

BECOMING ONE FLESH

A Pre-marital Course



Ron and Sherry Torbert



Becoming One Flesh Workbook

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To our Pre-marital Couples,

Congratulations on choosing to invest your time and money in a pre-marital course like this one. This is not a rush-through, check-off-the-list kind of class. It will address deep issues in each of your lives. But if you commit your best each week for 8 weeks, you will have a marriage that will be envied and one that will most likely last a lifetime! Marriage is God's idea, and He has exciting plans and purposes for you two if you keep your eyes fixed on Him.

Paul says in I Cor. 7:28 that if you get married, you will have trouble. In this class, we will help you eliminate some of that potential trouble. We agree with author Gary Thomas who writes that God probably designed marriage to make us holy, not happy. We must give up the blame game in order to see how God uses our spouse to expose areas in our lives that need to be healed. Living "happily ever after" is a fairy tale. Marriage takes work and a continual commitment to do your part to keep your relationship alive and thriving.

Welcome to this adventure to hopefully divorce-proof your marriage before it starts. We are available for individual ministry sessions at any time during or after the class. Also, we offer coaching along with each lesson to make the application more personal. If you want to go further with inner healing, we also recommend you both take our Passion for Purpose online course at some point.

We are excited to hear how this class enlightens your understanding of what marriage is really all about as you two become one flesh!

God richly bless you,

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LESSON 1

Marriage Is a Covenant

Malachi 2:14 . . . “the wife of your marriage covenant.”

Contract versus Covenant – God is a covenant-making God. He made covenants with Noah, Moses, Abraham, David, and others. We have a “new” covenant with Jesus.

Contract	Covenant
Self-centered (lust, get, me)	Others-centered (love, give, we)
Your responsibilities are specified and restricted by terms of the agreement	All responsibility falls on you
May be renegotiated, amended, or broken	Irrevocable, unconditional, and unbreakable
If one party does not live up to their part of the agreement, you are freed from obligation.	Till death us to part

Marriage is a covenant relationship, and it parallels our covenant with Jesus – see chart on the next page.

Covenant Comparisons

Old Testament Steps to Making a Covenant (tribe to tribe)	Our Covenant with Christ (God to man)	The Marriage Covenant (man to woman)
Shedding of animals' blood	Jesus shed his blood on the cross	Death to self
Vows/promises spoken	Promises of scripture	Wedding vows/promises spoken
Exchange of robes	White robe of righteousness	Bride adorned in white
Exchange of armor	Armor of God	Pledge of protection
Exchange of authority	Name of Jesus is ours to use	Exchange of rings
Exchange of names	Christian	Wife takes on husband's name
Making of a scar	Holy Spirit is our guarantee	Hymen broken during intercourse
Covenant meal	Holy Communion	Cake and wine at reception
Erected a memorial	Cross is our memorial	Planting a tree

Highly recommended booklet: "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant" available on iblp.org. It gives you the meaning and significance of wedding traditions. (If we had a copy, we have included it for you as a gift.

We suggest you consider writing your own wedding vows to personalize your commitment to one another. Here is a sample to get you started

Sample Wedding Vows

(Based on Ephesians 5:21-33)

I _____, take you _____ to be my wife. With God's help, I will be subject to you out of reverence for Christ. I will be the head of our home as Christ is the head of the Church. I will love you as Christ loved the church and laid down His life for it. I will love you as my very own body and cherish and protect you in every way as long as both shall live.

I _____, take you _____ to be my husband. With God's help, I will be subject to you out of reverence for Christ and submit myself unto you as a service to the Lord. I will respect and reverence you, honor, prefer, and esteem you. I will defer to you, praise you, love and admire you exceedingly, knowing this is God's will, as long as we both shall live.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Is your marriage going to be a contract or covenant? Talk about the differences.
- 2) What surprised you about how the wedding ceremony reflects covenant?
- 3) What things, finances, or people that are currently "yours" will become "ours"; i.e., inheritance money, debt, cars, children from previous marriages, family?

LESSON 2

God's Design Laws that Affect All Relationships

1. The Law of Sowing and Reaping:

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:7-9)

2. The Law of Judgment:

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Matthew 7:1-2)

*In **this** verse and in Romans 2:1, the Greek word for judge is "krino" (kree'-no) which means to condemn. If you condemn, you will be condemned or do the same thing.*

*In 1 Corinthians 2:15, we are instructed **to** judge; however, the Greek work used here is "anakrino" (an-ak-ree'-no) which means to discern.*

We are to determine right or wrong based on God's Word.

3. The Law of Honoring Father and Mother:

"Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Deut. 5:16, Ephesians 6:2-3).

