Pre-Marriage Information Sheet
Canaan Community Church

Marriage Preparation & Enrichment

Remembering How God Designed It

Gen 2:23-24
23 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man.”

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.
INTRODUCTION
The reason we are in this class is because as a couple, you wish to vow your union to each other before God. That is a very serious step. Ecclesiastes 5:5 says, “It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.” (NIV)

A vow, especially before God, is not something to take lightly. It is not something to be made merely for the sake of tradition or sentiment.

If we are going to make a vow before God, it only makes sense to understand God’s view on the commitment. And for that reason, we will refer to His teaching on love and family.

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GENERAL WEDDING INFORMATION
(Click here to use online form instead)

Groom’s name in full

NAME: __________________________
PHONE: __________________________
ADDRESS: __________________________

Bride’s name in full:

NAME: __________________________
PHONE: __________________________
ADDRESS: __________________________

1. ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL ISSUES YOU’D LIKE TO ADDRESS IN THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION SESSIONS?

2. ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL OBSERVANCES YOU’D LIKE IN YOUR MARRIAGE CEREMONY. (Unity candle, etc.)

3. WHAT PEOPLE WOULD YOU LIKE INVOLVED?

4. WHAT DATE AND PLACE ARE YOU PLANNING?
   (If you plan to use the Canaan premises, please fill out the FACILITY USE form.)
FACILITY USE REQUEST

(Click here to use online form instead)

Today's Date: ________________  Date(s) Needed: ________________________

Function: ____________________  Time: From ____________ to_________________

Person in Charge: _________________________________________________________

Group/Person Requesting Use: ____________________________________________

Home Phone: _________________  Alternate Phone: _________________________

Person making request is responsible for cleanup; if different, please list person’s name on next line:

Person responsible for cleanup:___________________________________________

Facility coordinator:______________________________________________________

Key-authorized person on site:_____________________________________________

Home Phone: _________________  Alternate Phone: _________________________

Areas Needed: (Circle area(s) needed):

Fellowship Hall  Kitchen  Sanctuary  Nursery  Number of Classrooms_______

Room for Groom to Dress/Wait  Room for Bride to Dress/Wait

Other:___________________________________________________________________

Supplies or Equipment Needed/Location:_____________________________________

Audio/Visual Equipment Needed/Location:____________________________________

Will you need sound system? Yes ___  No ___  (May be operated by trained personnel only)

I have read and agree to all of the rules set forth by the Church, understand that if the building is not vacated by 4:30 p.m. on a Saturday, I will be responsible to complete the cleaning list as described and am responsible for the actions of all guests as well as any damages to the Church property.

Signed: ____________________  Printed: ____________________  Date:_________  Sponsor_______
**QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK BEFORE MARRIAGE: A QUICK COMPATABILITY TEST**

Every couple tries to cover the important issues before marriage. But sometimes we miss some of the crucial questions. Below is a list of questions dealing with issues that often crop up after marriage.

Take the time to answer them **honestly and independently** from your loved one. When we get together in our discussion sessions, we can compare notes. A pastor has the unique vantage of dealing with couples before and after marriage and so the “extra set of eyes” may prove helpful in discerning insights.

**WHY DO YOU FEEL NOW IS THE TIME TO GET MARRIED?**

**WHY DO YOU DESIRE A RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE?**

**WHAT PART DOES FAITH IN GOD PRESENTLY PLAY IN YOUR LIFE?**

**WHAT IS THE GREATEST THING YOU EXPECT FROM MARRIAGE?**

**WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO BE THE GREATEST CHALLENGE?**

**HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU ENVISION YOUR FAMILY HAVING?**

**WHAT PART WILL THE FOLLOWING THINGS PLAY IN RAISING YOUR CHILDREN:**
- PARENTS
- GRAND PARENTS
- DAY CARE
- CHURCH (DENOMINATION?)

**HOW MUCH INCOME IS ENOUGH FOR YOUR FAMILY?**

**DO YOU EXPECT THE WIFE TO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME- HOW MUCH?**

**HOW DO YOU ENVISION YOUR FAMILY 10 YEARS FROM NOW- YOURSELF -YOUR SPOUSE?**
WHAT IS THE GREATEST STRENGTH **YOUR SPOUSE** BRINGS TO YOUR MARRIAGE?

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE THEY BRING?

WHAT IS THE GREATEST STRENGTH **YOU** BRING TO YOUR MARRIAGE?

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU BRING?

IF THERE WERE SOMETHING THAT WOULD CAUSE YOUR MARRIAGE TO FAIL, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU EXPECT TO SPEND TOGETHER?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE AN ARGUMENT?

WHAT MODELS OF FAMILY DO YOU FEEL WERE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IN YOUR IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED FAMILY GROWING UP?

0 BEING NOT AT ALL, AND 10 BEING MOST IMPORTANT, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE THINGS TO YOU:

___ BEING FINANCIALLY SECURE

___ HAVING A NICE HOME

___ RAISING CHILDREN SPIRITUALLY

___ CONTINUE LIVING IN THIS AREA

___ WIFE BEING ABLE TO STAY AT HOME

___ PARENTS EQUALLY SUPPORTING THE SAME FAITH SYSTEM
SESSIO N #1
HOLDING IT TOGETHER

It’s the first thing you are part of when you enter this world, and it is the last thing you leave. It shapes and molds you before anything else has a chance. This thing is the family. It’s in the family we first learn to be cynical or positive, kind or cruel, biased or open. It’s the family that paints the first pictures of love and hate. It’s in the family where we first learn what it means to be human. The family is that important!

DISCUSSION POINT
WHAT IS THE IDEAL FAMILY TO YOU?

Family psychologist, Dr. James Dobson, writes this in an article entitled, ‘Couples in Crisis’:

Western nations are witnessing a continuing epidemic of dysfunctional relationships. A recent study done by sociologists at Rutgers University concluded that the institution of marriage itself appears to be dying. I shudder to contemplate what life will be like (and how children will suffer) if the researchers prove to be right! … Only those who have been rejected by a beloved spouse can fully comprehend the tidal wave of pain that crashes into one's life when a relationship ends. Nothing else matters. …Nothing in human experience can compare with the agony of knowing that the person to whom you pledged eternal devotion has betrayed your trust … Death itself would be easier to tolerate than being tossed aside like an old shoe.

The good news is; this doesn’t have to happen. With the proper wisdom, we can avoid that kind of pain- or at least, going through it again.

So what’s the ‘bonding agent’ that allows a marriage to survive? What’s the glue that holds our marriages and families together? -We call it ‘love’, but what is love?

POINT OF DISCUSSION:
HOW DO YOU DEFINE LOVE?

