

STUDY GUIDE | 33 LESSONS

DRIVE BY
MARRIAGE

**BY: TODD FRIEL
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Drive By Marriage: Individual, Couple, or Group Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is a companion to the 33-part Drive By Marriage audio series available at www.Wretched.org

By Roger and Becky Patterson

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CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Message from the Author | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |

CHAPTER ONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

| | |
|--|----|
| Lecture 1 - Introduction | 8 |
| Lecture 2 - The Concept | 10 |
| Lecture 3 - Arguing | 12 |
| Lecture 4 - Anger | 14 |
| Lecture 5 - He/She Won't Change | 16 |
| Lecture 6 - Repentance | 18 |
| Lecture 7 - His Needs, Her Needs, pt.1 | 20 |
| Lecture 8 - His Needs, Her Needs, pt.2 | 22 |
| Lecture 9 - Honesty and Transparency | 24 |
| Lecture 10 - Wrongs and Preferences | 26 |
| Lecture 11 - Roles | 28 |
| Lecture 12 - How to Do This | 30 |

CHAPTER TWO: THE ART OF HUSBANDRY

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Lecture 13 - Warming Your Wife | 33 |
| Lecture 14 - Gardening | 35 |
| Lecture 15 - Manly Man Test | 37 |

CHAPTER THREE: THE ART OF BEING A WIFE

| | |
|--|----|
| Lecture 16 - Mr. Incredible | 40 |
| Lecture 17 - The Power of a Wife | 42 |
| Lecture 18 - Be an Encourager | 44 |
| Lecture 19 - No Nagging! | 46 |

CHAPTER FOUR: STRUGGLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Lecture 20 - Grudges, pt.1 | 49 |
| Lecture 21 - Grudges, pt.2 | 51 |
| Lecture 22 - Fighting | 53 |
| Lecture 23 - Changing Your Spouse | 55 |
| Lecture 24 - Barrenness and Suffering | 57 |
| Lecture 25 - We Don't Talk Anymore | 59 |
| Lecture 26 - Suspicion, Hypocrisy, Chilliness | 61 |
| Lecture 27 - Fear and Anger | 63 |

CHAPTER FIVE: BOMBSHELLS

| | |
|--|----|
| Lecture 28 - A Busted Bedroom | 66 |
| Lecture 29 - Porn and Fantasizing | 68 |
| Lecture 30 - Adultery and Divorces | 70 |
| Lecture 31 - Abuse | 72 |

CONCLUSION

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Lecture 32 - Do It! | 75 |
|---------------------------|----|

BONUS

| | |
|--|----|
| Lecture 33 - Pre-Marriage Advice | 78 |
|--|----|

APPENDIX

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Biblical Counseling Information | 81 |
| Recommended Books | 81 |

MESSAGE FROM TODD



Way to go!

You are doing something very unusual, and you should be applauded!

Many people have good marriages they just don't think can improve. Congratulations for investing time to make your good marriage even better.

Others struggle in their marriages and either resolve to plug their noses and live with it, or just get divorced. If you are struggling, congratulations for your willingness to put in the effort to help your marriage not just survive, but thrive.

No matter how good or bad your marriage is, it can be better . . . much better. "Drive by Marriage" will take you on a deep, profound, and soul-searching journey that will produce an intimacy between you and your spouse that you never imagined could happen.

Once again, WAY TO GO! Now prepare for an amazing journey!

STUDY GUIDE & INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the discussion guide for Drive By Marriage. This guide has been created to help you get the most out of the Drive By Marriage audio lectures. The guide contains two components that accompany each lecture.

LECTURE QUESTIONS

The Lecture Questions reinforce the lessons in each lecture. Within the questions, you will find Scripture passages mentioned in the lecture and many of the ideas presented in written form. The questions are intended to promote transparency within the group or between spouses in order to foster an environment in which wisdom can be shared and true Gospel-centered hope can be discussed. Use the Scripture passages mentioned in the questions to get the Bible open and the words of God injected into the discussion. Check every idea against Scripture.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Using Scripture passages and other key ideas from the lectures, these questions will ask you to examine your hearts and actions. As with any study, the amount of time, effort, and honesty you put into the individual questions will determine the growth seen by the individual. In many cases, you will be sitting down with your spouse and family members and asking them to give you honest feedback about your actions and attitudes. The Christian life is meant to be lived in community and fellowship, and these questions are intended to promote that in a unique way for each individual.

FINAL THOUGHT...

Remember that change is a process, not an event, and that every Christian grows at different rates. The truths drawn out in these lectures are founded in the Gospel and the person of Jesus Christ. It is God's will that every believer be conformed more and more into the image of Christ (Romans 8:28–34). As you interact in Gospel-centered fellowship, you will have opportunities to encourage others and to be encouraged yourself.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE - SMALL GROUP PLAN

START (15 Minutes)

Week 1 ⇒ Having familiarized yourself with the guide and the structure of this study, read the welcome letter and introduction provided for you in this guide to the class.

Following Week 1 ⇒ Start each session with a review of the Personal Questions from the previous lesson. Ask for examples of encouragement or clarification about the questions or Scripture passages. Here are some helpful questions to facilitate these discussions:

- In what areas of your life did these questions challenge you the most?
- Share an example from this past week where you applied some of the lecture ideas. What was the result?
- Did you learn something new about yourself, your spouse, or your children that you previously were unaware of? How does that affect your actions going forward?

LISTEN (15 Minutes)

Listen to the audio lecture.

LECTURE QUESTIONS (15-25 Minutes)

Go through the Lecture Questions together. Use them to help one another think through the issues presented. Read the Scripture passages indicated, and make sure all the ideas discussed are grounded in Scripture, not simply feelings and experiences.

CLOSING (5 Minutes)

Close in prayer, focusing on specific aspects of the lesson to guide the time.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS (HOMEWORK)

To get the most out of this study, we strongly encourage you to study through the Personal Questions. We cannot stress this enough. Here are two options:

Option 1: Work through the Personal Questions on your own. Write down your thoughts, and study through the scripture references provided. Be prepared to engage in conversation at the next meeting. When finished, spend time in prayer.

Option 2: Work through the Personal Questions with your spouse. Answer the questions separately. Then, come together to discuss and compare answers. You will find this to be very rewarding. **CHARGE TO HUSBANDS** ⇒ When finished, lead your wife in prayer. Pray for your marriage, your children, and the Holy Spirit to grow you through this study.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE - **INDIVIDUAL PLAN**

START

Week 1 ⇒ Familiarize yourself with the guide and the structure of this study. Read the welcome letter and introduction provided for you in this guide.

Following Week 1 ⇒ Start each session with a review of the Personal Questions from the previous lesson. Assess what you have learned and ask yourself these helpful questions:

- In what areas of your life did these questions challenge me the most?
- Did I miss any opportunities this past week to apply what I've learned? What could I have done differently?
- Have I fully grasped the material from last week's lessons?

Remember not to rush. Let the ideas work in your heart before moving on to the next lecture.

LISTEN

Listen to the audio lecture.

LECTURE QUESTIONS

Go through the Lecture Questions together. Use them to help guide you through the issues presented. Also, read the Scripture passages indicated, and make sure all your thoughts and ideas are grounded in Scripture, not simply feelings and experiences.

CLOSING

Close in prayer, focusing on specific aspects of the lesson to guide the time.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

To get the most out of this study, we strongly encourage you to study through the Personal Questions. We cannot stress this enough. You can work through the Personal Questions immediately following the Lecture Questions, or you can work on them throughout the next week. Regardless of what you decide, make sure to **DO THEM!** Write down your thoughts, and study through the Scripture provided. When finished, spend time in prayer.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE - COUPLES PLAN

START

Week 1 ⇒ Familiarize yourself with the guide and the structure of this study. Read the welcome letter and introduction provided for you in this guide.

Following Week 1 ⇒ Start each session with a review of the Personal Questions from the previous lesson. Assess what you have learned, and ask yourself these helpful questions:

- In what areas of your life did these questions challenge us the most?
- Did either of us observe changes in the others' behavior? Give an example.
- Have I fully grasped the material from last week's lessons, or is there something that needs to be revisited?

Remember not to rush. Let the ideas work in your heart before moving on to the next lecture.

LISTEN

Listen to the audio lecture.

