



COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Discipleship Essentials Pathways

NEW VISION

DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY

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Cover design: Farmshed Creative
Interior design: Farmshed Creative

Printed in the United States of America

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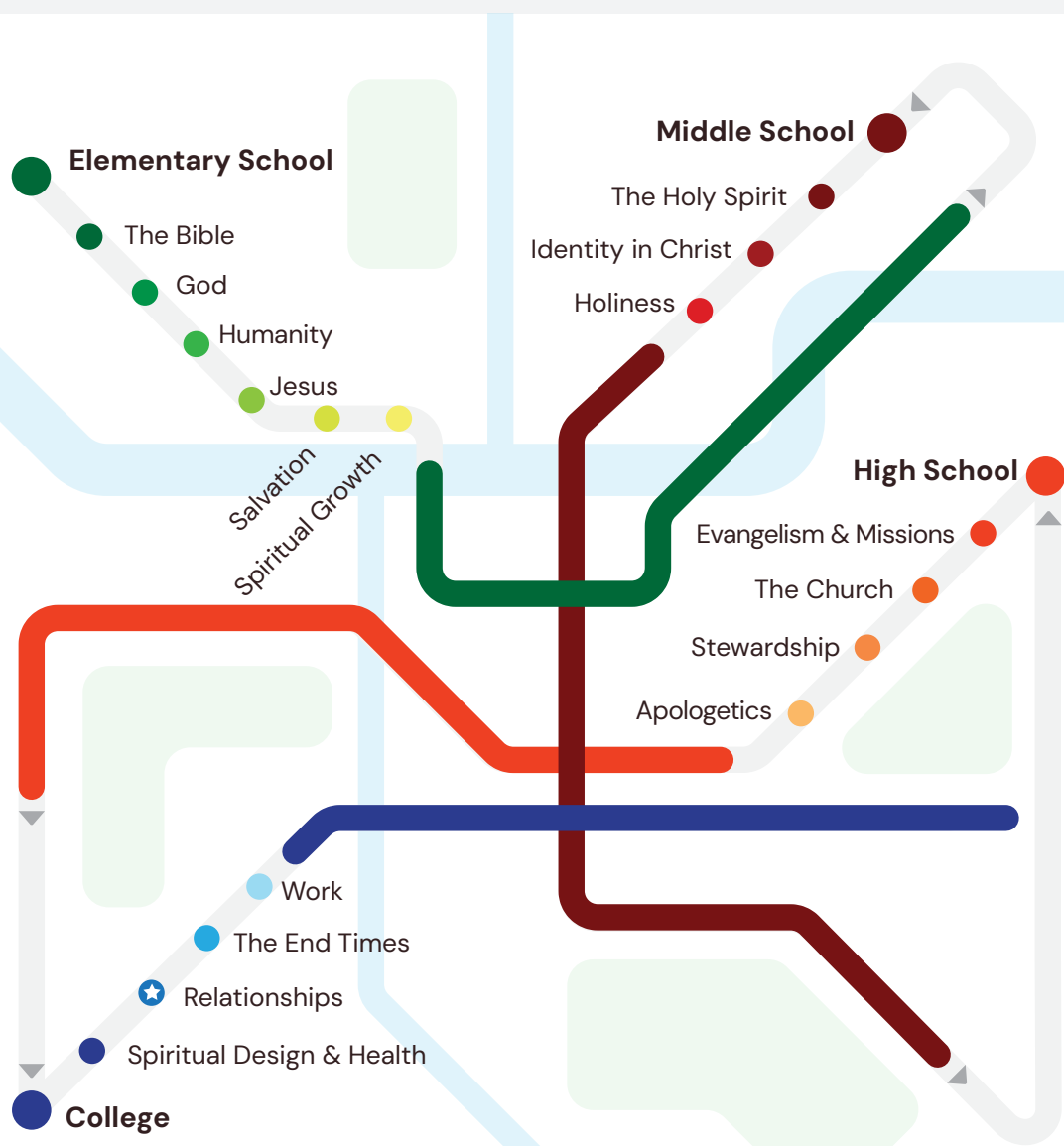
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Godly Sexuality

System Map

LEGEND

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College



Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Detailed Overview

Elementary Schoolers

- Kindergarten: The Bible
- First Grade: God
- Second Grade: Humanity
- Third Grade: Jesus
- Fourth Grade: Salvation
- Fifth Grade: Spiritual Growth

Middle Schoolers

- Sixth Grade: The Holy Spirit
- Seventh Grade: Identity in Christ
- Eighth Grade: Holiness

High Schoolers

- Ninth Grade: Evangelism and Missions
- Tenth Grade: The Church
- Eleventh Grade: Stewardship
- Twelfth Grade: Apologetics

College Students

- Freshman: Spiritual Design & Health
- Sophomore: Relationships
- Junior: The End Times
- Senior: Work

Introduction

Note: You may be a young adult going through this Pathway on your own. That is awesome! If you would like, continue through the Pathway on your own; but you may also consider doing so with a small group leader, friend, or mentor. This is also an opportunity to invite someone in your family to study with you. Feel free to reach out to the College or Young Adult Team for help or guidance as you walk through your own discipleship journey.

To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to lead others to follow Jesus too. Contrary to the spirit of the famous “The Buck Stops Here” placard on President Harry S. Truman’s desk, Jesus’ desk placard might have said something like “You’re One Link in a Long Chain.” To be a *disciple* of Jesus is to be a *discipler* of others, just as Jesus told us in what is known as the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.”
– Matthew 28:18–20

Often, when we think of people discipling to fulfill the Great Commission, we think of men and women discipling other men and women at coffee shops, a collegiate minister discipling students at the student union, or perhaps a church staff discipling its members on the church campus. All of that is true, of course, but one of the most important places for discipleship is our homes. Whether you are a young adult planning on discipling others in the future, or you are a parent, grandparent, family member, or mentor, your calling is discipleship. As a Christian, God has called you to disciple others. This is the central point of what God told His people Israel through Moses:

“The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). This is what we want to help you with through the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*.

How to Use the Discipleship Pathway

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* is built on a framework of seventeen modules to be used one per year. This book includes Module 15: Relationships and is designed for sophomore-age college students or young adults. Modules 1–6 are to be used for kindergartners through fifth graders. Modules 7–9 are to be used with sixth through eighth graders. Modules 10–13 are to be used with ninth through twelfth graders. And finally, Modules 14–17 are to be used with college-aged young adults. Throughout the seventeen modules, you will have the opportunity to engage with the core doctrines of the Christian faith and many practical aspects of following Jesus.

Each module contains twelve lessons, one for each month beginning in August and ending in July of the following year. Here’s how to use the *Pathway*:

The First Week of August

STEP ONE

Choose a day and time when it is easiest to block out about fifteen minutes for a weekly devotion. You can do this alone, with family, friends, or a small group. Of course, if you already have a regular devotion time, that would be the best time to choose.

STEP TWO

During your family devotion time in the first week of August, open the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book to August’s content.

STEP THREE

Begin by reading the catechism to your family. A catechism is a method of instruction based on a question-and-answer format that has been used throughout church history. The catechism provides the main idea that your family will focus on for the month. You may notice definitions or further definitions provided. These are provided to help you learn these important terms.

STEP FOUR

Next, read the Bible story, either from the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book or from a Bible. The CSB is used in Modules 14 through 17.

STEP FIVE

Now, it is time to read the devotional.

STEP SIX

Next, find the memory verse and prayer prompt for week 1. These will provide your focus for the rest of the week. Begin by reading the memory verse a few times, saying as much as you can by memory as you do. Then, close your devotional time in prayer, using the prompt as a guideline for what to pray about. Of course, you can pray about more than that, but at least pray about the topic provided.

That's it! You're done.

You will notice that each lesson concludes with a next step, a challenging thought, or reflection questions. These are for you to use during the week and on the rest of the devotion days of the month.

