



**WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT
MARRIAGE, AND SINGLENESS**

FAITH COVENANT CHURCH

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline

~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON PLAN

Lesson	Subject	Verses	Date
1	Introduction, Marriage	Various	
2	Godly Marriage	Various	
3	Worldly Marriage	Various	
4	Marital substitutions	Various	
5	Fidelity	Various	
6	Monogamy	Various	
7	Divorce	Various	
8	Singleness	Various	
9	Fruits of Godly Relations	Various	

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Where there is anything that's designed, there is a designer. Whether it's a truck, building or train — or even marriage — there is always a mastermind behind the masterpiece. God, the mastermind of marriage, also has a plan for how marriage works best.

For the Evangelical Covenant Church, the starting place for our ongoing discernment regarding all matters of faith, doctrine and practice is our foundational conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, leading us to the foundational confession, “Jesus is Lord!” It is our shared confidence in the love of God our Father, the life giving presence of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the liberty we experience in the Holy Spirit through the Word of God that are at the root of our Covenant identity. It is our vision to be “a companion of all those who fear Thee” (Psalms 119:63). We affirm we are a biblical, formational, connectional and missional people.

It can be overwhelming to try and understand God's design and plan for marital love because contradicting and varying messages are everywhere: in books, magazines, TV, movies and music. As a result, many couples fall into the trap of looking everywhere but to the Designer to find out what God intended for marriage. If you've tried understanding marriage through the world, there's a better way.

- God created marriage as a loyal partnership between one man and one woman.
- Marriage is the firmest foundation for building a family.
- God designed sexual expression to help married couples build intimacy.
- Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship with His people.

We see this last parallel throughout the Bible. For instance, Jesus refers to Himself as the "bridegroom" and to the kingdom of heaven as a "wedding banquet."

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These points demonstrate that God's purposes for marriage extend far beyond personal happiness. God isn't *against* happiness per se, but marriage promotes even higher values.

In 1996 a resolution on human sexuality was adopted by the Covenant Annual Meeting. The core declaration of the resolution stated: God created people male and female, and provided for the marriage relationship in which two may become one. A publicly declared, legally binding marriage between one woman and one man is the one appropriate place for sexual intercourse. Heterosexual marriage, faithfulness within marriage, abstinence outside of marriage—these constitute the Christian standard. When we fall short, we are invited to repent, receive the forgiveness of God, and amend our lives.

God did not create marriage just to give us a pleasant means of repopulating the world and providing a steady societal institution to raise children. He planted marriage among humans as yet another signpost pointing to His own eternal, spiritual existence.

Because our sexual identity as male and female is an expression of God's creative impression, it forms an essential part of our identity before God. As God's creatures, humans are accountable for God to be stewards of all they are. This stewardship extends to our sexuality, for our sexual identity is a precious gift from God with a profoundly eternal purpose. Therefore, as followers of Christ we are expected to heed the apostolic warning, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins people commit are outside their bodies, but those who sin sexually sin against their own bodies. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have

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received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

In Genesis 1-2, sex is more than the union of male and female; it is the reunion of humanity, the image and intimacy of God. This is a union marked by the making of covenant vows. God is a lover passionate for intimacy, fidelity, and fruitfulness with us. Just as true spirituality prays and lives out of a deep desire to know and be known, love and be loved by God, so human sexuality mirrors this God-given desire. In marriage, sexual desire is yoked, directed, matured, and fulfilled by surrendering to the Spirit and to the discipline of unconditional, faithful covenant love. In this way, fidelity in marriage is often seen to mirror or imitate the fidelity of God.

Not to be thought of as an inferior term, the Hebrew word—helper (‘ēzer) refers to one who saves or delivers. (As a side note such as Ebenzer-stone of help, 2 words, Eben ezer). Apart from this usage it is only used to refer to God in relationship to Israel, —The Lord is our helper (Deuteronomy 33:7; Psalm 115:9). God’s plan was to create a complementary human being who could deliver Adam, not from boredom, but from bondage to a solitary existence. By being an equal partner with Adam in the divine mandate to be fruitful, multiply, and rule over the creation, woman is a complement, not just as a mate and companion, but politically as a co-regent and economically as a co-steward to tend and tame the earth.

Jesus was both fully human (i.e., a fully sexual being) and fully chaste, as an unmarried person. By choosing to live within Israel in singleness and celibacy, Jesus did not avoid human sexuality, but embraced it and affirmed singleness as a path of life and discipleship that is of

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equal value to marriage. Singleness is a chaste expression of openness and inclusiveness to others – a complement to the exclusiveness and monogamy of marriage and family. While most of his disciples were married, Jesus was unencumbered with the responsibilities of spouse and children in order to focus on the mission God had given him. His family consisted of those who do the will of the Father, a lineage of faith and not physical descent (Luke 8:20-21).