LECTURE QUESTIONS

Husbands, use the Lecture Questions to help guide you and your spouse through the issues presented. Also, read the Scripture passages indicated, and make sure both your thoughts and ideas are grounded in Scripture, not simply feelings and experiences.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

To get the most out of this study, we strongly encourage you to study through the Personal Questions. We cannot stress this enough. Answer the questions separately. Then, come together to discuss and compare answers. You will find this to be very rewarding.

CHARGE TO HUSBANDS

Close your time together by leading your wife in prayer. Pray for your marriage, your children, and the Holy Spirit to grow you through this study.

LAYING

THE FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 1



LECTURE 1

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to understand the bad news of sin before you can understand the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. Read Acts 20:21–24. The Apostle Paul is describing the good news he was preaching as he traveled. What two things was Paul testifying about, and who was the message from?
3. What is the typical attitude toward sin in Western culture?
4. In what way are the Gospel and a regenerated heart necessary for transformation to take place in relationships?
5. In 1 Timothy 1:15, the Apostle Paul calls himself the chief of sinners. Do you think he deserved this title? Who might be a better candidate for that title today?
6. Read Matthew 7:3–5. How do the sins you have committed against God compare to the insults or slights you might receive from those around you (spouse, kids, coworkers, neighbors, etc.) on a typical day?
7. How might your pride cause you to think that you deserve to be treated better by those around you? Was this Christ's attitude while on the earth? (Philippians 2:1–11)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. The Gospel is a very personal topic. It is meant for individuals to respond in an individual way. How have you responded to the sacrificial death of Jesus to pay the penalty of the sins you have committed against God?
2. If you have rejected the truths of the gospel, who could you speak to in order to better understand why every person is in need of Jesus Christ as their Savior?
3. If you have received Christ's gift of salvation, what evidence of the transforming power of the Gospel do you see in your life?
4. When anyone repents to God and places their faith in Jesus, they receive the presence of the Holy Spirit and their sinful heart is renewed. If you have not been born again, why will these lectures be useless to you? Read 1 Corinthians 2:12–16 to better understand this idea.
5. 2 Corinthians 5:16–21 speaks of different types of people. Which type of person are you—an ambassador seeking to reconcile others to Christ, or one who needs to be reconciled to a holy God whom you have sinned against? Describe an example.

LECTURE 2

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Gospel better than a list or a set of principles when responding to various situations in life?
2. What are we saying to God when we choose to punish our spouse for the sins they commit against us? How does Romans 5:8 apply to this attitude?
3. Read James 4:6–10. Why is it important that we humbly recognize our own sinful condition when we are facing a conflict?
4. When facing a conflict with your spouse, should you respond in a fundamentally different way based on whether or not they have received salvation?
5. If we focus on winning and losing battles, how do we miss the Gospel?
6. Read 1 Peter 2:18–25. How can we truly reflect the character of Christ in a conflict? Is this a simple or natural thing to do?
7. How can it be true that we can serve and love our spouse more when we need them less?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you find yourself seeking satisfaction in anything other than Christ? Write down five things you tend to look to for comfort or pleasure other than Christ. Pray and ask God for wisdom to understand if any of these things have become an idol in your life.
2. Think of a time when you have intentionally punished your spouse for offending you. Was what they did a sin? How did you punish them? How does that punishment compare to what Christ has already paid for that sin?
3. Stop and consider your true attitude toward the sin in your life. Can you honestly say that you consider yourself to be the chief of sinners? Read Exodus 20:1–21, and examine your life in the mirror of the Ten Commandments.
4. How do you connect who Christ is to what the Gospel means for your life?
5. As you think about your life, is the Gospel a spontaneous reaction to the circumstances around you? How could you make it more so?
6. Read Philippians 2:1–11. Describe how your attitude toward your spouse reflects the character of Jesus in this passage.
7. Think back to the time when you recognized your need for a Savior. Do you see yourself in the same humble state today—in need of His grace?
8. When there is a conflict in your day-to-day relationships, would others recognize your response as one that points to Christ and the Gospel? Give an example, positive or negative.

LECTURE 3

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to understand the bad news of sin before we can understand the good news of the Gospel?
2. What passages of Scripture talk about self-esteem or making sure that we are happy with who we are?
3. What happens to our thinking when we elevate human value and make God to be more like man—when we have too small of a gap between the two?
4. Why do we need to be careful when comparing our sin against people like Hitler, Stalin, and Osama Bin Laden?
5. How might stopping and thinking about fighting at the foot of the Cross change how you handle conflicts in the future?
6. Why is it foolish to think that our motives are pure or better than the other person's?
7. What should our motivation be as we look to serve our spouse or others? What examples of service in the life of Jesus can we look to as we seek to serve others?
8. How does seeking to win an argument undermine God's desire to conform your spouse into the image of Christ?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Popular psychology would have us believe that a high self-esteem is a virtue. The Bible teaches that humility is a virtue. In what ways have you bought into the ideas of having a high self-esteem?
2. Read Matthew 22:34–40. Based on this passage, is it necessary to love yourself before you can love God and others? Explain.
3. The next time you have a conflict, stop and picture yourself at the foot of the Cross. Record the outcome of the conflict here.
4. Think about your standard response to conflict. Do you tend to think you are in the right or the wrong during the fight? Why should you be suspicious of your heart's motives? (see Jeremiah 17:9–10) Who knows the true motives of your heart?
5. In what ways do you hope to grow as you continue to study this topic?
6. Do you find it difficult to serve others? Think of one practical thing you can do to serve your spouse this week. While you are doing that, meditate on how gracious Jesus was to come to this earth to serve those who were His enemies (Matthew 20:20–28).
7. Read Romans 8:26–30. What has God predestined you to and whom has He sent to help you in this process?

LECTURE 4

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it difficult to admit we are prone to anger?
2. How does the Gospel offer believers hope for change? Consider Ephesians 1:15–21.
3. Have you ever considered the idea of inverted self-righteousness? Is it possible to be a bigger sinner than Jesus is a Savior? Consider Romans 5:20.
4. What is the relationship between expectations and anger?
5. Was the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross sufficient to pay for the sins of all those who would believe in Him? How is this possible?
6. What is the gospel-centered response when your spouse sins? How does Ephesians 5:25–33 confirm this for husbands?
7. If I truly have a gospel-motivated response to my spouse's sin, how will my responses to conflict play out?
8. If I recognize that the sin I have committed against Christ is bigger than any sin my spouse could commit against me, how does this recognition help me develop a proper response to anger or conflict?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. If you were honest, do you really believe that the Gospel is more powerful than your sin?
2. If your marriage (or any other relationship) is in jeopardy at this moment, do you believe that the Gospel gives hope for restoration? Why or why not?
3. Do you have the ability to change your spouse's attitude or sinful habits? Do you have the ability to change your own heart's attitudes? Which should you focus your energy on?
4. Think about the expectations you have of your spouse. Are any of those unreasonable or petty? Make a list.
5. Is double punishment consistent with God's character? Should it be part of your character?
6. Read 1 John 1:8–10. How could you use this verse to minister grace to your spouse in a time of conflict?
7. Read 1 Peter 3:8–10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:14–15. Describe how you should respond to sin against yourself in light of these passages.
8. Read James 1:19–20. If you were to memorize this passage, how might the Holy Spirit use it in times of conflict or anger?
9. Read Ephesians 1 at least three days this week, and meditate on the things that are found "in Christ" or "in Him."

LECTURE 5

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Is it your responsibility to change your spouse?
2. How can thinking about God's patience in your salvation help you be more patient with the unsaved people you interact with?
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:24–26 and Ephesians 2:8–10. What can we do to make someone a Christian faster?
4. Why do we tend to see situations where a loved one is rejecting Christ as a bad situation rather than resting in God's timing? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18 for a biblical perspective.
5. Luke 15:11–32 gives the parable of the prodigal son (or the gracious father). Is God still good during the time our loved ones are rejecting Christ?
6. Read Romans 5:5–11. How does this passage give us hope that anyone can be changed by the Gospel?
7. What is a practical and scriptural way to evaluate your own salvation? (2 Corinthians 13:5)
8. How do you see yourself growing in holiness in your marriage? What means is God using to accomplish that growth?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Think about your own conversion story. How long after hearing the Gospel were you saved? How many times had you heard the message of God's grace before you received it?
2. Did you readily receive biblical counsel before you were saved? How can this help you as you deal with unbelievers?
3. Have you always thought of repentance as a gift from God (2 Timothy 2:24–26)? Describe how your understanding has changed from the time you were saved.
4. Read Luke 15:11–32, and relate your life at different points to the characters in the parable.
5. Have you ever wondered if you married the wrong person? In light of God's sovereignty, why is this a silly question?
6. Read through the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 or 1 John, and use these passages as a way to identify and confess your sins to God.
7. Are there sins in your life that are hindering your growth? Write them down and confess them in light of 1 John 1:6–10.
8. Read Romans 8:12–14. Pray to God and ask Him to help you put your pet sins to death by the power of the Holy Spirit.