During the week, look for opportunities to talk about the main ideas of the catechism, Bible story, and devotional that you covered. The goal is to keep God at the top of your mind and deep down in your heart. Also, continue working on memorizing the memory verse and praying for the topic of the prayer prompt.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks of August

STEP ONE

During your devotion time in the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month, go over the catechism again, perhaps memorizing it along with the memory verses.

STEP TWO

You do not need to read the Bible story or devotion again, but of course, you can if you want.

STEP THREE

Spend more time working on the memory verses.

STEP FOUR

Close your time in prayer, once again using the prayer prompt as your baseline.

The First Week of September

Once the calendar flips to September, it's time to move on to the next lesson, repeating the process. Then, once July arrives, it will be time to get Module 16 to begin using that next August.

A FEW FINAL TIPS

If you have multiple people going through different modules, that's awesome! Go through the lesson with the youngest student in the first week, and move to the second youngest the next week, and so on. Review together as needed, and turn your prayer prompts into a prayer list!

If you miss a devotion one week, that's okay! Give yourself grace and pick back up next week. Consistency over the long term is the key.

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If you use the *Pathway* in a group setting, try to encourage questions as a part of your time as you grow more comfortable. Dialogue is always better than monologue when it comes to discipleship.

If you are starting your journey using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* with this Module, you might consider using what you have missed during Christmas break, Spring break, or the summer as a short-term intensive, covering one lesson per day instead of per month, and forgoing memorizing the memory verses. Of course, there's also nothing wrong with starting right where you are and moving forward without ever looking back!

If you already have a devotional plan, or if you find one along the way, feel free to couple it with the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*. Do both on the same day or choose a second day to stretch your discipleship efforts further throughout the week.

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* doesn't provide you with all the answers about our faith, but it should give you a solid framework from which you can explore additional questions as they come up.

The Gospel Message

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1). He formed light and darkness, land and sea, fish and birds, plants and animals. But on the final day of creation, He saved His best work for last: He made people. God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and designed us to love, trust, worship, and follow Him.

However, God didn't force us to love Him; He gave us a choice. We can choose to trust and obey Him or we can go our own way. When we choose to go our own way instead of God's way, that's called *sin*, and sin breaks our relationship with God. The Bible tells us: "Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory" (Romans 3:23). The bad news is that our sin separates us from God, and we cannot fix this problem on our own. We need help.

The good news is that God, in His great love, made a way for us to be forgiven through Jesus. God sent Jesus, His one and only Son, to live a perfect life and take the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross (John 3:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). Even though he physically stopped breathing and died, He didn't stay dead. On the third day, He rose again, defeating sin and death so we could have new and eternal life in Him. Why is this important? Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves – pay the price for our own sin.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, a restored relationship with God has been offered to us. To accept this offer, we turn away from sin and choose to put our faith in Jesus as both Savior and Lord. The Bible tells us: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9). To break that down, We trust Jesus as Savior, because His death in our place is the only way we can be forgiven for our sins. We trust and follow Jesus as Lord, meaning we submit to His ultimate authority and allow Him to lead our lives. When we trust Jesus for our salvation and submit to His authority as Lord, we receive forgiveness and are saved from the power and punishment of our sins.

If you're ready to follow Jesus, here's what you need to do:

01

Admit that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness.

02

Believe that Jesus is God's Son, who died for your sins and rose again.

03

Confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord, choosing to follow Him daily.

The following is an example of what to pray if you are ready to put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord today. The words themselves aren't special. It's your heart behind them if you believe it.

Dear God,

I know that You created me in Your image to love, trust, and follow You. But I confess that I have sinned against You. I have chosen my own way instead of Yours, and my sins have separated me from You. And I know that I cannot fix this problem on my own.

Thank You for loving me so much that You sent Your Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I believe that He paid my punishment, and I believe that He rose from the dead, defeating sin and death so that I could have new life in Him.

Today, I turn away from my sin and I surrender my life to You. I ask for Your forgiveness and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Please change my heart, help me to follow You daily, and give me the strength to live for You.

Thank You for Your love and the gift of salvation.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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If you just prayed that prayer for the first time, don't keep it to yourself, share it with someone! Tell a parent, guardian, pastor, or trusted Christian friend. They would love to celebrate with you, encourage you, and help you to take your next steps in following Jesus.

The Family and God's Purposes

What is the purpose of the family?

Families are designed by God to reflect His love to the world and bring Him glory. God desires that families serve as witnesses to the gospel by loving God, loving others, and making disciples.

Bible Story

Here's a quick introduction to this passage, one of the most famous passages in the Old Testament for God's people. This passage highlights how important families are to God and calls families to pass down the truths about God from one generation to the next.

⁴"Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. ⁷Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. ⁹Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates."

— Deuteronomy 6:4–9

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Right now, you may not have a spouse or children, but chances are you desire that one day. And if you don't today, at some point you likely will.

Deuteronomy 6 shows us that our faith isn't just meant for Sundays; it's meant to shape every part of our lives. It calls parents to make their faith part of every aspect of life, when at home or out and about, in the morning or at night, make your relationship with God central. So how does this affect you now? At every age, we should place Jesus as the most important person in our lives. Your relationship with Jesus should influence your school, work, friendships, and everything else.

And what does this have to do with you having a family one day? Because how you live out your faith now sets the tone for how you'll live it out with a family in the future. Faith isn't something you dust off for Sundays; it should be the foundation of your life.

God designed families to reflect His love. Husbands and wives are to love each other sacrificially and selflessly, mirroring Christ's love for

the church. Parents are called to teach their children about God, living out His commands daily. Children are to honor their parents, learning trust and obedience. But at the end of the day, the purpose of family fits with a greater purpose for all of us: **to love God, love others, and make disciples.** Marriage and parenting are a training ground for patience, forgiveness, and selflessness. They are meant to reflect God's love to the world, demonstrating His faithfulness to the next generation. When families live this way, they don't just function well; they also become a powerful reflection of the gospel to the world around them.

If you want to start living this out now, begin by building habits that center your life on Jesus. Spend time daily in God's Word and in prayer—not out of obligation, but out of love, to deepen your relationship with Him. Choose friends who challenge and encourage your faith. Serve at your church and look for ways to love others the way Christ loves you. Practice patience and forgiveness in your current relationships, even when it's hard. These steps may seem small, but they form the spiritual

foundation you'll one day carry into marriage and parenting. Becoming the kind of person who helps lead a Christ-centered family starts with becoming someone faithful in the day-to-day, long before the family arrives.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the

road, when you lie down and when you get up. — Deuteronomy 6:6–7

Prayer

Thank God for giving the family the amazing and important task of being the center of discipleship.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.
— Galatians 6:10

Prayer

Thank God for extending the family in the home to include the family of faith in the church.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second

is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” — Matthew 22:37–39

Prayer

Ask God to help you deeply love the members of your family.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

My son, keep your father’s command, and don’t reject your mother’s teaching. Always bind them to your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk here and there, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch

over you; when you wake up, they will talk to you.

— Proverbs 6:20–22

Prayer

Ask God to help you to be joyfully obedient to your parents, as well as all others He has put in authority over you.



Next Steps

Think about your family of origin. What spiritual legacy have they left for you? What aspects of your family would you like to mirror, and which would you do differently? What habits can you begin to shape today? Make a list of 5 spiritual habits you desire to implement for your future family, and begin to pray for God to help you establish them in the future.

Notes:

The Meaning Of Marriage

What is the meaning of marriage?

Marriage is God's gift to men and women and is designed to reflect the covenant love between Jesus and His church. It is a lifelong union between one man and one woman that displays the gospel through love, sacrifice, and faithfulness.



Definition

Covenant: in the Bible, a sacred, binding agreement given by God, based on His faithfulness; a promise.

Unlike a contract, which either party can break, a covenant is rooted in God's unchanging character. It often includes a divine promise and commitment, as seen in God's covenants with Abraham, the Israelites, and ultimately through Jesus' new covenant with the church, which was proven by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (see Luke 22).

