PAUL DAVID TRIPP

What did you Expect?

REDEEMING THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE

LEADER’S GUIDE

by Paul David Tripp
with Michael E. Breece, contributor
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A WORD OF WELCOME

Thank you for being willing to lead a study on marriage; this comprehensive, life-long relationship will require spiritual care, and God can use you as an instrument of grace to those in need.

I would encourage you to work through this curriculum with other couples or in a small group. God designed us for community, and working with others can reveal areas of weakness and blindness that would never be revealed on our own or with just our spouse.

As a leader, your role is both similar and different to those participating in the study. You should pay close attention to the material and listen with a humble heart, because God will teach you things. At the same time, it’s your role to lead others and be available for counsel, advice, and wisdom.

Here are some recommendations for you to keep in mind throughout the duration of the study:

• Watch the Video Session in advance and review the questions to be answered;

• Agree on a beginning and ending time and honor it; we suggest 60 minutes per Session;

• Be the one to take charge of the Session, asking questions and encouraging participation;

• Solicit multiple answers from people; don't let the same person answer every question. For some questions, it might be appropriate to ask every participant, but don't force anyone to answer;

• Allow “wait time” for answers; give the group time to think about a question. Rephrase the question when necessary, and avoid answering them yourself. You can contribute, but don't dominate;

• Affirm everyone's answers and allow “faulty” responses to remain uncorrected. Rejecting answers, or allowing others to reject answers, will result in an environment of timidity;

• Be honest and transparent; share from your own experiences, especially if that includes weakness, failure, and sin. The group will most likely follow your lead, so encourage honesty and transparency;

• Continually remind people that they don't have to fear being discovered; there is nothing that could be exposed about them that Jesus hasn't already covered. We have confidence to admit to sin;

• Use discernment for group discussions; it may be wise to break up into gender-specific groups, rather than keep husbands and wives together. Some marriages are incredibly hostile and hurtful, and depending on the subject matter of the discussion, it may be safer to keep spouses apart;

• Make adjustments as needed; you know the participants of your group better than I ever will. If you need to spend an entire session on one question or feel that combining several questions will help participants discuss the content in a more helpful way, do so. This template is a guide, and as such, it can be flexibly molded to best fit your demographic, schedule, and specific issues.
ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY

This Leader’s Guide includes all the Sessions found within the Discussion Guide and provides some suggested answers or additional commentary to help you facilitate the discussion times with your group. Some of the elements are basic and self-explanatory and don’t require additional instruction.

Here are the different elements that will appear in a Session:

**Opening Discussion:** These questions are designed to stimulate initial thoughts about the material that will be taught in the video. These questions are designed to be discussed **BEFORE** watching the video. As leader, you need to consider how long the video session is (which we provide) and how much time you should allow for the **Opening Discussion** (typically 5-10 minutes). If there is more than one question, you combine them or select just one that you think would be most “discussable” by your group.

**Key Ideas:** These simply summarize the main points that Paul Tripp will teach on. They are included for future reference and don’t need to be discussed aloud.

**PowerPoint Slides:** The **PowerPoint** slides correlate with the teaching slides in the video. Participants should be encouraged to take notes during the teaching, as it is helpful for future reference. Notes can also be taken in the margins and on the back of each page.

**Review Questions:** These questions are intended to help the participants to review the video content presented in each session. These should be discussed aloud as a group **AFTER** watching the video. Room for notes are provided so each person can write down their own answers and additional comments presented by those in the group.

**Discussion Questions:** Similarly, these questions should be discussed aloud so as to help participants extend their thinking about the material. In some sessions, you might find that the Review Questions and Discussion Questions overlap; combining these elements may be appropriate. Please remember to use discernment regarding husbands and wives; it may be wise to split into gender-specific groups.

**Applying What You Learned:** This element should be assigned as “personal homework” for a participant to complete on their own time between sessions. Occasionally an **Opening Discussion** will review the homework, but if not, consider finding opportunities that allow participants to share their answers.

**Personal Reflection:** Participants should be encouraged to further examine their heart outside of the allocated session times; these questions provide a “personal devotion” element.