Honor (kabad in Hebrew) means to place high value upon, accept, give a good report, and bless. Dishonor means to make light of, disgrace, consider invalid, curse, give a bad report of, or blame even if they are not at fault.

We are to honor our parents based on their position, not on their performance -- love them, but do not condone their sin.

We judge or condemn things in our parents that we then reap, either in ourselves or through our spouse (with whom we are one flesh). Some common examples include:

Divorce	Adultery	Abortion	Harsh discipline	Abandonment/Unmet Needs
Perfectionism	Slothfulness	Control	Conditional love	Abuse of any kind
Gluttony	Legalism	Abuse	Dominant women	No spiritual headship of father

If you realize you have judged someone, there is good news. Jesus is eager to take the reaping to the cross. You can use this sample prayer to repent for your sin of judging.

Prayer to Bring the Reaping from Bad Seeds to Death on the Cross

Before praying, ask the Lord to bring his gift of repentance so that you can truly forgive. Ask the Holy Spirit to take you back to the time when the offense occurred and pray from the wounded child's heart, not from the adult mind. Forgiveness is for YOU! (See the forgiveness lesson.) You do NOT have to go to the person who wounded you. Just say the prayer as if he or she is present. You may also include churches or institutions as well.

Sample prayer: (Dad, Mom, or whomever) I forgive you for _____. Lord Jesus, I see the impact my sin of judging has caused me, and others and I want to repent for that and ask you to forgive me for judging my (Dad, Mom or whomever) for _____. I give you permission now to do heart surgery. I choose to give you the hurt, pain, bitterness, and resentment I've held in my heart all these years. I let it go and I turn them over to you for your judgment. I receive your forgiveness and ask that you would now bring the reaping and the habit patterns that are in place because of this judgment to death on the cross and separate me from any further reaping by applying your blood. I call to resurrection life in me _____ (the opposite of what you judged). With the help of your Spirit, I choose to bless (name) _____ who wounded me.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What patterns do I currently see in my life that I would like to change?

- 2) Share with each other some of the positive/negative seeds you remember that were sown into you as a child?

- 3) What judgments do you need to repent of? Do you see the connection between your judgments and the reaping of the exact same fruit in your life?

- 4) When you are ready, we encourage you to use the sample prayer in this lesson to change the reaping in one area of your life, either together or alone.

LESSON 3

Communication Barriers

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up and defiles many.”

(Hebrews 12:15)

Bitter Root Expectancies

What are bitter root expectancies? It is a behavior you expect from someone because of the judgment (bitter root) you have made on that person.

When you have made a judgment (condemnation) about someone (doesn't have to even be spoken), you believe this is who they are. Consequently, when you are around them this is what you expect. You can actually draw out negative behavior from another person because of your bitter-root judgments and expectations.

Here are a few fruit-to-root examples that show what you can reap when you have judged a parent for (or whomever your primary caregiver was).

EXPECTANCY

POSSIBLE JUDGMENT MADE AS A CHILD

Rejection	Not wanted as a child
Critical	Negative, critical, perfectionistic parent
Addiction	Addictions in parents
Abusive	Parents were abusive (physically, mentally, sexually)
Inability to rest	Father or mother performance-oriented
Need to control	Controlling parent, or raised without boundaries
Divorce	Parents divorced
Adultery	One or both parents were unfaithful

Male/Female Differences (God's Design)

Note: These characteristics are generalities that can cause misunderstanding! These differences will give you opportunities to extend grace to one another!

<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>
Logical	Emotional
Need time to process	Impulsive
Focused	Multi-taskers
Easy to respect, hard to love	Easy to love, hard to respect
Physically stronger	Physically weaker
Firm	Gentle
Private	Relational

*A delightful presentation of these differences can be seen by watching Part 1 of "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage" on YouTube by Pastor Gungor.

Different Spiritual Gifts Can Cause Misunderstandings

According to Romans 12:6-8 each one of us in the Body of Christ has one of these gifts as our main motivational gift: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, mercy, and leadership.

- Your main spiritual gift affects how you hear and process information, i.e., a teacher hears through ears of discerning truth, they test and question most everything — “Does this line up with what I know to be true?” An exhorter listens through ears of application— “How can I apply this information to our lives?”
- Take the spiritual gifts assessment found in the back of this workbook to help you determine your main spiritual gift.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Talk about any bitter root expectancies you have of a particular person.
- 2) Pick one of the male/female differences and discuss how they have caused problems in your relationship.
- 3) Discuss what you think your main spiritual gift is. What do you like about your gift? How have you seen God use you in this gift in the past?