LECTURE 6

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How does the driving analogy help us understand what is meant by biblical repentance?
2. What are some of the consequences of repenting?
3. Why is it important to model biblical repentance to your children? To your spouse?
4. Can you think of examples of “garbage removal” in your home?
5. What’s the difference between a moralistic apology and gospel-motivated repentance?
6. What is the relationship between vertical and horizontal repentance?
7. Read James 5:16. What do we learn about horizontal repentance from this passage?
8. What makes it so hard for us to surrender and say we messed up?
9. Why does recognizing and repenting of our sins give us hope?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Examine your home. Do you have a repentant home?
2. When you find your kids sinning against each other, do you respond in a way that will promote repentance or forced apologies?
3. What are the consequences of allowing the “garbage” of unrepentance to accumulate in your home?
4. Read Psalm 32:3–5. Describe a time when you felt convicted of your sin but refused to repent. Should this be the pattern of a believer’s life?
5. Do you recognize the severity of your sin, or do you tend to categorize your sin by comparing it to the sin of others?
6. When a conflict arises this week, make a point to build a case against your own sin and sincerely ask for forgiveness.
7. Can you think of a time when you repented either horizontally or vertically (not both)? What were the results?
8. How do you recognize when pride is preventing you from repenting?
9. Describe a time when you were able to rejoice after repenting of your sins. How does this give you hope for the future?

LECTURE 7

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How have you been influenced by the popular ideas of meeting one another's felt needs or catering to one another's love languages?
2. Read Philippians 2:1–8. How am I sinning if I am using a relationship to have my needs met?
3. Is it wrong to need something? What is the danger in focusing on the needs that we have?
4. Read Ephesians 5:22–33. What results would you expect if you adopted an attitude of selfless serving in your marriage?
5. Why is our motive in a relationship an important thing to consider as we serve others?
6. How does satisfaction in our relationship with Jesus lead to greater satisfaction with our spouse?
7. Read James 1:13–15. Why is it important to understand the move from desire to need to expectation to frustration to punishment as we examine the conflicts in our home?
8. As you think about your relationship with your spouse, what desires tend to cause you to become frustrated? How can this begin to change in your home?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. The Gospel is a message of sacrifice on the behalf of others (Philippians 2:1–8). If you evaluated your relationship with your spouse, could you say you are truly loving them in a self-sacrificing manner? Explain.
2. Read Ephesians 5:22–33 carefully, and consider how your role (as husband or wife) can be understood in this passage. What commands are there to obey?
3. Make a list of your physical needs and your spiritual and emotional desires. Do any of these desires tend to turn to needs in your mind and lead to conflict? Consider 1 Timothy 6:6–11. Pray for God’s help in repenting of any sin in these areas.
4. Is it realistic for you to expect your spouse to fulfill all of your desires? Do you do the same in return?
5. Stop and think about a time when your frustration about an unmet need led to you sinning against your spouse. Were you truly satisfied in Christ at this time? Have you sought forgiveness for this sin?
6. How does the idea that you cannot serve someone and need someone at the same time help you understand your relationship with your spouse?

LECTURE 8

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. What is the typical worldly attitude about deserving respect, love, etc.? Where do you see that manifested in our culture?
2. Read Mark 10:42–45. If we are to become more like Christ, what must our attitude toward serving be?
3. Why is it to be expected that others will not love us in a way that meets our expectations? How can understanding God's grace help us shift from frustration to satisfaction?
4. How can you keep your God-honoring desires from becoming inappropriate needs?
5. How can thinking about the way Jesus responds to us help us be more patient with others?
6. What is the relationship between needing something and the control it has over you?
7. If you are willing to sin to acquire a need, what has gone wrong?
8. Why do women tend to look for fulfillment in novels, social media, or friendships while men look to pornography or jobs to gain approval?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Mark 10:42–45. Identify areas in your life in which you expect others to be serving you. How can you begin to change your attitude in one of these areas?
2. In light of your sin against God, what do you deserve? How can this help you gain a proper perspective on the other things you think you deserve?
3. Whatever you need will control you. How do you see this truth playing out in your life?
4. When you find yourself with unmet needs, what do you tend to seek in order to meet those needs? Is this pleasing to Jesus?
5. How do men and women tend to differ when it comes to fulfilling unmet needs in relationships? Do you see any of those patterns in your marriage?
6. Can you identify a desire for approval, respect, or commendations in the relationships and activities in which you involve yourself? If so, confess those sins to God, and seek forgiveness where appropriate.
7. How does 1 John 2:15–17 relate to our unrighteous desires for finding fulfillment apart from God?

LECTURE 9

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 2:18–25. Why is it important to understand the one-flesh nature of a married couple?
2. It is good to be transparent with one another, but in what places should we draw lines?
3. What will be the result of a desire to grow in transparency with our spouse?
4. Lying is likely the result of a deeper heart issue. How can we help one another understand the root of those sins?
5. How is lying really a manifestation of our unbelief in God?
6. In what way is pride an unhelpful term when discussing our sin?
7. Read Genesis 3:1–17. How did the entrance of sin find its root in unbelief? How did Adam and Eve attempt to cover up their sin and shame?
8. If our goal in becoming more transparent is to improve our marriage, what may happen? What should our goal be?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that you have a biblically informed view of the one-flesh relationship that you have with your spouse? Based on Scripture, what does that relationship look like?
2. As you look back over the relationship with your spouse, how do you see a change in the level of transparency? Are any adjustments needed?
3. There are likely sins in your past that you have not revealed to your spouse. Even if you have overcome this sin, it may be helpful to confess those things to your spouse. Prayerfully consider doing so in a time and place that is appropriate and free of distractions.
4. A lie is often told to control a situation. Think about a recent time when you have lied to your spouse. What were you trying to control, and why did you fail to trust God in that situation?
5. Considering your connection to Adam and his sin, why is it difficult for you to be “naked” before your spouse?
6. Read Romans 8:1–2. How can this passage help you to have a Gospel-centered response when you have lied to your spouse?
7. If you truly focus on bringing God glory through honesty in your relationship with your spouse, how do you expect the relationship with your spouse to change?

LECTURE 10

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so difficult to admit a mistake when we are wrong? What is the specific sin issue?
2. Why is it important to recognize that there is a degree of “rightness” to each side of an argument?
3. Read Proverbs 15:1–2. How can we apply this wisdom to our arguments and discussions?
4. How do you tend to react when someone brings an exhortation or correction to you? Does the response change if it is a fellow Christian? Does the tone change your response?
5. What benefits come as we are willing to humbly admit our sin? (James 4:6)
6. Take a minute to think about some preferences you have in your home. How can the “ten-year perspective” help you to keep such things in their eternal perspective?
7. If your spouse has a preference, what is the Gospel-motivated response to those issues in light of James 1:19–20?
8. What does the way we respond to our preferences being met reveal about our character?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. If you were to ask your spouse or close friends, how would they describe your tendency to admit to being wrong? How do you need to grow in this area?
2. Are you known as someone with a sharp tongue? Read Proverbs 15:1–7, and write down the positive and negative aspects of the tongue (or words).
3. Scripture calls Christians to bring correction to one another. How do you typically respond to those situations (defensive, accepting, or critical in return)? How should you respond in light of the Gospel?
4. Are you expecting your spouse to behave in ways that you are not willing to behave? How do Jesus's words in Matthew 23:10–12 inform how you should rightly respond?
5. Read Proverbs 19:11. How do you typically respond when your preferences are not met? How do you respond when you have the option to meet the preferences of your spouse?
6. Identify two preferences in your relationship with your spouse. The next time the opportunity arises to meet a preference or to overlook an "offense," pray and ask God to give you the strength to honor Him.

