:28.
6. Why should our labor focus primarily on giving to others? Ephesians 4:28; Proverbs 11:24; Luke 12:16-21.
7. What attitude should accompany our giving? II Corinthians 9:6-12; Philippians 4:11-19.
8. What perspective should Christians maintain about money? Matthew 16:26; Luke 12:15; Proverbs 15:16-17; Psalm 19:7-10; Matthew 6:19-21