GOD IDEA OF LOVE AND IN THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN

Gen 2:20-24
20 … But for Adam no suitable helper was found.
21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.
22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.
23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."
24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.
(NIV)
Man is incomplete in himself. Someone is designed to make life richer, and the challenges easier to bear. Someone is created from his very flesh- out of his side. It is a picture of equality, partnership, and especially... union.

But something goes wrong-
Gen 3:5-6
5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
(NIV)
It’s critical that we see what has happened here. Christianity says it is at the root of understanding the human condition as it now exists. The issue here, is not about eating some kind of fruit. It is that mankind betrayed God, and in so doing, twisted human nature.

What does that have to do with your marriage? It is this- we all have faults imbedded in our character because of this. And we take those faults into our relationships. If we remain unaware of this fact, if we let them go unchecked, we will very quickly destroy any hope of meaningful relationships.

God describes the effect of our broken natures like this:
Gen 3:16-19
16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.
18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
(NIV)
POINT OF DISCUSSION
1. DO YOU THINK PEOPLE REALLY HAVE DEFECTS IN THEIR HUMAN NATURE TODAY?
2. WHY OR WHY NOT?

Faults in our nature can come out in various forms of cruelty in a relationship. Noted researcher, Dr. McBurney offers these reasons for cruelty in marriage relationships:

1. **Cruelty was modeled in childhood.** We criticize because it’s what we know... it’s a familiar pattern. (Remember this as we raise our children.)

2. **Unresolved anger spills over.** Dealing with conflict isn’t easy. As Christians we might even feel it’s a sin to get angry at all. Sin isn’t the anger; it’s the wrong response to the anger. As McBurney puts it, “Beneath... demeaning comments are areas of disappointment or tension.”

3. **Individual insecurity breeds cruelty.** It’s a common tendency, when a person feels inadequate; they lift themselves up by putting others down... especially people close to them.

4. **Passive guilt can be used to provoke a response.** One person is angry below the surface, so they deliberately provoke the other person. Spite talk is an ineffective way of trying to vent pain.

5. **Fear of emotional closeness.** Intimacy creates vulnerability. Admitting the desire to be loved can be scary, especially if there’s the chance of rejection. Some people survive by maintaining a distance. They perform a kind of painful dance of emotionally stepping close and then pushing away. But if the dance continues, it brings terrible consequences. It erodes the self-confidence of the mate, and it teaches the children of the family to take on the same pattern of being inconsiderate and unkind.

**Cruelty nullifies real love.** It dissolves the glue that will hold your family together. But according to God, what is real love?

1 Cor 13:2-11

2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but **have not love, I am nothing.**

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I **gain nothing.**

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. ...

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I **put childish ways behind me.**

(NIV)

What is love according to God’s view?

It is patient and kind. What is patience? **Patience** is when you have the right, or at least the urge, to blast your partner, but you don’t. **Why?** Because you are always protecting their dignity, you are always hoping they’ll get it right. You are persevering. ...**Kindness, not self-seeking, not keeping score, holding your temper, and protecting instead**- these are things you choose to do.
Our culture speaks of love as a powerful emotional attachment. But if it is only emotional, we have no control. We fall in love. We fall out of love. That is not what God calls love. **Love is a choice**. Here is a great revelation: **You can choose to love**. You choose who will come first in a relationship. You choose to protect or attack.

Now, don’t get this wrong- this is **not to say you’re a doormat**. Love can be tough. In cases like abuse, or codependency, real love demands there will be change. But real love never works from selfish interest. God guarantees a love that will never fail. But you have to understand, God is talking love by **His definition**.

**POINT OF DISCUSSION:**

1. HOW DOES THIS IDEA OF LOVE DIFFER FROM WHAT OUR CULTURE TELLS YOU IS LOVE?
2. HOW IS IT THE SAME?

**But how do we get this kind of love?**

The **first thing** we’ve got to do is- **go to the source**. There is no Biblical teaching that says you can develop this quality of love on your own- no one can do it. Why? -Because human nature is ‘broken out of the box’. We all have aspects of our nature that tend to sabotage our own love relationships. The good news is; God is able to fix that. But that empowerment is not possible unless He is present in our lives.

**Secondly**, we’ve have to- **Grow up**. 1 Cor. says you have to leave behind the childish ways. The discussion we are having today is little more than planting a seed of thought. The seed is from an unfailing and perfect God, but it’s still, just a seed. To know the real power and wisdom of love, we have to grow up **in its use**.

Rom 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(NIV)

The Bible refers to this as transformation. It is the empowerment to leave behind old patterns. McBurney offers these practical steps in our transformed thinking:

1. **Be aware of how you have been treating each other.** It’s amazing how blind we can become to our own destructive patterns. Keep in mind, the process of discovery may not be easy or painless. Ask a trusted third party or a counselor what they see. **Start praying together**.
2. **Respect each other.** A few years ago, there was a study done on long-lasting marriages. And despite the incredible variety in the couples, one thing was common to every one of them- an uncommon level of respect. Turn that around and do you know what it says? No healthy marriage has a **hope of existing without genuine and mutual respect**.
3. **Be a positive, confident, effective partner.** Be your spouse’s greatest fan. Be your kids’ greatest fan. As McBurney puts it, ‘Nit-picking and criticism will slowly, but surely, reduce your mate to a person of insecurity and self-doubt.’ And as we’ve learned, that’s the path to cruelty.
Every marriage will see conflicts, we can’t avoid them all. But we can learn how to resolve them. Is it a serious effort? You bet! But just look at the alternative! Family was designed to be a love-relationship.

**Make it worthwhile; take these three challenges this morning:**

1. Take the time to reflect on God’s definition of love. *(1Cor 13)*
2. Make a conscious decision to choose to love.
3. Open yourself to the only source that can empower your decision- God, Himself, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION:**

1. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MAKING YOUR MARRIAGE A SUCCESS?
2. WHAT DO YOU FEEL THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF OUR DISCUSSION WAS TODAY?

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**SESSION #2**

**WHAT IS GOD’S IDEA OF A GOOD WIFE?**

Although the majority of women will spend the majority of their lives as wives, our culture offers no working definition of what makes a good one. Every young woman is left to formulate her own ideas, influenced by pop psychology, market-driven magazines, and the entertainment industry. No wonder there’s barely a 50% chance her marriage will survive! ...But the good news is; God doesn’t leave us floundering.

**POINT OF DISCUSSION**

1. WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF A ‘GOOD WIFE’?

Scripture goes into great detail describing the ‘good wife.’ And we find one of the fullest descriptions in *Proverbs 31:10*.