LECTURE 11

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 1:26–27 and 2:18–25. How do these passages help us understand the roles, similarities, and differences between men and women?
2. Read 1 Timothy 2:12–14 and 1 Corinthians 11:7–12. What do these passages add to our understanding of headship and roles within a marriage?
3. How does the world’s view of the equality of men and women differ from Scripture’s teaching?
4. Read Genesis 3:1–19. How did Adam and Eve fail to fulfill their roles in the temptation? In the Curse, what natural consequences come as the woman is told her “desire shall be for [her] husband and he shall rule over [her]”?
5. Where can we look to understand the proper roles of a man and a woman within a marriage?
6. Does the failure of our spouse to meet their role in the marriage give us license to sin? (Consider Ephesians 5:22–33.)
7. How does the one-flesh union provide a valuable tool in making decisions?
8. Read Proverbs 11:14 and 15:22. What wisdom for making large decisions do we see here?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. How has your understanding about the roles of men and women within a marriage changed as you have studied Scripture over the years?
2. Describe the complementarian and egalitarian (equality) views of the roles of men and women in your own words.
3. How have you allowed yourself to be influenced by the secular thinking of total equality between the sexes?
4. Read Genesis 3:1–19. Part of the Curse included a woman’s desire for her husband’s authority (v. 16). This is compounded by Adam toiling to provide food. How do you see this dynamic, introduced by sin, playing out in your marriage?
5. In what areas are you failing to meet your proper role in your marriage? What can you do to repent of this? (Consider Ephesians 5:22–33.)
6. When you think about making important decisions, what weaknesses do you have? How does your spouse compliment those weaknesses, and vice-versa? How do you involve others in your fellowship?

LECTURE 12

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. What are some practical ways you can continually focus your mind on the Gospel?
2. How can thinking about our salvation help us to appreciate our position in Christ?
3. How do the categories of God, Bible, Self, Situations, and People relate to the way we change and grow to become more like Christ?
4. Knowing that God can use people as change agents, how do you see yourself changing within this group? How could the group be more effective at promoting change?
5. How do passages like Ephesians 4:20–32 show the idea of “let go and let God” to be an unbiblical method of change?
6. Read Philippians 2:12–13. What apparent paradox is presented in this passage?
7. What does Romans 8:29 tell us God will accomplish through the various situations in our lives? How does this encourage you?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Make a list of ways that you intentionally bring the message of the Gospel into your life every day. What methods would you like to add to your routine?
2. Write a letter or prayer to God thanking Him for saving you from your sin.
3. Read Colossians 3:8–16. How can you apply the principle of putting off and putting on as you seek to grow to become more like Christ?
4. Of the five methods of change, which do you find yourself growing through the most often? Describe a recent change in your life, and identify which of the five components were involved.
5. Read Romans 8:27–30. What hope do you find in this passage?
6. How has your thinking regarding the popular phrase “let go and let God” changed?

THE ART OF HUSBANDRY

CHAPTER 2



LECTURE 13

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Read Ephesians 5:22–33. How should a husband respond to learning that the standard of loving a wife is to love her as Christ loves the church?
2. What conflict does the presence of sin introduce into the husband’s role as servant leader?
3. What danger does the wife face in knowing that her husband will never be a perfect leader?
4. What are some specific things a husband can do to nourish his wife’s relationship with Christ in light of the Gospel?
5. What are some specific things a husband can do to fail to cherish his wife?
6. Read Romans 5:6–8. Did Christ wait to die for us when we were meeting His standards? Do you treat your spouse the same way Christ treats you?
7. How could stopping and asking yourself, “Am I treating my spouse the way Christ treats me?” be helpful in the middle of conflict?
8. How is the term “warrior-poet” helpful in thinking about the role of a man?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Husband, do you tend to “Lord it over your wife,” lead gently, or not lead at all? Is this a Gospel-motivated response?
2. Read John 13:1–17. Considering how Jesus modeled being a servant leader, in what ways are you willing to wash your spouse’s filthy feet?
3. Husband, how are you helping your wife to mature in Christ-likeness?
4. Wife, are you making it easy for your husband to lead you into maturity?
5. Listen through the list of ways to warm and chill your wife. Write down the ones you have a tendency to use. Read Ephesians 4:25–32 for guidance in understanding what you can “put on” in place of the sinful things you need to “put off.”
6. Do you treat your spouse as if they deserve the same grace you have received from God?
7. Pick two of the probing questions at the end of the lecture to ask your wife when the two of you can be alone.

LECTURE 14

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why would a counselor look at the wife to assess the leadership of a husband?
2. Why is it silly to “curse the fruit” when you are the one responsible for tending the garden?
3. How does the analogy of weeding a garden connect to the progressive sanctification that should be occurring in the life of every Christian?
4. Read Romans 2:4. How can this verse be applied to the relationship between a husband and wife?
5. Read Hebrews 10:24–25. What is the benefit of a husband/father encouraging his family in good deeds?
6. How much time should it take for your spouse to change from a sinful habit to a habit that honors God? What might help speed that process?
7. Why is a house that operates in a context of grace an environment that promotes growth in holiness?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. If you were to describe your marriage as a garden, what kind of plants would be growing there? Compare notes with your spouse, and discuss any differences in your lists.
2. When you think about your marriage, what was the condition of the garden and soil you inherited? How have you worked to improve those conditions?
3. We know that plants grow better with fertilizer. In what ways do you encourage the fruit in your spouse's life?
4. Make an effort this week to identify two things your spouse is doing to honor God, and praise them for that. Thank God for His grace in your life as you do so.
5. Read Hebrews 10:24–25. How do you intentionally seek to surround yourself with other Christians who you can encourage and receive encouragement from?
6. Ask your wife to tell you two struggles that she would appreciate your encouragement and prayers to overcome. Look for opportunities to encourage her and pray for her.
7. Read John 15:1–8. How can your relationship with Christ strengthen your relationship with your spouse in light of this passage?

LECTURE 15

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. What types of attributes does the world glorify in a man?
2. How would the world view a man who cherished his wife, put her interests (and the family's) before his own, and was more interested in building his family than climbing a corporate ladder?
3. For a man, how can a job become a sinful part of his life? Do you see any of those patterns in your own career?
4. Consider the life of the Apostle Paul. What manly traits did he exhibit? See Philippians 3:2– 11.
5. Why is clear, biblical communication an important mark of a biblical husband leading his wife? Do you see a passive or assertive style to your communication in your home?
6. How might a wife respond in an edifying manner if her husband does not tend to lead through his communication? Consider 1 Peter 3:1–9.
7. What do you tend to nourish when you are not looking to your spouse for approval?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. As you think about your spouse, are you open and honest, willing to confess, seeking forgiveness, and sincere in your communication? In what areas could you pray for God's assistance in serving your spouse better?
2. Husband, as you think about your job, what types of excuses or reasons do you give when you have to work late or during off hours? Are these legitimate reasons, or are you seeking fulfillment in your job rather than in your family and your Savior?
3. God created men to work and provide for their families (Genesis 2–3; 1 Timothy 5:8). What sinful outcomes can come from a desire to work too much or too little? Are any of these true of you?
4. Think of a time when you failed to communicate well with your spouse. Do you tend to be too passive or too assertive in your communication? Husband, how does this affect your leadership?
5. Wife, has your past pattern of communication made it difficult for your husband to lead with words? Husband, have you become passive allowing your wife to lead? How could the two of you work together to overcome this sinful habit? Read 1 Peter 3:1–9 together.
6. You are always nourishing something that will satisfy you. As you think about how you respond to your spouse (knowing that God should be our ultimate source of satisfaction), what things are you looking to in order to find satisfaction in a sinful way?
7. On a blank sheet of paper, draw a circle near the middle representing the boat of your marriage. At the top of the page, write "God-honoring Destination." Draw an arrow from your marriage boat (the circle) that represents the current course of your marriage with respect to the desired destination. Compare boat diagrams with your spouse, and discuss the different perceptions you have.