Bible Story

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, ²³ because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷ He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own

flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,³⁰ since we are members of his body.³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

³² This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

³³ To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

— Ephesians 5:22–33

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In a time when love and marriage are debated more than ever, it's important to know what Christians believe about marriage. God, who instituted the first marriage and defines love and marriage, is clear about marriage. God is unchanging in His definition and design of marriage because it is a picture of something wonderful for humans, but it is bigger than human relationships. Paul teaches that marriage is a special picture of Christ's relationship with His church.

In Ephesians 5:25–29, husbands are commanded: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Just as Christ sacrificially loves and cherishes the church, so marriage calls a man and a woman into a self-giving union. This means that love and service are to be hallmarks of a marriage. It's true that we receive an amazing blessing in a marriage, but our higher calling is to be a blessing to our spouse, and if God provides, our children. This is what Jesus Himself pointed back to at creation: “He who made them at the beginning made them male and female... ‘the two shall become one flesh.’ So

they are no longer two but one flesh” (Matthew 19:4–6). While many scholars see “one flesh” to speak of physical intimacy, many others see it as the forming of a new family—a new entity, which often includes children. God's design of marriage, then, is the foundation to His design of the family. Both of which are wonderful gifts to us from Him.

As important as marriage is for us, God is clear on marriage because it is something that is bigger than us, too. From the very beginning in Genesis, God promised that He would send a way for us to be saved from our sins. He would give us new and eternal life, even though our sins meant we deserved death and separation from Him. This way, of course, is Jesus Christ, “the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him]” (John 14:6). And God wants us to know that He will never relent from His love or relinquish His promises, which takes us back to His design of marriage.

Marriage between a man and a woman is to be a picture of that *covenant* or promise. As such, its

a picture of something greater. The union between Jesus and the church is the mountain range, and human marriage is the picture on the postcard, not the other way around. It's why we can't tamper with or redefine marriage; it's to be how God created it to be. That means life-giving closeness and sexual intimacy should occur only within marriage. That also means that marriage is to be a commitment between one man and one woman for life, just as Jesus is committed to us eternally. This is why God hates divorce, for He would not leave His people. It's why husbands are to die to themselves, serving their wives daily, and why wives submit to their husbands as their husbands follow God (we will look more at the roles of husbands and wives in a subsequent devotion). Marriage is designed perfectly, and it matters greatly, so we must adhere to God's definition and design, knowing it's what is best.

Jesus Himself upheld these truths as He taught on earth. No matter what time in history, God's design stands ultimate, even though Scripture doesn't mention every cultural scenario by name. Jesus' reference (Matthew 19) to the Genesis pattern shows His view: marriage is a divine

gift for reflecting gospel love. This means seeing dating and marriage not just as personal choices, but as ways to live out Christ's story of sacrificial love. Even as we extend grace to everyone, we hold that God's design for marriage is the lifelong union of a man and woman, modeled after Christ and the church. When we follow God's design, we see His love for us in an even more beautiful way.



Further Inspection

Many scholars believe that the Bible gives two allowances for divorce: sexual immorality (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15). Some hold to these two exceptions only. Others see how the Bible speaks against physical violence and believe the two divorce exceptions were not intended to be exhaustive, so they add another provision for physical, sexual, and other forms of abuse. Even then, though, divorce is never commanded—it's only ever a last resort. God's heart is always for confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration, because that's the story of the gospel. Just as Christ never gives up on His bride, we're called to fight for faithfulness, even when it's hard.

We do not want you or anyone you know to walk through that fight alone. Fighting for faithfulness is often difficult and should include seeking insight and guidance from a trusted pastor, minister, or biblical counselor. Please reach out to us for care or visit newvisionlife.com/care.

SEPTEMBER



Challenging Thought

Marriage exists as a picture of the covenant union between Jesus and the church. How does that picture challenge your view and idea of marriage? Where does God's true picture differ from your conception?

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the

truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. — 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

Prayer

Ask God to grow you in love, patience, and kindness, and to decrease any pride and arrogance.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man. — Genesis 2:23

Prayer

Ask God to prepare you to sacrifice your own desires and place your future spouse’s desires first.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” — Matthew 19:6

Prayer

Ask God to give you a permanent view of marriage and to do what is needed to make that a reality.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. — Ephesians 4:3

Prayer

Thank God for providing the Holy Spirit to be part of your marriage to bring about unity and peace.

Singleness and God's Mission

What does the Bible say about singleness?

Singleness is a gift from God, given for undivided devotion to the Lord and His work. It is not a lesser calling than marriage, but a unique opportunity to serve Christ wholeheartedly.

Bible Story

³² I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. ³³ But the married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—³⁴ and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. ³⁵ I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

— 1 Corinthians 7:32–35

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In the modern world, singleness is often viewed in two different ways. First, it is seen as a way to avoid commitment. However, God's Word calls His people to live in purity and holiness. This means humans were not created to live with multiple partners in uncommitted relationships. Therefore, this view that the world so often holds is incorrect, and the Bible reveals that it is also dangerous.

Second, some view singleness as a life of loneliness. However, this is far from the truth. God provides relational intimacy in relationships with friends, family members, and other brothers and sisters in Christ. On top of this, there are great biblical models such as Jesus and the apostle Paul who were never married.

Inside the church, many today feel as though singleness is less than, and some may even wonder if God is delaying bringing them a spouse as a kind of punishment for something they have done. This is far from the biblical perspective on a season of singleness, or even long-term singleness. Instead, God

has something specific and unique for single people.

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is speaking about how sex is reserved for marriage relationships, and that it should not occur outside this boundary. This leads him to bring up his singleness, sharing that he wishes everyone lived in the same circumstances. This is Paul's opinion, of course, but it is especially important because of *why* Paul says this.

He says that he wishes more people were single like him because those who are married are concerned about both the calling they have from the Lord and the duties expected of a wife or a husband. In this way, their energy is divided. On the other hand, the single person can be wholeheartedly devoted to the calling of the Lord for his or her life, rather than dividing their time and energy with their marriage relationship.

If you're unmarried, use the time you have right now wisely; steward it well. Start by intentionally investing

your time and energy into your relationship with God—develop consistent habits of prayer, Scripture reading, and worship. Look for opportunities to serve in your church, community, or on mission, using your flexibility to meet the needs of others who may not be able to. Grow deep, Christ-centered friendships that sharpen your faith and remind you that you're not alone. Set big personal goals, intently pursue what God is calling you toward, and ask Him to show you how He wants to use this season for His glory. Don't be impatient for what's next; step fully into what God is doing in your life today.

Marriage is a gift from God, but so is singleness. It allows you to use the time you have in unique ways. Singleness is not less than, or like a punishment of any kind. It may be a season, or like Paul, it may be a calling. But it is something that God can use in a powerful, Kingdom-building way.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Let each one live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches.
— 1 Corinthians 7:17

Prayer

Thank God for the gifts He has given you in the season of life you are in right now.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Trust in the Lord and do what is good; dwell in the land and live securely. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. — Psalm 37:3–4

Prayer

Ask God to align your desires with His and help you to delight in Him.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the

secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.
— Philippians 4:11–12

Prayer

Ask God to help you be content with whatever circumstances may come in your life.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

A tranquil heart is life to the body, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones. — Proverbs 14:30

Prayer

Ask God to give you peace about your present situation and to guard you from any jealousy you might feel about others.



Challenging Thought

Singleness may be a season, but it could also be a calling. If you are single but desire marriage, be encouraged that God knows the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 says, “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires.” The contingent part of that verse commands us to “delight in the Lord.” How are you delighting in the Lord and seeking Him alone for contentment right now?

Notes:

Marriage and God's Design

What does the Bible say about marriage?

When God creates man and woman, He says they are to leave their parents and become one flesh, which occurs through the union of marriage. Later in Scripture, God says that husbands are called to love their wives, and wives are called to respect their husbands.

Bible Story

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, ²³ because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷ He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ since we are members of his body. ³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³² This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

— Ephesians 5:22–33

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, ⁵ is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. ⁶ Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

— 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In today's culture, there are a lot of different ideas about what relationships and marriage should look like. Many people are getting married much later in life, and some are not interested. This looks very different from marriage when the Bible was written. Although the differences today are not necessarily bad, some biblical principles about marriage should still be adhered to today.