The passage might be 3000 years old, but it reads like a description of today’s ‘super mom’. For the sake of time I’ll summarize the highlights:

*Prov 31:10-31*

10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.
11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.
12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
13 She ... works with eager hands...
15 ... she provides food for her family ...
17 She sets about her work vigorously; …
18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night…
20 She opens her arms to the poor and … to the needy.
21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed …
23 Her husband is respected at the city gate…
25 She is clothed with strength and dignity…
26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction …
28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: …
30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

(NIV)

Now obviously, every woman can’t be Martha Stewart, Marilyn Monroe, and Mother Theresa combined. The purpose of this passage isn’t to offer an ideal so unrealistic it only leaves you feeling inadequate. It’s to serve as a list of qualities God defines as ‘goodness’ in a wife. **So, what qualities do we find in here?**

- **By God's definition, goodness in a wife means:**

  **She is worthy**- v 10- The proverb says a good wife is worth more than precious jewels. Think about this: Having the quality of goodness as a wife is worth more than the most precious things, materially, on this earth. Ladies, as you wrestle with your value and purpose as a woman… as you juggle home and career, consider this opening statement from God.

  **She is trustworthy**- V11-12- Her husband has all the confidence in the world in her. Why? Because she only brings him good, never harm. There’s a lot of ways to do harm, especially to someone close to you- by action, by lack of action, by a poison word, or withholding the right words. And it only takes a few times to destroy someone’s confidence.

  **She is conscientious**- V13- She doesn't just work, she works with ‘eager’ hands. What makes a person eager? A few people will work hard out of duty, but almost everyone works hard when they see direct value. A good wife is eager because she is wise enough to see the direct value in what she is doing as a wife.

  **She is enterprising**- V16-18- Being enterprising simply means you are productive in your abilities. And you seek God’s help in rounding out the weak areas. Combine that with wisdom and discretion and you will be ‘profitable.’

  **She is compassionate**-V20- Compassion is the product of Godly wisdom. It is Godly wisdom that turns your trials into empathy instead of emptiness. You empathize with the struggles that come up in other people’s lives. Your nature knows compassion for one reason; the God of compassion lives inside you.

  **She is forward-looking**-V21- Any financial councilor will tell you- it’s not how much you make, it’s how you spend it. A pastor at Indiana Wesleyan spoke about the grounds keeper there from 15 years ago. He put his children through college on a family income of some $20,000 a year. How? -By looking ahead. -By living wisely. God says a good wife will have that same quality.
**PRE-MARRIAGE Information Sheet**  
**CANAAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**

*She is an effective supporter* - V23- Our passage is talking about the wife, and then there’s this abrupt switch to the husband. He’s sitting at the city gates. In ancient times, the gates were ‘city hall.’ All the important magistrates worked there. So, the husband has done very well in life. That’s great! But what does that have to do with the wife? - Great men develop in large part because of great wives. *Great men need great supporters!*

*She is a woman of character* - V25- She has **strength** and she has **dignity**. Here is how the dictionary defines dignity: 1. The quality of **being worth** esteem or honor  
2. Proper pride and self-respect. A good wife does not devalue or cheapen herself. Because she sees her value through God’s eyes and that is the gateway to **everything else**.

*She is a woman of spiritual intellect* - v 26- She is **wise** and what’s more, she is able to communicate that wisdom. When the ancient Hebrew used the word ‘wise’ this is what he or she meant: WISE- transliterates: *hakam*

 Religious experience was not a routine, a ritual, or faith experience. It was viewed as a mastery of the art of living in accordance with God’s expectations. ...Wisdom was a process of attainment and not an accomplishment. *(What you are- not what you have done.)*

*She is ‘well developed’*- If we say well developed in our culture, the first thing that comes to mind is breast augmentation and liposuction. But that is not God’s idea of true development. In fact He PAGE 4

says- v30 **Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.**

Take a look at these virtues- wisdom, compassion, skills, and disciplined focus. These things don’t start a year before you marry. But on the other hand, it is never too late to change… if God is doing the transforming. It’s a life-long pursuit. You are never done ‘becoming.’ *Every day is a choice.*

**PRACTICAL STEPS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT**

✓ **But how does someone become this kind of ‘goodness’?** Let me share a few critical points from the New Testament.

Eph 5:21-22  
Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. *(NIV)*

Now there’s a nasty word to modern ears- ‘submit’. But before we reject it, let’s look at what ‘submit’ means according to the Bible. Let’s go back to the beginning:

Gen 2:18  
The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." *(NIV)*

The very first description of a wife is a ‘suitable helper.’ What does that mean exactly? Let’s go ahead several thousand years and find another use of this term:

Heb 13:6  
So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" *(NIV)*
Wives, do you know what this means? **The very word God uses to describe Himself, He bestows on you as a title.** Such honor is found nowhere else in Scripture! The concept of ‘submission’ isn’t a statement of **rank**, but of **functionality**... of **mission**. It is the focus of **helping** out of real love.

Here is a beautiful definition of the Biblical ‘helper’:

*Helper* is an aide to man who allows him to do what he could not possibly do on his own. The word refers to the Spirit of God, and it refers to the role of wife.

**POINT OF DISCUSSION**

1. **DOES ANY PARTICULAR VIRTUE FROM PROVERBS 31 STAND OUT MOST TO YOU? WHY?**

2. **WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF “SUBMIT”?**

So, **how does a wife carry out this noble mission of ‘helper’?** Let me share an interesting passage:

Eph 5:33

However, each one of you also **must love his wife** as he loves himself, and the wife must **respect her husband**.

(NIV)

Isn’t it curious, the husband is commanded to ‘**love**’, but the wife is commanded to ‘**respect**’. Why?

- Because, men interpret **love through respect**. A wife can do a whole lot of things right, and **nullify it all by simply denying respect**.

If you do **not** communicate respect to your husband, if you don’t teach your children to communicate respect, you are doing this: You are chipping away at the core of your **husband’s identity**. And regardless of what legitimate complaints you might have, God’s Word says **you** are failing at the most basic definition of ‘goodness’ as a wife.

✔ **So wives, how do you communicate respect in ‘man language’?**

**Don’t try to change him**- Ladies, it seems it’s a natural tendency for women to want to change their men into their idea of what’s right.

Supporting your spouse to **grow** is the very definition of ‘goodness.’ But no human being has the power to **transform** another. God reserves that power for Himself through the Holy Spirit. Nagging, manipulating—trying to change the essence of a man only communicates lack of respect.

**Allow him the room to lead**- Ephesians 5 defines man as the head. Once again, it is not **superiority**, but **function**. Sheryl Wunder of **Family Life Today** says—

Look into the homes of dominant wives and you will find resigned husbands, daughters that will take on a model of overbearing wives, and sons of weak character. If you read the social research, you’ll find she’s right; the incidence of gender confusion is significantly higher in families with domineering
wives and resigned husbands. Scripture says a good wife expects and believes in her husband to lead his family.

Mrs. Wunder offers wives some practical tips in this department. She says a man won’t compete for leadership. Your husband’s response to nagging is to either give in, or dig in; and both have negative consequences. Giving in simply builds deep resentment, and digging in will cause him to refuse what is right, even when he realizes it.