###

These elements are flexible and should be adjusted based on your group environment. There are many different ways to incorporate them, so be wise, aware of your surroundings, and creative!

**ONE FINAL NOTE:** It’s essential that you give yourself enough time to prepare for your small group sessions. **We highly recommend watching all 10 sessions** and reviewing the guides on your own before meeting as a group to discuss Session 1. It’s incredibly helpful to know the entire material before leading others. Make an investment and be faithful to this ministry that God is inviting you into!

God bless you - Paul David Tripp
OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 1:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 6:43-45

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

ROMANCE IS NEVER THE CAUSE OF A GOOD MARRIAGE;
ROMANCE IS ALWAYS THE RESULT OF A GOOD MARRIAGE.

KEY IDEAS:

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

These responses will result from personal experience, which can vary dramatically depending on the participants in the room. It’s important, especially in the first session, to set a standard for participation. You want to encourage all answers, regardless of how “right” they are. Over time, this material will reveal the “right” answers to participants, and if you, as the leader, shoot down answers (or allow other participants to shoot down answers), an environment of timidity might result. Always affirm others and encourage participation. Avoid answering questions yourself, but share from your own life experiences and foster an environment of transparency, humility, and honesty from the beginning. If you have singles, engaged, divorced, or widowed in the group, be sure to extend the questions to their specific story; everyone has something they can contribute.
PRINCIPLE 1:  
A marriage of unity, understanding, and love is not rooted in romance, but in worship

LUKE 6:43-45

THE HEART
The heart is the causal core of your personhood

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
REVIEW:

1. Why are the small, mundane moments of everyday life so critical to your marriage?

2. What does it mean to be a “worshiper”? What does worship in marriage look like?

3. Why can't you build a strong marriage on the foundation of romance?

DISCUSSION:

1. What small and mundane moments have had a big impact in your marriage?

2. What things, other than God, have a tendency to capture your heart in marriage?

DISCUSSION:

1. Many possibilities here - let the participants share the little mundane moments of their marriage, like small conversations before or after work; gestures of kindness and affection; harsh words in an argument; laziness around the house; unwillingness to serve your spouse by participating in their desired activity.

2. Many possibilities here - let the participants share their struggles, like a desire to be left alone when your spouse wants to talk; the desire to be right in a conversation; the desire for a comfortable life when your spouse asks you to serve in some capacity; the desire to be in control; the temptation to change your plans when you have already made a promise to your spouse.

1. Roots of a Good Marriage
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

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

ASSIGNMENT #1a - Evaluating Romance

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

ASSIGNMENT #1b - Evaluating Conflict

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

Supplemental Reading:
WDYE Chapters 1 & 4
Psalm 139
Psalm 51

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

These Applying What You Learned elements should be viewed as personal homework to be completed in between designated session times. Encourage the participants to continue their examination of their own heart and marriage outside of the time they spend together in the group.

For questions like these, remind husbands and wives that if they do have conversations with each about marriage, they have the capability of turning ugly. Self-righteousness, anger, and pointing the finger of blame can flare up in an instant, so it’s very important to have a humble and gentle spirit before entering into these conversations.
OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 2:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 6:43-45

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

KEY IDEAS:

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

ILLUSTRATION:

The Apple Tree

ILLUSTRATION:

Stuck In Traffic

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Those familiar with this marriage material will probably know that “the biggest problem in marriage exists inside of you, not outside of you.” If that is the answer among the participants, ask them to flesh out what other problems typically get the blame, instead of personal sin.

For example, other problems that receive a lot of blame are: communication, sex, money, house chores, gender roles, hobbies, extended family members, cultural upbringing, or parenting methods.
IMPLICATION 1:  
All marriage problems are heart problems

IMPLICATION 2:  
Lasting change in your marriage will always travel through the pathway of the heart

IMPLICATION 3:  
I am my biggest marriage problem - it's me!

LISTEN FOR YOU  
Don’t listen for your spouse

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
**REVIEW:**

1. What is the illustration of the apple tree and how does it relate to marriage?

2. Why do threat, manipulation, and guilt fail to solve marriage problems? How might they actually increase the problems?