Several places in Scripture discuss marriage. One of the most prominent, however, is found in Ephesians 5. This text is helpful in many ways, and we examine it now to look specifically at the roles within marriage. Paul says that women are commanded to submit to their husbands. This command to women has been largely misunderstood in modern times. The command for women to submit to their husbands directly follows a command in Ephesians 5:21, which commands all believers to live in submission to one another. Submission in this context has less to do with fear or blind obedience, and more to do with respect and love. This is certainly a principle for girls to consider when looking for a

husband. A good question to ask is, "Do I respect this person enough to submit to him?" Another one is, "Is he following God to the best of his ability in order to lead me in the right direction?" These are wise guidelines as you evaluate a potential spouse.

More context for the submission of the wife to her husband is added a few verses later when husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church. This refers to a sacrificial love, revealing that God's design for marriage has less to do with a harsh and dominating husband and more to do with a husband who is leading his family from a place of love. A good question for guys to ask when looking for a wife is, "Do I love this person enough to serve her sacrificially?" Another one is, "Am I following God to the best of my ability in order to lead my future spouse to Jesus?" Both of these are of ultimate consideration when seeking to become the man God has made you to be.

Returning to the passage found in Genesis, God's design is for a man and woman to be united in marriage and to be considered one flesh

before Him. As Ephesians says, no person hates himself, and so within marriage, the Golden Rule is an applicable principle. A husband or wife is meant to be treated as you would desire to be treated. Several factors within marriage make this a hard practice; both people are imperfect humans. However, another aspect of God's design for marriage is that He often uses godly marriages as a way to refine and challenge His people to look more like Himself. As the saying goes, marriage isn't easy but worth it. God gives marriage as a good gift; as a picture of the relationship between Jesus and the church.

So, what can you do now to prepare for a marriage that reflects God's design? Start by becoming the kind of person you'd want to marry—someone who is rooted in Christ, committed to growing in character, and learning to love selflessly. Practice honoring others in your current relationships through patience, forgiveness, and humility. Seek accountability and mentorship from older, godly couples who can model a Christ-centered marriage, especially if you're already in a relationship. Learn to communicate with truth, forgiveness, and grace,

and ask God to shape your heart for service rather than self. These intentional next steps will strengthen your relationship with Jesus—and help prepare you for a future relationship that honors Him.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." — Genesis 2:18

Prayer

Thank God for His good gift in marriage and other close relationships.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. — Genesis 2:24

Prayer

Ask God to help you commit any possible future marriage to Him; pray it would be a marriage of unity and faithfulness.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

Didn't God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his youth. — Malachi 2:15

Prayer

Ask God to help you commit any possible future children to Him so that you will strive to raise them in the Lord.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female, and he also said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his

wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" — Matthew 19:4–5

Prayer

Ask God to help you desire a marriage that honors Him, rather than seeking what the world thinks marriage is all about.



Next Steps

If you're single, what God-honoring marriage do you watch in order to emulate? Find a married person of the same gender as you who can mentor you, or whom you can ask questions about marriage.

If you're already in a relationship, make sure you're with someone you can see yourself marrying according to the principles above. Find a married couple you can spend time with to help you learn more about a God-honoring marriage.

Notes:

The “Who” of Dating

What kind of person should I consider dating?

You should pursue someone whose character reflects Christ, who is growing spiritually, and with whom you share a direction and purpose in life. While attraction and compatibility matter, a relationship should ultimately be built on the only thing that will stand: Jesus and His kingdom.

Bible Story

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” ¹⁹ The Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²² Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man.

²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

— Genesis 2:18–24

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

The passage above is about the first marriage in history, and before a Christian gets married, they must first be in a Godly relationship. So in this devotion, we'll focus mainly on the "who" and a bit of the "how" of dating.

When it comes to dating, many people focus on surface-level traits: looks, financial stability, or shared interests. But Scripture teaches us that *character* matters more than anything else. The person you date could become your spouse, and marriage is one of the most significant decisions you will ever make. So, how do you know if someone is worth dating?

Here are five key questions to help guide your decision. This is called the "Are They Potential? Grid" because if they make it through this grid, then they are potential!

Are they a follower of Jesus?

2 Corinthians 6:14 warns against being "unequally yoked" with unbelievers. Do not, I repeat, do not date someone who is not a follower of Christ. If you are heading in different spiritual

directions, your relationship will face tension and frustration. Shared faith is foundational for a God-honoring relationship.

Is there evidence of spiritual growth in their life?

John 15:4-5 reminds us that those who abide in Christ will bear fruit. A healthy relationship should encourage you both to grow in your faith, not pull you away from it.

What's their reputation with friends and coworkers?

Character is often revealed in how someone treats those around them. Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is more desirable than great riches." Do they treat others with kindness, integrity, and respect?

Do you like hanging out with them?

This may seem "unspiritual," but there is wisdom here. You will be spending a lot of time with the person you choose to marry. So you should make sure you actually enjoy talking to them, find them interesting, and like being around them. So...here's a challenge: for the first 6 months of the relationship, commit to spending less time

making out and more time talking and getting to know each other (ok, yikes, I said it!). Focus more on communication than physical connection, and for certain, you will be thankful later.

Do you have similar directions in life?

Amos 3:3 asks, “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” If your long-term goals and callings clash, it will lead to frustration. It’s important to ensure your paths align before committing to a serious relationship. Listen, you’ll never be perfectly aligned with anyone, godly relationships are

about sacrifice and selflessness.

But if you desire a family-centered life and they want to work for NASA and spend 5 years on Mars, that might be a problem.

Dating is not about “fixing” someone or waiting for them to change. It’s a time to *evaluate* if this is someone you can build a future with in Christ. Instead of asking, “How can I get them to be who I want?” ask, “Are they already walking in the direction God is calling me?” If the answer is no, it may be time to reconsider the relationship.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? — 2 Corinthians 6:14

Prayer

Ask God to help you not compromise on pursuing relationships only with other followers of Jesus.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Can two walk together without agreeing to meet? — Amos 3:3

Prayer

Ask God for guidance in pursuing a relationship with shared direction and purpose.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

"Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much

fruit, because you can do nothing without me." — John 15:4–5

Prayer

Ask God to help you guard your mind and heart to keep Jesus first and foremost in your dating relationships.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold. — Proverbs 22:1

Prayer

Ask God to develop your Christlike character so you can reflect Jesus in all your relationships, not just in dating.



Challenging Thought

In dating, character matters more than anything else. What character does your current partner have? If you are single, what type of character are you looking for? Be specific with your answer.



Reflection Questions

- 01** Why is it tempting to focus on surface-level qualities when looking for a partner?

- 02** What have you primarily searched for in a partner? Why?

- 03** Why does God's Word tell us to prioritize a deeper level of connection?

Dating with Wisdom

What safeguards or boundaries should I have when dating?

Scripture does not specifically define boundaries regarding what is and is not sin regarding relationships outside marriage. What is clear is that throughout scripture, humanity is called to be free of sexual immorality. Sexual immorality can be defined as any sexual activity outside of the confines of marriage.

Bible Story

¹ Now Joseph had been taken to Egypt. An Egyptian named Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guards, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. ² The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, serving in the household of his Egyptian master. ³ When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made everything he did successful, ⁴ Joseph found favor with his master and became his personal attendant. Potiphar also put him in charge of his household and placed all that he owned under his authority. ⁵ From the time that he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. The Lord's blessing was on all that he owned, in his house and in his fields. ⁶ He left all that he owned under Joseph's authority; he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome. ⁷ After some time his master's wife looked longingly at Joseph and said, "Sleep with me."

⁸ But he refused. “Look,” he said to his master’s wife, “with me here my master does not concern himself with anything in his house, and he has put all that he owns under my authority. ⁹ No one in this house is greater than I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. So how could I do this immense evil, and how could I sin against God?”

¹⁰ Although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her.