The Bible names sin, including sexual sin, as an expression of idolatry – a discounting, minimizing, or eliminating of God as Lord of all creation. Idolatry happens when we use God in lieu of worshipping God. Unconsciously and self-justifying, the object of the sinful desire slowly erodes and replaces all other desires. In this way humanity worships the creation instead of the Creator, violating the first commandment (Deuteronomy 5:7), as the apostle Paul also confirms (Romans 1:25).

The failure of society to live up to the ideal of monogamy is acknowledged by the incorporation of polygamy into the culture. Polygamy subverts the equality of male and female in marriage, instituting a potential for anxious rivalry in lieu of the security of mutuality.

A second concession to the brokenness of humanity came in the form of divorce. The presence of this practice compromises the ideal of the permanence of marriage. The Mosaic instructions were an attempt to regulate with some justice an unregulated practice already present in Hebrew society; they attempt to make the situation more humane for the divorced woman by demanding that her status be clearly spelled out by the man who was putting her out of his household. Yet God hates divorce, drawing a connection between faithlessness to the

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marriage covenant and faithlessness to the covenant with God (Malachi 2:10-16). All sexual activities that violate the covenantal marriage relationship by diversion, competition, confusion, or avoidance are rejected by the biblical authors as a rejection of the divine purpose. Maintaining a unique identity as the people of God requires a particular spirituality and a distinctive sexuality in the world. This is how, as Paul says in reflecting on Leviticus 26:12, we are to –purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Adultery is the violation of sexual fidelity within marriage by either partner, and is explicitly forbidden in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:14). Through it the unfaithful partner is articulating their intent to violate their marriage covenant and vows. It is a forsaking of the commitment made to the marriage and to one's spouse.

Pornography (obscenity) has emerged as an arena of sexual activity that requires Christian discernment. Whether accompanied with or as a stimulus to sexual activity, alone or with a partner, pornography participates in a form of prostitution (the selling of sexual activity) and oppression that often leads to addiction. Both men and women suffer from this temptation, whether in visual images, Internet chat rooms, –romance novels, or movies. Pornography, however it is used, does not equip persons to share in the rigors and requirements of mutual intimacy within marriage.

Each of the sexual practices mentioned above are symptomatic of a deeper brokenness that is at odds with love of God and neighbor. We escape the rigors of spiritual formation in our bodies through abstinent singleness or marital fidelity in a sterile search for the

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fulfillment of desire. In each of these forms, a person has sexual relations with the wrong object of desire. While these wrongful sexual relations can occur either in reality or in fantasy, they all contort a good and gracious embodiment into an inhospitable imprisonment, sentencing us to serve as prisoners of desire rather than as prisoners set free for the fellowship and service of the risen Lord (Ephesians 4:1-2). Of all these Paul says, – Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

Scripture contains a handful of references to homosexuality practice or behavior, mostly in the Old Testament. The Gospels make no overt mention of homosexuality; their teachings in this area can only be inferred from Jesus' teachings on marriage. In letters from Paul and Peter, relevant texts are Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10. Both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 condemn homosexual behaviors along with a number of other sins, including slave-trading, idolatry, and adultery. A more sustained argument is given in Romans 1:18-32, which describes homosexual behavior as a form of idolatry. Paul writes that God gave the Gentiles up to –degrading passions because of their worship of creatures rather than the Creator and because of their sinful passions. He continues, –Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error (Romans 1:26-27). The church must speak from Scripture, which calls people to define their personal identity and express their sexuality in relationship to the Triune God.

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We will review all of these issues over the next 9 weeks, within a biblical context, knowing that within the divine plan for human community there are two expressions of human sexuality: fidelity in marriage, and chastity in singleness, both lived out within and supported by the worshiping community. Whether in chaste singleness or in marital fidelity, our sexuality can and will be remade into chaste and holy love of God and neighbor, whether now, as we mature in faith, or most fully at the coming of Christ. Martin Luther long ago reminded the Church of this tension when he said: "This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it. The process is not yet finished, but it is going on. This is not the end but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified." Tim Keller reminds us "Men, you'll never be a good groom to your wife unless you're first a good bride to Jesus."

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LESSON 1-MARRIAGE

God's plan for marriage

Read Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-8

1. How and why did God originally create mankind?

In His image. To increase & fill the Earth, and rule over all the Living creatures in it.