3. Why are all marriage problems heart problems?

**DISCUSSION:**

1. How have threat, manipulation, and guilt revealed themselves in your marriage?

2. Why will it be tempting, in following sessions, to listen for your spouse instead of for yourself?

**DISCUSSION:**

1. Have participants give specific examples of how these play out in their marriage. You want participants to begin to see themselves with accuracy, so make sure they don’t regurgitate the “theological definitions” from the video session, but rather place themselves under the exposing light of Scripture. It may be best, especially in these first few session, to have gender-specific groups.

2. Sin is blinding; we don’t see ourselves with accuracy. For the Christian, that means we think we’re more righteous than we actually are. We have no problem seeing the weaknesses and sins of our spouse, but we are blind to our own moral failures.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #2 - Breaking Down Conflict (Part 1)

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

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

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

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

END OF SESSION

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

These Applying What You Learned “homework sections” are only discussed aloud in the Opening Discussion of Session 7 and Session 10. If you find extra time in your meetings, or if you meet for longer than 60 minutes, consider giving participants an opportunity to share their “homework answers” aloud with the group (or gender-specific group).

If time is limited and no opportunities present themselves to discuss the Applying What You Learned homework, still encourage the participants on the importance of these application assignments. It’s very important that we be vigilant about our hearts and take the destructive nature of our own sin seriously.
OPENING DISCUSSION:
Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 3:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
2 Corinthians 5:14-15
14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

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

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:
All good and pleasurable things have the ability to become destructive. Too much food results in obesity; too much wine results in drunkenness; too much sex results in addiction. A desire for peace and quiet can be a pleasurable thing, but if it rules your heart, you will respond in anger if you get disrupted. A desire for control and leadership can be biblical, but if it rules your heart, you will respond in despair and fear when that power is lost.

Most, if not all, of the things your participants will share as pleasurable things will not be sinful on their own. The question is: does that thing rule their heart and compete with God as king?
IMPLICATION 1:
The DNA of sin
is selfishness

IMPLICATION 2:
Sin is anti-social in its
fundamental form

IMPLICATION 3:
Sin will cause you to
dehumanize the other
person in your marriage

IT’S NOT
YOUR PARTY!

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
REVIEW:

1. For the believer, what is the difference between the power of sin and the presence of sin?

2. What is the DNA of sin, and how does sin reveal itself most frequently in marriage?

3. How can one person dehumanize another person in marriage, or in any relationship?

DISCUSSION:

1. Does your culture try to persuade you that life is your party? What are some of these lies that they communicate?

2. In what ways do you buy into the lie that your life - and marriage - is all about you?

3. The power of sin has been broken; that means, with the power of the Holy Spirit, you don't have to be a slave to sin any longer. However, the presence of sin still remains. That means your heart will be drawn towards sinful things and you will be tempted to make selfish choices.

2. The DNA of sin is selfishness. In marriage, and in all relationships, sin makes me think only of myself and ignore the other person.

3. You dehumanize another person by turning them into a vehicle or obstacle. If they help you get what you want, they are a vehicle to your pleasure, and you treat them well. But if they are an obstacle to what you want, you lash out in anger and bitterness and “punish” them for their disobedience.

DISCUSSION:

1. There will be many cultural references here - television, movies, music, advertisements, blogs, and the rest communicate that life is your party and that you should do whatever you can to achieve the most pleasurable life here and now. Try and draw out specific examples from people; you want to train your participants to view their culture and life through the discerning lens of the Gospel.

2. Many examples are available. When you’re in conversation, you talk only about yourself and don't let the other person get a word in. When asked to do a menial task, you think you’re too good for that task and that you’ve already done your duty. While establishing your schedule, you only think of yourself and what you desire, ignoring the other person’s requests and desires.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #3 - Breaking Down Conflict (Part 2)

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

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

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

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

What can motivate me to love others more?