LESSON 4

Living by the Spirit

Galatians 5:16 TPT “As you yield to the dynamic life and power of the Holy Spirit you will abandon the cravings of your self-life. When your self-life craves the things that offend the Holy Spirit, you hinder him from living free within you!” Death-to-self is the key to a great relationship.

God the Holy Spirit has the following names:

- He is our **Counselor/Comforter/Helper**. (John 14:16-17, 26)
- He is our **teacher**. He teaches us all things and He brings to remembrance everything Jesus said (John 14:26, I John 2:27). Every time we open the Word, we can ask the Holy Spirit to teach us something.
- He is the **Spirit of Truth**. (John 16:13) He never speaks on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell us what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Jesus by taking what is His and making it known to you (John 16:13-14) in our healing process. He will give us the truth where we have believed lies.
- He **convicts** us of our sins (John 16:8). When we confess our sins to one another, we are healed (James 5:16). He leads us to repentance and enables us to forgive.
- He **empowers** us (Acts 1:8). We can lay hands on the sick and see them recover, cast out demons, and speak in new tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.
- He is the **source of hope** (Romans 15:13). Hope deferred makes the heart sick.
- He **lives with you** and will be **in you** (John 14:17b) We are never alone.
- He **fills us** to speak the Word of God boldly (Acts 4:31). We need to ask for a daily filling!
- He **intercedes** for us (Romans 8:26-27).
- He **baptizes** us (Acts 1:5; 11:16).

- He **speaks to us and through us** (Acts 6:10; 13:2, I Cor. 2:4). He enables us to prophesy (Acts 2:18; 19:6).
- He **produces fruit** in us that changes our lives! The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).
- He **gives gifts** (Romans 12:6-8, I Cor. 12:7-11).
- He is Himself a **gift** (Acts 2:38b).
- He guides us (Acts 16:6-7).
- He is the **source of true freedom** (II Cor 3:17).
- He transforms us into Christ's likeness (II Cor. 3:18).

EQUALLY YOKED: What does being equally yoked mean and why does it matter?

To have a great marriage, both of you need to believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. A shared faith will save your marriage in hard times and enrich your marriage in the good times. As each of you grows together in your faith, your marriage will be stronger. Going to church together, praying together, studying God's Word together, and parenting your children as the Lord directs in His Word will all bring huge blessings into your lives. Pray together about which church to attend.

If either one or you are not sure of your salvation, you may pray this simple prayer now:

Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner and I need forgiveness. I believe that you died on the cross, paying the price for my sins and that through your death and resurrection, I can have forgiveness and eternal life. I invite you into my heart now to be my Lord and my Savior. Amen.

Your assurance: *“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).*

What is Spiritual Warfare?

It is important that you recognize that we are in a spiritual battle. Satan will do everything in his power to keep you from being united in thought, word and deed. Some part of your spiritual journey should include a study on warfare. We recommend Ron’s book, *“Who Told You That”* which is basic training in spiritual warfare.

- *“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3-5).*
- *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (Eph. 6:10-13).*
- *“We are not to be ignorant of the devil’s schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11).*
- *“When he (Satan) lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the Father of lies” (John 8:44b).*

- *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).*
- *"...Jesus answered, 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me'" (John 18:37).*
- *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).*
- *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13a).*

How we fight:

- By taking responsibility for our own sin through repentance and forgiveness.
- By putting on the armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18).
- By submitting to God and resisting the enemy (James 4:7).

You have been given the armor of God to protect you in warfare. Every piece of that armor reflects Jesus: belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, gospel of peace on your feet, shield of faith (belief), helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, and praying in the Spirit.

THE ENEMY'S SCHEME

The enemy's main scheme is to get us to believe a lie about ourselves, others or even God. Here are some examples of lies we believe: I don't matter, nobody really cares, God won't be there for me, and nothing good ever happens.

We can also believe lies a deceived culture is teaching us such as: you have to look a certain way, you have to have a college degree to be successful, or there is no consequence to sin.

It is possible to intellectually believe the truth of God's Word but be unable to believe it in your heart. We act on what we believe in our heart.

RECOGNITION is the first step to healing. Repentance for believing his lies is next and coming out of agreement with the enemy. Here is a sample prayer to repent for believing a lie:

Dear Lord, I repent for believing _____ (name the lie specifically) _____. I come out of agreement with it and break its power over me. I confess that I have sinned against You, others and myself by embracing this lie.