2. What do you learn about God from these verses?

He formed all things, He is 3 distinct individuals in 1 (*let US*), in Genesis 1:26, He is perfect, and all powerful.

3. What do you learn about yourself from these verses?

I am created in God's image & likeness, my wife has been given to me as a suitable helper, I live in a fallen world (We are now ashamed to be naked), I am united to my wife for life, as one.

4. What was God's plan for marriage?

One man, married to one woman, for life as one.

Lesson:

(God's Plan is lifelong monogamy, between a man & a woman)

The symbol of marriage

Read Ephesians 5:22-32

5. What command is given to husbands?

Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph. 5:25) husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Eph. 5:28)

6. What command is given to Wives?

Submit themselves to their husbands as they do to the Lord, submit to their husbands in everything (Eph. 5:22, 24)

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LESSON 1-MARRIAGE

7. What are the characteristics of Godly love? See (1 Cor. 13:4-8; John 15:13)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. John 15:13-Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends

8. How do you see marriage as a symbol of something greater? Use any scripture you know.

God is a triune God (3 in 1) in marriage 2 becomes (Gen. 1:26; Genesis 2:24). Men are called to love their wives as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25); Christ says he is Bridegroom of church (Mark 2:19-20); Paul reveals Christ as husband to church (2 Cor. 11:2)

9. How is God's symbol of marriage being destroyed by sin in the world today?

Homosexual Marriage (which we will discuss in 2 weeks), Too easily to divorce (which we will discuss in Dec), Men do not honor & love their wives (Porn-3 weeks; cheating-4 weeks; abuse), wives not submissive to husbands in Godly love.

Lesson: _____

(Human marriage symbolizes Christ's eternal marriage to His church)

Challenge: Honor your spouse, according to God's plan, and as Jesus honors you.

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LESSON 2-GODLY MARRIAGE

Last week we looked at God's perfect plan for marriage, and the symbol of marriage as the marriage of Jesus to His church. This week we will look at the Godly marriage, in God-established roles, all should honor marriage, and the purposes of marriage.

Marriage Roles

**Read Ephesians 5:22-28; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7;
1 Corinthians 7:1-5**

1. What roles are wives called to in a Christian marriage?

Submit to husbands, as they do the Lord, not have elaborate hairstyles, clothes, or jewelry. Have sexual relations only with husband. Strong helper.

2. What roles are husbands called to in a Christian marriage?

Love wives as Christ loves the church, Love wives as he loves himself, do not be harsh with them, be considerate and treat with respect, fulfil marital duties with wife only. Submit to wife, as Christ did The Father. Be servant-Leader

3. Why would husbands and wives have specific roles within a Godly marriage? (See Philippians 2:1-11)

Each serves the other, in complete harmony, (as God is) with Christ. To sharpen & enhance each other.

4. Husbands, and wives have very different roles in a Godly marriage, what can you do to understand your role better? What can you do to understand your spouse better?

Study the bible, fellowship w/ other Godly husbands. Spend time together in prayer, study the bible together.

Lesson:

(God established roles in marriage to compliment one another in harmony)

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LESSON 2-GODLY MARRIAGE

Honoring Marriage **Read Hebrews 13:4**

5. What is the definition of “honor”? (You may use a dictionary)

NOUN-high respect; great esteem; adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct; something regarded as a rare opportunity and bringing pride and pleasure; a privilege.
VERB-regard with great respect; fulfill (an obligation) or keep (an agreement).

6. What definition of “honor” do you feel fits best in Hebrews 13:4?
Why?

High respect; great esteem-**precious**-“Let marriage always be thought of as precious. Let it be treasured like gold and silver and rare jewels. Let it be revered and respected like the noblest, most virtuous person you have ever known. Let it be esteemed and valued as something terribly costly. When you think of marriage, let yourself be gripped by emotions of tremendous respect and sanctity. In relation to marriage cultivate the feeling that this not to be touched quickly or handled casually or treated commonly. In God's eyes marriage is precious and therefore he says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all."

7. Why is it important to God that marriage be honored by all? (See Jeremiah 3:9, and Malachi 2:15)

Because adultery creates Godlessness, and is a form of idolatry, and dishonors not only participants, but God, as it is the 7th commandment.)

8. What areas do you fall short in honoring your marriage, or that of other marriages?

Personal

Lesson: _____

(Marriage is precious to God, it should be precious to us)

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LESSON 2-GODLY MARRIAGE

Purposes of marriage

Read Song of Songs 2:3-7; Genesis 1:27-28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9); Genesis 2:18

9. What purpose of marriage is revealed in Song of Songs?

To express love intimately.