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

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapters 6-8
Philippians 2:1-15
**OPENING DISCUSSION:**

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 4:

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

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE**

1 Corinthians 5:14-15

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

**KEY IDEAS:**

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

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**2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15**

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**THERE IS HOPE!**

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**OPENING DISCUSSION:**

There are many potential answers here, and Paul Tripp will talk about some in the upcoming video session. Some examples result in comedic humor, as they should, because sin reduces us to fools. Don't be afraid to let people laugh at their own foolishness, as Paul will do in this session.

While funny, these “big deals over little things” have the capacity to destroy relationships. The other person will feel belittled, pressured, and extremely cautious about what they say and how they live. It won't result in a relationship of unity and understanding and love.
REVIEW:

1. Why do we make big deals over little things in marriage?

2. Why is the doorway to hope hopelessness?

3. Why do we have confidence to reveal personal sin and marital weaknesses to others?

DISCUSSION:

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

1. Knowing that there is nothing that can be exposed about you that hasn't already been covered by the Cross of Jesus Christ, be fully honest and transparent with those in your gender-specific group: how have you failed to create an environment of love, protection, and safety for your spouse? How have your words and behaviors been critical, harsh, and condemning?

2. When you go home from this Session, will you be committed to spending personal time with your spouse and confessing to the things you revealed in the previous question? What specific sins do you need to repent of to your spouse?

3. If and when your spouse confesses to you, will you struggle to forgive? Why might it be difficult to forgive quickly and freely?

REVIEW:

1. We make big deals over little things because we're full of ourselves. We always feel the need to be right and in control of life.

2. The doorway to hope is not hopelessness in life, but hopelessness in yourself. There is always hope - Hope is a Person, but He is not you or me. Hope is found in Jesus, but we first need to abandon hope in ourselves.

3. When Jesus died, all of our sins were future sins. That means Christ gave His life up for us knowing full well that we would still fail and sin. If Jesus covered our failure, we don't need to worry about hiding it. When we come clean about who we are and where we struggle, we will have a better chance of reaching out for help.

DISCUSSION:

For probing Discussion like this, we recommend splitting couples up. While some might have a healthy relationship, and the maturity to handle the sin of their spouse in a Biblical manner, many will have a history of pain and turmoil. Exposing this in front of one another probably won't be helpful.

Instead, isolate the husband and the wife and have a mature man and a mature woman lead each of the gender-specific groups. Encourage the husband and wife to have a conversation with each other after the session, but use this environment to prepare them for reconciliation with their spouse.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #4 - Committed To Confession

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

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- Do I struggle to accept the reality that I am my biggest marriage problem? Do I self-righteously argue against Jesus' verdict?
- Do I struggle to accept the reality that I have no hope in myself for marriage? Am I trying to do what only grace can do?
- Do I struggle to allow other people to know the true me, riddled with flaws, weaknesses, and failure?

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

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

Accountability groups will never solve the issues of our hearts; there are many believers who have learned the skill of hiding sin in their accountability groups. However, you should consider creating some type of healthy relational network where men and women can reach out to other men and women and share their struggles, not only in marriage, but in everyday life.

After four Sessions together, hopefully trust, transparency, and confession have developed as themes in your group. This might be a good time to suggest and endorse meeting up with people in the group, but outside of the assigned meeting times. Remember, the body of Christ is meant to minister to one another all the time, not just in organized times and places.
OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 5:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:19-33

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

KEY IDEAS:

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Treasure can be a physical object, like a car or a television program or a gym membership, but there's always a deeper treasure ruling that physical object. For example, a fancy sports car is a physical treasure that allows someone to express an inward treasure like social status. Television is a physical treasure that allows someone to enjoy an inward treasure like peace and quiet or entertainment. A gym membership, or fitness, is a physical treasure that allows someone to express an inward treasure like self-worth.