THE ART OF BEING A WIFE

CHAPTER 3



LECTURE 16

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to acknowledge that every man is a leader in his home?
2. Did your own father exhibit any bad leadership styles (angry, passive, weak, distant, absent, authoritarian, drunk, adulterous/flirtatious, porn-viewing, or workaholic)? Do you see his leadership having an influence, positive or negative, in your home today?
3. How does the Curse in Genesis 3 help us understand the sinful leadership styles that many couples experience?
4. How does popular culture portray the role of the husband in the home? How have those portrayals influenced your family relationships?
5. How is a grateful attitude a result of living in a Gospel-centered manner of life?
6. Which of the Gospel-centered leadership styles (grateful, encouraging, sin-confessing, repenting, praying, serving, studying, and hospitable) have you never considered before? Which are common in your home?
7. Read Colossians 3:19 and 1 Peter 3:7. Why is it difficult to live out these commands in a Gospel-centered way?
8. How is kindness connected to loving your spouse? (1 Corinthians 13:4)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Husband, as you think about the ten different bad leadership styles mentioned, which one do you identify with most? Are there others that fit you as well?
2. Wife, as you think about the leadership dynamic in your home, in what areas do you wish your husband would be a better leader? Lovingly communicate this to him, and pray together about growing in this area as a couple.
3. Read Ephesians 5 individually at least three times this week and then once as a couple. In what ways has God grown you through the years in obeying these commands? In what areas do you have more growing to do?
4. Husband, make time to sit down with your wife this week and ask her what you can do to serve her better. Wife, respond to this question in a way that will not overwhelm your husband.
5. How would your children describe your marital relationship in light of Ephesians 5:25?
6. Write out Mark 10:45 on an index card, and work on committing this verse to memory.
7. Use 1 Corinthians 13:3–7 to write a list of the qualities of biblical love (*agape*). Use this as a tool to help you confess with specificity when you are unloving toward your spouse.

LECTURE 17

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. According to Genesis 3:16, what sinful desire did the woman have after the Fall?
2. How does the world view a woman who is submissive to, dependent upon, vulnerable to, and serving her husband?
3. How is the biblical understanding of a wife's submission different from the "doormat" mentality the world has regarding submission?
4. How do motives and desires influence the way you respond to your spouse? How would bringing the Gospel to bear on the situation change the outcome?
5. How does the doctrine of sin impact the relationship between a husband and wife? How does it impact the relationship between people and God?
6. Who are you loving when you are concerned about your desires being met? Who are you loving when you concern yourself with your spouse's sanctification?
7. Read Hebrews 4:14–16. How does this passage inform our understanding of what Christ has done for us?
8. Why is it important to model Gospel-centered responses when your spouse is not?
9. As you think about your relationship with your spouse, what distractions prevent you from fulfilling your role in the marriage?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. As you think about your relationship with your spouse, do you believe you are fulfilling the biblical role God has given you to follow in Scripture?
2. How do you see yourself submitting to your spouse on a daily basis?
3. Do you see your husband as your ministry? How are you being a means of grace in his life? Ask him if he agrees with your answers.
4. If your spouse sins against you, is it ever appropriate to sin in response? How does the example of Christ help you think about your answer?
5. Read Genesis 2:18–25. Judging by your actions and attitudes toward your husband, would he be able to agree with God’s statement that it is not good for man to be alone?
6. Wife, consider each of the following questions as they relate to your life:
 - a. Did you marry your Savior?
 - b. Do you treat your husband the way God treats you?
 - c. Do your children and husband see you modeling the Gospel?
 - d. Are you confusing the difference between being a wife and a mother?
 - e. Do you put your husband or children first?

LECTURE 18

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How are the responsibilities and the role of a wife and mother downplayed by our culture? How does the Bible help us understand this issue better?
2. Read Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 27:15, and Proverbs 15:4. What rules for communication could we draw from these passages?
3. What is the opposite of encouragement, and when do you tend to use it?
4. Why is it important to understand the difference between attitudinal and transactional forgiveness? (1 John 1:8–10)
5. If you were to ask your children or other family members about how you treat your spouse, how would they characterize your treatment?
6. Is it your experience that women tend to gossip about their husbands in a gathering of ladies? What does Titus 2:3 have to say about that practice? Should gossip ever be tolerated?
7. How should our understanding of the Gospel influence the way we act on a daily basis?
8. What effect does a wife criticizing her husband in front of others tend to have?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Wife, do you more often use your tongue to encourage your husband or to tear him down? Ask him if he agrees with your assessment.
2. In what ways is the influence of a wife and mother in her home more important than the influence she might have in the business world or another career?
3. Describe a time in your life when someone encouraged you to grow in Christ-likeness. How might you have reacted differently if they had pointed out the flaw without any encouragement?
4. How does God's attitude of forgiveness compare to your readiness to forgive others? (1 John 1:8–10)
5. Wife, when you gather with other women, describe how you use your speech about your husband. Is it typically to build him up or to tear him down? Is this how the church should speak of Christ? (cf. Ephesians 5:22–24)
6. Make a list of ten things to encourage your spouse with. Set aside a special time to go over the lists with one another. Continue to look for things to encourage one another about in your daily lives.

LECTURE 19

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that women tend to nag more than men? Is this supportable from a biblical perspective?
2. Read Romans 2:4, 5:6–8. How does this character of God help us understand how we should respond to others in a God-honoring way?
3. When is it appropriate to respond to sin by sinning? Support your answer with Scripture.
4. How does your current priority list compare to the one proposed in the lecture: God, Spouse, Children, Local Church, World? (Ephesians 5:22, 33; Matthew 22:37–40; etc.)
5. Is it possible to serve someone and need them at the same time?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. If you were to insert your name where the word “love” occurs in this passage (i.e., Fred does not envy), which would not be accurate reflections of your character (in general)?
7. What benefits come from keeping a record of wrongs to use against another? Is this a Gospel-motivated action?
8. How is being more aware of your spouse’s sins than your own a form of idolatry?
9. Describe the connection between our humility and God’s grace in our lives. (Luke 14:11; 1 Peter 5:6–7)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does your spouse need to change before you can show love to them? How does the Gospel help you understand this question and demonstrate a proper response?
2. Describe a time when you have responded to a sin against you with a sin of your own. Was the outcome honoring Christ or the other person? How might you change in the future?
3. Read Proverbs 21:9, 21:19, 25:24, and 27:15. How have you experienced the truth of these passages in your own life? Wife, how can you prevent this attitude? Husband, how can you curb this in your wife?
4. How do you need to adjust your priorities in light of the order given in the lecture? Does your spouse agree with this evaluation?
5. Has the sin of your spouse clouded your ability to see your own sin in the relationship? Explain this in light of a record of wrongs you are recording and the sins you have committed against Christ.
6. Read James 1 and 3, and note all of the dangers associated with the tongue. Which one point from this passage do you most need to repent of and ask God to help you change this week?
7. Read 1 Peter 5:6–7. How does this passage help you understand the connection between God's grace and your contentment in a relationship?

STRUGGLES

CHAPTER 4



LECTURE 20

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is forgiveness such an important issue in living the Christian life?
2. Why is understanding the severity of every sin important when we consider forgiveness?
3. What is the difference between an apology and asking for forgiveness?
4. Does the possibility of being sinned against in the future make it acceptable to withhold forgiveness? (Matthew 18:21–22)
5. Read Matthew 6:7–15. What consequences come when we do not extend forgiveness to others as God has done for us?
6. How do we use grudges to manipulate others we love?
7. Does God forget our sins or hold them against us? How can this help us understand how we should treat others? (Micah 7:18–19; Isaiah 38:17)
8. Have you ever thought to yourself, “I can’t seek forgiveness yet; I just sinned”? Or, have you ever thought to yourself, “I can’t forgive you yet; you just sinned against me and I need to make you pay a little more”? How do these stack up against the Gospel?
9. Read Romans 8:1–5. How does this passage relate to the idea of the guilt we feel for sin?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Put yourself in the shoes of the first-century Christians. How would you ~~likely~~ treat Paul if he attempted to join your fellowship? Is this a Gospel-centered response?
2. When you consider your responses to conflict, do you tend to apologize (making a defense for your actions) or seek forgiveness (acknowledging the severity of your sin)?
3. Read Psalm 51:1–4. When you have sinned against someone, do you seek forgiveness vertically and horizontally, or do you tend to focus on only the other person?
4. Forgiveness means: 1) you release the other person from the penalty of their sin; 2) you choose not to use that sin against the other person; 3) you choose not to dwell on the sin; 4) you do not talk about the sin to others. Discuss this with your spouse, and try to understand where you can improve in granting forgiveness in the future.
5. Since extending forgiveness does not guarantee that the other person will not hurt you in the future, how do you typically respond to those requests? Does the severity of the sin change your response? (Matthew 18:21–25)
6. How long after a sinful act or thought do you wait to seek forgiveness from God or the other person? How does this compare to a Gospel-motivated response?
7. How does knowing that Jesus has died for your sins help you understand your freedom from guilt for your sins?

