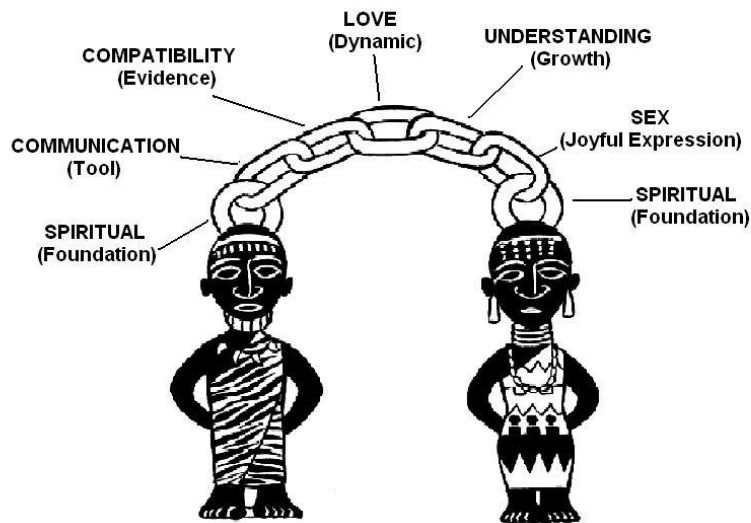


FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

TMBC Course #14



Student Workbook



Family and Marriage

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: FAM01



Objective: To introduce what the Bible says about marriage and family.



So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”

—Genesis 1:27-28

Then the Lord said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

—Genesis 2:18

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

—Psalm 127:1

All through the creation account, God looked at what He created and said, “It is good.” But when He saw that the man He created was alone, He said, “It is not good.” This man was incomplete without a partner. So God created a woman, joined man and woman together as one, and told them to fill the earth with their children.

The Bible gives us God's design and purposes for marriage and family. It tells us how to have a marriage in the sight of God, a marriage put together by God, a marriage brought together by God, and a marriage kept together by God. It also tells us how to raise our children and have strong families.

There are many benefits for us in learning what the Bible says about marriage and family. Next to salvation, a happy marriage and home are the most wonderful things in the world. But what does marriage mean to God? Why did He institute marriage? Why did He create us male and female? The answer is that God wanted to populate the earth with people who love Him and His kingdom.



1. True or false? Marriage and family are a law of life that fulfills God's purposes for the world.
2. True or false? Women have a role in completing men, and men have a role in completing women.
3. True or false? God intended for a husband and wife to minister to each other as two whole persons.
4. True or false? Women do not have the same worth as men.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Who came up with the idea of marriage?
 - a. God
 - b. Adam
 - c. Ancient cultures
 - d. Modern society
6. How does the Bible describe the relationship between husband and wife?
 - a. They become one person with no distinction between them.
 - b. They remain two completely separate people.
 - c. They become "one flesh," or two distinct people united as one.

7. How does the Bible address the members of a family about their roles?
 - a. It tells them to focus on each other's attitudes and behavior.
 - b. It tells them to focus on their own attitudes and behavior.
 - c. It does not really matter because family is not a priority.
8. What is the basic unit through which God works?
 - a. Individual people working independently
 - b. The family
 - c. The church
 - d. The government
9. Which partner in a marriage is superior?
 - a. The man
 - b. The woman
 - c. Neither—they are equal.
10. According to Solomon in Psalm 127, who is the most important person in the family—or in any endeavor?
 - a. The man who leads
 - b. The one who works hardest
 - c. Children
 - d. The Lord
11. How did Solomon describe parenting?
 - a. Raising children is like shooting arrows with a bow.
 - b. Being a parent is like being a watchman who stands guard.
 - c. Being a parent involves many nights without sleep.
 - d. Children are like warriors who always fight.
12. What was God's original intention for marriage?
 - a. For it to be an easy relationship with no effort involved
 - b. For it to be a temporary relationship
 - c. For it to be a permanent relationship
 - d. For it to be between any two people, no matter what gender
13. How do we let God build our marriage and family?
 - a. By worrying about it
 - b. By realizing we cannot do it on our own and by depending on God
 - c. By actively pursuing our own plans
 - d. By always working and never sleeping
14. What is God's definition of a marriage?
 - a. Any two people who love each other.
 - b. Any two people who have children.
 - c. A man and a woman who are joined together by God.
 - d. A man and a woman who get married in a church.

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.
—Psalm 127



What are God's desires for marriage and family? What are your desires for marriage and family? How do you think He wants to use your family life to further His purposes in the world?

One of the greatest problems in Christian marriages today is men who will not accept their God-given responsibility to be the head of the home and the spiritual leader—the priest of their home. Husbands, how are you doing in leading and loving your wife as Jesus loves? What can you do today and this week to become the husband and father God wants you to be?



Thank God for the wonderful gifts of marriage and family. Ask Him to prepare your heart for this study and to teach you about His purposes and plans for your life and relationships. Pray that He would strengthen your faith and family relationships for His glory.



Going Deeper

1. Who created the idea and institution of marriage? _____

2. What is the “law of marriage and family”? _____

3. Why is this law under attack today? _____

4. What are the three levels of the pyramid of marriage and family, and why is each important? _____

5. What is the basic unit that God works through in the world? _____

6. Why is it essential to put God into our marriages? _____

7. What is the basis on which we should make the decision to marry? _____

The Law of Marriage and Family

Chapter 2

Audio Lesson: FAM02



Objective: To understand God's providential purpose for marriage.



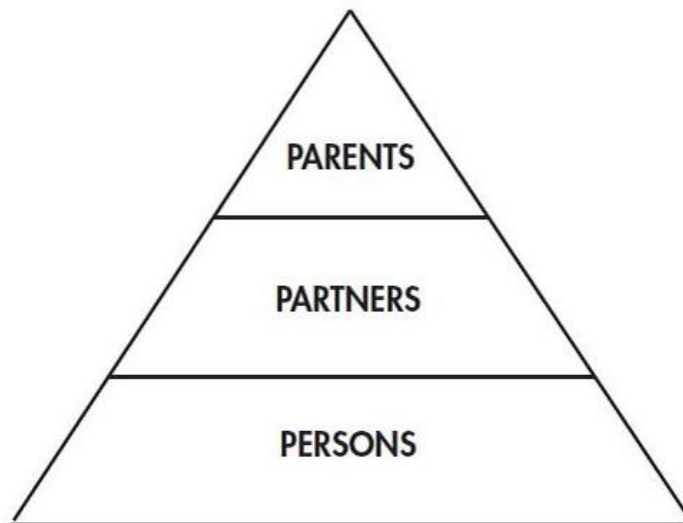
“Have you not read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

—Matthew 19:4-6

Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.