10. What purpose of marriage is revealed in Genesis 1:27-28?

To have children, and fill the Earth.

11. What purpose of marriage is revealed on 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9?

To prevent immorality.

12. What purpose in marriage is revealed in Genesis 2:18?

To inspire human happiness.

Lesson: _____

(God's purposes in marriage are for mankind's good)

Challenge: Honor all marriages as God's purposes for men & women on Earth.

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LESSON 3-WORLDLY MARRIAGE

Last week we discussed the Godly marriage, where God established roles for each gender, noted that all should honor marriage as God does, and some of God's purposes of marriage. This week we will be talking about worldly marriage such as homosexual marriage, being unevenly yoked, and cohabitation before marriage.

Homosexual Marriage

Read Leviticus 18:22; Mark 10:6-8; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9

1. Given that none of these verses explicitly oppose homosexual *marriage*, why would it still be inferred as not acceptable to God? **Does not fulfil God's perfect plan for marriage-1 man & 1 woman for life. Homosexual marriage cannot be consummated, as per these verses. Homosexual marriage does not fulfil God's purpose in repopulating the Earth. Men who have sex w/ men excluded from Heaven.**

2. Is it be acceptable for a church to not accept homosexuals? Why or why not? (See Romans 3:23, Matthew 22:37-40, James 4:11-12, Matthew 9:10-13)

All have sinned & fall short of the glory of God, so there is no difference between their sin & mine. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to not judge, that is for God. In Godly fellowship their sin may be revealed as such. Jesus desires mercy.

3. How might someone who is tempted by same-sex attraction fight that sinful temptation? (See 1 Corinthians 6:13-20)

Unite themselves with the Holy Spirit

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LESSON 3-WORLDLY MARRIAGE

4. How have you, or would you respond if someone in your life tells you they are homosexual?

Take your cue from the Lord Jesus. He didn't avoid sinners; He ministered grace and compassion to them—without ever compromising His commitment to holiness. As a Christian, you are a light shining in a dark place. Like the Lord, we need to value and esteem the person without condoning the sin.

Lesson: _____

(Marriage is defined Biblically as a covenant between a man and a woman which is by its nature ordered toward the procreation and education of children and the unity and wellbeing of the spouses.)

Unevenly Yoked

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

5. What does unevenly yoked mean?

Believer's dating or marrying an unbeliever. Engaging the other as a team. Like a team of oxen not pulling equally.

6. Why does God call believers not to be unevenly yoked? (See Deuteronomy 7:3-4)

The unbeliever may turn the believer to their unbelieving ways, just as in the OT.

7. What should a Christian who is already married do if they are married to an unbeliever? Why? (See 1 Corinthians 7:12-16)

The unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband.

8. How has being unevenly yoked affected you, or someone you know? Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Being unevenly yoked can lead the believer to idolatry)

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LESSON 3-WORLDLY MARRIAGE

Cohabitation

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6; Galatians 5:19-21

9. Why is cohabitation a problem? (See Matthew 26:41)

Temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

10. Some feel living together is good, people can learn about each other. What would you say to them?

This is a conversation that would have to happen over several discussions, but start with the unique, committed setting of marriage is the place God designed for the expression of sex. (See 1 Corinthians 6:18-18) the sinfulness of all sexual relations outside of marriage. In addition to outward sinfulness, sexual sin is a sin against one's own body. This makes sexual sin uniquely destructive, a clear reason to follow God's plan for sex. **GET MARRIED!**

11. Is it possible to live together in a relationship, and not sin sexually? Explain your answer.

Personal. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says No **temptation** has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

12. Share your experiences with cohabitation, whether personal or someone close to you.

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Do not tempt yourself, wait until you are married to live together)

Challenge: How will you live in the world not of it this week, reflecting the light & salt of Jesus!

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LESSON 4-MARITAL/SEXUAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Last week we talked about marriage, as it is wrongly viewed by the world, such as homosexual marriage, being unevenly yoked to unbelievers, and living together before marriage. Today we will talk about the somewhat uncomfortable, but real, sinful substitutions people use in their marriages, such as pornography & obscenities, prostitution, and idolatry.

Pornography

Read Matthew 5:28; Matthew 6:22-23; James 1:14-15

1. How is pornography damaging to a marriage?

Jesus warns us to guard our gaze in Matthew 6, pornography breaks the sacred bond of marriage, Jesus calls it adultery, and it creates an unrealistic expectation about the marriage bed.