If you have established an environment of self-disclosing honesty, don't be afraid to push someone to dig deeper and find the inward treasure that drives that outward object.
<p>| PRINCIPLE 3: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriage, this side of eternity, is always a war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of self</th>
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<p>| TREASURE PRINCIPLE 1: |</p>
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<th>Everyone lives for some kind of treasure</th>
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<p>| TREASURE PRINCIPLE 2: |</p>
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<th>The thing that is your treasure will control your heart</th>
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<p>| TREASURE PRINCIPLE 3: |</p>
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<th>What controls your heart will control your words and behavior</th>
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**NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE**
IMPLICATION 1:
This side of eternity, it’s very hard to keep what God says is important important in your heart.

IMPLICATION 2:
Your marriage will always be victimized by, or enhanced by, what you treasure.

IMPLICATION 3:
A desire for even a good thing becomes a bad thing when that desire becomes a ruling thing.

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
REVIEW:

1. What is treasure?

2. Why is it difficult to keep what God says is important important in our lives?

3. What can the pursuit of treasure do for your marriage?

DISCUSSION:

1. How can good treasures become bad treasures when they become ruling treasures? Be specific.

2. What are some things to treasure, according to the Bible?

REVIEW:

1. Treasure is something that we name as important, for a multitude of reasons, that will control our heart and consequently control our words and behavior.

2. This side of eternity, while the presence of sin still remains, it’s difficult to prioritize what God names as important. Once eternity comes, and all sin is cleansed, we’ll have no difficulty, but the struggle continues today.

3. The pursuit of treasure can do beautiful things for your marriage, if you’re pursuing heavenly treasure. But if you pursue earthly treasure (which we all do), we have the risk of neglecting our marriage in pursuit of such things.

DISCUSSION:

1. There are many examples here - food, for example, is an edible testament to the glory of God and was intended for our pleasure. However, if we value physical pleasure over the pleasure of having relationship with God, we can become ruled by food and overeat. The same can be said about sex, control, status, money, leisure, etc. Almost everything on earth was once pure until sin tainted it, so almost everything has the capacity to be God-glorifying, but almost everything also has the ability to become bad treasure.

2. Many examples - the fruit of the Spirit, for example, are character qualities that we should all treasure and pursue. Giving to the poor, helping the needy, and loving the marginalized are all social actions to be treasured (although, we must admit that there is selfish danger even in noble causes like those).
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #5 - On A Treasure Hunt

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

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

Supplemental Reading:

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

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

Journaling can be helpful, especially when you want to look back on years past and see how God has moved and transformed you. However, not everyone will be inclined to journal, so encourage them to at least prayerfully consider these questions or talk with someone about their reactions.
OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 6:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:19-33

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

KEY IDEAS:

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Whatever fills in the blank of “If only I had ______” or “If only I didn’t have to deal with ______” is typically where we look for life and happiness. Granted, we all live in a fallen world and wish that we didn’t have to deal with the brokenness, so instances of “groaning for redemption” (Romans 8:23) should be encouraged. However, because of sin, most of our “If only” statements reveal the selfish desires of our heart.
What does it look like to seek God’s kingdom in your marriage?
REVIEW:

1. What is the primary reason marriages fail?

2. Why are earth-bound treasures potentially dangerous?

3. What are the three things that happen when you name something as a need?

DISCUSSION:

1. What are some earth-bound treasures that you pursue in everyday life?

2. Share any experiences you have had with these treasures and how, even though pleasurable and created by God for his glory, ultimately didn't satisfy your heart.

REVIEW:

1. Ignoring the statistics and surveys out there, neglect is the primary reason marriages fail. Husbands and wives pursue earth-bound treasures and neglect their spouse.

2. Earth-bound treasures are dangerous because we believe that they can satisfy our soul. Only God can do that, and we when replace God with an earth-bound treasure, we run the risk of addiction.

3. We feel entitled to it; we feel the right to demand it; we judge the love of another person by their willingness to provide it.

DISCUSSION:

1. There are many examples to be found, but make sure the examples are personal. Remember, the Bible is a mirror to see ourselves with accuracy, and while it will be tempting to name earth-bound treasures that our culture names as valuable, you want participants to see their own pursuits more than others.