—Psalm 127:4

God's design for family and marriage gives our relationship a beautiful and meaningful purpose and accomplishes His plans for the world. We see in Scripture that there is a *providential* dimension to marriage. God brings male and female together into “oneness.” Divine guidance should therefore be the basis of our decision to marry. We also see that marriage is a *permanent* relationship. Permanence is necessary for many reasons, but primarily for the children. God's design for marriage creates a home that gives children the nurture and security they need before they go into the world and face life. Marriage is also meant to be an *exclusive* relationship. A husband and wife no longer relate to their parents as their primary relationship but to each other, and they choose to relate intimately only to each other. A marriage is like a divine contract between a man and woman that binds them together. But marriage is *inclusive* in the sense that it includes every part of the husband and wife's lives: their spirits, minds, hearts, and bodies. The two become as one.



In order to live as one, married couples must seek unity first in their spiritual relationship with God. Then God can help them as they work on their ways of communicating, their values, their unselfish love, their understanding of each other, and in their physical relationship. When they live in this kind of unity, they reflect God's purpose and plan for marriage. Man and woman as whole persons become united as partners so they can be adequate parents.



1. True or false? God joins a husband and wife together and makes them one.
2. True or false? When deciding whom to marry, we can only guess and hope it works out. God does not guide us in decisions about human relationships.
3. True or false? Building a healthy Christian marriage requires two emotionally and spiritually whole, healthy persons committed to the relationship.
4. True or false? In most marriage conflicts, it is better to solve the problem in the other person first, not yourself.
5. True or false? According to the Bible, marriage is meant to be a temporary commitment.
6. True or false? God designed the marriage relationship to be exclusive.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

7. Which of the following are the four problem areas of a marriage relationship? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. The husband and his problems
 - b. The wife and her problems
 - c. The parents of the husband and wife
 - d. The husband and wife's joint problems as a couple
 - e. The unrealistic ideal of a husband and wife staying together their whole lives
 - f. The children and their problems
 - g. The husband's and wife's friends

8. Why is it good for children to see their parents being affectionate toward each other? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. It makes them feel secure.
- b. It gives them a positive attitude about marriage.
- c. It demonstrates the kind of love they will need to have in their marriages one day.
- d. It is not good. We should never show affection publicly.

9. In what sense is marriage meant to be inclusive?

- a. It involves many partners.
- b. It is a lifelong commitment to everyone in your spouse's family.
- c. It is a spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical union between husband and wife.
- d. It is not inclusive at all; it is based on many rules and limitations.

10. Which of the following words describes marriage as God designed it? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. Providential
- b. Accidental
- c. Permanent
- d. Exclusive
- e. Inclusive
- f. Temporary
- g. Unimportant

11. List the seven ties, or links, of marriage.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____

12. What is our most important relationship in life?

- a. Our relationship with our spouse
- b. Our relationship with our children
- c. Our relationship with our parents
- d. Our relationship with other Christians
- e. Our relationship with God

13. What is the role of effective communication in marriage?

- a. It is the tool that helps us maintain our oneness.
- b. It is the key to telling each other what to do.
- c. It is the only way to point out what is wrong with each other.
- d. It is a practical necessity for raising children.

14. Which is the most important aspect of compatibility between a husband and wife?

- a. Physical attraction to each other
- b. Having similar values
- c. Agreeing on everything and never arguing
- d. Avoiding talking to each other

15. Which is the most important aspect of love in marriage?

- a. Unselfishness
- b. Physical attraction
- c. Strong feelings
- d. Sex



King Solomon used the image of a husband and wife being like a bow and string and the children like arrows. Do you see in the marriages around you how Satan is trying to cut the string on the bow or bend the bow so much that it cannot shoot the “arrows”? If you do not change anything, in what direction will your children go? How does God’s design for marriage help you remember to ask God for His help to keep your “bow” strong and your “string” from being cut?

From your experience with marriage—either your own or that of your parents and friends—what attitudes best prepare a person to have a fulfilling marriage relationship? How does God’s design for marriage fulfill our need for a deep, intimate relationship?



Thank God for His purposes for men and women and the marriage relationship between them. If you are married, ask God to strengthen your marriage through this study of His Word. If you are not, ask Him to lead you into the right relationship at the right time. Wherever you are at this point in your life, trust God to fulfill His purposes for you.



Going Deeper

1. What are the four problem areas in a marriage? _____

2. Why is marriage a permanent tie? _____

3. What is meant by “passing the law of God through the love of God”? _____

4. In what two senses is marriage “exclusive”? _____

5. What is the foundation of oneness in marriage? _____

6. What is the definition of communication? _____

7. What are the two dimensions of communication? _____

The Sevenfold Tie of Marriage

Chapter 3

Audio Lesson: FAM03



Objective: To understand the importance of communication in maintaining the oneness in marriage.



“In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

—Matthew 7:12

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building each other up according to their needs.

—Ephesians 4:29

A wise man’s heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction. Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

—Proverbs 16:23-24

Good communication can help a husband and wife become one flesh because it is a tool that makes it possible for them to work on their oneness. In the same way, as we maintain and cultivate our relationship with Christ by communicating with Him in prayer and listening for His voice, married couples must maintain and cultivate their relationship with each other. We are always communicating; the issue is what and how we are communicating. The right kind of communication is like turning a light on our relationship, exposing things that would harm our oneness and revealing things that would help us grow closer.

Good communication involves two parts: sending and receiving of information. The way communication is received is as important as the way communication is sent. Communication is not simply what is said; it is also what is heard, received, and felt. It is the total impression conveyed by the message that is sent. When we realize the importance of good communication and learn the attitudes and actions that hinder it, we can dramatically improve our marriage relationships. Good communication is the tool that helps us maintain and strengthen our oneness.

1. True or false? Unlike a parent-child relationship, a husband-wife relationship should grow closer and closer throughout life.
2. True or false? There is only one important dimension to communication. If we express ourselves, we have communicated well.
3. True or false? Silence between a couple always means they have a communication problem.
4. True or false? There is no such thing as “not communicating.” We are always communicating, even when we are not speaking.