LECTURE 21

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Is it necessary for someone to come to you and seek forgiveness before you can forgive them? What biblical principles can help us understand this issue, at least concerning our attitude?
2. What does it look like to live in forgiveness? (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)
3. In what way does the Gospel free us to talk about our sin?
4. Read Ephesians 5:28–29. If a man and woman are one flesh in a covenant relationship, how should this inform our responses to our spouse during times of conflict?
5. How might a spouse respond to a situation where there is physical danger from sin, yet still demonstrate an attitude of forgiveness?
6. Does the severity of the sin change the way you respond to the person if they seek forgiveness from you? Should there be a difference?
7. How does remembering that we are responsible for the murder of the Savior helpful in measuring the sins of others against us?
8. Consider Ephesians 1:7–10. How does thinking about God’s grace toward us motivate us to love others in forgiveness?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. How has your understanding of forgiveness changed as you have listened to this teaching?
2. What is the connection between the Gospel, living in an attitude of forgiveness, and humility? Do these things characterize your life?
3. How do your responses to conflict affirm or deny the covenant you have made with your spouse?
4. If someone offends you, you have a choice to make: to be offended or to overlook the offense. How should you respond to such situations in light of Proverbs 19:11 and Matthew 5:38–39?
5. Read Acts 9:10–22. Considering the response of Ananias, was it easy for him to go to Saul, or was he acting in obedience to God's command?
6. How could the idea of worshipping God alongside someone who has murdered a family member help you to have more forgiveness in your heart? Who is your focus on if you can do this?
7. Read Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13. How do these verses give you hope for responding to others in a Gospel-centered way?

LECTURE 22

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How does a right view of God, His omnipotence, and His sovereignty help us keep our sin problems in perspective?
2. Do you tend to compare the size of your boxing gloves (the validity of your argument) to your spouse's when engaging in conflict? Why is this a fool's errand?
3. Who are we agreeing with when we confess our sin? (1 John 1:8–9)
4. Why is it wise to expect sin in our relationships? What balance do we need to keep in mind while thinking about this issue? (Romans 6:1–7)
5. Read Proverbs 15:28 and 18:13. Why is it wise to enter into conflict with questions rather than with accusations?
6. What percentage of the conflicts in your home are over trivial things? How could you change that percentage?
7. If you were to ask your family, would they say you tend to point out their sin more or offer them grace more?
8. When is it good to gossip and brag?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Isaiah 53, and pray for God to give you a deeper understanding of the suffering that Christ endured on your behalf.
2. If you are in a one-flesh relationship with your spouse, why is it foolish to attempt to win the boxing match (an argument)?
3. What are you saying about Christ's sacrifice on the Cross if you live life expecting others not to sin against you?
4. Do you tend to think that you are right in an argument? As the opportunity arises this week, approach the conflict with questions and compare the outcome to previous conflicts.
5. Think about your tendency to make "log" lists and "grace" lists. How could you work this week to love your spouse more by emphasizing God's grace in their life?
6. Make the opportunity to gossip about yourself and brag about others this week.

LECTURE 23

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Read Titus 3:3–7. What model for change does God give us in this passage?
2. Read Revelation 12:10. What characteristic of Satan do we tend to employ when we want others to change?
3. How would the outcome of a conflict be different if we approach our spouse with humble questions rather than accusations?
4. If we try to put these ideas into practice without sincerity, what will our spouse's reaction most likely be?
5. How does Paul's response to the different churches he writes to in 1 Corinthians 1 employ a Gospel-centered approach?
6. What is the wisdom in only seeking to correct those we have affection for?
7. Read Philippians 1:3–6. How does this passage help us understand the long-range effects of Gospel-centered changes?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you currently show mercy to others when they are not changing the way you would like to see them change?
2. Gather your family together, and ask them to evaluate your attitudes using the questions mentioned in the lecture.
3. If your communication patterns have not been sincere in the past, you cannot expect that your spouse will instantly trust your efforts. What practical step toward building that trust can you make this week?
4. Think about a time when you have responded well to the correction of another person. What was their attitude, and how can you seek to emulate that?
5. People tend to respond to correction better from someone who also encourages them. What changes can you make to be more of an encourager?
6. In what ways are you modeling Gospel-centered sanctification so that you can encourage yourself and your spouse to be conformed into Christ's image?
7. Assuming your spouse is a Christian, do you trust that God will fulfill His promise in Philippians 1:6? How do you see God fulfilling this promise in your marriage?

LECTURE 24

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How do we connect the word “good” in Romans 8:28 to the Gospel?
2. What good things can come from a season of suffering?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. What does God promise us in the midst of trials? Who brings the trials into our lives?
4. Do you believe, or have you ever believed, that your suffering is a punishment from God for your sin? How is this different from facing natural consequences for our sin?
5. How does Deuteronomy 29:29 apply to the situations of suffering in our lives?
6. In what ways is it better to trust in God rather than in having a full understanding of every situation of suffering we face?
7. In light of Ephesians 1:3–6, how might God use the option of adoption to provide a child and promote the Gospel through the lives of a barren couple?
8. What attitude should we display toward those who are suffering through barrenness or other physical suffering? Do you have to have a common experience or all the answers to their questions in order to minister to them?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Psalm 37:3–7. When does God choose not to grant us the desires of our heart?
2. If you are not currently struggling with barrenness or other physical suffering, why might it be important for you to study this topic now?
3. Evaluate your thinking about suffering in your own life and your view of others in suffering situations. If you tend to think these things are punishments from God, what important biblical truth do you find in John 9 to correct that misunderstanding?
4. Does the Gospel lead us to conclude that God is a good, loving, kind God, or a cruel, vindictive, punitive God with respect to His children? Are you embracing this idea?
5. How does Ephesians 1:3–6 relate to the idea of barrenness and what God may be leading certain couples toward?
6. Although you may not have experienced barrenness or physical suffering, how can you relate to others in their suffering? Identify a couple or individual in your church or neighborhood whom you could serve with the love of Christ, and minister that love to them.

LECTURE 25

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is a problem with communication not the real issue that needs to be dealt with?
2. From Luke 6:45, what truth do we learn about the things we say? Is it ever true to say, “I didn’t mean to say that”?
3. How does Matthew 5:21–22 relate to giving your spouse “the silent treatment”?
4. Stubbornness, apathy (hatred), anger, fear, ignorance, and arrogance (self-righteousness) all inhibit communication. How is each of these contrary to God’s character and the Gospel?
5. Ephesians 4:25–32 gives us a biblical model for Gospel-centered communication. For each of the six inhibitors above, what could be “put on” in their place?
6. Who do you tend to communicate more sinfully with—people you are close to or strangers? Why do you think this is the case?
7. How could the ideas in James 1:19–20 and Ephesians 4:29 work together in our hearts to help us stop communicating in sinful ways?
8. Why is it so important to understand the Gospel, with all of its implications, before we can ever hope to change our sinful pattern of communication?
9. Does it scare you to think about asking others about your communication habits? Is it because they might respond ungraciously or because they would respond truthfully?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 15:16–20. How does this passage relate to Luke 6:45 and the contents of your heart? Ask God to show you the sins of communication in your heart.
2. Examine your own tendencies with regard to communication. Do you tend to punish your spouse with silence or tear them down with words? How can you change this pattern in your marriage?
3. Consider the question above in light of the six inhibitors to communication. Which of these issues do you need to ask God to help you understand better so that you can overcome it by His Spirit?
4. How could memorizing Ephesians 4:29 provide an instant roadblock to poor communication? Commit to memorizing that verse this week and meditating on it when you are tempted to sin in your communication.
5. Using the cross references in your Bible or your concordance, identify fifteen passages that deal with communication (tongue, speaking, love, heart, lips, etc.). How does the multitude of passages related to communication offer great hope for change?
6. Take time to sit down with your family and sincerely ask them about your communication patterns. This can begin the formation of a culture of grace in your home.