This lie has caused me to feel _____ ("ashamed," "fearful," "angry," "hurt," "sad," etc.) _____. I tried to protect myself from that pain by _____ (confess your "structure of defense", i.e. hardening my heart/giving up/striving to prove that the lie wasn't true/pride/judging those who hurt me/criticizing others. etc.) _____. But I realize now that those things have not protected me; they have only helped "cement" this lie into my heart. Please forgive me Lord and heal me.

Forgive me for the ways that I have turned from life through _____ (thoughts of suicide/not wanting to be here/wanting or trying to be someone else/passivity/hopelessness, etc.) _____. I repent and choose to turn toward the life, purpose, and destiny that you have given me. You are the way, the Truth, and the Life, and I embrace You now. (Allow some time to let him give you the truth.

I can see that this lie entered my heart when _____ (describe the specific wounding; the hurtful thing done, or the lack of the necessary good thing) _____. I choose to forgive _____ and to release my "right" to hold this offense against him/her/them.

I repent for the times when I have spoken lies over myself and disdained my _____ (body/looks/intelligence/creativity, etc.) _____. I come out of agreement with the enemy and break any alliance I have made with him. Lord, I choose to believe Your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Discuss what you learned about the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5 says “Don’t be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit”. The tense of the word “be” in the original language is “be being filled,” so this is not a one-time filling!

2) What do you know about spiritual warfare?

3) Talk about how the enemy has gotten you to believe a lie about yourself. In what area of your life are you most vulnerable to the lies of the enemy? Your worth? Your looks? Your intelligence? Your value?

When you recognize a lie you have believed, we recommend that you pray the sample prayer in the lesson for healing and freedom.

LESSON 5

Forgiveness as a Lifestyle

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. . . . But if you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:12,14-15.

Forgiveness is giving God permission to take the bitterness out of my heart. It can also be defined as canceling a debt.

Unforgiveness affects our spirit, soul, and body.

Unforgiveness can result in the following: anger and bitterness which leads to judgment, a hard heart, physical illness, mental illness, sleep disturbance, anxiety and depression, broken relationships, and worst of all – a broken relationship with God.

Forgiveness results in things like peace of mind, good health, healthy relationships, a soft heart, and open communication with God.

Forgiveness is NOT:

1. Condoning the offense
2. Saying what someone did is right or wrong
3. Forgetting
4. Denying hurt or anger
5. Making excuses
6. Easy

FORGIVENESS IS FOR YOU!

Some reasons we often give for not forgiving are:

- The person is not sorry or may do it again
- The person didn't ask to be forgiven

- I'm right; he/she is wrong
- We want to punish

Key scriptures in this lesson:

"In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matt. 18:34-35).

"In your anger, do not sin.' Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:26-27).

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25).

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

"And with that he breathed on him and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (John 20:22-23).

"If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven – if there was anything to forgive – I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2: 10-11).

You will recognize forgiveness is accomplished when:

You no longer bring up the offense.

You recall the offense, and you feel sad instead of mad.

You do not think about revenge.

You want to bless instead of curse.

Sample prayers to forgive others, God, and yourself

Forgiving others:

Lord Jesus, _____ has wounded me by _____. I really don't feel like forgiving. In my flesh, I want to retaliate. However, since forgiveness is for me, I would like to ask the Holy Spirit to help me forgive _____ from my heart. _____, I forgive you for _____. I do not want to hold on to bitterness and anger. Take my hurt to the cross and help me cancel the debt I have against him/her. If I crossed the line and judged this person for what he/she did, please forgive me for that. I receive your forgiveness now and choose to walk in your unmerited favor and grace. I choose to bless _____. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Forgiving God:

God, I became angry at you and judged you when you did not _____. I have been harboring unforgiveness in my heart and not wanting to admit it. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I choose to forgive you and release all my anger, bitterness, disappointment and sorrow to the cross today. I also ask you to forgive me for judging you. Thank you for forgiving me and giving me a new relationship with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Forgiving yourself:

Lord Jesus, when I sinned against you by _____, I felt like I could never be forgiven. I have judged myself to be bad. I have been angry at myself and consequently have not only hurt myself, but others as well, by my own self-condemnation. I've been beating myself up for years. I am grateful to know that you don't condemn me. _____
(Say your name) _____ I forgive you for _____. Jesus, forgive me for judging myself and give me a fresh start today. Thank you for your blood that cleanses me from all unrighteousness. Help me walk in a newness of life today, knowing that you have forgiven me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is forgiveness important?

- 2) What did you learn about forgiveness that was new for you?

- 3) Who have you had difficulty forgiving? What reasons have you used to keep you from forgiving?

- 4) How could your life be different if forgiveness was a lifestyle for you?

