Premarital Counseling
Session 4: A Theology of Everything Else (Love, Money, Forgiveness and Children)

Instructions: Be sure to finish the Scripture study, readings, and exercises *before* Session 4.

Key Ideas

1. The essence of marital love is commitment, not emotion.

2. Money is a primary way to give expression to what is important to you.

3. We forgive our spouse because God has first forgiven us.

4. Children are a blessing from the Lord.
Scripture Study Guide for a Biblical Theology of Everything Else

Instructions: Read 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Psalm 127. Below you will find a list of verses and questions that help you think about the text. For each verse, explain briefly what the verse means and how it applies to marriage. (Note that I’ve only included a few lines to write on because I want you to be brief!)

1 Corinthians 13

Questions: In vs. 1-3, Paul uses the phrase: “but have not love.” What effect does the exclusion of love have on the things Paul listed? In vs. 4-7, Paul describes love. Can you summarize his thoughts in a few words? Summarize the point of vs. 8-13?

Explanation: ________________________________________________________________

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Application to marriage: ___________________________________________________________

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2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Questions: Why does Paul use the Macedonian churches as an example to the Corinthians (vs. 1-5)? What does “grace” (vs. 1, 6, 7) have to do with giving? What does the gospel have to do with your giving (v. 9)?

Explanation: ________________________________________________________________

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Application to marriage: ___________________________________________________________

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Matthew 18:21-35

Questions: How often should you forgive your spouse (vs. 21-22)? Who are the main characters in the parable? What’s the point of this parable? Why was the master angry at the servant (vs. 32-33)?

Explanation: _____________________________________________________________

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Application to marriage: __________________________________________________

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Psalm 127

Questions: Summarize the main idea in vs. 1-2. What’s the point of the terms “heritage” and “reward” (v.3)? Why does the psalmist compare children to arrows (v. 4)? What does the psalmist say about a “full quiver” (v. 5)? What is the psalmist describing when he talks about parents not being put to shame when they “speak with their enemies at the gate” (v.5)?

Explanation: _____________________________________________________________

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Application to marriage: __________________________________________________

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Exercise for Biblical Theology of Everything Else

Part 1. Making a Budget

Every couple must make decisions about finances. As you merge together your money, you will have to make decisions about what you value and what you don’t value. Remember: a budget is simply a means to define what we value. How we spend our money defines what we value.

Step 1.

Instructions: The point of this exercise is to get you to start thinking about your budget. Do your best to come up with a “rough” budget. Bring a copy of the budget to your final premarital counseling session. Before you work on your budget, please ask the pastor about the family budget Excel spreadsheet that is available to help you with this exercise. After you come up with a budget, talk through the questions listed below.

Questions to consider

1. What do you learn about your priorities and values by looking at your budget?
2. What are your guidelines/philosophy for how you will tithe?
3. Who will primarily handle the day-to-day managing of the finances in your family?
4. What does it mean for the husband to show leadership in the family finances?
5. Have you come up with a system of how to organize your finances? (e.g., will you use some type of software like Quicken or Microsoft Money? Or will you use the ‘envelope’ system?)
6. If you have debt, how are you planning to pay it off?
7. If you have bad debt (e.g., credit card debt), does your budget reflect an aggressive plan to pay it off?
8. Is your family budget dependent on two incomes? If the wife were suddenly to become pregnant and decide to stop working, would she be able to stop without it resulting in a significant change of lifestyle?

Step 2. (Optional)

Instructions: Imagine if the wife became pregnant and very sick during the first year of marriage, and was not able to work. Or, maybe she just becomes unable to work because of a sickness unrelated to pregnancy. Regardless of the circumstances, take the budget that you came up with in part 1 and now redo it so you are dependent only on the husband’s income. Note differences between the two budgets and talk over with the pastor/counselor—how painful will it be to live on this second budget? Looking back on it now, what adjustments might need to be
Part 2. Organizing Your Family Schedule

One thing that often catches couples by surprise is a merger of their individual schedules into one family schedule. For example, suppose the husband has small group on Monday night, and the wife has her small group meeting on Tuesday night, and they both go to the mid-week church evangelistic training on Wednesday nights. That would mean the first night of the week they get to be together is Thursday night! Like this couple, too many couples plan their weeks more like individuals in marriage rather than thinking more like a married couple.

**Step 1.** Write out your individual schedules for one week of your life. Think in terms of begin a single adult and write out what you typically schedule for one week. Include how many hours you sleep, your quiet times, commuting to and from work, church related activities (including church attendance on Sundays), your job, extra-curricular activities (reading, running, etc.), fellowship with believers and time with other friends, and anything else you can think of.

Add up the total hours you have in each category (i.e., how many hours per week do you sleep, work, do church activities, etc.) and list them below.

- Sleep = _______ hours per week
- Work = _______ hours per week
- Church-related = _______ hours per week
  - _______ hours per week
  - _______ hours per week
  - _______ hours per week

**Questions to consider**

1. How many hours do you sleep each week? Is this your ideal, or how far short do fall of your ideal?
2. How many hours do you work each week?
3. How many hours are you doing church-related activities?
4. Was there anything that surprised you about your schedule?
5. How do you think your schedule needs to be adjusted in marriage?

**Step 2.** Take your two individual schedules and work together to merge them into one family schedule. Recommendation: About two or three months into marriage, pull this out and compare real life with your tentative family schedule.
Sermons

Try to listen to at least one sermon from this page.

From CHBC audio (www.capitolhillbaptist.org):
  • Al Mohler – Reproductive Techniques and Contraception – Henry Forum

From Desiring God (www.desiringgod.org):
  • John Piper – Marriage is Meant for Making Children (Pt 1 and 2) – Eph 6:1-4
  • John Piper – Marriage: Forgiving and Forbearing – Col 3:12 - 19

From First Baptist Church Durham audio (www.fbcdurham.org):
  • Andy Davis – Children are a Blessing from God – Psalm 127

Readings

The Ricucci’s Love that Lasts: Epilogue

An Optional Reading and Companion Exercise for the Prideful and Self-Righteous

If you struggle with pride or self-righteousness, you should:

1. Read a book on humility like CJ Mahaney’s Humility: True Greatness
2. Write out some ways in which your pride commonly affects your relationship and confess these things to your fiancé (Proverbs 28:13).
3. Think together about some ways in which you desire to grow in humility (James 4:6).
4. Pray together and ask for the Lord’s help.