LECTURE 26

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. How is it that fear and control issues are often in the heart of someone who is constantly suspicious of the actions of others?
2. Read John 13:1–5. How did Jesus treat Judas even though He knew how he would betray Him? How is this an example for us?
3. How is unbelief the real core of all the sins in our lives?
4. Why is it important that we not pass off our sins as personality traits? Did Jesus come to free us of all sin, or can we cling to some sins that are harder to deal with in our lives?
5. We know that God should be the central defining person in our lives, so why do we tend to place ourselves in His rightful position? How can thinking of ourselves as part of His story help us change this attitude?
6. What passages of Scripture can help us better understand that we are not to seek vengeance when others wrong us?
7. If you stopped and considered that sarcasm is to “cut the flesh,” how might your speech habits change?
8. In light of Matthew 16:24–28, what kind of life should we be living toward others as we seek to follow Christ?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. As you think about interacting with people who are hypocritical, who should you be focused on changing and why?
2. How is it possible to be a believer in God and yet have unbelief in your life? What areas of unbelief do you struggle with?
3. When you consider looking to Christ as the perfect model, how does this change the way you think about behaviors like chilliness, living as a hypocrite, or being self-centered?
4. Read Romans 12:19–21. In what way are you exhibiting unbelief when you seek vengeance for yourself? How is this related to being self-centered?
5. If you frequently use sarcasm toward an individual in your life, examine your heart to see if there is any bitterness toward that person for a past offense. If so, seek God's forgiveness for that and then that person's forgiveness for your sin.
6. When you put another person down or mock them, does it bring you the joy you hope for? How can you change this self-righteous attitude in your life?
7. Read Mark 8:34–38. Take time each morning this week to read this passage, and consider how you ought to live in order to deny yourself and follow Christ as you interact with others.

LECTURE 27

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. What is the connection between unbelief and fear in light of Genesis 3:9–10?
2. Read John 17:17–19 and John 14:6–7. How do these passages help us combat fear?
3. It's very unhelpful to just say that we need to trust God more. What are some specific things we can do to build our faith and drive out the fear in our lives?
4. When we fail to trust God, who are we trusting? Is this ever profitable?
5. Read Jeremiah 9:23–24. Why is it important that we understand God's character as revealed throughout Scripture?
6. Why is it important that we understand the root of our anger (exactly what we need to repent of) in order to overcome a sinful habit?
7. How is a clear understanding of the Gospel the foundation on which we must begin to confront the problems of fear and anger?
8. How does being angry with another person actually make you lose control of the situation?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Take time to make a list of five things that you fear. Identify the specific way you are not trusting God in each situation. Pray for wisdom to overcome these fears and trust God.
2. How does thinking about a lack of faith and its connection to your fears help you seek to understand God's character more?
3. Examine your heart. If you are struggling with fear, what abilities do you think you have that God lacks? What does this demonstrate about your trust in God?
4. Read Exodus 34:5–7. Which of these attributes do you need to understand better in order to trust God more? Find a book on the attributes of God to help you grow in this area.
5. Of the three inhibitors of faith (ignorance, anger, fear), which of these do you need to grow in the most? How can your spouse or other members of your church help you with this?
6. As you find yourself becoming angry over a situation, stop and ask yourself, "What am I desiring so strongly that it would make me sin to get it?" How might this question help you identify the root issue of the sin of anger?
7. Read Romans 8:31–35, and describe how this passage relates to the fear and anger in your life.

BOMBSHELLS

CHAPTER 5



LECTURE 28

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the world distort God's gift of sex and its purpose? (Romans 1:24–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–20)
2. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1–7. Would it be a sin to withhold sex from your spouse as a form of punishment? Is it always wrong to withhold sex in your marriage?
3. Why might a woman feel like a prostitute in her own home? What sinful patterns in both spouses might lead to this situation? (Consider the complementary nature of men and women.)
4. In what way should an understanding of God's character inform our view of sex? Is this any different from playing a sporting activity or doing a job?
5. The Gospel presents a message of self-sacrifice. In what way is the sexual relationship between a man and a woman a reflection of the Gospel and the roles of the man and woman in the marriage?
6. Why is it important to think of our sexual relationships as happening 24/7 and within a complementary framework?
7. How can we honor God and His purpose for sex with the way we speak about the topic? (Ephesians 4:29–5:7)
8. How can we use Scripture to help us overcome the corrupt thoughts and images that come from the media and our past sinful habits?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever withheld sex as a form of punishment? Is this a sin in light of 1 Corinthians 7:1–7? How can you repent of this sin and move forward with a biblical perspective?
2. Consider your understanding of sex in the past. What has changed about your understanding of the subject, from a biblical perspective?
3. How can you approach the topic of sex with your children (at an appropriate age) so that they can have a biblically sound understanding of sex and God’s purpose for it? Discuss this with your spouse.
4. Examine your conversation in light of Ephesians 4:29–5:7. Are there any habits of coarse jesting or filthiness about sexual subjects that you need to repent of? How can you begin to change these habits?
5. Think about the typical experiences of physical intimacy with your spouse. Do you approach those situations with the goal of serving and enjoying one another, getting your needs met, or fulfilling a duty? How can thinking on the message of the Gospel help you to improve or enhance these times of intimacy?
6. If you have a past filled with sexual sin or you struggle with impure thoughts, meditate on 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 and praise God for the truth of what Christ has done for you. Use Philippians 4:8–9 as a pattern to put on new habits, and trust the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 to be assured that God is working in you to conform you to the image of Christ.

LECTURE 29

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. If your spouse is sinning by looking at pornography, why is it important to understand that their sin is not your fault? Why is it important to examine your heart to make sure you are not encouraging their sin in any way?
2. In what way is engaging in pornographic sin a symptom of a worship disorder?
3. Thinking back to the lectures on desires turning into needs and the descent into sin, what godly desires are being perverted by someone who engages in pornography?
4. We often think that pornography is much more prevalent today than it was in the past. In what ways is this a true statement? In what way is this a false statement considering the corruptness of human nature since the Fall of man?
5. In what different ways do men and women seek to fulfill their selfish sexual desires apart from their spouse? Why is this a sinful and self-seeking response? Which of these is more sinful in the eyes of God?
6. Read the following passages: Ecclesiastes 1:8, 4:8; Proverbs 27:20; Romans 1:28–32; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8. What important truths do we learn about pornographic sin from these passages?
7. Jesus presents the idea of “radical amputation” in Matthew 18:7–9. How might a person with pornographic habits apply this principle to help them kill this sinful habit?
8. How does a clear understanding of the Gospel and our identity in Christ (His righteousness credited to our account) help us think clearly about the sinful habits of pornography?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. At any given moment you are either worshipping God (trusting in His character) or worshipping self (trusting in your own wisdom and power). How can this truth help you understand any pornographic tendencies you might have?
2. Pornography is much more than looking at images of naked people. Any time you allow your mind to think about the affections of someone other than your spouse you are violating God's laws. List the ways you tend to sin against God and your spouse (e.g., internet images, magazines in the checkout lane, romance novels or films, social media interactions, lustful looks, etc.)
3. Using the list above, what real and practical steps can you take to put off these sinful habits and put on righteous habits? (Colossians 3:5–17) Pray to God, and beg Him for His Spirit to work in you to put these sins to death. After you have confessed these sins to God, set aside a time to speak to your spouse and confess these sins to them, seeking their forgiveness.
4. Use your concordance or another resource to find passages in Scripture that speak of “sexual immorality” or related terms. What hope do you find in knowing that God speaks clearly on this topic?
5. Take time to examine your heart before God and seek to understand if any of your actions might be promoting the sin of pornography in your spouse's life. Repent of these behaviors, and seek to change them for your spouse's benefit.
6. When you are tempted to engage in a pornographic activity (or if you find yourself in the middle of an act), stop and consider asking God to bless the activity you are about to engage in. How might this reorient your thinking and your actions?

