

# Marriage Class Outline

## Session 1 – Marriage and our relationship with Jesus Christ

### INTRODUCTION

- Marriage has been God's plan for us from the beginning: Gen. 2: 18-24.
  - God likens marriage between a husband and wife to the union between Jesus Christ and a Christian. Eph. 5:25-33.
  - The closer the relationship husband and wife each has with Jesus Christ the closer, the more loving, the more fulfilled and the more fruit-bearing is their marriage.
1. Jesus reveals the secrets of how He lived while on earth in a body:
    - He was anointed and led by the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:18 & 4:1.
    - He depended moment by moment on hearing and seeing within His heart the Father as to what He should say and what He should do: John 5:19 & 14:10.
  2. How can we follow the way Jesus Christ lived on earth?
    - By trying to somehow copy His behavior but without the love, power and life of God working within us to do it? John 15:5.
    - Or by learning the mystery of the Gospel, which is, how to let Jesus Christ increasingly live His life in us? Col.1:27, Mat.11:29, Gal.2:20.
    - As a born-again child of God, God desires that, like Jesus, I too be anointed and led in my spirit by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14 & 16) and learn diligently how to hear in my heart the voice of His word. John 10:27, Heb. 3:15.

Most of this Marriage class therefore will focus on what God has to say on how to let Jesus Christ live in me, in the context of marriage.

The strongest bond a marriage can have is a couple both knowing in their hearts that their marriage is God's will.

## Session 2 – Marriage and love.

1. What is my greatest ongoing need as a husband or as a wife?
  - To be constantly re-assured and know that God loves me. Eph. 2:4 & 5, 3;19, 1 Joh. 3:1.
2. How does God reveal His continuing love for me when I don't feel loved?
  - By His Spirit. Rom. 5:5.
  - How does God's Spirit shed His love abroad in my heart – by guiding me into and revealing to me - His Word. John 16:13.
  - As daily I hear with my heart and retain (keep) God's words within me, so the love of God in me increases. 1 John 2:5.
3. God doesn't love me for who I am or am not, He loves me because He is love. His nature is love, unconditional love. 1 John 4:16 & 4:10.
4. The only true love between a husband and wife is this love – God's love. Unless I have the ongoing assurance and presence of this love from God in me, I won't have this God kind of love for my family (or be able to truly assure them of my unconditional love for them).
  - This love isn't a thing it's a person, God Himself. 1 John 4: 7&8.
  - I can't manufacture it – to have it I must have Him in me, loving through me. 1 Thes. 3:12.
  - The nature of this love, God, is described in 1 Corinth. 13. These words I cannot attain to myself, but if God can write these words in my heart (one line at a time) He can conform me to them (Himself).

This is the love (Agape love) with which husbands can love their wives even the same love with which Christ loves the church. Eph. 5:25. With this love in me I will always be faithful to my wife even as Jesus Christ is faithful to me.

### Session 3 – Marriage and forgiveness

1. It is the nature of our Father God, who is love, to forgive. 2 Corinth. 5:19
2. His unchanging willingness to forgive me is based on mercy and justice:
  - Mercy – because I don't deserve His forgiveness. Psalms 103:10
  - Justice – because at Calvary He judged Jesus for my sins so that I would not have to be judged for them - provided only that I admit my sin and believe what Jesus did on my behalf. 1 Pet. 2:24, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 John 1:9.
  - Since sin separates me from my Holy Father, if I neglect to or refuse to believe that I am forgiven I will remain apart from God. Isa. 59:2.
3. As a born again believer, God's nature in me is always to forgive others. Mat. 6:12.
  - The basis for my forgiving others is the same as that on which God forgives me: Mercy, since I have received His mercy He requires that I extend mercy to others. Justice, since Christ was judged for the sins of others as well as mine I should not require others to pay for their sins even as I did not pay for mine. (Society of course may extract its own penalty).
  - God directly links His forgiveness of me to my forgiveness of others, this includes forgiveness between a husband and a wife. Mat. 6:14 & 15.
  - My ability to forgive is not based on how I feel or whether the other person is sorry for what they did – It is solely based on my believing with my heart that I have forgiven them, in fact the exact same way that I receive God's forgiveness of me. Mat.18:35.