LESSON 6

Finances and Children

What was modeled for you by your parents with regard to financial planning and responsibility? Was it an area of contention in their marriage? Did they worry about money? Did they tithe? If they trained you well, this area would go well in your marriage, but if you were not given what you needed in training, you may struggle in this area. What judgments have you made that you could reap? Go back and use the prayer in lesson 2 to repent of financial judgments you may have made against your parents.

The one who is most adept at financial management should handle the monthly bill payments; however, both of you should be fully informed about every financial decision and you both should have free access to all financial information.

You should not have separate bank accounts unless for business reasons. This only leads to strife and trust issues. In covenant, there is no more “my” money and “your” money. It is “our” money.

No large expenditure should be made without both agreeing. You can agree that purchases up to an agreed-upon amount can be made without consulting the other.

What do you know about tithing? Is this something you can agree upon? Study God’s Word and you will know that tithing brings blessing. You cannot outgive God.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN?

God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Children are a blessing from the Lord. We think that is mainly because they show up things in us that God wants to deal with in us. If we were rebellious as a child, you can be assured that your child(ren) will be rebellious toward your authority, unless you repent of your bad seeds.

If you weren’t wanted or valued as a child, you may not want children of your own. If you felt like a burden to your parents, you may see children as a burden and treat them like that.

We need to go back to sowing and reaping and see how our judgments have affected our beliefs.

The number of children you would like to have may differ. Make this a matter of prayer. We don’t decide anyway. Any child that you conceive was His idea. He is the author of life and death.

Disciplining your children can be a source of tension. The Lord says in His Word, “Fathers, don’t exasperate your children, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” How a child sees his earthly father has a direct impact on how they will see the heavenly father.

Women, once you have children, the tendency is to put them first over your husband. Your parental responsibility is not a covenant relationship. Your marriage should always be the first priority and when it is, your children will feel secure.

We recommend every couple go to some type of marriage class or seminar every year to keep the health of your relationship a priority. Leaving the children for a few days with a trusted caregiver will be to their benefit, particularly if mom and dad’s relationship is strong.

We recommend Danny Silk’s book, “Loving Your Child on Purpose”, and Larry Keefauver’s book “77 Irrefutable Laws of Parenting”.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Who will handle the money in your relationship? Talk about what your expectations are for that.

2) Share your memories about how your parents felt about money, how they used money, their fears about money, etc. Did they experience great losses? How did they react to that? Were they good investors? Did they save money? Did they teach you to tithe?

3) How many children would you like to have? When would you like to start your family? Would you consider adoption if you have problems getting pregnant?

4) What type of discipline did you receive as a child? Do you see discipline as love?

LESSON 7

Sexual Intimacy

Sex is meant by God to be life-giving. Sexual abuse, pre-marital sex, pornography, and judgments and vows regarding sex can all impact what you believe about sex. “You have power over what you believe, but what you believe has power over you.” (Timothy Jennings)

The enemy has done everything he can to destroy the purity of marital sex. God’s ideal is joyful, unashamed, indulgent, loving sexuality within marriage. Sex inside of marriage is not to be just tolerated but celebrated! While many say Song of Solomon is about Christ and the church, it is also a celebration of sexual intimacy. We suggest you take time to read that book!

For the purposes of this course, our main focus is to help you heal any past sexual sins done to you or by you. That’s why we have provided a number of prayers for that healing to take place. If you have saved yourself for marriage, we are so proud of you. You will be blessed in this area of your union.

We also highly recommend a small book for men called “Sex, Romance and the Glory of God” by C. J. Mahaney. This book teaches men to lead their wives into increasingly rich, erotic, holy, satisfying, God-glorifying encounters!

Any hidden sexual sin will eventually cause destruction in your sexual intimacy. The following prayers will be helpful in healing past sexual sin and woundings:

Sample Prayer for Freedom from Shame (Use those portions that are applicable)

Heavenly Father, I come to You in Jesus’ name, confessing my sins and asking for forgiveness for the ways that I have sinned against You and others.

I repent for every act of unrighteousness and renounce the hidden works of darkness over my life. Thank You for Your mercy and forgiveness and for the blood of Jesus that cleanses me from all sin. I want to be free from bondage and ungodly influence in my life and break all agreements with the enemy now.

Father, I confess that I have used my hands in unclean ways, bringing emotional and

physical pain to others. Please forgive me for sinning in this way. Please heal each person I have wounded. I lift my hands to You now and ask that You wash them clean in the name of Jesus. Make them holy and consecrate them for Your service.

Father, I confess that I have used my mouth in unclean ways – unclean speech, cursing, gossiping and speaking evil of others. I repent. Please forgive me for bringing pain and death with my words and forgive me for sinning against You and others.