5. True or false? There is only one level of communication.
6. True or false? In a family, there are many types of communication among its members.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

7. What aspect of communication has the most impact?
 - a. The words we say.
 - b. What the other thinks we said.
 - c. The gestures we use with the words.
 - d. The inflection and emphasis we place on the words.
8. Which of the following are required to communicate well? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Time
 - b. Energy
 - c. Courage
 - d. A loud voice
9. Which of the following attitudes and actions can hinder effective communication? (*choose all that apply*)

being argumentative	showing interest
being preoccupied	asking questions
not listening	suspicion
attentiveness	generosity
being too opinionated	anger
humility	selfishness
busyness	concern
distractions	nagging
patience	stress and fatigue
depression	insecurity
contempt	gentleness

10. What kinds of obstacles to communication can we experience?
- a. Emotional
 - b. Practical
 - c. Physical
 - d. Psychological
 - e. All of the above
11. How should we respond if we are married to a difficult person?
- a. Show that we can be just as difficult.
 - b. Get a divorce and find someone else to marry.
 - c. Maintain the fruit of the Spirit and be forgiving.
 - d. Endure the difficulty, even though God offers no real solution.
12. In which family relationship is effective communication most important?
- a. Husband-wife
 - b. Mother-daughter
 - c. Father-son
 - d. Brother-sister
13. How are other members of the family affected if the communication between husband and wife breaks down?
- a. No one notices because it has very little impact.
 - b. All other communication patterns between family members are negatively affected.
 - c. All other communication improves in order to make up for the problems of the husband and wife.
 - d. Everyone decides to stop talking to each other.
14. Which of the following is a primary benefit of good communication in marriage?
- a. It keeps your spouse informed about each day's events.
 - b. It keeps the home running smoothly.
 - c. It lets your spouse know what you expect them to do.
 - d. It is the tool that enables you to improve every other area of your marriage.



At what level are you communicating? How can you be other-centered to improve your communication? What one thing is hindering your communication from improving?

Have you noticed any attitudes or habits in your own communication that need to be changed or improved? If so, what? What can you do to improve them?



Thank God that He desires strong marriages among His people and that God gives us the tools to have strong marriages. If you are married, ask God to show you areas of communication that need to improve and to help you strengthen your communication with your spouse.



Going Deeper

1. What are some common communication problems within a marriage? _____

2. Do any of the above exist in your marriage or relationships? _____

3. What three things show your value and priority of communication? _____

4. What are some typical communication “circuit-breakers”? _____

5. What Scripture verse and what fruit of the spirit are recommended for living with a difficult person? _____

6. What are some important family communications? Why are they important? _____

7. Why is the husband/wife combination the most important? _____

Compatibility – The Evidence of Oneness

Chapter 4

Audio Lesson: FAM04



Objective: To understand the importance of compatibility in marriage.



Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

—Ephesians 5:21, 22, 25

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. . . . Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

—1 Peter 3:1-2, 7

Compatibility is the evidence of the oneness God designed for a husband and wife. Compatibility is a very important part of a good marriage. The original meaning of compatibility was “two people who have decided to suffer with each other through all of the difficulties of life.” Yet today the concept of compatibility includes not only our physical relationship but also our values, spiritual maturity, moral issues, how we spend our time and money, what marriage partners both want for their children, and every other area of life together. Your spiritual compatibility with your spouse will be the foundation upon which you will be able to define the roles and responsibilities each of you must fulfill in your relationship.



Compatibility is one of many reasons that the most important communication relationship in a family is the one between husband and wife. I have heard many devout marriage partners confirm the reality that when they are right with the Lord and with their spouse, they can handle any hardship. That is a good summary of the meaning of compatibility. In order to maintain compatibility, we must accept our spouse with all of his or her strengths and weaknesses. Many people think they can change their spouse, but that does not work. Instead of focusing on the points of incompatibility, we must focus on the positive aspects of compatibility.

The Bible gives us several instructions about how husbands and wives should relate to each other. They are all based on having the kind of love in marriage that Jesus has for us. When we have that kind of *agape* love, compatibility grows and marriages are strengthened.

1. True or false? It is important for parents to communicate with children and to teach children how to communicate with them.
2. True or false? It is important for parents to spend time with their children.
3. True or false? Suffering is a normal part of life.
4. True or false? It is good to suffer alone and not share problems with anyone else.
5. True or false? God's Word says that incompatibility is a good reason for divorce.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. What normally happens when people divorce their spouse in order to marry another?
 - a. They usually find that they are much happier.
 - b. They are usually disappointed to find that they have exchanged one relationship with pluses and minuses for another relationship with pluses and minuses.
 - c. They usually discover that all their problems have disappeared.
 - d. They are always much more committed to the second marriage than they were to the first one.
7. Which of the following is the best way to improve your compatibility with your spouse?
 - a. Try to change your spouse's habits, attitudes, and personality.
 - b. Pretend to be exactly the way your spouse wants you to be.
 - c. Accept your spouse as he/she is.
 - d. Always do whatever your spouse tells you to do.
8. Which of the following areas of compatibility should we focus on in our marriage?
 - a. The negative side—all the ways we are not compatible
 - b. The positive side—all the ways we are compatible
 - c. The superficial issues that do not involve deep discussion
 - d. Whatever other people are saying about us

9. Which of the following are important areas of compatibility in marriage?
- Physical
 - Spiritual
 - Values
 - Personality
 - All of the above
10. What aspects of a relationship are affected by our values? (*choose all that apply*)
- Money
 - Time
 - Disciplining children
 - Desires and goals for children
 - Desires and goals for the marriage relationship
 - Roles for men and women
11. To what does Scripture compare the relationship between a husband and wife?
- The relationship between two sheep
 - The companionship of two children
 - The difference between night and day
 - The relationship between Christ and the Church
12. How does Scripture portray a husband's role?
- As a master
 - As a slave
 - As a shepherd
 - As a sheep
13. What do we need in order to have the kind of love God desires for us in marriage?
- Supernatural grace
 - Self-will
 - Natural strength
 - Strong feelings that never waver
14. How are men supposed to love their wife and children? (see Ephesians 5:21-28)
- As a demanding master
 - By always doing what they want
 - Only by providing a good income
 - In the same way that Christ loved the church

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
—Ephesians 5:21-28

15. How are women supposed to be submissive to their husband?

- a. By always doing exactly what he says
- b. By never disagreeing with him
- c. By letting him lead as a shepherd
- d. By constantly telling him how to lead



What characteristics and attitudes do you value in your spouse? What characteristics and attitudes does your spouse value in you? In what ways do you think you can improve your compatibility by focusing on these attributes?

Husband, are you loving your wife as Jesus loves the Church? What can you do today and this week to show God's love for your wife?

Wife, are you showing proper submission to your husband as the Church is to be submissive? What can you do today and this week to demonstrate Godly submission?



