you and me FOREVER

marriage in light of eternity

FRANCIS CHAN & LISA CHAN

Facilitator's Guide
provided by rightnow MEDIA
Before You Get Started

Welcome to the You and Me Forever group video experience with Francis and Lisa Chan. Whether you’re leading a group of engaged couples, newly marrieds, or couples who’ve been married for years, our hope is that this series will challenge your group to build God-honoring marriages with an eternal mindset.

As the facilitator, there are a few things you should know before you get started with your group:

1. This video series works best in conjunction with the book, You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity by Francis and Lisa Chan. Francis and Lisa’s video teaching assumes that your group members have read the appropriate chapters before coming to your group time. Copies of the book can be ordered directly from the Chans at www.youandmeforever.org. You can also purchase the book at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and many Christian bookstores near you. All of the net proceeds from this book will support various ministries including those that help provide shelter and rehabilitation for thousands of children and exploited women around the world. If there are those in your group that cannot afford to purchase a copy of the book but would like to go through the study with you, they can download a free copy of the book at www.youandmeforever.org.

2. Francis and Lisa also offer a workbook for couples along with the book. That workbook is based on the book and not this video series. It’s an excellent companion to the book and we encourage you to offer that to your group as a supplemental resource.

3. Take some time in advance to watch the video and read and consider the questions in this facilitator’s guide. Think through some of your own personal examples that will help encourage group discussion. As you watch the video, you may also come up with questions that speak more directly to the needs of your group that aren’t included in this guide.

4. Before you begin the video, set the audio at a comfortable level and make sure that everyone can see the screen.

5. If possible, obtain copies of You and Me Forever in advance, and schedule this series so that people know at least a week in advance that they need to read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of the book before your first group session. The first video assumes your group has read those portions of the book.
**Session 1: Marriage in Light of God’s Glory**

**Introduction:** Today’s session will challenge your group to consider how they can create a Christ-centered, eternity-minded marriage. Each person should have already been introduced to this topic by reading the Introduction and Chapter 1 in *You and Me Forever*. There may be some who have not yet read the material. Encourage them to go back and read the Introduction and Chapter 1 as well as Chapter 2 before the next time you meet.

**Watch Session 1:** *Marriage in Light of God’s Glory* (16 minutes)

**Re-View:** One of the first things you’ll notice about this video series is that it’s filmed in Francis and Lisa Chan’s garage. That was intentional since they wanted to communicate that they too have to work on their marriage and struggle every day against sin. They said they wanted the background to “reflect who we are—people in process.”

**Why is it important for us, in this small group, to likewise be honest about our own lives and marriage relationships? How can we create an environment where people feel safe to be authentic?**

Not one of us has a perfect marriage. We all have areas where we can grow. The goal of this study is to have God do something powerful in our lives and in our marriages, all for His glory. Take some time up front to remind people about the importance of confidentiality in your group, and about being sensitive to others as they share about the struggles and successes in their relationships.

Francis and Lisa mentioned that one of the primary reasons they wrote *You and Me Forever* was to encourage people to look at their marriage with an eternal perspective.

**How does looking at your marriage in light of eternity change your perspective?**

Francis said in the video that understanding we are here for a brief period of time should change everything about our lives; that we should invest our marriages on things that matter for eternity.

**How are you currently “investing your marriage”? What might have to change in order for you to invest your marriage in things of eternal value?**

Have someone read 2 Peter 3:10–12.

**How do these verses impact the way we live in marriage?**
Francis and Lisa talked about the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives and in our marriage. They encouraged us with 1 John 4:4, “...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” But they also mentioned that building a God-honoring marriage requires intentional effort on our part.

Have someone read Philippians 2:12–13 and someone else read 2 Peter 1:5–8.

**What do these verses teach us about our responsibility in our marriage relationship?**

In the book Francis and Lisa write, “…our marriage problems are not really marriage problems. They are heart problems. They are God problems. Our lack of intimacy with God causes a void that we try to fill with the frailest of substitutes. Like wealth or pleasure. Like fame or respect. Like people. Like marriage.” (pg. 27)

And in the video we just watched, Francis mentioned that life really isn’t about us or our marriages. Everything, including our marriage, should bring glory to God.

**Does your marriage bring glory to God? Why or why not? What does a marriage that brings glory to God look like?**

Francis and Lisa ended this video session talking primarily about our priorities. Lisa said, “Think about marriage and life. Who are we here for? Who put us here and designed us and designed marriage, for His glory, for His purposes? It’s not about us. I think we just want you to pause, and change your thinking a little bit…what does God want? Let’s just think about God for a minute, because this is all about His glory.”