2. How is pornography damaging to a society?

Pornography often leads to increasingly degrading sexual behaviors. (James 1:14-15) It is demeaning to women.

3. How might someone avoid the use of pornography? (See Amos 5:14-15 & 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Seek God who is good, and be transformed in Jesus.

4. Have you had any experience with pornography? Would you share with the group, how you dealt with, or are dealing with it currently?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Pornography is destructive to marriage & society)

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LESSON 4-MARITAL/SEXUAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Prostitution

Read Proverbs 9:13-18

5. From the bible how is prostitution described? (Use any other scripture verses you know)

Degrading (Leviticus 19:29); Sin against own body (1 Corinthians 6:18); Act of the flesh, not Spirit (Galatians 5:19); Creates unfaithfulness (Proverbs 23:27-28); Seems good, but leads to death (Proverbs 5:3-5)

6. What prostitutes do you know from scripture?

Tamar, Judah thought his daughter in law as one (Genesis 38:15); Rahab (Joshua 2:1); Jephthah's mother (Judges 11:1); Delilah (Judges 16:1)

7. What do you know about any of the biblical prostitutes you listed above?

Tamar-Genesis 38:26 Judah proclaimed her more righteous than he; Rahab-Redeemed in assisting Israelite spies, in the lineage of Jesus; Mother of Jephthah-her son was a great warrior of Israel & Judge; Delilah-Betrayer of final Judge of Israel Samson, to the Philistines.

8. What can you take from what you learned about biblical prostitution, to help the issue in your community?

Know that everyone is redeemable, so pray for them, and witness to them, help in ministries assisting them.

Lesson:

(No one is worthless in God's eyes, so we should not look down on prostitutes)

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LESSON 4-MARITAL/SEXUAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Obscenity (Lewdness)

**Read 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 2:22;
1 Thessalonians 5:19-24**

9. Is there a difference between pornography, and obscenity? If so, what do you feel it is?

Yes. From the Oxford dictionary thesaurus, Obscenity means something dealing with sexual matters in an offensive way; pornography means writing or pictures intended to stimulate erotic feelings by portraying sexual activity. While both are inappropriate, Obscenity seems more offensive & is mostly illegal.

10. How could visiting a “strip club” damage a marriage?

Lust of the flesh & eyes draws one away from God (1 John 2:15-17), conforming to the pattern of the world one is unable to know God's will for them (Romans 12:2), makes heart impure (2 Timothy 2:22), in not rejecting evil quenches the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19-24)

11. How might self-gratification go against God's plan for sex, and damage a marriage?

Spouses yield their bodies to the other, not themselves, it is a tempting of Satan to lose self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). It often involves fantasy & goes against Matthew 5:28-looking upon a woman is adultery.

12. How might bestiality go against God's plan for sex, and damage a marriage?

In the creation account, none of the animals were “suitable” for Adam (Genesis 2:20). Bestiality essentially denies the uniqueness of humanity which God created in His image (Genesis 1:27). Leviticus 18:23 declares, “Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.”

Lesson: _____

(There is no acceptable replacement for God's plan for sex, and marriage)

Challenge: Honor God & your spouse this week!

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LESSON 5-FIDELITY

Last week we weighed the salacious activities involved in substituting for God's perfect plan for marriage and sex. This morning we will continue to discuss that which harms marriage according to God, in infidelity and God's laws against it, the characteristics of it, and spiritual infidelity.

Laws against infidelity

Read Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 5:1-23; Proverbs 6:32-33; Matthew 5:27-28;

1. What do these verses tell you about adultery (infidelity)?

It is God's 7th commandment (Exodus 20:14); Do not commit adultery, it may seem good at 1st, but will end up bad, it will cost you your dignity, God knows when we commit adultery (Proverbs 5); The one who commits adultery has no sense & destroys himself & will be shamed (Proverbs 6:32-33); To look at a woman lustfully is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28)

2. Why would it be necessary to create laws against adultery? (See Genesis 3:1 & Romans 3:23)

Satan is a deceiving serpent, and God knows all mankind are sinners.