Thank God for the different ways He made men and women and for the ways husbands and wives complete each other. Ask Him to help you focus on the ways you and your spouse are compatible and to strengthen your unity. Ask God to help you know and experience His love more and more so you can love your spouse as you should. If you are not yet married, ask Him to help you become the kind of person who will fit with the spouse He has planned for you.



Going Deeper

1. What are the advantages to a family of a regular “round-table” discussion? _____

2. Is incompatibility a valid ground for divorce? Why or why not? _____

3. What is the only hope of meaningful change for a husband, or a wife? _____

4. Discuss four areas of compatibility in marriage that are covered in the lesson. _____

5. What is Scripture’s guidance on role-definition? Is this culture-relative or *supra-cultural*? _____

6. What is Scripture’s assignment for men in marriage? _____

7. What is Scripture’s assignment for women in marriage? _____

Compatibility and Love

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: FAM05



Objective: To further explore the evidences of compatibility in marriage and to introduce the dynamic of *agape* love.



Husbands, love your wives, in the same way Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, he who loves his wife loves himself... each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband.

—Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

—Proverbs 31:30-31

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

—1 Corinthians 13:13

The spiritual dimension of a marriage relationship is the foundation of oneness God has designed for us; communication is a tool that helps couples cultivate and maintain their oneness; compatibility is the evidence of their oneness; and love is the great dynamic and expression of the oneness God intended when He said “the two shall become one flesh.” But one of the biggest problems in marriage is selfishness. When we learn to treat our spouse unselfishly—to put our spouse at the center and meet his or her needs—we begin to love as Jesus does. And that is the true expression of a couple’s unity and oneness as God intends.

As we look at the issue of compatibility in marriage, we see that love is the foundation for a husband’s and wife’s roles and the primary way they are to relate to each other. God’s Word tells the husband to be considerate as he lives with his wife and to respect her as a co-heir of the gift of life so that his prayers will not be hindered. And it tells the Christian wife to find her value in completing her husband, be a man maker. One of the best descriptions of *agape* love is in 1 Corinthians 13, which not only helps us understand divine love but shows us how we should love others. If we have the Holy Spirit in us, we have the ability to love our spouse and other people with divine love. Without this ability, the oneness of marriage cannot truly be fulfilled and experienced; but with it, marriage can be everything God intended it to be.

1. True or false? Most problems with compatibility in marriage have to do with the physical side of the relationship.

2. True or false? The marriage relationship is to be a reflection of the relationship between Jesus and His church.



3. True or false? The Bible tells the man how to fix the woman and the woman how to fix the man.

4. True or false? The Bible tells us that men and women have identical roles in marriage.

5. True or false? The Bible says women are inferior to men and treats them as less important than men.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. How does the Bible instruct husbands to treat their wives?

- a. Honor and respect them
- b. Dominate them
- c. Submit to everything they say
- d. Own them as property

7. On what does Scripture base the worth of a woman?

- a. Her ability to perform the same role as a man
- b. Her physical beauty
- c. Her spiritual attitudes and ability to complete her husband
- d. Her ability to make money

8. Which of the following attributes is at the heart of defining a man's and a woman's roles?
 - a. Submission
 - b. Talents and skills
 - c. Appearance
 - d. Love

9. Which of the following is the greatest spiritual quality to have?
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Hope
 - c. Faith
 - d. Love

10. When we read about love in the Bible, how should we first apply what we learn?
 - a. We should tell other people how to love us.
 - b. We should feel guilty about all the ways we do not love others.
 - c. We should be encouraged to love others the way Jesus loves us.
 - d. We should make sure we understand it before we offer it to others.

11. Which of the following words describe true, biblical love? *(choose all that apply)*

selfish	trusting
patient	impatient
rude	kind
envious	vengeful
proud	humble
rejoicing	selfless
hopeful	dangerous
persevering	protective



Husbands, how can you get to know your wife better? What can you do to show that you respect and appreciate her?

Wives, where are you seeking your value? What can you do to be a better completer of your husband?

How do you think your marriage and other relationships would change if you focused completely on other people and showed them the kind of love that Jesus shows us? What can we do to grow in our ability to show that kind of love?



Thank God for His unfailing, selfless love toward us. Ask God to show you His love in deeper and deeper ways and to help you grow in your ability to love others selflessly. Ask God to change your attitudes and relationships, especially your marriage, as you learn to demonstrate His love.



Going Deeper

1. How compatible are you and your spouse in your values? _____

2. What model do both Peter and Paul hold up for marriage? _____

3. What role does this model prescribe for the man? For the wife? _____

4. How do you and your spouse see your respective roles in your marriage? Are you in agreement on this? _____

5. In what ways does our culture flow against the Scriptural law of marriage and family? _____

6. What is the greatest single problem in marriage? _____

7. What kinds of stress can two careers put on a marriage? _____

Love and a Biblical Perspective on Divorce

Chapter 6 Audio Lesson: FAM06



Objective: To understand the dynamic of love in a marriage relationship and what the Bible says about divorce.



Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. . . . And now these three remain, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

—1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13

“I hate divorce,” says the LORD God of Israel, “and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as he covers himself with his garments,” says the LORD Almighty.

—Malachi 2:16

Oneness—the two becoming one flesh—is the foundation of a marriage relationship, and love is the expression of that oneness. Without love, we can never have the kind of marriage God intended. But the kind of love necessary for a fulfilling marriage is the supernatural love of God—*agape* love. As we are told in 1 Corinthians 13, this kind of love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful or proud, not rude or selfish, not easily angered, forgiving, delighting in truth, protective, trusting, hopeful, and persevering. We can only show that love through the power of God’s Spirit living in us. Therefore, having Christ at the center of our lives and letting Him live and love through us is a vital key to a good marriage. This kind of love is irreplaceable, indestructible, unconditional, inspirational, and irresistible. We must realize this kind of love is impossible without God’s help.



God intended marriages to be indissoluble. The Bible is realistic in that it recognizes our failures and inability to live up to God's highest standards. Sometimes marriages fail and couples get divorced. God gives us instructions about marriage and family that are designed to help us fulfill His plans for us. God's Word teaches us to have boundaries for marriage that protect and preserve the relationship, but all of them are based in His love and His good purposes for us.