— Genesis 39:1–10

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In the early stages of a relationship, physical attraction can play a large role in the overall health of a relationship. We often date those we find attractive. Physical attraction is not what makes or breaks a relationship. Still, in terms of being honorable in the eyes of the Lord, strong physical attraction can often lead to trouble. When you combine good “chemistry” with weak resistance to sexual temptation, the result is almost always unhealthy. In modern-day America, hook-up culture is at an all-time high. As humans, we fall prey to our desires, and often cannot resist ourselves and fall into the “too far” category far too often. The Bible does not speak of dating relationships in terms of physical intimacy. However, we are all called to be free from sexual immorality or any sexual activity occurring outside of the confines of marriage.

What exactly does this look like today? Physical desire is a natural part of human nature, but God tells us to practice self-control; specifically, this looks like refraining from any sexual activity. Although some physical actions fall on the

“ok” side of this imaginary “line”, the temptation to further intimacy often leads to sin (crossing the “line”).

Thankfully, God’s word gives us wisdom and even a practical example. Taking Joseph’s approach in Genesis 49, he said, “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” when asked if he would sleep with this married woman. “ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.” Joseph recognized the sin/temptation and not only resisted it with his words, but also furthered his proximity from the sin/temptation. He ran away from the possibility of sin. That is how we should live. Although physical actions on the right side of the “line” may not be sinful, it rarely stops there. If you find yourself tempted, don’t put yourself in the situation. The Bible literally tells us to run, to “flee from sexual immorality” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

So then, God’s rules are clear, and the line is solid. No, the Bible doesn’t tell us that holding hands is good, but kissing is bad. It simply discussed sexual immorality; however, we can

learn much wisdom from the Word. Paul is helpful in this as he talks to the church in Rome about clean and unclean things. In Romans 14:13, he says, "Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother." Paul says not to put yourself, or anyone else, in a position to sin. Although the context is of food and drink, the concept of not causing someone else to stumble by your actions holds weight in the question of "what is too far?" He's saying, "Don't even get close!" Paul continues, writing:

"So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in

the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding."

He says it "is not a matter of eating and drinking but of *righteousness*..." God wants us to live righteous, or pure and holy, lives. We don't only look out for our own proper and holy actions, but we also make sure that we help our partner stay clear. If we are stumbling ourselves or causing others to stumble through our actions, that is unacceptable in the eyes of the Lord. So, how far is too far? If you're asking the question, it may be that temptation is right around the corner. Run from the mere possibility of sin, and you will not regret it later.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? — 2 Corinthians 6:14

Prayer

Ask God to help you not compromise on pursuing relationships only with other followers of Jesus.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Can two walk together without agreeing to meet? — Amos 3:3

Prayer

Ask God for guidance in pursuing a relationship with shared direction and purpose.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

"Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much

fruit, because you can do nothing without me." — John 15:4–5

Prayer

Ask God to help you guard your mind and heart to keep Jesus first and foremost in your dating relationships.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold. — Proverbs 22:1

Prayer

Ask God to develop your Christlike character so you can reflect Jesus in all your relationships, not just in dating.



Reflection Questions

01 When and where do you find yourself most tempted in dating relationships?

02 Have you been able to walk the line of “not too far” and “too far” well? Why or why not?

03 What is a good boundary for your current or future dating relationships?

Dating with Discernment

Why is it unwise to be romantically involved with a non-Christian?

It isn't wise. If the goal of dating is to ultimately lead to marriage, then it is best to be involved with someone who shares your beliefs. Scripture tells us that the person we marry is to be a believer.



Further Inspection

Followers of Jesus are to marry followers of Jesus, which is what 2 Corinthians 6:14 calls being *equally yoked*. Being equally yoked spiritually means that two people, especially in a marriage or close partnership, share a common faith and commitment to God. Just as two animals in a yoke together must pull in the same direction to work effectively, believers are called to unite with others who share their faith to avoid spiritual conflict and grow together in Christ.

Bible Story

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said:

I will dwell and walk among them,
and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

— 2 Corinthians 6:14–16

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Think back to when you had to work on a team, whether in a team sport, in a band, or on a school project, etc. Whether good or bad, the outcome of the team's success fell on all team members. Although we all have good and bad days, we have always wished that we or someone else on our team had done better, whether catching the ball instead of dropping it, or being in the correct key in chorus. When all of the parts of a team are pulling in the same direction, the team acts as one and therefore finds success and growth. It's not about one, it's about the whole.

We can apply this same concept to future marriages. In 2 Corinthians, Paul says that a partnership of "righteousness and lawlessness" (a believer and an unbeliever) will not work; it's not a true partnership because the members pull in two different directions. Marriage is like rowing a boat across a wide, deep river. If both people are paddling in rhythm, facing the same direction, and listening to the same guide—Jesus—the boat moves forward with grace and purpose. But if one rows toward comfort while the other rows toward Christ, the boat spins in circles or drifts off course entirely. The current of life is strong, filled

with challenges and distractions, and unless both hearts are anchored in the same truth, the journey becomes exhausting and ineffective.

But what if you simply want to date a non-believer? Dating a non-Christian is unwise because dating is meant to be a path toward marriage. If marriage is designed to be a spiritual partnership with both people pursuing Christ together, then dating someone who doesn't share your faith sets the relationship on an uneven foundation from the start. As mismatched teammates struggle to succeed, a dating relationship with divided spiritual priorities will only lead to tension (and often damaging compromise). If your ultimate goal is to glorify God and build a Christ-centered future, then it makes little sense to begin that journey with someone who isn't heading in the same direction. Dating should reflect the marriage you hope to build—and that starts with shared faith. That's why it matters so much to align your heart now—not just with who you hope to marry, but with the God who will steer your future together. You must look first toward Jesus, and secondly, at each other.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said: I will dwell and walk among them, and I will be their

God, and they will be my people.
— 2 Corinthians 6:16

Prayer

Thank God for indwelling you and shaping you in Christ's image so that you can be the best future spouse possible.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

For this is God's will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality, that each of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor,

not with lustful passions, like the Gentiles, who don't know God.
— 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

Prayer

Ask God to help you remain sexually pure from this day on.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

"When a man takes a bride, he must not go out with the army or be liable for any duty. He is free to stay at home for one year, so

that he can bring joy to the wife he has married." — Deuteronomy 24:5

Prayer

Ask God to help you make a potential future marriage a top priority after Him.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.
— Hebrews 13:4

Prayer

Ask God to help you honor marriage by having a godly view of its purpose.

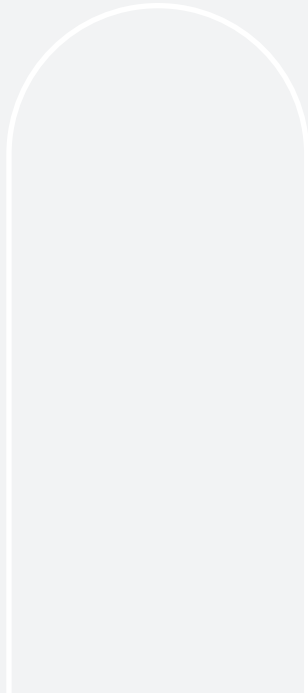
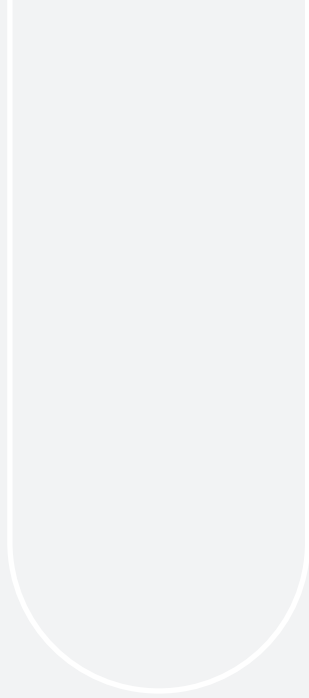


Next Steps

If you want to marry someone the Bible says you should marry, you have a clear next step: begin living like who the Bible says you are made to be. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Give glory to God. Love His people. Speak to a close Christian friend and ask them what areas of your life are aligned with God's will, and where you can continue to work. Pray together and for one another.