And allowing to lead is also allowing to fail. Your husband may not accomplish some things to perfection. He may even make some serious mistakes. But constantly watching over his shoulder or throwing up past failures will only harm your cause, not help it. It is in your best interest to build up your husband in as genuine a manner as possible-

Prov 14:1
The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.  (NIV)

Learn to listen. When a poll was taken of husband’s complaints, #1 was- Wives tend to talk too much and listen too little. Traditionally, men are the less vocal in a relationship. But the complaint of many men was, even when they do try to open up, their wives cut them off in the conversation. There was a sense their wives weren’t really hearing, and so the man withdraws. More than wives realize, their husbands do look for their support. They may not admit it, but they want a confidante in their wives.

Despite all the pressures life brings, maintain a love life.

And there are two very important reasons for this. Dr. James Dobson explains the female and male side in very frank language. Since we are trying to understand the man I summarize from that side:

Women should also understand how their husbands’ needs differ from their own. When sexual response is blocked in males, they experience an accumulating physiological pressure that demands release. … Hormonal influences sensitize the man to all sexual stimuli. Whereas a particular woman would be of little interest to him when he is satisfied, he may be eroticized just to be in her presence when he is in a state of deprivation.

That’s not to say every husband will cheat, but wives, you need to realize your husband’s own physiology can work against him in ways yours doesn’t.

Jill Renitch in her book, ‘To Have and to Hold’, offers a second reason of which many wives may not be aware: Studies show that typically, a man’s sexual acceptance by his spouse is part of his core identity- for a wife to follow a pattern of sexual rejection is to tear at the very core of her husbands identity. As Sheryl Wunder puts it, ‘Ladies, we are not doing our husbands any favors by merely accommodating them sexually.”

A wife- of strength, and dignity must understand what love means to her partner as well as herself. It is vital for a blessed family. Love... respect... it is a choice, it is a wisely understood objective. Real love isn’t passive; it is active. It is creative. And it must happen at all levels of living and union.

POINT OF DISCUSSION
WHAT IS GOD’S IDEA OF A GOOD HUSBAND?

Gen 1:27
27 So God created man in his own image... male and female he created them.
(NIV)

Last week we discovered how that reflection works for the wife. She is meant to be a reflection of the Holy Spirit, the ‘suitable helper’. -But what about the husband? What is he designed to reflect? Or to ask another way...

WHAT MAKES A GOOD HUSBAND?

Ephesians 5 is a great anchor for the husband.

Eph 5:23-31
23 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.
24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,
27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.
28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Men, as husbands you have the awesome privilege, potential, and mandate to reflect Jesus Christ, Himself. And in this reflection you are called to be ‘the head’, but...

What exactly does v23 mean by ‘the head’?

Men, we’d love to read as far as ‘the husband is the head of the wife’, and then stop. “See honey, the Bible says I’m the head and you need to submit.”

Sorry guys, it doesn’t work that way. Before the sentence is even finished this ‘headship’ is given a very specific qualification. You are head as ‘Christ is the head of the church’. And this takes us into two very serious areas: the issue of leadership and the issue of responsibility. To understand ourselves we need to ask two basic questions:

a. What does it mean to be responsible?

John 6:38-39
For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.
And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me.... (NIV)

Jesus was able to say, "I have not lost one of those you gave me." John 18:9
When the *drama of Apollo 13* began to unfold, and the spacecraft was in serious trouble, the flight engineers moaned, ‘This is going to be the worst disaster in NASA history!’ But the missions chief said, ‘Gentlemen, I disagree, I believe this is going to be our finest hour. *No one is going to die on my watch.*’

*Can you see yourself as a husband who says this about his family*—“No one’s going to die eternally on my watch”? -Or in the words of Jesus, “I have not lost one of those you gave me”?

**Matt 16:26**—*says-*
What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Let’s change a few words just to make it personal to the husbands today:

**What good will it be for a husband if he gains the whole world** [providing a beautiful house, two cars and every possible toy], yet forfeits the souls of his wife and children? Or what can a husband give in exchange for the soul of his wife and his sons or daughters?

*Take a look at the culture*—Half of all families will not survive— the roles of husband and wife are questioned by arrangements like cohabitation and same-sex marriage. Children of failed families to the 3rd and 4th generation understandably doubt true marriage is even possible at all. Being married in a church is often an empty status symbol and is quickly becoming neither status nor symbol. The family is dying... and husbands carry the responsibility!

**POINT OF DISCUSSION**

**WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE HUSBAND’S RESPONSIBILITY IN A MARRIAGE?**

**b. How does a husband lead?**

Let’s start with a perfect example of leadership in a loving relationship? How did Jesus lead?

**John 13:1-5**

> It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world ... So God in the flesh - wraps a towel around His waste and comes to the supper table... the last meal He will ever eat. It should be a special honor. But instead He begins washing dirty feet. He carries out the task of a slave to each person who calls Him their leader. *Why?*

**Matt 20:25-28**

> "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

> **Not so with you. Instead,** whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ...

> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."  

(NIV)

Husbands, have a mandate not to simply lead their families... but to lead through serving. Husbands, like Jesus- are called to be ‘servant-leaders.’

**HOW DOES A HUSBAND BECOME A SERVANT LEADER?**

It all starts in this foundational act- ‘*Love your wives.*’ -V25- But guess what, that’s not enough! You must love your wives ‘as Christ loves the church.’ Now just what does that mean?

**1 Pet 3:7**

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner [sex] and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.  

(NIV)
Now, here’s another term that can cause the postmodern woman to bristle. Peter refers to them as the *weaker partner* based solely on their gender. Well, before we beat poor Peter into the ground, let’s follow his line of thought. We’ll discover just what it *means to love as Christ loves the Church*.

- **This Christ-love means- not hurting**
  The word, ‘weaker’ in the original Greek was ‘asthenes’. Here’s the meaning:
  Literally ‘strengthless’. Of physical weakness by comparative degree.

*Is this a fair assessment?* It’s a biological fact that the male hormone, testosterone causes a building of muscle tissue and makes behavior more aggressive. It is a biological capacity God has given the male for His design in life. But like every capacity God gives, it can be abused.

**So, is Peter being chauvinistic, or simply realistic?** Every few weeks our church gets a flyer from ‘Sheltering Wings’ in Danville. The ministry is for one purpose, to give wives, and their children, a safe place to go because of the physical danger posed by a male partner.

**A PEEK OF CURRENT EVENTS:**
The Tuesday night news in South Bend covered a special YWCA dinner. It was to raise awareness on the rise of domestic violence in the Mishawaka area. And as a graphic reminder, they had plaques with little yellow ribbons on a table for every woman recently murdered through domestic violence- and the length of that table was disturbing. As our culture continues to take God out of our families… as men abandon their design in God, we are reaping a murderous whirlwind.