1. True or false? Love is an internal feeling that has no effect on how we behave.
2. True or false? We can never show others the kind of love God shows us.
3. True or false? Love as the Bible describes it is a supernatural, unchanging part of who God is.
4. True or false? At its heart, true love is centered on others and not on ourselves.
5. True or false? God's original purpose for marriage was for it to be a permanent relationship.
6. True or false? The Bible does not allow divorce for any reason.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

7. When we come to Christ in faith, what becomes the center of our life?
 - a. Ourselves
 - b. Jesus
 - c. Our work
 - d. Our church
8. What is the biggest problem in marriage?
 - a. Your spouse
 - b. Money
 - c. Selfishness
 - d. Children
9. God's love is _____.
 - a. Faithful
 - b. Everlasting
 - c. Unconditional
 - d. All of the above
10. To be able to love the way God loves, what must we realize? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. I am not this kind of love, but God is.
 - b. I can not love this way, but God can.
 - c. I many times do not want to love, but God does.
 - d. All of the above

11. Which of the following does the Bible give as valid reasons for divorce? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. The couple is no longer compatible.
- b. One spouse shows a pattern of adultery.
- c. The husband or wife no longer feels love for the other.
- d. An unbelieving spouse decides to leave because the other spouse has become a Christian.
- e. The couple cannot agree on how many children to have.

12. What is the primary purpose of God's instructions related to family and marriage?

- a. To control our desires
- b. To inhibit our freedom
- c. To force us to choose obedience over love
- d. To give us fulfilling relationships and a happy home



How fully do you think you are experiencing God's purpose for your marriage? In what ways can you grow to experience His love and demonstrate His love more fully?

What do you need to do to make your marriage stronger, to make your home happier, and to protect your marriage from divorce?



Thank God for His desire to fulfill us with love, meaningful relationships, and happy homes. Ask God to fill your home life with His presence and His love. If there is any area in which you need to obey God more fully, ask Him to help you do that and commit to growing in your relationships according to His purposes.



Going Deeper

1. Rate your love for your spouse against each of the 15 virtues of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

2. What is unconditional love, and how does it build up a family? _____

3. How is it possible to love as set forth in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7? _____

4. In a marriage of a believer and an unbeliever, which has freedom to leave the marriage, according to the Scripture? _____

5. If a couple who have been divorced and remarried comes to the Lord, what is Paul's counsel regarding their marriage? _____

6. What is the purpose of the law of marriage and family? _____

7. Why is the last third of life so important for children and grandchildren? _____

Understanding

Chapter 7

Audio Lesson: FAM07



Objective: To examine the importance of understanding our spouse for growth of oneness.



“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

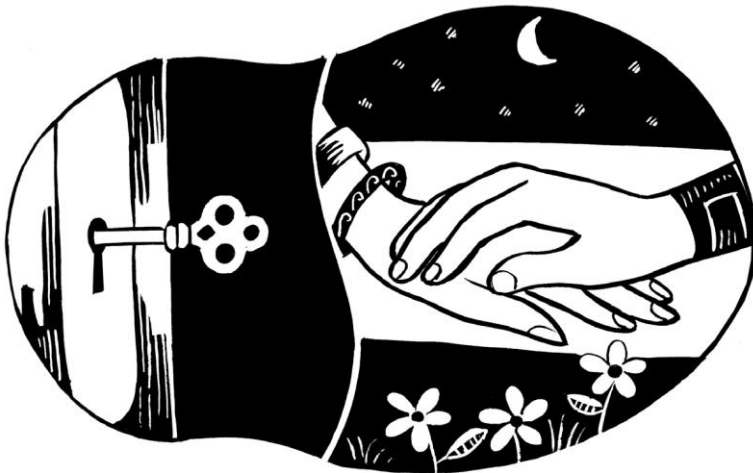
—1 Peter 3:7

“And Jesus said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

—Matthew 19:5-6

If you were wealthy, you could buy everything your spouse does for you—everything except a relationship. We all want to be understood and should want to understand our spouse. And to have a relationship, we must work at understanding our spouse and at being understood. Thus, understanding our spouse is the link that provides for the growth of oneness. We need to understand first of all that men and women are different and these differences are to be celebrated, not resolved.

The value and worth of a man or a woman is based on their function and role as God has created them to be a unique individual. The word “self” in the dictionary is described as “the uniqueness, the individuality of any given person that makes him distinct from every other person.” We must understand the uniqueness of our spouses and the importance of their past. We must learn to listen. To properly love our spouse we must learn to properly love ourselves as God intended.



We must seek God's help to understand and love as we ought.

*"Lord make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, **to be understood as to understand**, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."*

—Francis of Assisi

1. True or false? Communication is the tool that helps us maintain the oneness in our marriage.
2. True or false? Compatibility of values is not important as evidence of the oneness of a couple.
3. True or false? We can have a good marriage relationship without understanding each other.
4. True or false? We will never understand our spouse, and we should just give up trying.
5. True or false? If your understanding is not growing, your marriage oneness is not growing.
6. True or false? God's Word tells us we are never to be angry because anger will destroy our marriages.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

7. Why is it important to understand your spouse?
 - a. It is impossible, so we should not even try.
 - b. It is important because it causes oneness to grow.
 - c. It is important so you can get them to do more things for you.
 - d. It is not important to have a happy home.

"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.

—Ephesians 4:26-27

8. What are some of the differences we need to understand between men and women? (*choose all that apply*)

values	physical
biological	importance
rights	intellectual
worth	spiritual
emotional	roles

9. What are some of the things that we should want to understand about our spouse?
 - a. Their past, the way they were raised, what happened to them
 - b. Their individuality and what make them unique
 - c. The differences of men and women and to celebrate those differences
 - d. All of the above

10. Why is it important to understand the sacredness of our individuality?
- a. Because we are all part of the divine, we are gods.
 - b. It is not important. We have no value because we will all suffer and die.
 - c. Because God created us unique and different from all others.
 - d. It is not important because God made us all the same.
11. In light of the fact that spouses are so different, what is a good definition for understanding?
- a. Simply agreeing to disagree
 - b. Finding mutual agreements that resolve differences
 - c. To intellectually accept every difference
 - d. To agree with our spouse about everything
12. What does it mean to be “spouse-centered”?
- a. To treat your spouse in every way as you want to be treated
 - b. To demand that you are the center and most important
 - c. To understand that providing for the needs of the children is top priority
 - d. To give your spouse whatever he or she desires
13. How can we really listen to our spouse?
- a. Let them talk all they want.
 - b. Argue with everything they say.
 - c. Wait until it is your turn to talk.
 - d. Hear what they are saying and seek to understand and be understood.
14. In our marriages, what is the opposite of love?
- a. Hatred
 - b. Indifference
 - c. Anger
 - d. Cruelty



Reread the prayer by Francis of Assisi. What section of this prayer, if applied to your life, would help your marriage the most? Pray the words of that section for your life this week.

What are some of the things that are hindering better understanding in your marriage? What can you do this week to improve understanding?