3. What biblical case of adultery do you know? What lesson do you learn from it?

2 Samuel 11-David cheated on wife Abigail, with Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite-adultery may lead to greater sins (murder); Genesis 16:4-Abraham, in a manner of speaking, at his wife Sarah's request, with Hagar the Egyptian Handmaid-adultery creates despising & mistreatment; John 8-Woman taken in adultery, if she had a husband, he is unnamed, and, the man she was caught with, his marital state is unknown-Adultery can be forgiven, on Earth & by Jesus; Hosea 1:2-3-Gomer wife of Prophet Hosea-God will punish the unrepentant & unfaithful.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline

~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 5-FIDELITY

4. Have you, or do you know anyone who has dealt with infidelity? Will you share how God helped or could have helped in the situation?
Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Adultery is destructive, but can be forgiven, in Jesus)

Results of infidelity

**Read Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19-21; John 8:3-11;
1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

5. Why does God judge the adulterer & sexually immoral?

Because marriage & the marriage bed are important to God, and adultery & sexual immorality are extremely damaging.

6. What do the “acts of the flesh” all have in common?

They are absent the “fruits of the Spirit”, and exclude someone from the Kingdom of God.

7. What do you learn from Jesus, in regards to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11)? (See also 1 John 1:9)

Only Jesus, who is without sin, can righteously condemn or forgive sin, when we confess it to him.

8. How does knowing these results of infidelity change your thoughts of even looking at someone of the opposite-sex, with lust in your eyes?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(The results of adultery are not worth the act, but Jesus loves us)

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LESSON 5-FIDELITY

Spiritual Adultery

Read Jeremiah 3:6-10, 20; James 4:4-5; Ezekiel 16:37-42; Mark 8:38; 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

9. How did Israel & Judah commit spiritual adultery against God?

They worshiped pagan deities, knowing God is a jealous God.

10. How did the people of James' (our) time commit spiritual adultery against God?

They loved "the world" more than God. God longs for mankind's full devotion & love.

11. How did God judge spiritual adultery in the time of Ezekiel? How will God judge spiritual adultery Marks's (our) generation?

God sentenced them to death (Punishment for adultery), and turned His enemies against them to administer the punishment. Jesus will judge those who reject him, and sentence them to eternal death.

12. When have you been guilty of spiritual adultery against God? What did/can you do to correct it?

Personal. Pray, and repent of what you honored above God, and trust the Holy Spirit in future temptations.

Lesson: _____

(Physical & spiritual adultery are placing idols over God)

Challenge: Go into this week remaining faithful to Jesus!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

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~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 6-MONOGRAMY

Last week we looked at God's laws against infidelity, the characteristics of infidelity, and spiritual infidelity. This week we will look at God's ideal plan for marriage, in Monogamy, however there are many examples of polygamy in the Old Testament, and we will note the friction created in such arrangements.

Monogamy is ideal

Read Genesis 2:15-24; Deuteronomy 17:16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:2; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12

1. Why would monogamy be ideal in God's plan for marriage?

God's perfect plan is one man & one woman united as one (Genesis 2:15-24); More wives may lead a man's heart astray (Deuteronomy 17:17); Man should have sexual relations with his wife only (1 Corinthians 7:2); It reveals self-control, and gives the man the ability to manage his family (1 Timothy 3:2, 12)

2. How might polygamy cause trouble for a man? (See 1 Kings 11:3) **He may be led astray by idolatrous wives.**

3. Why is monogamy a safe plan in a sexually immoral society?

A sexually immoral society causes the spread of disease.

4. Why do you think God would want leaders in the church to be monogamous?

It sets the standard of how the church should be governed, faithfully, and obediently!

Lesson: _____

(Monogamy is God's ideal marriage for mankind)

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LESSON 6-MONOGRAMY

Old Testament Polygamy

Read Genesis 4:19-25; Genesis 29:16-30; 2 Chronicles 11:21-12:11; 2 Samuel 5:13-15; 1 Kings 11:1-3

5. Why would God allow polygamy, even among His chosen leaders of Israel?

God allowed polygamy, much like divorce, due to man's hard heart.

6. Why would God's people engage in polygamy, knowing God's plan for marriage?

The pagan cultures around them led them astray, and it became culturally acceptable.

7. What lessons about polygamy do you learn from David, and Solomon?

You pass your poor examples on to your children. Sin & idolatry runs rampant in families with no spiritual leader.

Personal.

8. What examples are you setting for the next generation, in your household, and church?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Just because God allows polygamy, does not mean He approves of it.)

Friction in Polygamy

Read Genesis 30:1-24; 1 Samuel 1:1-8

9. From these verses, or any you may know, what was life like for the women in polygamous marriage?

Competitive for husband's attention & love.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENES

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LESSON 6-MONOGRAMY

10. What is common for the husband in both of these biblical examples, and any others you may know?

He is attracted to, or in love with one over the other ones.