Husbands, we need to realize, there are less dramatic ways of hurting our wives. The Christian commentator, William Barclay writes, “The cruelty which is hardest to bear is often not deliberate but the product of sheer thoughtlessness.”

God calls you as a husband to be **considerate**. Listen to how the dictionary defines this word:

- **Having or showing regard for the feelings of another- thoughtful- well considered, deliberate.**

God calls the husband to deliberately give regard to the feelings of his wife, then to show regard. ‘Goodness’ in the husband is sensitivity to his wife’s emotional and physical needs while seeing her as a spiritual equal. Then Peter ends this thought with a very stern warning, “so that *nothing will hinder your prayers.*”

The Christian writer, Bigg puts it this way:

"*The sighs of the injured wife come between the husband’s prayers and God’s hearing.*"

Husbands: **You can’t be right with yourself, or with God and be wrong with your wife.**

- **Leading means -Going beyond not hurting to cultivating her growth**
  Listen to the plans of Jesus in verse 26:
  to make her holy, cleansing her … to present her … without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

The goal as a husband should be **to cultivate the very best in your bride?**

Husbands, God says you are **responsible** for your wife’s welfare- especially her spiritual welfare.

- **LEADING IN LOVE MEANS –The willingness to sacrifice**

Mark 14:23-24
Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them... "This is my blood of the covenant, which is *poured out for many.*" ... (NIV)

For Christ to do what He came to do, involved self-sacrifice. Husbands, we also need to sacrifice in order to *let our wives grow.* Christ poured Himself out. Sometimes we have to ‘pour ourselves out.’ You come home tired from work. But your wife is tired too. She’s been working outside the home, or at home watching the kids. Self-sacrifice may mean taking the kids for a while and giving her some needed down time.
When you’re tempted to resent the opportunity to let her rest, or grow, or heal at your expense, consider this: When Jesus died on The Cross for you- it wasn’t good for Him, it wasn’t convenient, and it wasn’t what He deserved. That is your example to follow as husband.

- LEADING IN LOVE MEANS- Loving despite the response

Let’s take a moment to look down from The Cross through Christ’s eyes:

Matt 27:39-44
Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads
and saying, "... save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"
In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him...
In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

(NIV)
And what was His response?

Luke 23:34
"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (NIV)

(NIV)
Do you see the principle of real love here?

Loving by God’s definition means choosing to love, despite the response. Real love is action. It may be tender or tough, but it is always in the best interest of the loved-one. Jerry Wunder of Family Life puts it like this;

Our actions are real love- not those because they feels right, but because they are right. -They are the right choices despite the response.

- LEADING IN LOVE MEANS- Taking the initiative.

It means taking the first step in things like forgiveness. Let me share a side drama of The Cross with you:

31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.
32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

(NIV)
Look at what Jesus is saying here! “Peter, you are going to fail me. But I want you to know in advance; I forgive you. And you still have a part in my life.”

Now look at this summary of Mark 16:1-7
When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene... entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe ... and ... he said ... go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'

(NIV)
‘And Peter’, did you catch that? Not only does Jesus forgive in advance for a ‘strong’ betrayal, he makes a special effort to reassure Peter afterwards. Husbands... as ‘servant-leaders’- that’s taking initiative! That’s taking the first step in those hard things. That is your role.

WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN A HUSBAND TAKE TO SHOW THIS KIND OF LOVE?

1. Become a student of your wife- study her

Find things out- What is the most important to her. What’s her greatest concern right now? What would make life easier for her at this point in life? Here’s an idea, how about shutting off the TV for a night, and finding out.

2. Encourage her abilities-

Do you know what your wife is good at? Do you encourage those abilities? Do you praise or challenge her to reach the next level?

3. Communicate

Demands will swallow your time if you don’t make a deliberate effort- make a date to communicate.

4. Romance her way

Last week we talked about the man, sexually. On the other side, Dobson makes the point that a man can be done before a woman has even gotten her mind off the kids and the challenges of the day. “Husbands be considerate of your wives.”
Surprise her with something that says you still love and appreciate her. Guys, it doesn’t have to be a major production. A note on the fridge, a simple card, flowers for no special reason… small things are important.

5. **Be trustworthy**

28 **husbands ought to love their wives** as their own bodies. **He who loves his wife loves himself.**

The world is full of beautiful women who are not your wife. Men, make a covenant with your heart, and with your eyes. You don’t have to look twice. And you don’t have to look long.

Matt 5:27-28

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'
28 But I tell you that anyone who **looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** (NIV)

Internet porn is the fastest growing and most insidious vice in our culture today. All across this country, men have become addicted, behind their office doors. Voyeurism, eroticism is only a click away.

Husband, if you are having trouble with this, make yourself accountable to someone and break the cycle. - Jesus calls it adultery. Pornography and infidelity kill marriages. You cannot reflect Christ and betray your wife. You are Jesus or Judas.

6. **Be joined to your wife spiritually**

Statistics show, being a church member will not save your marriage. Divorce in the church equals the world. However, when families simply pray together routinely- the failure rate drops to around 5%.

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. **WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS YOU SEE THE HUSBAND’S “SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY” PLAYING OUT?**
2. **WHAT POINTS OF TODAY’S SESSION STOOD OUT THE MOST TO YOU TODAY?**
3. **ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR POINTS OR THOUGHTS YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE?**

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**SESSION #4**

**TOP 10 MARRIAGE KILLERS**

**What kinds of things kill marriages?**

The renowned Christian, family psychologist, Dr. James Dobson, was asked that very question. And this morning we’re going to explore a summary of Dr. Dobson’s response through the lens of Scripture. After a lifetime of family counseling and ministry, here are the **top 10 killers** listed by Dobson:

1. **THE LIST**

**#1 KILLER: Over-commitment and physical exhaustion**

When asked the greatest **threat to family stability**, this is what Dobson says counselors face with disturbing regularity:
The scenario involves a vulnerable woman who depends on her husband to meet her emotional needs and a workaholic man who has little time for family responsibilities. Year after year she reaches for him and finds he’s not there. She nags, complains, cries, and attacks him for his failures— to no avail. He is carrying the load of three men in his business or profession and can’t figure out how to keep that enterprise going while providing what his wife needs. As time goes by, she becomes increasingly angry, which drives him even further into his workaday world. He is respected and successful there. And thereafter he is even less accessible to her. Then one day, to her husband’s shock, this woman reaches a breaking point and either leaves him for someone else or files for divorce.

From the first moments of marriage, it is critical we understand what is really important, and live those priorities. What standard of living is high enough? How many overtime hours at the expense of family hours? How high up the career ladder is high enough?

Or to ask it another way: In twenty years, what will be more precious to you; a fancier office, or a relationship with your wife or children, deepened by twenty years of meaningful connection? The answer starts now.