Paul says, “He who loves his wife loves himself.” Do you understand God’s love for you, which can give you a proper love for yourself? How can you demonstrate God’s love more clearly to your spouse?



Pray the great prayer of Francis of Assisi for your marriage:

*“Lord make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, **to be understood as to understand**, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”*



Going Deeper

1. How well do you know your spouse? And do you understand each other? _____

2. Are you able to spend enough time with your spouse to get to know and understand him/her?
Or, are you both on life's roller-coaster with no time for each other? _____

3. Are any quarrels/misunderstandings in your marriage related to past experiences/hurts that
you do not know about? _____

4. Do you feel like your spouse understands you, your strengths, weaknesses, and feelings?
Explain why or why not. _____

5. Can you be vulnerable enough to discuss these topics with him/her? _____

6. Would you seek to understand your spouse even if he/she makes no effort to understand you?
Why is that so important? _____

7. Do you have a proper love for yourself such that you can love others as you love yourself?

Understanding (Part 2)

Chapter 8

Audio Lesson: FAM08



Objective: To realize the perils of not understanding, and the necessity of understanding ourselves so we can better understand our spouse.



“We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”

—2 Corinthians 10:12

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world in exchange for himself, his soul?”

—Mark 8:36

“But by the grace of God I am what I am.”

—1 Corinthians 15:10

The first challenge of understanding each other is to understand the differences between male and female. We must also understand the importance of the past. We must understand our spouse, to be able to communicate at a deeper level, and then to communicate at that deeper level. We must really see our spouse and then ask God to love our spouse through us, because to love God's way, we need God's help. God has created us all, male and female, unique individuals. Each of us has a sacred self; this is the individuality, the uniqueness of any given person that makes him distinct from every other person.



God initiates His dialogue with man by asking four questions. These four questions still echo down through the ages, from the Garden of Eden to us today. The first is, “Where are you?” Are you where God wants you to be? The second question, “Who told you?” God wants to know who you are listening to. Are you listening to God, or to culture for your answers? The third question God asks, “Have you eaten from the forbidden tree?” Are you allowing God to provide for your needs or are you “eating from the forbidden tree?” The fourth question God asks is, “What have you done?” God knows, but He gives us the opportunity to confess—to agree with Him.

God asks four other questions: “Where have you come from?” God wants us to confess our past. The next question is, “Where are you going?” There is a place God has for you. Do you want to be there? “Who are you?” We must learn to know who we are in Christ and who we are not. Another question Jesus asked His disciples is, “What is it you really want?” In other words, “Do you want to be who, where, and what God planned for you to be?” These same questions can guide us to know ourselves and understand our spouses better.

1. True or false? Communication is the evidence of oneness.
2. True or false? Love is the dynamic that drives the oneness.
3. True or false? Understanding is the growth of oneness.
4. True or false? There really are no differences between men and women; we are all created alike by God.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. Why did God create every human being to be himself or herself?
 - a. He wanted everyone to be alike.
 - b. The big universe needed to be filled with lots of beings.
 - c. There is a sacred individuality about every human being.
 - d. He enjoyed seeing men and women fight.
6. Who does God’s Word tell us it is not wise to compare ourselves with?
 - a. Others
 - b. Our siblings
 - c. Our spouses
 - d. All of the above
7. According to Jesus, what is the value of our identity, our self, our soul?
 - a. We are of little worth.
 - b. Some are special and worth more than others.
 - c. We cannot know because God does not tell us.
 - d. Each of us is worth more than all the treasures of the whole world.

8. Why did God ask Adam and Eve, “Where are you?”
 - a. God could not find Adam and Eve.
 - b. God was playing hide and seek with Adam and Eve.
 - c. God wanted Adam and Eve to confess they were not where they should be.
 - d. God did not know where Adam and Eve were.
9. Why did God ask Adam and Eve, “Who told you?”
 - a. God wanted to know who they were talking to.
 - b. God wanted Adam and Eve to know that He was the one who made them know.
 - c. God does not want us talking to strangers.
 - d. God was very curious about all the different people Adam and Eve might have met.
10. When God asked Adam and Eve, “Have you eaten from the forbidden tree,” what did God want to know?
 - a. If Adam and Eve realized they were seeking provision outside of God’s plan
 - b. What Adam and Eve had eaten for supper
 - c. If Adam and Eve had disobeyed Him
 - d. If Adam and Eve would lie or not
11. Why did God ask Adam and Eve, “What have you done?”
 - a. God really did not know what they done.
 - b. God was curious because there is no such thing as right or wrong.
 - c. God wanted them to realize what they had done was wrong and to give them the opportunity to confess.
 - d. God wanted to punish Adam and Eve, but needed to know for sure if they had disobeyed.
12. Why was it important for God to ask man, “Where have you come from?”
 - a. God wants us to realize that no past situation is impossible.
 - b. God knows where we have come from, and wants us to understand our past.
 - c. God wants us to confess our past.
 - d. All of the above.
13. Why did God ask man, “Where are you going?”
 - a. God wants us to realize that He has a plan for each of us.
 - b. God was not sure.
 - c. God wanted to go there too.
 - d. God did not know if man would choose well.
14. When God asked man, “Who are you?” what did He want man to realize?
 - a. Who he was
 - b. Who he was not
 - c. Who he was in relationship to God
 - d. All of the above



Ask yourself the eight questions God used. Then together with your spouse, work through the questions this week. Which question was the most convicting? Which questions helped you realize who you are and the self God wants you to be?

When Jesus asked His disciples, “What do you want?” He desired for them to confess that they wanted to be who and where God planned for them to be. If Jesus were to ask you, “What do you want?” how would you answer?



Thank God that He initiates dialogue with mankind. Thank God that He loves you and has made you a special and unique individual and has a specific plan for your life. Ask Him to use these questions to lead you in a better understanding of who you are and what His plan is for you and your family.



Going Deeper

1. Do you really want to understand yourself and your spouse? If so, what can **you** do about that? What must God do about that? _____

2. How can you become the unique person that God made you to be? _____

3. What and who are the sources of your world-view and convictions? _____

4. What does the word “confess” literally mean? Have you ever done that in regard to who you really are? _____

5. Are you who you are supposed to be? What do you have to boast about? _____

6. What are you seeking? Are you about building God’s Kingdom, or your own empire? _____

7. What are the eight questions that God asks in the Bible that can help the persons in a marriage to understand themselves and each other? Why are these questions also vital to a deep level of communication? _____

Understanding (Part 3) and Sex (Part 1)

Chapter 9

Audio Lesson: FAM09



Objective: To understand the Biblical definition of roles and division of labor and the joyful expression of oneness in marriage.



Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

—Hebrews 13:4

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

—1 Corinthians 12:1

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth” . . . God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.

—Genesis 1:27-31

We must understand each other so that we can properly understand our roles and responsibilities in our marriage and family life. In a Christian marriage, the husband is to be committed to the fulfillment of his wife and the wife of her husband. The Bible provides answers to help us in understanding our God-given role, but the division of labor in the Christian home should be based on our natural gifts and talents and take into account our spiritual gifts. However, we must not confuse natural abilities with spiritual gifts.

We must have understanding so that when crises and storms come into our lives, we can withstand them and our marriage will not be destroyed. The first foundational understanding, of course, is our relationship with Jesus; the rock of our salvation. If our lives and homes are built on Him, it will help us weather the other crises when they come.

God created man and woman to experience the joyful expression of oneness. In the context of marriage and family, it is obvious God created sex for procreation, as it was God’s plan to populate the earth with good people. God also intended for intimacy to be an expression of love and the joyful expression of oneness. God even gives us a beautiful little book in Scripture, called the Song of Solomon, which shows us poetically God’s affirmation of sex in the context of marriage.

1. True or false? The Bible says that a man should never help his wife with housework.
2. True or false? The roles and definitions of husband and wife should be dictated by culture.



3. True or false? God desires that we respond properly to crises so that our marriages will be strengthened.
4. True or false? The only reason God created sex was for procreation.
5. True or false? Spiritual gifts and natural abilities are the same thing.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

6. Why and to whom does the Holy Spirit give gifts?
 - a. To every believer
 - b. For the good of the body of Christ
 - c. To be used
 - d. All of the above
7. Why is it important to discover our spiritual gifts?
 - a. So we can show off at church
 - b. So we can better serve the church and our family
 - c. So we can hold an office of authority
 - d. So we can be better than our spouse
8. What does Jesus say will help our marriages survive the crises and storms of our lives?
 - a. Remaining dedicated and going on many pilgrimages
 - b. Building our lives and our marriages on the Rock
 - c. Praying every day and going to church every Sunday
 - d. Honoring our father and mother and being careful to not offend anyone

9. What crises have tried to destroy your marriage? (*choose all that apply or write your own*)

death of a child	unfaithfulness
financial	parenting
relationships	mid-life crises
health	physical intimacy
emotional stress	job

10. What should you expect in a good Christian marriage?

- a. That you will never suffer hardships and crises
- b. That you will always be loving and kind
- c. That you will no longer have any temptations
- d. None of the above

11. According to God's word, what is marriage in the sight of God?

- a. Those whom God has joined together and whom no man should separate
- b. Those who love each other very much
- c. Those who have a beautiful ceremony in church
- d. Those whose parents agree make a good match

12. What did God intend intimacy in marriage to be?

- a. Humanity's most joyous expression of love in this life
- b. The vehicle through which people come into this world
- c. A protection against temptation
- d. All of the above

13. According to Deuteronomy 24:5 what do you think was God's plan for marriage?

- a. Men should get married so they do not have to go to war.
- b. When men get married, their wives are to do all the work.
- c. The husband is to learn how to bring happiness to his wife.
- d. It is better for men not to get married.

If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

—Deuteronomy 24:5



What storm or crisis is your marriage facing? Is your life and marriage built on the Rock—Jesus Christ?

God gave very clear teaching throughout His Word about His plan for marriage. Read 1 Corinthians 7:2-5. What does His Word teach about the duties of the husband? What about the duties of the wife? How can we help our spouse be strong against the temptations of Satan?

Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

—1 Corinthians 7:2-5



Thank God that He understands and knows of every storm that comes into your life and wants to use those to bring you closer to Him so that you might know Him and His love for you. Thank God for the way He has uniquely made your spouse. Praise God for His plan for intimacy and pray that the joyous expression of oneness in your marriage might truly be all that He intended it to be. Ask God to help you express His unconditional love through you to your spouse.



Going Deeper

1. Have crises in your life brought you and your spouse closer, or the opposite? How? _____

2. The lesson lists several types of crises. Have you ever experienced any of these? How did you and your spouse handle it/them? _____

3. What is the one thing in the Genesis account that God said is not good? _____

4. How can sex, designed by God to be the joyful expression of our oneness, become an obstacle to our oneness? _____

5. Where do you and where should you get your information about sex? Where are married couples being told about God's plan for sex? _____

6. What is your attitude toward sex? What are your expectations? _____

7. How is the allegory of the trees in Genesis 3 applied to sex? _____

Sex (Part 2)

Chapter 10

Audio Lesson: FAM10



Objective: To understand God's design for the sexual relationship within marriage.



"It is not good for the man to be alone."

—Genesis 2:18

If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he married.

—Deuteronomy 24:5

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

—1 Corinthians 7:3

God intended sex for many purposes. One of the first purposes we see in the Bible is procreation, but it is also meant to be a vehicle of joyful expression for married couples. As a husband and wife bring their lives together and grow together spiritually, their physical relationship becomes an expression of their oneness. Unfortunately, what God designed for a joyful expression of oneness often becomes one of the greatest obstacles to their oneness.

Whatever a husband and wife can do to cultivate their oneness—with their spiritual growth, their compatibility, their communication with each other—also benefits their physical relationship. And the selfless expression of love is just as important in the sexual aspect of a marriage as it is in every other aspect of the relationship. When we enter into the act of sexual union, we should be totally committed to the other person's gratification. That is the kind of love and commitment that makes sex what God intended it to be.



God shows us His design for our relationships in Scripture. If we will allow God's Word to show us what our attitudes and expectations about sex should be, we will discover that sex is designed by God to be expressed in the context of the God-ordained institutions of marriage and family and to bring fulfillment and pleasure to both husband and wife. But most importantly, God shows us what we call the "Seven Spiritual Wonders" that can lead us to realize God's love and eternal plan for us:

- our design/uniqueness
- our divorce/separation from God
- God's dilemma between His love and justice
- God's great declaration - His Word tells us the Good News of how the divorce can be reconciled
- our decision and response to accept God's Good News that Jesus paid the price to redeem us
- our direction of following Jesus
- the spiritual dynamic of Christ living in us

1. True or false? God's only purpose for sex was procreation, not for enjoyment.
2. True or false? Sex is to be the joyful expression of oneness between husband and wife.
3. True or false? The Bible does not teach us anything about sex; we have to learn about it from our culture.
4. True or false? Christians should never talk about sex because it is not holy to do so.
5. True or false? Paul wrote that married couples should refrain from sex as much as possible.
6. True or false? The most important aspect of our marriage is the spiritual aspect.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

7. What are God's purposes for sex? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Procreation
 - b. Conflict between husband and wife
 - c. Pleasure and enjoyment
 - d. Expression of love and oneness
 - e. Selfish fulfillment of desires
 - f. Selfless fulfillment of love
8. What must occur for both husband and wife to experience sexual fulfillment?
 - a. Both of them, especially the husband, must be other-centered.
 - b. They must focus on their own fulfillment and not each other's.
 - c. They must study what the culture says about sex.
 - d. Sexual fulfillment is an unlikely goal, so they should not expect to find it.