I know that it is from the abundance of my heart that I have spoken and ask that You cleanse my mouth and search my heart, revealing and bringing your light into any areas of darkness. I ask that You break the power of the shameful, harsh, or harmful words that I have spoken over others and myself. Gather them up and dispose of them and cancel every effect they have had.

I humbly ask You to heal the hearts of those I have wounded and defiled in this way. I forgive others for speaking negative words about me. I renounce the power of those words and break any hold they have had on me. Please heal me in the places where I've felt shamed, devalued, put down, and rejected. Reveal any way that I have sinned in my response to what has happened and lead me to repentance.

I confess that I have opened the door to darkness through my eyes, by looking upon unclean things-- pictures, movies, pornography, and acts of darkness. I have lusted with my eyes and defiled and wounded others, and I repent and renounce these sins. Forgive me. Cleanse my eyes and fill them with Your light. I refuse to allow my eyegate to be bound by darkness any longer.

I confess that I have also listened to unclean things—gossip, evil speech, and music that I knew was not healthy or holy. I repent and ask You to forgive me, wash me clean, and consecrate my hearing.

I confess that I have opened my mind to ungodly beliefs, lusts, fantasies, and ungodly imaginations. I repent for the times I have willfully sinned against You and allowed my conscience to be seared.

Please forgive me and cleanse my mind, thoughts, imagination, and conscience by the blood of Jesus. I renounce all open doors in my thought life that have led to darkness flooding my mind. Strengthen and sanctify my will so that I may choose rightly from this moment on.

I confess that I have used my body to gratify my own desires in unclean ways. I repent and ask You to forgive me. Please wash my body from any sinful desires that rule me and restore me to childlike innocence and a sense of purity.

In Jesus' name, I loosen myself from all uncleanness. Enable me to flee evil desires and to pursue righteousness and control my body in a way that is hold and honorable.

Father, forgive me for seeking love in all the wrong places.

I lift my heart and hands to You as a little child would to his/her dad, and I ask that You pour Your love and affection into me. Penetrate my character and personality.

Here I am, Daddy. I need You!

I receive Your forgiveness and I receive Your cleansing. You are faithful and just to forgive me of all my sin and I am thankful. Take me into Your arms and give me the love that others have not known how to give. Give me the love I have searched for all my life. Help me learn to love others more, and teach me how to express it in healthy, holy ways. May I be holy, consecrated and sanctified unto You.

I renounce and come out of agreement with any force of darkness that has gained a foothold in my life through my shameful actions and sin. Please free me from all addictive and shameful cycles and patterns that I have been caught in and help me walk in the disciplines of new life in You.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

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Sample Prayer for Release from Unhealthy/Unholy Ties of Habitual Masturbation and Pornography

Lord Jesus, I come to you with a truly repentant heart for where I have broken your heart by my sin of masturbation tied with fantasy and pornography and I ask you to forgive me. Forgive me for yielding my will to this temptation. I repent for my behavior that has brought me such shame and condemnation. I no longer want to give power to this evil spirit of lust. By my confession, I shut the door to his access in my life. I now embrace the power of the Holy Spirit to help me walk a new way. Thank you that your Word says if I confess our sins I am forgiven and the blood of Jesus cleanses me from all unrighteousness.

In the name of Jesus, I break any unhealthy or unholy tie with masturbation, fantasy, and pornography and I call my spirit back to myself.

I break any identification of peace, comfort, and emotional release that I have experienced with this sin and say to my body soul and spirit you will find these things only in relationship with Jesus.

Father, I give you permission to reveal any unhealed wound, unmet need, inner vow, bitter root judgment or bitter root expectancy that may be at the root of this sin.

Father, I repent for the sins of my forefathers who also walked in this sin. I ask you to forgive them and break off any generational inheritance of shame or condemnation that I have carried. May all things like this be brought into the light for healing.

Father, please rightly divide that which is normal and holy from that which is not. Grant me wisdom to know the difference, and to walk as the child of God you have called me to be. Please continue to heal the wounds that make me vulnerable to this temptation.

Thank you for cleansing me from my sin and from my shame. Thank you for restoring the honor and dignity that is my inheritance as your child. Fill me again with your Holy Spirit and enable me to put you first in my life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Sample Prayer to Break Ungodly Soul Ties

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I have sinned against you by taking part in pornography and/or unholy sexual relationships outside of the marriage covenant. I sincerely repent and ask for your forgiveness. Please cut off any ungodly soul ties between me and anyone else that were created by any encounter, sexual or otherwise, known and unknown, remembered or forgotten. I ask you to cleanse me from any and all defilement that was transferred to me from this person(s) and deliver me from any demonic forces that were given access by my sin. I break any commitments, contracts, agreements, dedications, and vows made over me and/or my family. Please cleanse me from the shame that has bound me and restore me to the honor and dignity that is my rightful inheritance as your child. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Share what you believe God's purpose of sexual intimacy is.