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

1. **BREAKING IT DOWN TO REAL LIFE: WHAT CONSTITUTES FINANCIAL SUCCESS FOR YOU? WHAT STANDARD OF HOUSING? HOW MUCH LEISURE TIME?**

   **Eccl 3:1**
   1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:
   There is a time for every basic act of living, like earning a living, and there is a time to refrain from it to do something else. God has a promise here-
   
   **Eccl 8:5-6**
   Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.  
   For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter.

   **Balance is the key.** -To balance means to set priorities. Setting wise priorities means truly understanding what’s important. Understanding what’s truly important comes by looking through the eyes of truth— that is the eye’s of God, Himself. Doing everything in its time reduces stress ... the stress that rips the joy from life and marriage.

   **#2 KILLER: Excessive credit and conflict over how money will be spent-**
   
   **Eccl 7:12**
   12Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.
   (NIV)
God tells us where we’re supposed to be storing up real treasure - with Him. We all want nice things, but when Christians bury themselves in debt in order to gratify themselves with things they can’t afford - it isn’t just a money problem, it’s a spiritual problem. Money can be a shelter or it can be a deathblow to your marriage - the difference is wisdom.

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. WHAT DO YOU TREASURE MOST REGARDING YOUR FAMILY?
2. WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOUR PARTNER TREASURES MOST?

#3 KILLER: Selfishness-

James 3:16
For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.
(NIV)

What exactly is selfishness? Here’s how the dictionary defines it:

1 too much concerned with one’s own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others;
2 showing or prompted by self-interest

If we could look down the line of every evil action back to the dawn of time, do you know what we’d find? Self-centeredness… self-interest would be somewhere at the heart of it. A gratifying marriage hinges on each partner putting the other first. So what could be deadlier than selfishness? Unfortunately, it is so embedded in our human nature that it is the first thing we do, the last thing we see, and the hardest thing to admit.

Here is an incredible list of killers:

Gal 5:19-21
19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;
20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions
21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
(NIV)

Think about it: Selfishness is ranked up there with orgies and worshiping idols, even witchcraft! Why? - Because selfishness is a murderer.

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. IN ALL HONESTY, SELFISHNESS REARS ITS UGLY HEAD IN ALL OUR LIVES. IN WHAT WAY HAS SELFISHNESS BEEN A CHALLENGE TO YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE?
2. CAN YOU THINK OF A FEW WAYS TO COMBAT SELFISHNESS IN YOUR SITUATION?

#4 KILLER: Unhealthy relationships with in-laws-

1Excerpted from Compton’s Interactive Encyclopedia. Copyright (c) 1994, 1995 Compton's NewMedia, Inc. All Rights Reserved
The Pharisees were experts at loaded questions and divorce was a big one.
Mark 10:2-9
2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

And here’s where the conversation ends up-
6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'
7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ...and the two will become one flesh.' ...
(NIV)

Do you see what happened here? A question on divorce to Jesus, ends with the in-laws. One of the greatest wedding gifts you can give yourselves-is to acknowledge the relationship has changed with your parents. Until this point, the top loyalty of the young man and woman was their parents. Then they pledged themselves to each other before God, and everything changed. You are now ‘one flesh.’ And that is especially important when children enter the equation. Realize, and help your parents, and grandparents realize-how they view you as their married children, ‘one flesh’ will determine whether they are a support, or a stress to your relationship and the raising of your children.

DISCUSSION POINT
1. WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE WITH YOUR IN-LAWS?
2. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR IN-LAWS?

#5 KILLER: Unrealistic expectations-
It’s kind of a funny thing; even though 100% of marriages are imperfect, many newly weds feel that somehow they’ll beat the odds. Expecting a perfect marriage between two imperfect people is to expect the impossible. And unfortunately ladies, research shows that unrealistic expectations are especially true among American women. Dr. Dobson puts the result this way, “The consequent disappointment is an emotional minefield.”

The book of Ruth is a touching story of a young woman whose husband dies and the only deeply loving relationship in her life is with her mother in-law, Naomi. Listen to this vow Ruth makes to Naomi:

Ruth 1:16-17
...Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."
(NIV)

Husbands, wives... how many more marriages would survive... how many would remain vital if this was the one expectation we held for our union before God.

POINT OF DISCUSSION
1. WHAT IS THE BIGGEST EXPECTATION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE?
2. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT SPECIFICALLY FROM YOUR PARTNER?
3. DO YOU FEEL YOUR PARTNER’S EXPECTATIONS ARE REALISTIC?

#6 KILLER: Invasion of personal space-
Here is a reality that’s proven over and over again: **Insecure** partners are destined to destroy the relationship by **suffocation**. In their insecurity, they try to build a cage around their partner, and the bars are made of envy and jealousy. Let’s go back to Galatians.

Gal 5:19-21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: … discord, **jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions**... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The insecure partner becomes threatened even by the other’s innocent relationships. It interferes with their selfish ambition to possess their partner. In their jealousy, they fly into fits of rage. If that describes you in any way let me emphasize this: With all due haste, deal with your insecurity. Bring it before God. Ask God to bring you to wise counsel. And this is why: **You will never have a long, loving relationship until this weakness is healed.**

Even if you move on to a second, third, or fourth union- you will eventually suffocate them all. As Dobson puts it, “Love must be free, and it must be confident.”

**POINT OF DISCUSSION**

**WHAT IS THE AREA OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP YOU FEEL MOST SECURE? MOST INSECURE?**

**#7 KILLER: Sexual frustration especially combined with the greener grass of infidelity**-

Prov 9:17-18

"Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" But little do they know that **the dead are there**, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

(NIV)

Several years ago, the family stopped in a health food store in the Boston area. And in our never-ending quest for guilt-free sweets, Kathy picked up some delicious looking carob bars. We were hungry and as she unwrapped that bar, it looked like the tastiest chocolate. And I’m thinking, “Yummy, I’ve got to talk her out of a bite of that.” And she sinks her teeth into this bar, and as she pulls it away, we look to see what delicious filling is in that bar. But what we see instead, are all these little spiders coming out. ...I decided I didn’t want a bite after all. Kathy has never gotten over that bar yet!

A sexual hunger that satisfies itself in infidelity tastes sweet at first, but eventually **the spiders come out**. The dead are there. Every affair embraces the grave.

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

**WHAT IS THE GREATEST TEMPTATION YOU FACE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP?**

**WHAT ARE A FEW PRACTICAL WAYS YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE CAN COMBAT TEMPTATION?**

**#8 KILLER: Dramatic shift in career**-
Career failure is especially devastating to men. Men have such a strong tendency to define themselves by what they do. So, when they lose a career, they lose self-value. And when we lose self-value, we tend to lose value in everything close to us. But failure isn’t the only danger. Dramatic success can be just as dangerous. Stresses—negative or positive, can cause a spouse to lose grip on their marriage. It’s no wonder Solomon wrote:

Prov 30:8

... give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.