11. What are some of the concerns over polygamy in our current society?

Age of men & women differ widely (older men "marry" younger girls), it is difficult on children, disparities in wealth, and gender.

12. Do you feel it is possible to have a polygamous marriage without any friction? Why, or why not?

Personal. But based on these examples, I would say no.

Lesson: _____

(There are less problems in monogamy, which is why God created it)

Challenge: Reflect God's perfect will in your marriage, or singleness.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

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LESSON 7-DIVORCE

Last week we looked at God's ideal plan for marriage, in Monogamy, however there are many examples of polygamy in the Old Testament, and we found there is much friction created between spouses in polygamy. Today we are going to delve into the permanency of marriage, but there is permissible divorce, and spiritual divorce.

Permanency of marriage

Read Romans 7:2-3; Matthew 19:3-6; Malachi 2:16

1. Why would God hate divorce?

To begin with the impact of a divorce can go on for many years—especially when children are involved. When promises and covenants are easily broken, the very fabric of society is threatened.

2. If God hates divorce, does that mean He hates those who get divorced? Explain.

No. The prophet did not say that God hates *people* who have been divorced. He meant that God hates what divorce (all that leads up to it and all that flows from it) does to those he loves and to his purpose for the covenant of marriage.

3. What is the world's view of marriage & divorce? What might they be hoping to get from marriage?

Married as long as *you* are happy, if not happy get divorced. What pleases them, and possibly tax breaks, etc.

4. God says a marriage is one man and one woman for life, in this sinful, up and down life, from your experience how is that possible? (See Ecclesiastes 4:12)

Personal. Only with Jesus as the 3rd strand, He never changes, even if life does

Lesson: _____

(God established marriage to last a lifetime)

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~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 7-DIVORCE

Permissible Divorce

Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:7-8; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

5. Why did God originally make it permissible for divorce? (See Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

If a man found something indecent about his wife? What does this mean?

6. What reason does Jesus uphold as permissible for divorce? Why did He give this reason?

Infidelity. Because of sin & hard hearts.

7. Why would God want people to remain married even if they are not happy anymore, or have differences arise between them?

Because the sin can be remedied through Christian counselling, or simply adding Jesus to the marriage. For Christians, the marriage has not been destroyed with infidelity, so it can be saved.

8. Though infidelity is a permissible reason for divorce, does it mean a marriage is over because of it? Why or why not?

Personal. I say no, forgiveness goes a long way, Jesus has forgiven us our many sins, and sinful spouses can find forgiveness in Jesus. It's not easy, but possible.

Lesson:

(Divorce is permissible for infidelity, but is never preferred by God)

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

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~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 7-DIVORCE

Spiritual Divorce

Read Jeremiah 3:6-15; Isaiah 54:5-8; Luke 12:4-12

9. Why did God spiritually divorce, separate Himself from, Israel (& Judah)?

Because of their infidelity to Him with pagan idols.

10. Why would God be spiritually divorced from people today?

Idol worship still, but ultimately blaspheme the Holy Spirit. (Luke 12:4-12)

11. Is it possible to be spiritually divorced by God, and be reunited with Him? If so how? See Colossians 1:15-22

Yes. Forgiveness in Jesus' death on the cross, and receiving His Holy Spirit.

12. Have you been reunited to God? How do you know?

Personal. Yes, guidance of the Holy Spirit as represented in new life.

Lesson: _____

(God delights in spiritually reuniting with His wayward People)

Challenge: This week trust in God's will for your life.

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENESS

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~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 8-SINGLENESS

Last week we discussed God's plan for the permanency of marriage, however under certain circumstances divorce is permissible, and spiritual divorce. This week we will look at what it means to be a single Christian through the virtues of remaining single, and the difficulties & blessings of singleness.

Virtues of singleness

**Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35;
1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 Peter 1:3-11**

1. What virtues of being single do you note in these verses, or any others you may know?

Remaining a virgin, free of sexual immorality & live a Holy life (1 Thessalonians.); perseverance (2 Peter); Free of concern about the world, concerned only w/ God (1 Corinthians 7)

2. How do these virtues relate to God's will in a single person's life? (See Romans 12:2 & Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

God's will for His people is that they be sanctified, & live a holy life, not conforming to the world's ways. They remain patient waiting on God's perfect timing.

3. How might someone who is single remain free of sexual immorality, in a world where temptation is all around? (See Psalm 119:9)

Live according to God's word, so need to know what God's word is, need to immerse selves in scripture.

4. Whether married, or single, how can/will you assist singles within your church remain in these virtues?

Personal. Remaining in Godly friendship/relationships.