LECTURE 30

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. In what way is adultery a long-term sin? (James 1:13–15)
2. If both spouses have sinned in a marriage tainted by adultery, why is the spouse who committed the act the only one responsible for that sin?
3. Read Proverbs 7. What warnings are given to avoid adultery? What are the consequences?
4. In Matthew 5:27–28, Jesus affirms the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14) in the physical sense and then says that even looking with lust is adultery of the heart (akin to the tenth commandment). Why is this such a sobering thought for a person desiring holiness?
5. Read Malachi 2:13–16 and Matthew 19:7–9. What is God’s attitude toward divorce? How does this relate to the meaning of marriage?
6. Knowing God’s attitude toward divorce and the message of the Gospel throughout Scripture, how should we approach dealing with sexual sins within our marriages, even adultery?
7. How did God refer to the Israelites in passages like Judges 2:17; 1 Chronicles 5:25; Jeremiah 3:1; Hosea 4:12. We don’t pray to wooden statues, but how do we do the same thing in our lives today? What is God’s attitude toward Christians even when they stray?
8. When you hear that someone has been divorced in the past, what sinful thoughts tend to pass through your mind? How might you cultivate an attitude of compassion for these hurting souls?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Proverbs 5. Identify the specific things that draw a man away from godly living and toward adulterous relationships. What advice is given to avoid these temptations?
2. If you were to say that adultery could never happen in your marriage, how would you be misunderstanding the nature of humans after the Fall?
3. How many times in a typical week do you commit adultery in your heart (looks, thoughts, “harmless” conversations, etc.)? What truths regarding lust do you find in Job 31:1–12 and 1 John 1:8–10?
4. Read the account of David’s sin in 2 Samuel 11. Describe the stupid things David did to fulfill his lustful desires. How do his actions relate to James 1:13–15?
5. Read through the book of Hosea to help you understand how the message of God’s forgiveness toward those who commit idolatry is seen in the Gospel.
6. If you know someone who is involved in a marriage where divorce is a possibility on the grounds of adultery, how might you encourage them with the Gospel?

LECTURE 31

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to define our terms from a biblical perspective rather than a cultural perspective?
2. We know that God made us to be emotional creatures. What is the relationship between the heart, the mind, and the emotions? (Proverbs 23:19)
3. If we are to have a Gospel-centered response, what two things do we need to filter a sinful action through?
4. If someone says something that would tend to “hurt our feelings,” what does it look like to respond in self-righteousness? What does it look like to respond in humility?
5. When someone brings a shortcoming to our attention, why is it important to seriously consider what the person is saying? What if only 45% of what they are saying is accurate?
6. How can our response to someone who sins against us provide a wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel with them?
7. How is the response to a physical or sexual sin different than the response to a verbal offense?
8. If someone stops using a drug, has the problem been dealt with? What must happen for a truly Gospel-centered response to the sin of idolatry? (Ephesians 5:18; Proverbs 20:1, 23:29–35)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe how using biblical language to define problems has helped you as you have worked through this study.
2. Read Ephesians 2:1–10. Where should you be finding your identity? How can this help you deal with people who are sinning against you in various ways?
3. How could you use the truth in Philippians 4:8–9 to inform your heart when someone brings an accusation against you?
4. The next time someone brings an accusation against you, take time to write down how you responded to reflect on your response. What were you thinking when the accusation was made? What was the initial thought in your mind? What were the initial words out of your mouth? Did you examine the truth in the claim? Were you suspicious of yourself? Do you need to repent of your actions in responding? How might you respond differently next time?
5. What are the two key ideas from this lecture that you need to work on applying in your life? How will you work to accomplish this?



CONCLUSION

LECTURE 32

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. Read 2 Corinthians 10:12. What are some of the dangers of comparing my sin to your sin? Who needs a Savior more?
2. We have been talking a lot about the Gospel and how it is contrary to the world's system. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18–29. What does Paul teach us here about the relationship between the world's wisdom and the Gospel?
3. In what areas are you tempted to seek an identity that is not grounded in Christ? How can you work with your spouse and God to find your identity in Christ?
4. Read Hebrews 10:23–25. What are the commands in this passage? Can they be fulfilled by being a solo Christian? In what way does community come from the attributes of God?
5. Discuss the following phrase: Gospel-centered living can only happen in community.
6. In what way does the Gospel offer us hope when we recognize our imperfect ability to love God and others every single day?
7. As a group, how can we help one another continue to think about these ideas and put them into practice as we move forward after this study?
8. As you think back over this study, who do you know that you could share these truths with in the hope of encouraging them in their marriage and their relationship with Christ?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever found yourself listening to someone's salvation testimony and thinking that your testimony is much better or totally inadequate? Why is this a self-righteous way of thinking? What can you do to repent of this attitude and thank God for His work in your life?
2. In light of James 2:8–12, why is it contrary to the Gospel to consider yourself a lesser sinner than someone who has done things more vile than you?
3. Read Mark 9:33–35, and meditate on verse 35. Ask God to help you understand the areas in your life where you need to put yourself last. How can you seek to serve your spouse (and your family and others) in order to be conformed more into the image of Christ?
4. The Bible is filled with “one-another” commands and statements. How are these commands related to the concepts of serving and community? How are you and your spouse living out these commands in your marriage, family, and church body? Where is there room for improvement?
5. Read Lamentations 3. What great Gospel hope is found in the character of God described by Jeremiah (vv. 22–24)? How can you apply this to knowing you will sin against God in the future?
6. How has your view of what the Gospel means to your everyday living changed through this study? Who could you share this encouragement with?

A high-angle, close-up shot of a dark asphalt road. Several white lane markings are visible, including a solid line at the top and a dashed line at the bottom. The word "BONUS" is printed in large, bold, yellow, sans-serif capital letters in the center of the frame.

BONUS

LECTURE 33

LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. If someone establishes a pattern of dating various people and then “divorcing” them when their needs are not met, what is the likely outcome of future relationships, including marriage?
2. What names does the culture use for dating? Are any of these biblically informed?
3. What dangers come with dating another person for fun or without the intent of getting married?
4. Read Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3, 2 Corinthians 12:21, and Colossians 3:5. What name does the Bible give to intimacy before marriage? How has the world relabeled this sin in order to make it sound more acceptable? Have you fallen into this trap of using unbiblical language?
5. What hope is there for those who have committed sexual sins before marriage? (Romans 8:1–4, 1 John 1:7–10)
6. How have you understood finding your “soulmate” in the past? How does your understanding compare to what was presented in the lecture? Which is more comforting?
7. How do preferences, godly counsel, prayer, and study of Scripture all play a part in finding a spouse?
8. What is the scariest thing about looking forward to marriage? How can you overcome these fears?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. As you think back to any dating relationships you have had, what regrets do you have? Have you asked God for forgiveness for any sins you committed during that time?
2. Why is it wise to keep yourself from being involved in a relationship with someone of the opposite sex unless there is a sincere intent to seek marriage?
3. Sexual sin is very prevalent in our culture. In what ways have you participated in this sin? Remember that lustful thoughts are considered adultery in God's mind. (Exodus 20:17; Matthew 5:27–28) How did you justify this sin at the time? What hope do you find in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11?
4. How does knowing that God created sex to be enjoyed within the covenant of a marriage help you overcome the temptations you face?
5. What qualities should a Christian seek in a spouse? If you are currently in a relationship, are these qualities present in that individual?
6. How does living a Gospel-centered lifestyle now give you a head start for living in a marriage?
7. Who are you planning on seeking godly counsel from in choosing a spouse? Make time to meet with this person(s) to pray together for wisdom and talk about the responsibilities of marriage.

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a dark asphalt road. Several white lane markings are visible, including a solid line running diagonally from the top left towards the middle right, and a dashed line in the bottom left corner. The word "APPENDIX" is printed in large, bold, yellow capital letters across the center of the image.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Biblical Counseling Information

The following organizations train Christians to counsel one another from a biblical perspective. You can find out more about each group by visiting the websites below.

- Association of Certified Biblical Counselors www.biblicalcounseling.com
- Christian Counseling Education Foundation www.ccef.org
- Biblical Counseling Coalition www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org
- Counseling Solutions www.rickthomas.net

Recommended Books

The following books are written by people who apply biblical truths to the topic of marriage and are sure to deepen your walk with Christ. As a secondary benefit, they will improve your relationships with your spouse and others as you become more like Christ.

- Dave Harvey *When Sinners Say I Do*
- Gary and Betsy Ricucci *Love That Lasts*
- Gary L. Thomas *Sacred Marriage*
- Paul Tripp *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- *What Did You Expect*
- Lou Priolo *The Complete Husband*
- *Heart of Anger*
- Martha Peace *The Excellent Wife*
- Stuart Scott *The Exemplary Husband*
- Jay Adams *Christian Living in the Home*
- *Competent to Counsel*
- Rick Thomas *Help! My Marriage Has Grown Cold*
- *Gospel-Centered Parenting*
- John MacArthur and Wayne Mack *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*
- Ed Welch *When People Are Big and God Is Small*
- Tedd Tripp *Shepherding a Child's Heart*