(NIV)

Edward Fitzgerald once said, “One of the saddest pages kept by the recording angel is the record of souls that have been damned by success.”

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A DRAMATIC CAREER SHIFT? -YOUR PARTNER?
2. HOW HAVE YOU DEALT WITH STRESS IN THE PAST?

#9 KILLER: Alcohol and substance abuse-

In our indulgent culture, few things do more damage than substance abuse. Substance abuse destroys the individual; it dissolves them into an empty shell. And if you are destroyed as an individual, how can you possibly have a successful partnership with someone else? You cannot be a good husband; you cannot be a good wife. In the grips of this killer—You cannot be a good mom, you can’t even be a good womb. Crack babies, fetal alcohol syndrome, effects of smoking—substance abuse has brought baby after baby into this world crippled before they’ve even had a chance to live. What tragedy can be more heart-wrenching and what could be a greater stress on a relationship than that?

Galatians 5—...drunkenness, ... and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. IN YOUR OPINION; WHEN DOES THE USE OF A SUBSTANCE BECOME ABUSIVE?

#10 KILLER: Pornography, gambling, and other addictions-

In our human nature— we have this tendency to get hooked on the very things that harm us. Dobson writes this:

I’ve made a twenty-year study of those who wreck their lives. Their problems often begin in experimentation with a known vice and ultimately end in death... or the death of a marriage. [He warns]...All that is needed to grow the most vigorous weeds is a small crack in the sidewalk.

A few months ago, there was a very revealing program on the effects of gambling in our culture. At one point they focused on the effects of Internet gambling, which is perhaps the most insidious of all, because it is only a click away and open to all age groups. They read a letter from an elderly lady who had built a lifetime of
equity. Her plan had been to leave financial support for her children and grandchildren. She was in a position to open financial doors to college and career building. But she became obsessed with Internet gambling, and she lost her savings. Eventually, she even lost her home and had to move in with her adult children. Instead of being a financial support to her family, she became their burden. And what’s disturbing is this is not an isolated incident. Addiction to gambling is crushing the lives of countless families all across this nation.

When it comes to pornography, Dr. Dobson speaks as an authority as he served on the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography since the 1980’s. He writes this:

> It is extremely important to understand what is being produced and sold by pornographers today... It is commonly believed that mainstream pornography is represented by the centerfolds in today’s men’s magazines. In fact, that is precisely what the... sex industry wants us to think. But if a man were to go into the sex shops... in [the] large cities... he would find very few depictions of normal heterosexual activity. Instead, he would see a heavy emphasis on violent homosexual and lesbian scenes, on excrement, mutilation, enemas, oral and anal sex, instrumentation for the torture of men and women, and depictions of sex between humans and animals.

Let me ask you a question; if a partner is using this kind of stuff as a basis of stimulation, what kind of sexual activity do you think they’ll want from their spouse? Last week, we talked about Jesus presenting His bride, the church, as blameless, pure, and without stain. And that is the example for the husband to follow. There is no way to converge these two realities. A partner addicted to pornography has only three options: 1. Reduce the spouse to this level of gratification- 2. Become unfaithful and look for it elsewhere- 3. Get out of the poison.

Little wonder that Proverbs gives one of its longest passages to this topic. Here’s a summary starting at verse 10:

Prov 7:10-27

10 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.
11 She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home...
16 I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt.
17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
18 Come, let’s drink deep of love till morning; let’s enjoy ourselves with love!
19 My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. ...
21 With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.
22 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose
23 till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.
24 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say.
25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.
26 Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.
27 Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

(NIV)

In our day, this isn’t simply the adulterous woman... it is an entire sex industry. It is armed with high technology and years of practiced manipulation and perversion. They eat the innocent, they rape lives, and they disease the normal appetites. Pornography kills what is human in whomever it touches.
Gal 5:19-21
The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; … I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF PORNOGRAPHY- FOR YOURSELF? -YOUR SPOUSE?

3. CONCLUSION:
Imagine you are at home. You hear someone quietly forcing the lock on your front door. You know that there are a group of murderers prowling your community. You even know some of your neighbors who have been victims. Can you imagine yourself sitting there thinking, “That sounds like them breaking in now. But I’m not going to take any action. I’ll just hope for the best, that they won’t kill my family.”

In effect, this very scenario is going on right now. The killers may not be physical criminals, but they are every bit as deadly. And the door isn’t on the front of your house, but the front of your heart. It all starts with what you allow in there.

Husband… wife… you have a choice. There are two, very different visitors knocking on the door of your marriage. One type is a murderer, and the other is life Himself. Which are you going to invite in?

(A more complete coverage of marriage topics are available in the Marriage Enrichment packet)
APPENDIX 1
FACILITY COST

Active Members of the church (Bride, groom, parents of either) will not be charged for the use of the facilities but, if required, are responsible for these fees:
- custodial
- light and sound technician
- Facility coordinator
(Our Church Constitution says an Active Member is a member who regularly attends the services of the Church and who gives financial support to the Church.)

Inactive or Nonmembers are charged for facility usage in addition to the above. The sanctuary, narthex, dressing rooms and rest rooms will be the only parts of the building available for them. The nursery will not be available. Any other use requires Governing Board approval.

Schedule of fees:

Inactive or Nonmembers
- Flat fee sanctuary wedding..........$ 200
- Deposit..................................$ 100
- Add for Fellowship hall if board approved...$ 100

All fee balances are to be paid two weeks in advance to avoid the possibility of reassignment of the facility and forfeiting the deposit.

Active Members or over 3 hours for flat rate- Per hour
- Custodian..................................$ 15
- Light and Sound Technician.........$ 15
- Facility Coordinator....................$ 15
- Key- Authorized individual.........$ 15

Gifts to a Pastor or Organist are given directly to them.

Workers per hour remuneration schedule:
Custodian..................................$ 10
Sound and Light Technician ..........$ 10
Facility Coordinator....................$ 10
Key- Authorized individual.........$ 10
APPENDIX 2
CANAAN WEDDING INFORMATION
FOR COUPLES PLANNING THEIR WEDDING AT
CANAAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

A Christian marriage is a testimony before God and those dear to you of your desire to live and grow together and to glorify God. This information has been put together to help you to make your plans for this very special day.

Premarital Counseling
Since it is our purpose to prepare couples for marriage, as well as to perform the ceremony which unites them in marriage, we require all couples to spend time in premarital preparation sessions with our pastors to discuss many practical aspects of marriage and life together. These sessions will be arranged when you first contact the pastor. During these sessions, you will also review the wedding ceremony. If the ceremony is to be performed by other than a Canaan Church pastor, our senior pastor must approve counseling and service by another minister.