Notes:

FEBRUARY



Focusing on Christ

What should be my goal as I prepare for engagement or marriage?

Although seasons of dating and engagement can be exciting, frightening, fun, and busy, Jesus must be your top priority. Spending time with Jesus and His word has to be a regular practice to follow Jesus as Lord. Above all else, even the good things in our lives, we must focus on Christ.



Further Inspection

There's no time like the present, and it always seems to be shrinking. Whether engaged or in a committed and serious relationship, life is busier than ever, and that rarely seems to change. With a busy schedule, free time to spend with Jesus may be more limited. However, time must be made, even if that means waking up earlier or rearranging your priorities to seek Jesus. No matter how active we are, one thing must remain: dedicated time to spend with our Savior.

Bible Story

¹⁹ "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

— Matthew 6:19–24

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

The older you get, the busier life becomes. Relationships just add to the time crunch. Dating life is busy, and spending time getting to know someone intentionally, socially, and spiritually is draining. And it never gets easier! The engagement season is busy with plenty of wedding planning and future life planning in the months leading up to marriage. What dress or suit will you get? Where will you live? How are you going to make money? How are you going to provide? All these questions are certainly valid to ask. The tipping point where this period of engagement can become unhealthy is when it becomes an idol. Although marriage is a blessing from God, it's not ultimate; our relationship with Jesus is. It can be very easy to make God's creation—in this case, relationships, engagement, and marriage—an idol and something worthy of worship rather than protecting God as the recipient of our worship. And even if you are not in this season now, it's good to be prepared for all busy seasons of life, keeping Jesus as your most important relationship.

In Matthew 6:19–24, Jesus warns against storing up treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and instead urges us to store up treasures in heaven. He reminds us that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. What are you most prioritizing in life? There are always good things that the enemy wants to use to distract us from what is ultimate. In the context of dating, are we focused on Jesus and the pure life He wants for us, or are we focused on our desires? In the context of engagement, this teaching challenges us to examine where our hearts truly lie—are we more invested in building an image of a perfect wedding, or in building a marriage rooted in Christ? Jesus says our eyes are like portals that bring whatever we are focused on into our bodies; when we're fixated on earthly things, we grow dim, but when we focus on Him, our lives are filled with light. Ultimately, Jesus calls us to choose our sole master: we cannot serve both God and the pursuit of earthly security, pleasure, or perfection.

So, how do you keep Jesus at the center, even while balancing the relationships and pressures life brings? Begin each day with prayer, asking God to guard your heart against idolatry and to help you steward each and every season with faithfulness. Set aside regular time to read Scripture and remind yourself (or yourselves as a couple) that your identity is found in Christ, not in a perfect future. Have honest conversations with yourself, your

partner, your fiancé, or your spouse about how to pursue God together. Plan for and build a future that glorifies Him.

In every season, the goal is the same. We were made to bring glory to God. Singleness, dating, and engagement, then, become not just a season of preparation for marriage, but a test of our devotion to the One who gives everything in life its meaning.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
— Matthew 6:21

Prayer

Ask God to guard your heart to keep Jesus as your greatest treasure, even more than any relationship you are in.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. — Genesis 29:20

Prayer

Thank God for the blessing He has given us in relationships.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

And he has told us about your love in the Spirit. — Colossians 1:8

Prayer

Ask God to fill your heart with selfless love for Him and a potential spouse.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death; jealousy is as unrelenting as Sheol. Love's flames are fiery flames—an almighty flame!
— Song of Solomon 8:6

Prayer

Ask God to help you learn to take all commitments seriously, but especially one in a potential future marriage.



Next Steps

If you're single at the moment, ask God to give you the wisdom to plan out how you will keep your focus on Jesus during your future relationships. Write down five things you can commit to now that will help you keep Jesus as the most important relationship in your life.

If you're in a relationship now, sit down with your partner and discuss how you will focus on Christ as a couple. Write down five things to commit to, together or individually, that will help you keep Jesus as the most important relationship in your life.

Notes:

Godly Husbands

What are the characteristics of a godly husband?

Marriage reflects Christ's love through sacrifice, care, and a commitment to holiness and unity. A godly husband is called to love his wife as Christ loves the Church—selflessly, faithfully, and as one with her. He should be a leader, a servant of Christ, a defender against evil, and a lover of righteousness. You or your future husband should exemplify these qualities.

Bible Story

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷ He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ since we are members of his body. ³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

— Ephesians 5:25–31

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Paul lays out fairly clearly how husbands are to act. Early in the passage, he clearly states that husbands are supposed to love like Christ. He compares husbands loving wives to Christ loving the church—both in cherishing and in sacrifice. Men of God should love their wives through sacrifice. In verse 25, Paul says, “Christ loved the church and gave himself for her”. Jesus literally died for the believers. He sacrificed his own body for the benefit of those who would believe in him. In the same way, husbands are to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of their wives. This looks like a physical sacrifice, yes, but also a sacrifice through spending time with your wife, and serving them. Godly husbands are to die to their own selfish desires and put their wives before themselves. Jesus desires to spend time with his people and came not to be served but to serve. Husbands are to follow after Jesus through sacrifice. This is not an easy calling, but a high one; it is a responsibility to hold with sincerity and care.

Similarly, husbands are to love their wives through cherishing them. Paul talks about husbands loving their wives “as their own bodies”. He says, too, that “no one ever hates his own flesh but *provides* and *cares* for it...”. This is the perfect example of just how husbands are to love their wives. They are to provide for them and care for them as if they were providing and caring for their own body. If you were hungry, you would make sure that you have a meal; husbands make sure their wives are provided for before themselves. Jesus showed and still shows us this love through how he loves the church/His people. Christ provides for our every need, and he cares for every part of our heart, soul, and mind. Paul mentions at the end that “the two will become one flesh”. This is a picture of the two separate people caring and sacrificing for one another as if caring and sacrificing for themselves. When husbands are committed to living as Jesus lived and dies for us, they are following God’s design for their role in marriage.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. — Ephesians 5:25

Prayer

Ask God to help you develop a sacrificial love for others, in part to prepare you for marriage.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

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. — Matthew 20:28

Prayer

Ask God to grow your heart for serving.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter toward them. — Colossians 3:19

Prayer

Ask God to guard your heart against patterns of bitterness and anger.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. — 1 Peter 3:7

Prayer

Thank God for designing husbands and wives to support and encourage one another.

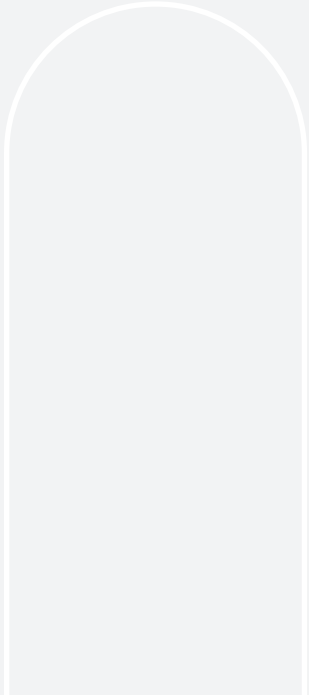
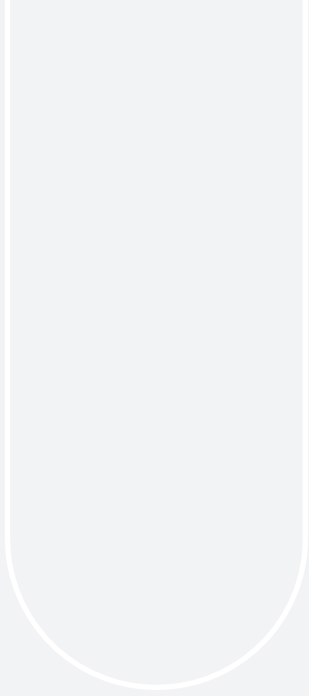


Next Steps

If you are a man, pray and ask God for wisdom. Then, make a list of five things you should do to be a godly husband toward your wife/future wife. Make sure at least two are specific, while three can be more general.