9. According to Paul, on what basis should married couples make decisions about their sexual relationship?

- a. On the basis of whatever is average
- b. On the basis of whatever is dictated by culture
- c. On the basis of whatever is mutually agreed upon
- d. On the basis of the man's opinion

10. Which of the following words describe God's design for the sexual relationship? (*choose all that apply*)

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| self-centered | volitional |
| mutual | demanding |
| unconditional | spiritual |
| physical | unsatisfying |
| unholy | exclusive |

11. What are the "Seven Spiritual Wonders of the World"?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____



In what ways have you seen God's purposes for sex fulfilled in your marriage relationship? In what ways do you think your marriage needs to grow?

Have you ever made the decision to follow Jesus Christ? If not, you will not be able experience marriage as God intended. If you have never surrendered your life and marriage to Christ, do so today.



Thank God for the wonderful gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Thank God for the gift of sex. Ask Him to help you fulfill His purposes for your sexual relationship with your spouse—that it would become the expression of oneness that it was meant to be.



Going Deeper

1. If God created sex for pleasure and procreation within the context of marriage, what does your culture teach about sex, and which have you chosen to believe? _____

2. What is the key that will make a sexual relationship work? _____

3. How is it possible for the model of Christ and the Church to be realized in our marriages? _____

4. If you will never be adequate partners and parents without God's help, how do you get that help? _____

5. How do the "Seven Spiritual Wonders" describe a Christian? _____

6. Does each of the "Seven Spiritual Wonders" describe you? How? _____

7. How does being a Christian help you to be the "adequate person" you need to be to make your marriage work? _____

Concluding Summary – The Sevenfold Marriage

Chapter 11

Audio Lesson: FAM11



Objective: To further understand the sexual relationship in marriage and the spiritual foundation that makes true oneness possible.



The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

—1 Corinthians 7:4

“In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

—Matthew 7:12

1 Corinthians 7 is one of the finest passages in Scripture on the intimacies of marriage. Paul discusses how husbands and wives can satisfy each other and how mutual agreement is a very important principle in having a fulfilling physical relationship. The key is in becoming other-centered. As the Golden Rule says, *“In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you”* (Matthew 7:12). When we are able to live with this perspective, our marriage and other relationships become much more satisfying and fulfilling.

The biblical model for marriage is Christ and the Church. A marriage is meant to be a total communion, a spiritual oneness of two whole personalities, pictured in the communion between Christ and His Bride, the Church. So physical unity also involves a spiritual quality in the relationship. That spiritual quality is the unselfish, others-centered love of the risen, living Christ. The only way we can have that kind of love is by having a vital relationship with Jesus and letting His Spirit live within us. If we are spiritually united with God and have invited Him to rule our lives and fill us with His Spirit, we are able to love our spouse in the way God desires. With this spiritual foundation, we can experience marriage as God designed it to be.

1. True or false? The Bible forbids remarriage after a spouse dies.
2. True or false? According to the Bible, no one can serve God effectively in ministry and also be married.
3. True or false? The Bible allows divorce when an unbelieving spouse chooses to leave a believing spouse.
4. True or false? Marriage is a serious decision that should be made very carefully and prayerfully.



5. True or false? The Golden Rule—treating others as you would want them to treat you—is a very helpful approach to any area of marriage.
6. True or false? When the Bible speaks of the oneness between husband and wife, it is referring only to their physical relationship.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

7. Which of the following are obstacles to a couple's oneness? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. Not being selfish
 - b. Lack of communication
 - c. Misunderstanding
 - d. Love
 - e. A healthy sexual relationship
 - f. Incompatible values
 - g. Children
8. Which of the following is an example of having incompatible values? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. Arguing about how to raise the children
 - b. Frequent disagreements about how to use money
 - c. Criticizing each other's desires and goals
 - d. All of the above
9. How can we love as fully as God wants us to?
- a. Through our own natural strength and ability
 - b. By expressing our own opinions constantly
 - c. By having sex as often as possible
 - d. By depending on His Spirit within us to love others through us

10. Why did Jesus die on the cross for us?
- a. To bridge the chasm between God and us
 - b. To be a good example as a martyr
 - c. To show us how to justify ourselves by good works
 - d. To demonstrate that all of life ends in futility
11. What role does Jesus play in our lives when we accept Him by faith?
- a. He gives us good advice.
 - b. We follow the parts of His teaching that we like.
 - c. He sits on the throne of our life.
 - d. He serves as a good example for us to follow if we want to.
12. How can we know we are saved?
- a. We are saved if we feel saved every day.
 - b. We are saved when we believe the facts of the gospel, trust Jesus to save us, and invite Him to come into our life.
 - c. We are saved only if we have a mystical experience when we pray to Jesus and are baptized.
 - d. We can know we are saved if we never sin again after we invite Jesus into our life.



Do you regularly depend on Jesus to live His life through you, showing love to others in His strength? If so, how has this affected your marriage and other relationships? If not, what decisions do you need to make to have Jesus live and rule in your life?



Thank God for the free gift of eternal life and for the Spirit of Jesus who lives within those who believe. Ask Him to help you live in His strength and, through your life, to show others the love that He has for them. If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, pray to receive His forgiveness and invite Him to live in you and sit on the throne of your heart. Thank God for God's plan for your life and your family.



Going Deeper

1. What is Pastor Woodward's opinion on remarriage for widow(er)s? On which Scripture does he base it? _____

2. How is the "golden rule" to be applied in the area of marriage and sex? _____

3. Do you and your spouse have the habit of being honest with each other, or are there areas you dare not go? _____

4. Are your values, such as how you spend your money and leisure time, in agreement? _____

5. Pastor Woodward says that sex is either 10% of the joyful oneness in your marriage, or 90% of the discord. Which would you say it is for you, and why? _____

6. Which of the obstacles to oneness (communication, compatibility, love, understanding, sex) may be operative in your marriage? _____

7. If there are areas of discord, do they relate to lack of spirituality or oneness with Christ of either/both partner(s)? _____