Wives seem a little more prone to stumble in the area of unforgiveness than husbands and sometimes carry offense or ought for years, not understanding that their loss of closeness to God, peace of mind and effectiveness in prayer all stem directly from this. Mat. 18:34.

## Session 4 – Marriage and prayer

1. Why do we pray?
  - Won't God's will be done anyway? No, that's fatalism, which makes prayer meaningless. Also it is contrary to the Lord's prayer in which Jesus asks us to pray in order that God's will may be done. Mat 6:10
  - To change God's mind? No, God only ever does His will and only prayers in accordance with His will are effective. 1 John 5:14 & 15
  - Or are the prayers of His people the only way God has given Himself for intervening and accomplishing His will in the lives of people – recognizing that God says the world is still controlled by His enemy. 1 John 5:19.
  
2. How do we pray?
  - Only in accordance with God's will – God's word is His will. 1 John 5:14 & 15.
  - Only by the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prayer, who alone knows what to pray for and which of God's words is applicable. Rom. 8:26, 1 Cor. 2:11.
  - Only by believing God for the answer to our prayer. It is only after we have sought in our hearts to know God's will and His Spirit has revealed His applicable word that we will have the faith of God to believe Him for the answer. Jer. 29:13, 1 Cor. 2:10, Rom. 10:17, Mat. 21:22.
  
3. Can I pray a believing prayer for my husband or my wife even though they have a free will?
  - Can God use one to pray and believe for another? This is precisely what something the Bible calls intercessory prayer is all about. And all prayer, including intercessory prayer, is intended to be believing prayer. In James 5:14 & 15 it is the prayer of faith by the Elders that God says He can use to save the sick.
  - The assumption that the person we are to pray for currently has a free will may not be correct. Their will may have been taken captive by sin or Satan (2 Tim. 2:26). The direction of our believing prayer may be for God to restore their will to freedom – freedom to choose God. In 1 John 5:16 God invites us to ask Him in faith for, and to receive, life on behalf of a brother or sister that has been captured by sin.

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you (Husband or Wife or child). 1 Sam. 12:23.

## Session 5 – Marriage and the Word of God

1. Christianity is a real relationship with God and not a religion
  - With my brain I can neither know nor relate to God. 1 Cor. 1:21, Rom. 8:7.
  - My brain (carnal mind) is designed to process sense knowledge (that is knowledge received through the 5 fleshly senses). Rom. 8:5
  - I can only relate to God with my heart 2 Cor. 4:6, Eph. 3:17.
  - My heart is my spirit where I receive spiritual (revealed) knowledge. Prov. 16:2, 21:2, 20:27.
  - God, who is Spirit, reveals Himself to my spirit. 1Cor. 2:9-14, Rom. 8:16.
  
2. Why do I open my Bible?
  - As a ritual to somehow win points with God? 1 Sam 15:22.
  - Or so that God can speak words of direction and life to my heart? Prov. 6:22, Psa. 119:130, John 6:63.
  - And through living words impart His very own nature to me. 2 Pet. 1:4, 2Cor. 3:18.
  
3. Is the goal for me to try and obey the written word of God?
  - No, that's the Old Covenant of Law – It will always result in failure, separation from God and coldness – the Law has been replaced by the New Covenant of Grace. Grace is the written word now made alive to me personally and written on my heart by the Holy Spirit. 2Cor 3:3-11 Heb 8:10.
  - The New covenant is the covenant of the Holy Spirit – He's the author of the Bible, He's the only one who can reveal the meaning of God's words and the only one who can enable me to keep God's words. 2 Pet. 1:21, Prov. 1:23, Ezek. 36:27.
  