Lesson: _____

(There are many virtues in remaining single)

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LESSON 8-SINGLENESS

Difficulties in singleness

Read Genesis 39:1-23; Jeremiah 15:15-18; Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 8:27-30

5. What Difficulties do you see in the verses above, or any others you may know?

Loneliness (Jeremiah), feeling unloved (Zephaniah), temptation (Genesis), Idolatry (of marriage) or unsatisfied w/calling (Romans)

6. How is it possible for a single person strive to overcome these difficulties? (See 1 Peter 5:6-7)

Be active in church, study God's word to be reminded of God's love for them.

7. How might the church assist singles, to help prevent them from being consumed by these difficulties?

They are loved, included in many activities including council, and ministry teams, etc.

8. What are you doing to engage Christian singles? (See Proverbs 27:17)

Personal. Bible studies (BSF), Small group, men's group...we get coffee together & as iron sharpens iron.

Lesson: _____
(It takes a community to overcome Life's problems)

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LESSON 8-SINGLENESS

Blessings in Singleness

Read Isaiah 54:1-6; Matthew 22:30; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

9. What blessings for singles do you recognize from these verses?

God is Husband, and will give more children than married woman, as Jerusalem was (Isaiah 54 & Galatians 4:26-27); In Heaven there will be no marrying, as on Earth for them (Matthew); Free from concern to focus on Jesus. (1 Corinthians)

10. What additional blessings of singleness do you find in Luke 14:26?

No worry of Earthly priorities above discipleship to Jesus.

11. How is God's blessings to Christian singles further enhanced by the family atmosphere? (See Psalm 68:6 & Acts 4:32-35)

They are equally brothers & sisters with married people, within the body of Christ. God has put those who may be lonely into a family of believers.

12. Who do you know that is single, that you could bless with brotherly/sisterly friendship, and what will you do? When have you blessed someone who is single, and what were the results?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Whether single or married, all are family in the body of believers)

Challenge: Go into this week loving everyone as children of God!

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE, & SINGLENES

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~2 Timothy 1:7

LESSON 9-FRUITS OF GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Last week we reviewed the special place within Christianity for those who are single, in the virtues, difficulties, and blessings. Today we will finish our study by discussing the fruits of maintaining godly relationships, not just marriages, which include peace, love, and forgiveness.

Peace

Read Ephesians 2:11-18; Philippians 4:6-7; James 3:17-18

1. How would you best describe God's Peace?

It transcends understanding, it guards hearts & minds in Jesus. Sincere, impartial & righteous.

2. How is peace displayed differently in godly relationships?

Godly relationships display peace from Jesus, it is pure & full of mercy.

3. How can God's Peace be established in a relationship?

Thru prayer & petition, with thanksgiving invite Jesus into the relationship

4. How have you experienced God's Peace in a relationship?

Personal. I no longer feel the need to argue, or win all of the time.

Lesson: _____

(God's Peace is naturally displayed in a godly relationship)

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LESSON 9-FRUITS OF GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

Love

Read Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 4:19-21

5. What are the Characteristics of Godly love?

Love is patient, kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes & perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians)

6. How can someone love another in a Godly relationship?

Only in recognizing Jesus' love first, the love sincerely, honoring, and devotion. Love them as you love yourself.

7. How can the love in a godly relationship be made obvious to the world around them?

Through expressions of sacrificial agape love, honoring the other above yourself.

8. When have you been in a godly relationship? How was it different from other relationships in your life?

Personal. A lot less strife!

Lesson: _____

(Godly love mirrors God love for us)

Forgiveness

Read Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3; Colossians 3:12-13

9. How would you define Godly forgiveness?

Freedom. Let go, pardon the offender. As Jesus did us!

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LESSON 9-FRUITS OF GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

10. What condition(s) of forgiveness do you find in these verses?
Repentance is necessary to truly forgive (Luke 17:3). Forgive as the Lord has forgiven us (Colossians 3:13). Forgive over & Over 70 x 70 (Matthew 18:22). Compassion/ pity (Matthew 18:27).

11. What does forgiveness do for the one forgiven? What does it do for the forgiver?

Sets the forgiven free from guilt of hurting the forgiver, and the forgiver is set free of holding on to the anger of the incident, and replaying it over & over in his mind.

12. When have you forgiven or been forgiven in a relationship? Explain the experience.

Personal.

Lesson: _____

(Forgiveness sets the forgiver free too, and creates harmony)

Challenge: Give love, peace, and forgiveness as God has given them to you!