If you are a woman, pray and ask God for wisdom. Then, make a list of five things that you desire your husband/future husband to do for you to live out his calling, from the Biblical truth in this lesson. Make sure at least two are specific, while three can be more general.

Notes:



Godly Wives

What are the characteristics of a godly wife?

Marriage reflects the Church's love for Christ through respect, submission, and faithfulness. A godly wife is called to support, honor, and walk in unity with her husband, trusting God and living with strength, grace, and humility. Genesis says that a wife is meant to be a helper, a word associated with completion, strength or power. You or your future wife should exemplify these qualities.

Bible Story

- ¹⁰ Who can find a wife of noble character? She is far more precious than jewels.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will not lack anything good.
- ¹² She rewards him with good, not evil, all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She selects wool and flax and works with willing hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from far away.
- ¹⁵ She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and portions for her female servants.
- ¹⁶ She evaluates a field and buys it; she plants a vineyard with her earnings.
- ¹⁷ She draws on her strength and reveals that her arms are strong.
- ¹⁸ She sees that her profits are good, and her lamp never goes out at night.
- ¹⁹ She extends her hands to the spinning staff, and her hands hold the spindle.
- ²⁰ Her hands reach out to the poor, and she extends her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all in her household are doubly clothed.
- ²² She makes her own bed coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known at the city gates, where he sits among the elders of the land.

²⁴ She makes and sells linen garments; she delivers belts to the merchants.

²⁵ Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the time to come.

²⁶ Her mouth speaks wisdom, and loving instruction is on her tongue.

²⁷ She watches over the activities of her household and is never idle.

²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also praises her:

²⁹ “Many women have done noble deeds, but you surpass them all!”

³⁰ Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.

³¹ Give her the reward of her labor, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

— Proverbs 31:10–31

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Social media and other influences create the impression that the ideal woman is someone who wears a size two, maintains a regular workout routine, has flawless skin, frequently gets her nails and eyelashes done, and possesses the latest trendy outfit. While these attributes are not inherently negative, they should not be anywhere close to the ultimate goals you pursue. Those are not eternally important; and like many other subjects, the Bible presents a different perspective on what it means to be a great wife compared to societal views.

There are numerous passages that discuss being a good Christian and honoring God with your life, but Proverbs 31 specifically emphasizes what it means to be a godly wife. She embodies integrity and has a profound love for the Lord and her family. According to Proverbs 31, this type of wife is far more valuable than jewels. Ultimately, this should be the aspiration for godly wives and the qualities godly men seek. Wives should be honest, of strong character, and committed to living for Jesus and His teachings.

The wife's goal is to submit to and support their husband, and that is not a less-than calling. It can also be misrepresented in the culture today, but the idea is to lovingly help the husband lead toward Christ, and encourage the selfless love of the husband.

Proverbs 31 provides a few more laundry-list bits of helpful wisdom for wives. While some verses in this passage may seem more applicable to its original audience, several insights about a godly woman are relevant to today's aspiring wives. Although these do not encompass every quality of a godly wife, they illuminate the kind of person she might be. Verse 30 of this chapter is well-known, and rightly so. It reminds us that being enjoyable to be around and outwardly beautiful are desirable traits, but they are not the ultimate objectives. Instead, a godly wife is characterized by her fear of the Lord. Another widely recognized verse is verse 25, which highlights that important attributes to strive for include strength and dignity. Additionally, the portrayal of a woman who laughs at the future

suggests that she profoundly trusts the Lord, believing He will care for everything ahead.

Other qualities worth pursuing, as noted in this passage, encompass

wisdom, tough love, a strong work ethic, and kindness, among others.

But remember the key: loving Jesus and chasing after Him daily. That calling is one that, when followed, will bear much fruit.



Further Inspection

Proverbs 31:30 says, “Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.” Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” The fear of the Lord means having deep respect, awe, and reverence for God. It’s recognizing His power, holiness, and authority, and choosing to live in a way that honors Him.

It’s not about being scared of God, but about taking Him and His word seriously and letting that shape your decisions, values, and actions.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Who can find a wife of noble character? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will not lack anything good.
— Proverbs 31:10–11

Prayer

Ask God to grow your Christ-like character, in part so that you can be a blessing to a potential future spouse.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.
— Ephesians 5:22

Prayer

Ask God to help you develop both a leadership and submission posture to be used in a potential future marriage and other relationships too.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children,

to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered. — Titus 2:3–5

Prayer

Thank God for your older, wiser friends and family who pour into your life.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

A man who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. — Proverbs 18:22

Prayer

Thank God for the good gift of a future spouse, but ask Him to protect your heart so you are content in Him no matter what.



Next Steps

If you are a woman, pray and ask God for wisdom. Then, make a list of five things you should do to be a godly wife toward your husband/future husband. Make sure at least two are specific, while three can be more general.

If you are a man, pray and ask God for wisdom. Then, make a list of five things that you desire your wife/future wife to do for you to live out her calling, from the Biblical truth in this lesson. Make sure at least two are specific, while three can be more general.

Notes:

Godly Parenting

How do I become a godly parent?

Godly parenting is centered on nurturing children in their faith, training them in godliness, and pointing them toward their need for Christ through both word and example. Developing a deep personal relationship with Christ is essential, as you will then be able to model the love, forgiveness, grace, patience, and discipline children need.

Bible Story

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. ² Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, ³ so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.

⁴ Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

— Ephesians 6:1–4

³ Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord,
offspring, a reward.

⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons born in one's youth.

⁵ Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them.
They will never be put to shame
when they speak with their enemies at the city gate.

— Psalm 127:3–5

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Even though many of you are not in this season yet, it is essential to begin now with a biblical view of what your role will be one day as a parent. Parenting is a beautiful gift, but it is also like a boot camp training ground for patience, forgiveness, and selflessness! For this devotion, Paul David Tripp's book *Parenting* will serve us up some practical wisdom and principles.

Grace-Based Parenting. Parenting should reflect God's grace, not just rules. *Ephesians 6:4* says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Instead of focusing only on discipline, godly parenting means modeling grace, patience, and love, just as God does for us.

Identity in Christ, Not in Parenting Success. Your worth and value are in Christ, not in how well your children behave. *Colossians 3:23* says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as

working for the Lord, not for human masters." This applies to your life now also; whether in school, work, or relationships, find your identity in Jesus, not performance or the approval of others.

Parenting is a Calling, Not Ownership. Children ultimately belong to God. *Psalm 127:3* says, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him." One day, you may have kids, but remember that they are entrusted to you to raise in the faith, not to fulfill your own personal dreams or desires

The Heart is the Target, Not Just Behavior. True transformation comes from the heart, not just external obedience. *Luke 6:45* reminds us, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart." This principle applies even now—focus on your own spiritual growth, not just on outward appearance.

Parenting is About God's Kingdom, Not Yours. Raising children is about teaching them to follow Jesus, not just making life easier for yourself. *Matthew 6:33* says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." In the same way, live with a kingdom mindset now, prioritizing Jesus over personal comfort or ambition.

Simply put, as a parent, you get the opportunity to point your children to Jesus every day. Will you be perfect? Definitely not. But will God strengthen you and help you if you seek to raise your children to know and love Him? Absolutely. Godly parenting is a calling, and even though you may not be there yet, these principles can apply to your spiritual life today. Begin now to build a faith foundation that will one day shape the way you lead a family.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old he will not depart from it. — Proverbs 22:6

Prayer

Thank God for His design of using parents in the home to lead children to faith in Christ.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth. Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They will never

be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gate. — Psalm 127:3–5

Prayer

Ask God to help you see a potential future family as an amazing gift from Him.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. — 1 Timothy 5:8

Prayer

Ask God to guard your heart against patterns of bitterness and anger.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise. — Ephesians 6:2

Prayer

Ask God to bless your parents and to help you love, respect, and honor them even though they aren't perfect.



Reflection Questions

- 01** What was/is your relationship like with your parents/family? How do you honor them today?