Take a moment to honestly consider this next question. **Is God your first priority, even over your marriage?**

**What gets in the way of making your relationship with God your first priority?**

One thing Francis and Lisa are very passionate about—both in the book and in the video—is that we take what we learn in this series and actually apply it to our lives. Have someone read James 1:22.

**How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?**
**Session 2: Marriage in Light of the Gospel**

**Introduction:** Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 2 in the book—examines the impact the gospel of Jesus Christ should have on our marriage.

**Watch Session 2: Marriage in Light of the Gospel** (14 minutes)

**Re-View:** Francis starts off the video by noting that our marriage relationships should attract people to Christ and that our “marriage should be a beautiful picture of the gospel.”

**What do you think Francis means by marriage being a picture of the gospel? How can human marriages be an example of Christ’s unconditional and sacrificial love?**

You might want to have people review the gospel message. Have different people look up each of the following passages (or 1 Corinthians 15:1–6) and then consider how this good news can be displayed in marriage:

- Romans 3:23 – all have sinned.
- Romans 6:23 – the wages of sin is death.
- Romans 5:8 – Christ died for us while we were still in sin.
- Romans 10:9 – Salvation is available by faith.

**When people look at your marriage, are they drawn toward God? Why or why not?**

The goal here isn’t to make people feel guilty, but to really examine their hearts and reflect honestly about where they are in their marriage. Francis and Lisa both mention that early on in their marriage they weren’t a great example for others to follow.

Both Francis and Lisa talked about how casual the world and even the church has become about divorce. Lisa said, “We should be mortified that this many people in the church are making a wreck of the picture of the gospel.”

**How does the world’s current view of marriage contrast with a biblical view of marriage?**

*Note:* It’s possible that someone in your group has experienced divorce. Be sensitive as you discuss this topic. While a proper understanding of the significance of divorce is important, so is our willingness to reach out in grace toward those who have experienced it. The goal is that from this moment forward, every member of your group will seek to live in the power of the Spirit and create a lasting marriage that draws people toward Christ.
Have someone read Romans 12:2.

**How has your view of marriage been conformed to “the pattern of this world”? In what ways do you think God wants you to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” in regards to marriage?**

The good news is that there is always hope. Francis looked at Acts 2 and noted that when people saw the impact that the Holy Spirit had in Peter and the other apostles, they were drawn in and wanted to experience the Holy Spirit themselves. Francis said, “God didn’t just save me from the penalty of sin, He saved me from sin itself…don’t underestimate what God can do in you. You aren’t just a normal person, you are the temple of the Spirit.”

**What difference has the Holy Spirit made in your life? In your marriage?**

Francis made a powerful observation. He said that since the Holy Spirit lives in every believer, if you have something against your spouse, you have something against God.

**How should the fact that the Holy Spirit lives in your spouse impact the way you treat him or her?**

Lisa talked about our reluctance toward suffering. She said, “Maybe all my needs aren’t going to be met. I’ll display the gospel even if he doesn’t. We are all about fairness and equality, but this is about you and God…I’ll honor Christ at any cost.”

**Is it possible for your spouse to meet all your needs? How should we respond when our needs aren’t being met?**

**Note:** Lisa’s comment about honoring Christ at any cost may bring up the question about spouses caught in a marriage with an unfaithful partner or one who is physically abusive. It’s important to remember that Lisa speaks from the context of being married to Francis, who is striving to treat her as a fellow heir in Christ. You might want to be familiar with your church’s position on adultery, abuse, and abandonment before this class.

Have someone read John 15:4–5.

**What do these verses have to do with marriage?**

Francis said, “The closer you are to Him [God], the more good things start to happen. It starts with your personal walk with God. As individuals first, then as a couple.”

**What can you do as an individual this week to “abide” in Christ? What can you do as a couple?**

**How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?**
Introduction: Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 3 in the book—discusses the importance of humility in marriage.

Watch Session 3: *Marriage in Light of Christ’s Example* (17 minutes)

Re-View: Lisa and Francis challenged us to follow Christ’s example in humility.

Have someone read Philippians 2:3–8.

What do these verses teach us about humility? How is that applicable to marriage?

Why do you think it’s so hard to consider the needs of your spouse above your own?