4. Only God's living words entering and remaining in my heart can change my nature:
  - The teachings of the Law and the teachings of man (through such things as behavioral science) may temporarily suppress my nature- with a sufficient incentive I can learn how to pretend to be nice. But neither one can actually change my nature nor improve my character. Rom. 8:3, Heb. 7:18, Jer. 13:23.
  - The repeated admonitions of husband or wife or parent will not change my nature or improve my character. 1 Cor. 2:13.

- Mentally assenting to or agreeing with a scripture won't do it Rom. 8:7.
- Only when I hear with my heart a scripture, made alive to me personally by the Holy Spirit, and I believe what I've heard, and the words enter into me – then these living words, which are the nature of God, will conform me to themselves (Himself). Prov. 22:17, Luke 8:15, Heb. 4:2, Jam. 1:21.
- This is how God delivers a man from pride, anger and addictions, a woman from bitterness and gossip and children from disobedience and rebellion – imparting His character to us one verse at a time. Prov. 16:6, John 8:32, John 17:17.

If I truly love Jesus Christ I will love God's (living) words – they are one and the same. John 14:23, 1 John 5:7..

## **Session 6(a) – Marriage and believing God (more than my circumstances)**

1. God wants to be my God, my sole source and all provider, in every area of my life. But it can't happen until in each area I am willing to actually put my trust in Him. 2 Cor.6:16, Rom. 8:32, Mat.6:33, Psa. 23;1, Psa 37:5.
2. Everything that comes from God comes only by faith – my relationship with Him began by faith and only continues by faith. Heb 10:38 Eph 2:8 Mar.9:23 Rom 5:2.
  - It's either my own faith or the faith of another God is able to find to believe Him for me (possibly a husband or wife or child). Mat. 9:29, Mar. 2:5.
  - Walking by sight (based on sense knowledge and reasoning) is the opposite of walking by faith – hence fatalism or the resignation that whatever happens was meant to be, is not faith 2 Cor 5:7, Col. 2:6.
3. It's impossible for me to trust God unless He has spoken to me personally so that I know His will and have His word of promise on the matter. Rom 10:17 Luk.11:28.
  - He is utterly faithful to perform what He has promised – if I retain His promise. Heb 10:23, Num. 23:19.
  - Since my faith depends on having heard His voice, it is impossible therefore to have faith for something that is not His will. Mat 21:22 Jam 4:3.
  - When I've heard from Him I don't need to presume what His will is (presumption is not faith) I know it – my words and actions (works) therefore will be consistent with what I am believing Him for. Psa. 19:13 Jam. 2:17.

When we let God teach us how to truly trust Him for our material needs then our time allocation between work and family will become more balanced.

## **Session 6(b) – Marriage and the enemies of our faith (& our marriages)**

1. While God wants me to trust Him more, my flesh, the world and evil spirits want me to trust God less or not at all. These three seek constantly to gain or retain control of my will (my soul) rather than the Holy Spirit, acting

through my spirit, having control of my will. 1 Pet. 4:2, 1 John 2:16, 2 Tim. 2:26, Gal. 5:16.

2. As more of God's living words enter my heart, through daily eating the bread of living scriptures God gives me, the stronger my faith grows. With increasing faith it becomes easier to overcome thoughts that oppose my faith – thoughts such as: doubt, fear, pride, lust, fantasies, anger, envy, self-pity and resentment. By the daily renewing in my heart of God's word (Jam. 1:21, 2 Cor. 4:16) and submitting to the control of His spirit (Rom. 8:14), so in Christ, I can begin to:
  - Subdue the appetites of my body and learn to possess my vessel. Rom. 8:13, 1 Thes. 4:4.
  - Cease to be conformed to the world's opinions and practices but progressively be conformed to the image of God's Son. Rom. 12:2, Rom. 8:29.
  - Resist the Devil, quenching more of his fiery darts by bringing his thoughts and thought patterns, that once held me captive, into the captivity of God's words residing in my heart. Jam. 4:7, Eph. 6:16, 2 Cor. 10:4 & 5.
  - This is spiritual warfare, fighting the daily good fight of faith, in the thought life. 1 Tim. 6:12, Rev. 12:11.
  