- 02** What do you need to do to set a godly example for your future children?

- 03** What aspects of parenting are you most looking forward to? What scares you about parenting?

- 04** Which of the practical points above is most impactful to you? Why?

Godly Sexuality

What is God's design for sexuality?

God intends sexual intimacy to occur between one man and one woman inside the confines of marriage for the entirety of one's life.

Bible Story

⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"

⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

— Matthew 19:4–6

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In conversations about sexuality, some people focus heavily on same-sex attraction, but it's important to remember that all forms of sexual sin fall short of God's design. Whether it's sex outside of marriage, pornography, lust, or same-sex relationships, anything outside of a man and woman joined together in covenant is outside God's plan for love and intimacy.

Sexuality is one of the most emotionally charged and controversial topics in our culture, and that tension often makes its way into the church. But God is not confused, and His Word is not unclear. From the very beginning, God spoke with clarity and purpose: "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). In this, God designed sexuality as a gift—not just physical, but deeply emotional and spiritual—meant to unite a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage.

Sex was never meant to be casual or disconnected from commitment. It was created by God to be sacred—a sign of trust, love, and unity within

a lifelong relationship. Some forms of emotional and spiritual intimacy were designed to exist only within marriage. When we go outside of that design, we may not always see it immediately, but the effects can be deeply damaging to our hearts, bodies, and relationships.

Because we live in a fallen world, the pull of sin and brokenness tries to convince us that God's way is too restrictive or outdated. Like all sin, sexual sin is tempting because it offers something that feels good in the moment. The lie goes all the way back to the Garden, from Satan in Genesis 3: "God must be holding out on you." But that lie has never led to freedom—only regret, shame, and deeper confusion. God is not withholding good from you; He is inviting you to something better. His design is not just a rule—it's a reflection of His heart. God created us, and He knows how we thrive.

Think of it like this: if you bought a car, you'd want to read the owner's manual from the manufacturer to know how to take care of it. You wouldn't pour soda in the gas tank just because it smells sweet. In the

same way, we don't thrive by doing what feels good in the moment—we thrive when we follow the One who made us. God's Word is the manual for our design, and His ways lead to life.

Or put it this way: when fire is in the fireplace, it warms the whole house. But when fire leaves the fireplace, it becomes destructive. Sex, when kept within the safety of marriage, brings warmth, closeness, and life. But outside of that boundary, it burns. The damage may not be immediate, but it's inevitable. God's boundaries are not about shame—they're about safety and sacredness.

So, how does a young person walk in purity today? Psalm 119:9 asks the same question: "How can a young man keep his way pure?" The answer: "By guarding it according to your word." Purity doesn't come from willpower alone; try on your own and

you will fail. It comes from a heart and mind anchored in the truth of God's Word and filled with His Spirit. That means daily time in Scripture and prayer, surrounding ourselves with godly community, setting wise boundaries, and removing sources of temptation—from the shows we watch, the social media we indulge in, and the relationships we entertain.

And if you're struggling in this area, you're not alone—and there is hope. God's grace is not just forgiveness; it's transformation. Freedom begins with honesty. Talk to a trusted Christian mentor, join a small group, or pursue biblical counseling. Talk to a friend about what you're going through; Confession is the first step to healing. Even in the struggle, God's love meets you where you are; it never leaves you there. He calls you into something better—into holiness, wholeness, and real love.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. Do not deprive one another—except when you agree

for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. — 1 Corinthians 7:3–5

Prayer

Thank God for the wonderful gifts of singleness, marriage, self-control, and sex within marriage.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and the wild does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time.
— Song of Solomon 2:7

Prayer

Ask God to help you patiently wait for engaging in sex—only within a God-honoring marriage.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

I am my love's, and his desire is for me. — Song of Solomon 7:10

Prayer

Ask God to guard your mind and heart so that you don't see a potential future spouse primarily as the means to satisfy your desires.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. — Galatians 5:16

Prayer

Ask God to teach you how to walk by the Spirit, especially in the area of sexuality.

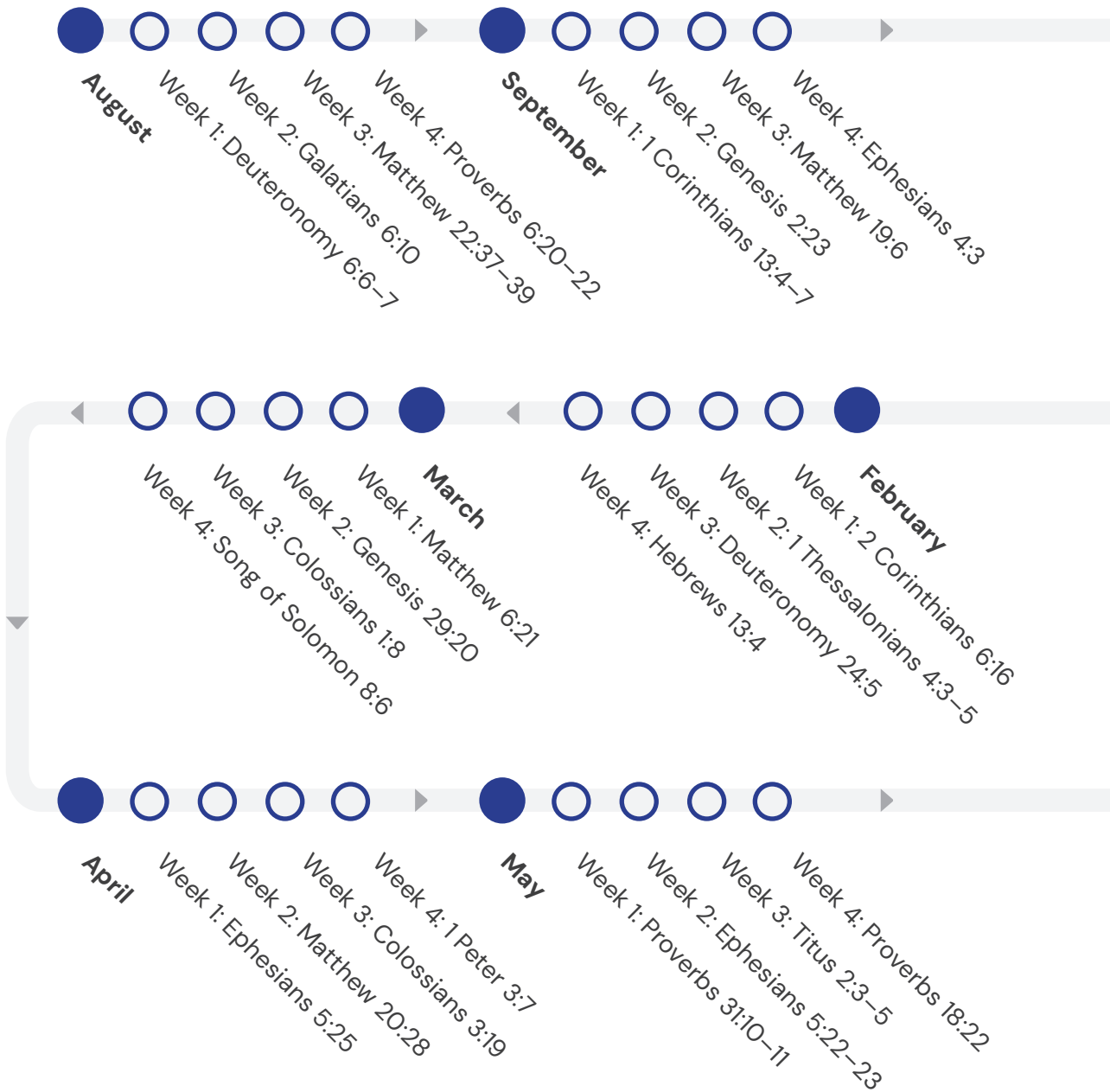


Challenging Thought

God created us, and He knows how we thrive. When and where are you tempted to go your own way instead of trusting God's word?

Notes:

Memory Verse Tracking Log



COLLEGE SOPHOMORE





NEW VISION