2. It will be tempting for participants to name other people and their examples, like Paul Tripp did with the rich man and his sports cars. These examples are fine, but encourage them to share examples from their own mundane life. We all know from Hollywood tabloids that money and fame often lead to disaster, but in doing so, we risk thinking that only rich people struggle with those things. People in every tax bracket chase after earth-bound treasures in the hopes that earth will satisfy their soul.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #6 - Define The Kingdom of God

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

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

1) What is the Kingdom of God?

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

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

Supplemental Reading:

WDYE Chapter 15
1 Timothy 6:6-19

END OF SESSION

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

The Opening Discussion of Session 7 will ask participants to share their definition of the Kingdom of God; encourage them to spend time defining this phrase.

Paul Tripp will have already hit on the “spiritual platitudes” theme to end Session 6, but remind your group that there's no need to “show off” when they share their definition. Lofty and complex academic definitions are rarely helpful to others, and theology needs to be practically applied to be good theology.
7. What Is Love?

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE 1

Galatians 5:13-15

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE 2

1 John 4:7-11

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

KEY IDEAS:

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

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

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
REVIEW:

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

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

3. Review each of the elements from the cruciform definition of love, rephrasing it, if necessary, in a way that has personal application and meaning for you. Share one element with the group:
   1) Willing:
   2) Self-sacrifice:
   3) For the good of another:
   4) Reciprocation / Deserving:

DISCUSSION:

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

2. Sin is first the breaking of relationship with God before it breaks relationship with another person; in the same way, the best way to restore relationships with other people is to restore it with God first (Psalm 51:4)

3a. The key character quality of love is willingness; you can't love someone out of begrudging "duty"

3b. Love that doesn't require sacrifice is "self-love" because you benefit from it as well

3c. Love that does not benefit the other person in some capacity can't be love

3d. If you only give love when the other person is deserving, you will spend a lot of your time not loving them

DISCUSSION:

1. Some potential answers could be: corporate worship services, where we're reminded of the goodness and mercy of God; small groups, where we spend time with other believers sharing His faithfulness; spending time in Scripture and in prayer, personally communing with God; journaling, so we can read back and find where God has answer prayer and showed His love.

Instead of listing potential “activities”, get participants to share their personal experience with each of those activities and how they personally benefited. These stories can inspire and encourage others to follow their lead and pursue helpful resources that water the soil of gratitude.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #7 - A Cruciform Definition of Love

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

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

1) Willing:

2) Self-sacrifice:

3) For the good of another:

4) Reciprocation / Deserving:

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

Supplemental Reading:

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

END OF SESSION
8. A Better Way

"The fruit of the Spirit describes God's kingdom purpose for every one of His children."

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 8:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Galatians 5:19-23

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

KEY IDEAS:

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

The fruit of the Spirit are:


Consider asking participants to share one fruit and how it applies to marriage, covering each fruit before watching the video.
The Fruit of the Spirit

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

No leader notes on this page
REVIEW:

1. How are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) driven by the kingdom of self? Each person should pick a work of the flesh and describe the selfish pleasure motivating that work.

2. How are the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) driven by the kingdom of God? Each person should pick a fruit of the Spirit and describe the Christ-centered motivation for that fruit.

3. Why is a relationship, specifically marriage, most beautiful when both people are pursuing the Kingdom of God and living out the fruit of the Spirit? Be specific in your examples.

DISCUSSION:

1. What fruit of the Spirit have you seen grow the most in your life as you matured in Christ?

2. Conversely, what fruit of the Spirit has seen the least growth in your life? Why do you think you still struggle with this fruit, and how can you get help?

DISCUSSION:

1. This question will be an opportunity to celebrate the grace of God in an individual's life. Don't shy away from talking about growth and the death of the old self, but be sure that all the credit goes to the work of the Holy Spirit. You want to give individuals struggling with that fruit hope for change in Christ.

2. Encourage participants to share with honesty. There's no need to hide our sin, because Christ covered it all. Plus, when we hide our sin and try to “parade” our righteousness, we won't be able to receive the help that we really need.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #8 - Fruit of the Spirit


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

1) _________________________:

2) _________________________:

3) _________________________:

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

What fruit of the Spirit do I intentionally need to monitor?