2) Is there any sexual sin in your past that you need to pray about sharing with one another? If so, ask God for the timing and for your hearts to be ready. Wiping the "slate" clean with forgiveness will give you a brand-new start together.

3) Share how you think pornography has affected your view of sexual intimacy. Are you aware of its devastating consequences? Is there an addiction here? If so, please seek godly counsel. One resource we recommend for men is a ministry called "Be Broken" in San Antonio, TX.

Repeated sin opens the door to demonic influence. AFTER true heart-felt repentance, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, we recommend that you bind a spirit of lust from operating in your life.

LESSON 8

Spiritual Intimacy/One-Flesh Destiny

Spiritual Intimacy:

- Continue to grow in your own personal relationship with God in private quiet times, prayer, discipleship, etc.
- We recommend that you Study God's Word together. We "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of water through the Word." (Eph. 5:25). Men, your wife longs for you to lead her in the study of God's Word. You are designed by God to be the spiritual head of your family. If that is difficult for you, ask the Lord to show you're the root!
- Pray together. If this is difficult, start by just thanking God for each other.
- Attend church together. "Do not forsake assembling together, as is the custom of some, but exhort one another." (Heb. 10:25). Maybe you could serve together in your church. Remember, there is no perfect church, but we are designed by God to be corporate. (If you have judged pastors or churches in the past, consider repenting of that so that you can fully receive from those in your present church.
- You could share a devotional for married couples. We really like "Devotions for a Sacred Marriage" by Gary Thomas. Another one we really enjoyed was "Draw the Circle" by Mark Batterson. This was not specifically designed for couples but the testimonies in it really built our faith.
- You could read Christian books together and discuss whatever the Holy Spirit brings to light for you in each chapter.

One Flesh Destiny

Gen. 2:23-24 (NIV) “The man said ‘this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.”

What God has given my wife is now mine, and what I have is now hers. We are no longer independent, we are interdependent. Our destiny is now based on the blending of two lives into one.

How do we determine our one-flesh destiny? Proverbs 22:6 (ESV) says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it. We believe that your spiritual gift(s) have a lot to do with your destiny. If you haven’t taken the Spiritual Gifts Analysis that is part of this workbook, please do so this week. Then you can begin to see how God might blend your differing gifts in order to determine your one-flesh destiny.

Read Romans 12:1-9. Sherry’s book, *Chosen by Love, Gifted to Love* will help you determine your identity and your unique purpose.

Learn to hear God’s voice. In John 10:27 we read, “My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.” Following God’s voice throughout your marriage will result in a blessed life. A three-fold cord is not easily broken!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) What would you both like to commit to that will build your spiritual intimacy? Who will take the lead to make sure this happens?

2) What are the strengths you see in each other’s main gift?

3) How might your differences cause conflict?

4) Brainstorm about what your one-flesh destiny could be.

Parents' Blessing for Your Wedding

We strongly advise that your parents lay hands upon you at your wedding and pray a prayer to release you and bless you. Here is a sample they might follow:

One of the fathers will say: We the parents of _____ and _____ chose this moment to cut the “umbilical cord” and allow you to leave us and cleave to one another in marriage. We bless you new identity as a one flesh couple. What God has joined together may no man, no parent, no in-law, separate! We promise not to interfere or give advice, unless you ask. We promise to pray for you and continue to love you, but in a new way.

Wife's parents: _____, we respect your headship of this new family. Lead her well. Protect her, care for her and support her. Allow her to be the best she can be as God has designed her. We love you as our own.

Husband's parents: _____, we bless your role as wife and mother, that you would live in perfect submission to one another and that you would continually pray for _____, lifting him up, deferring to him and honoring him. We love you as our own.

If either of you has never had a father's blessing, we want to direct you to IAPM.live where Ron has a recorded blessing for each of you. If you are meeting with us in person, he will pray that over you then.

ON YOUR WEDDING DAY: We bless you to be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit and his love. We bless you to enjoy fellowship with your heavenly father and to welcome His presence at the altar. We rejoice with you and over you and wish you many years of joy meeting life together, united with Christ as your cornerstone.