Setting a Date
You should talk to our pastor well in advance to confirm the availability of the church and his services. The date will not be held until the request is deemed acceptable to Canaan Church and a nonrefundable deposit of $100 is made. Use of the facility cannot extend beyond 8:00pm.

NOTE: Weddings scheduled on a Saturday, should be planned in such a way, that the building will be free by 4:30 p.m. If weddings are scheduled after 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, the custodian will not have time to clean the church before Sunday morning church services. In this case, the family is expected to clean the church under the direction of the custodian.

Cost
Inactive or Nonmembers are charged a flat rate for facility usage, custodial services, light and sound technician and facility coordinator. An organist, if required, will be an extra fee. The sanctuary, narthex, dressing rooms and rest rooms will be the only parts of the building available. The nursery will not be available.

Active Members of the church will not be charged for the use of the facilities, but are responsible for, if required, the custodial fee, as well as the cost of the organist, light and sound technician and coordinator. This waiver of facilities fee is applicable if a parent of either the bride or groom is an active member or if the bride or groom themselves are active members. (Our Church Constitution says an Active Member is a member who regularly attends the services of the Church and who gives financial support to the Church.)

The $100 non-refundable deposit must be made before the wedding date can be reserved on the church calendar. All fee balances are to be paid two weeks in advance to avoid the possibility of reassignment of the facility and forfeiting the deposit. Fees are to be paid directly to the Facility Coordinator. The fee amounts are set from time to time by the Governing Board and amounts can be obtained from the Facility Coordinator.

Flat rate facility usage, facility coordinator, custodial and light and sound technician fees are for a building opened to building vacated maximum time of three hours and a one hour practice. Longer times will incur
additional per hour fees. Building openings in advance of the wedding for decorations, etc. may result in additional fees.

All scheduled fee checks should note “Wedding” on the memo and be made payable to Canaan Community Church. They may be given to the Facility Coordinator or mailed to:

Canaan Community Church
3517 N. County Road
Coatesville, IN 46121

Honorarium or gratuities for a Pastor, Organist or others involved should be handled with them directly.

How to Make Arrangements
The Bride and Groom are responsible for making the wedding arrangements. This should be done as far in advance as possible to confirm dates and to avoid disappointment.

1. Call the pastor to set up a date to meet.
2. Return all paperwork in person or mail it, accompanied by a $100 nonrefundable deposit.  (Remember your wedding reservations at the church cannot be guaranteed until after this is done.)

It is your responsibility to contact and schedule the Pastor. The Facility Coordinator will assist you in contacting the custodian, organist, light and sound technician, etc., as well as going over additional facility use requirements with you.

Usage Requirements
1. All music should be in keeping with the dignity and nature of the wedding ceremony and is subject to the Pastor’s approval.
2. Decorations should be discussed with the Facility Coordinator.
3. Put back all furniture and furnishings that were moved.
4. Sweep birdseed off sidewalks and other finished public areas.
5. Only ceremonial food or drink used by the bride, groom or minister is allowed in the sanctuary.
6. All provisions of Sections 1 through 4 of the Building Use Policy must be followed to the extent that the wedding party affects various areas of the facility.
7. Please plan your activities and music as appropriate to a church setting. Kindly discuss your plans with the Coordinator before committing yourself to the elements of your wedding in the church facility.
8. If you, as a member, have reserved the Fellowship Hall, you may also use the kitchen area and refrigerator. However, you must supply your own serving utensils, trash bags, towels, coffee, paper products, all food items, etc. Be sure to remove and bag all trash from containers and place the trash bags in the dumpster.

The Facility Coordinator will work with you to make sure that everything is done and make certain that all doors are locked and the building is secured as you leave.
APPENDIX 3
INFORMATION ON MARRIAGE LICENSE IN INDIANA [State Government]

In most circumstances you may apply for a marriage license at any IN county clerk office where you plan to be married. These offices are usually located in the county probate court or circuit court. This document outlines the procedures you must follow to obtain your license.

Cost of License

What is the cost of a marriage license?

The marriage license fee is $18.00 for in-state residents and $60.00 for out-of-state residents. Personal checks not accepted.

Residency Requirements

What are the residency requirements for Indiana?

If both partners are residents you may obtain your license from a Town Clerk of your residence. If only one of you is a resident go to the Town Clerk of that resident. In either circumstance, your license will be valid statewide. If neither partner are residents you must apply for your license in the county where the marriage will take place.

Waiting Period

Is there a waiting period from the application date to the date the license is issued?

No, you will receive your license immediately.

Is there a waiting period from the date the license is issued to the date I am allowed to marry?

No, you can marry immediately after receiving your license.

Age Requirement

What is the minimum age a man or woman may marry?

You must be 18 years old or older to marry without parental consent. A birth certificate may be necessary to show proof of age.

What if one or both of us is younger than 18?

If either partner is under 18, parents or legal guardians must be present. If a parent can not be present, due to death, separation, divorce or other circumstances, proper evidence must be presented for verification. You will need a certified copy of your birth certificate. If you are under 16 you can not marry without a court order.

Blood Tests and Physical Exams

Are blood tests and physical exams required?

No blood test or physical exam is required, although women under the age of 50 must provide a completed State of Indiana Premarital Examine Certificate obtained from a health clinic.
License Expires

How long does a marriage license remain valid once it's been issued?

Your license will expire 60 days from the date it is issued.

Divorced and Widowed Applicants

What if one or both partners have been divorced or have had a spouse die?

If previously married, the date of divorce or date of spouse's death must be provided. If the divorce or spouse's death had taken place within the last 2 years, some counties require you to bring a certified copy of the divorce decree or death certificate. A copy of your divorce records or spouse's death certificate can be ordered online.

How Do I Legally Change My Name?

What's the process of legally changing my last name after marriage?

Following your wedding ceremony, you will receive a marriage certificate, which is a piece of paper proving that you are legally married. This certificate will serve as evidence of your marriage, which you'll need when you begin the process of notifying several government agencies about your name change, as well as any non-government institutions that you do business with (ie, banks, employers, credit cards, memberships, etc).

We have created a legal name change kit that you can use and complete before or after your marriage takes place. Completing all the necessary name change documentation prior to your wedding can be considerably convenient.

Miscellaneous Questions

Are proxy marriages legal?
No, marriage by proxy is not allowed.

Are cousin marriages legal?
Yes, cousin marriages are allowed. Cousins may marry as long as both are over the age of 65.

Are common law marriages legal?
No, common-law marriages are not allowed.

Are same sex marriages legal?
No, same-sex marriages are not allowed.

COUNTY CLERK INFORMATION

Hendricks County Recorder
P.O. Box 599
Danville, IN 46122
317-745-9231

Marion County Recorder
200 E Washington
Suite 721
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-327-4725

Putnam County Recorder
Courthouse Square Room 25
Green Castle, IN 46135
765-653-2648