Do I need to seek out help from the body of Christ?

Supplemental Reading:

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

END OF SESSION
9. Rooted in Worship

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

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 9:

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

2. How do those differences affect your marriage?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

There is no Scripture passage for Session 9

KEY IDEAS:

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

God as Creator
(Your Hardwiring)

Worship

God as Sovereign
(Your Story)
God as Savior
(Your Growth in Grace)

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Some differences between spouses will be comedic. This can result in a light-hearted discussion, but it also has the potential to be hurtful. As Paul Tripp will reveal in this video session, those differences can create a lot of conflict and disdain in marriage.

You don’t want couples to avoid talking about difficult differences in their relationship, because avoiding conflict will never solve it. At the same time, be sure to facilitate an environment of safety and protection for all involved.
REVIEW & DISCUSSION:

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

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

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

REVIEW & DISCUSSION:

1. If you don't worship God as Creator, you will get annoyed at the physical creation of your spouse. Or, you will worship God and celebrate those unique elements of their person.

2. If you don't worship God as Sovereign, you will be angry with your spouse's upbringing. Or, you will worship God and celebrate those differences.

3. If you don't worship God as Savior, you will be irritated at the sin of your spouse. Or, you will worship God and take part in the redemptive plan for your spouse.
APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

ASSIGNMENT #9 - Appreciating Differences

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

1) Worship God as Creator:

2) Worship God as Sovereign:

3) Worship God as Savior:

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

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

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

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

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

NO LEADER NOTES ON THIS PAGE
OPENING DISCUSSION:

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

There is no Scripture passage for Session 10

KEY IDEAS:

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

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

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

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

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

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**FOR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY:**

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

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

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

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

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**DISCUSSION:**

It would be extremely unwise to have an open discussion about sex in a mixed-gender setting, but it’s also unwise to have a discussion about sex in even a gender-specific setting. The heart of humanity is twisted, and people will think things that they should never think, even in an environment like this. Questions about sex should be reserved for personal review only. Finish your study with a “roundup discussion” instead, reviewing what people have learned from the entire course.

It would be incredibly helpful to make avenues of further help available for people that need it regarding their marriage. If you have a counseling center at your church, encourage them to seek help there, or recommend local biblical counselors or other ways to follow up for more intensive care.
If you were convicted in the tenth and final session regarding your sex life, a helpful resource might be my book and DVD, “Sex and Money: Pleasures That Leave You Empty and Grace That Satisfies.”

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

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

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

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

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

Visit www.paultripp.com/marriage for more information.
APPENDIX A: CONCRETE DESCRIPTIONS OF LOVE

1. Love is being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of your husband or wife without impatience or anger.

2. Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise.

3. Love is the daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.

4. Love is being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding, and being more committed to unity and love than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.

5. Love is a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the blame.

6. Love means being willing, when confronted by your spouse, to examine your heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus.

7. Love is a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to your husband or wife is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.

8. Love is being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged but to look for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good.

9. Love is being a good student of your spouse, looking for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support them as they carry it, or encourage them along the way.

10. Love means being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the problems that you face as a couple, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response.

11. Love is always being willing to ask for forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness when it is requested.

12. Love is recognizing the high value of trust in a marriage and being faithful to your promises and true to your word.

13. Love is speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack your spouse’s character or assault his or her intelligence.

14. Love is being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt your spouse into giving you what you want or doing something your way.

Continued on next page...
15. Love is being unwilling to ask your spouse to be the source of your identity, meaning and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of his or hers.

16. Love is the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to do as a husband or a wife.

17. Love is a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your marriage.

18. Love is staying faithful to your commitment to treat your spouse with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when he or she doesn’t seem to deserve it or is unwilling to reciprocate.

19. Love is the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of your marriage without asking anything in return or using your sacrifices to place your spouse in your debt.

20. Love is being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm your marriage, hurt your husband or wife, or weaken the bond of trust between you.

21. Love is refusing to be self-focused or demanding but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.

22. Love is daily admitting to yourself, your spouse, and God that you are not able to love this way without God’s protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.