We recommend that you get counseling at least once a year just to keep hearts soft and communication open. There is wisdom in many counselors. Of course, the Holy Spirit is the best

Spiritual Gifts Assessment for Adults

Instructions: Score between 0 – 5, 0 being never; 5 being always. Do not score what you think *should* be true or what you *hope* might be true in the future. For best results, score only based on past experience.

1. ___ I pay close attention to what people's likes and dislikes are.
2. ___ I have no tolerance of sin – no gray area.
3. ___ I love helping people apply God's word to their personal lives.
4. ___ I love to study the scriptures and share new revelations.
5. ___ I absorb other people's burdens.
6. ___ I make good investments and handle money wisely.
7. ___ I am a visionary
8. ___ I love to do research and share what I learn with others.
9. ___ I love to help behind the scenes.
10. ___ Wounded animals wrench my heart
11. ___ I sometimes speak rather frank and direct.
12. ___ I see a job that needs to get done and I know how to put people and resources together to accomplish that task.
13. ___ People come to me for coaching or counseling.
14. ___ I look for ways to raise large sums of money for a good cause.
15. ___ I love people, I draw life from people.
16. ___ I spend a lot of time in intercession.
17. ___ I can see something that needs to be done, and I will use my own resources to meet that need.
18. ___ I love to support ministries financially and get others to join me.
19. ___ I'm always checking what I hear others teach against what I know.
20. ___ I'm not bothered if people I am working with don't like me.
21. ___ I'm more concerned about emotional needs of others than physical needs.
22. ___ I am put out when I see others' motives are not pure in helping others.
23. ___ I love long-term goals.
24. ___ I see the glass half full instead of half empty.
25. ___ I draw life in my alone time and time in worship.
26. ___ I particularly enjoy the company of others with my same gift.

27. ___ I don't like for others to know when I meet a financial need.
28. ___ I present truth in a systematic order.
29. ___ When I walk into a room, I can sense things about people.
30. ___ I love short-term goals.
31. ___ I love to share testimonies of what God has done in my life.
32. ___ I like to encourage others to give to causes I support.
33. ___ I'm more task oriented than people focused.
34. ___ What the Lord reveals to me can become a burden.
35. ___ I'm passionate about truth.
36. ___ Organization of people and resources is my strong suit.
37. ___ I can see good from bad circumstances or situations.
38. ___ I love to work with my hands.
39. ___ I can easily discern the character and motives of others.
40. ___ I weep with those who weep.
41. ___ I am alert to the Word of God being taken out of context.
42. ___ I make sure the ministries I support are very reputable.
43. ___ I like to help people who are hurting.
44. ___ I love taking food to homebound people.
45. ___ I'm bored by systems of information that have no application.
46. ___ I don't have a lot of patience with people's feelings/emotions.
47. ___ I am strict about obeying the laws of God and of the land.
48. ___ I like to see my gift make a difference for others.
49. ___ I believe my gift is foundational to all the others.
50. ___ When I am responsible for a project, I act to get the job done and am anxious to move onto the next.
51. ___ I am careful to make sure when I speak for God that it is backed up by scripture.
52. ___ I like to get all the facts and am very logical.
53. ___ I am good at meeting practical needs.
54. ___ I am extremely sensitive to people's emotions and hurts.
55. ___ I can see good coming out of hard situations.
56. ___ People who are living in poverty attract my attention.
57. ___ When I see wrong, I feel compelled to speak.
58. ___ I am drawn to opportunities where I can give direction to others.

59. ___When a speaker gives details of Biblical words, studies and archeology, I find myself listening intently.
60. ___I tend to have compassion for those who feel rejected.
61. ___When it comes to goals, I can match people and resources to achieve success.
62. ___When it comes to taking care of others' needs, I willingly sacrifice my own needs and desires.
63. ___I volunteer to work with the underprivileged and poor.

Spiritual Gifts Assessment Answer Key

Total the answers for these questions on the line provided.

Prophecy: 2, 11, 16, 25, 34, 39, 47, 51, 57 _____

Serving: 1, 9, 17, 22, 30, 38, 44, 53, 62 _____

Teaching: 4, 8, 19, 28, 35, 41, 49, 52, 59 _____

Encouraging: 3, 13, 15, 24, 31, 37, 45, 56, 58 _____

Giving: 6, 14, 18, 27, 32, 42, 48, 55, 63 _____

Leadership: 7, 12, 20, 23, 33, 36, 46, 50, 61 _____

Mercy: 5, 10, 21, 26, 29, 40, 43, 54, 60 _____

My strongest gift is _____

My secondary gift is _____

A wonderful way to validate your gift is to ask your spouse or others in the Body of Christ to confirm if your result is true.