3. More than anything else the principal weapon employed by the flesh, the world and the Devil to keep us from God or from growing in God, is pride. Pride is the voice and chief characteristic of self, it is the nature of Satan and we inherited its poison in our flesh from the first Adam. It lurks as a potential motive behind virtually everything we say and do. Pride is the opposite of love and since faith works by love where pride is present faith is impossible. It is at the root therefore of all unbelief.

When we move out of pride, no matter how subtly it conceals itself, God resists us. We ourselves cannot conquer pride, only the continual inflow of the meek and lowly Christ with His nature of Humility into our hearts, through Spirit breathed words, can mortify self with its pride. Humility is the chief characteristic and foundational grace of the Christian life. Humility is the only right and fitting disposition of one created towards our Creator. Psa. 10:4, Eze. 28:17, 1 John 2:16, John 5:44, James 4:6, Rom. 8:13, Mat. 11:29.

“All arguments come from pride” – Proverbs 13:10

## Session 7 – Marriage and bearing spiritual fruit

1. As part of our heavenly Father's desire for us to let Him fully be our God, He actually has a will for everything in my life. Even down to what I eat and what I wear. Col. 1:9, Mat. 6:31-33.
2. When I'm ready to genuinely submit to God's will for me, having had enough of the futility of my own will, God will fill me with His Holy Spirit and begin to lead me moment by moment. Mat. 11:29, Acts 5:32, Luke 11:13, Isa. 58:11.
3. The Holy Spirit will lead me into the word of God and reveal to my heart its meaning. As I believe each revealed scripture, the Holy Spirit writes these now living words on my heart and causes and enables me to walk in the light of them. John 16:13, Prov. 1:23, Heb. 8:10, Ezek. 36:27.
4. As more of God's nature resides in me through His living words, not only does my faith increase but my desires and interests start to become His desires and interests. 2 Pet. 1:4, Psa. 37:4, Phil. 2:13.
5. I become passionately interested in seeing others come to Christ especially the members of my family. I begin to seek God for promises that He can use me to believe and pray on their behalf. I start to recognize that the greatest thing a parent can do for a child is to introduce them as early as possible to a wonderful God and Savior. Prov. 11:30, Psa. 2:8, Luke 10:2, Luke 18:16.
6. As I grow in the knowledge and understanding of God and see him accomplish in me things that no amount of my will-power could achieve, so also does my enthusiasm to share deeper truths with other believers. Doors of opportunity to participate in Bible studies, discipleship programs and other forms of ministry and service begin to open up to me. Jer. 9:24, Zec. 4:6, 2 Tim. 2:24 & 25.
7. I find that as my heart abides in His words and I stay submitted to His Spirit, His anointed words start to flow out of my mouth as the fruit of my lips available for others to eat. Luke 6:45, John 7:38, Prov. 22:21 & 25:11.
8. I discover that the most important part of me in my relationship with Jesus Christ, and therefore with my family, is my heart – and in particular keeping my heart tender without which I cannot have fellowship with either God or

family. Heb. 3:15, 1 John 1:3. God's desire for me daily as a husband or wife is that.

- Above all else I put on love which is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14), and that we as a couple:
- Exhort, encourage and comfort one another daily with God's word, and pray for one another ... lest either one of us should become hardened (of heart) through the deceitfulness of sin. Heb. 3:13.
- When both of our hearts are submitted to God and to His will, arguments and contentions between us begin to disappear. 1 Pet. 4:2, Phil. 2:3.

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see (hear and have communion with) God" Mat. 5:8