Verse 3 focuses on our actions and verse 5 focuses on our attitude. Why is it important that both our attitude and actions are rooted in humility?

What needs does your spouse have that you can meet, but currently aren’t? How can you look to the interests of your spouse this coming week over your own interests?

Francis looked to Proverbs 16:5 which, depending on your translation, mentions that the Lord *detests* the proud or “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished” (ESV; italics added).

Why is our pride such a big deal to God?

How do we resist being prideful in our marriages?

Francis talked about some of the senseless arguments that he and Lisa had early in their marriage. What do you and your spouse argue about? What does that say about you?
Have someone read John 13:1–17.

What does this passage, where Jesus washes His disciples’ feet, teach us about how we should treat our spouse?

We don’t usually wash people’s feet today. That was a custom in Jesus’ day. But, in what way can we “wash our spouse’s feet”? What does that look like in your relationship?

Sacrificially serving your spouse in this way might be very difficult for you. Lisa mentioned that it’s easy for us to feel like we are being taken advantage of, but that we need to remember the eternal purpose of marriage and trust in the Lord for strength.

Francis said, “Fix your eyes on Jesus…How did Jesus live? He was taken advantage of. He served when He didn’t have to…He never got what He deserved…Fix your eyes on Him, that’s the goal of your life…Our gaze has to be on Christ…I’m becoming more like Him and am able to just forgive and love and keep on serving.”

Have someone read Hebrews 12:2–3.

How does focusing on Jesus and His example help you serve in humility?

These verses mention that Jesus endured the cross “for the joy set before Him.” What joy comes from serving your spouse?

Francis challenged us, especially if we are competitive, to try to outdo one another in love this week…to out-serve one another. One example he mentioned was taking care of the kids so that his wife could get some time for herself.

Will you take this Out-Serve Challenge? What tangible things can you do this coming week to “outdo” or “out-serve” your spouse?

You might consider not having your group answer the specifics of their challenge out loud so that they can surprise their spouse over the coming week. You might also encourage your group to actually ask their spouse what would be the best way they could serve them. Remember, the goal really isn’t to “win” this game. The goal is to become more like Christ. Encourage the group to make a note of some of the creative ways they sought to sacrificially love and serve their spouse this week, and come prepared to talk about it next week.

How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?
Introduction: Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 4 in the book—challenges us to make God’s mission the most important thing in our marriage.

Before watching this week’s video, take a moment and ask the group about last week’s Out-Serve Challenge. How did your Out-Serve Challenge go last week? Any surprises?

Be prepared with an example of your own to get the discussion going, but give people an opportunity to talk before jumping in.

Watch Session 4: Marriage in Light of Our Mission (18 minutes)

Re-View: In the book, Francis and Lisa write,

In this battle, He has given us a clear mission—to make disciples. Yet Christian couples can most typically be found holding hands and skipping through life, ignoring the battle that rages around them. We have made happy families our mission. That is not the mission that Jesus gave us, but we try to justify this idolizing of marriage because it’s what we want. (pg. 96)

Have someone read Mathew 28:18–20. Then take a moment to honestly reflect on this question. Is the primary goal of your marriage to be on mission together for God making disciples? What does a “missional marriage” look like?

Is there anything wrong with being happy in marriage? Can you be both missional and happy? How can mission lead to happiness?

It might help to spend some time thinking about how your family spends your time and resources together. Encourage couples to honestly examine the impact their marriage is having on those around them for eternity.

Take another look at the end of Matthew 28:20. What promise does Jesus give to those who are out on mission for Him? How does that promise impact your marriage?

At the beginning of the video, Francis says, “We don’t work on marriage that much, but we are focused on mission, and because of that, everything has come together.”

Why does pursuing God’s mission together help a marriage thrive?

This reality extends far beyond marriage alone! Small groups grow closer and deeper when they find ways to seek God’s mission. Your own spiritual growth and sanctification flourishes when you stop “spiritual navel gazing” and you seek to live God’s mission.
Lisa talked about losing sight of the mission when she had her second child. She mentioned losing the joy of motherhood. Lisa was brutally honest and said that it wasn’t the “baby blues,” but that she realized her attitude was sinful. She eventually confessed to God and invited Him to change her perspective.

What’s robbing you from focusing on God and having joy in His mission for you? What might you need to confess to God? How can basking in God’s grace help you become more joyful?

Remind people that this is a process. Francis noted the remarkable change in their lives and that it’s been a 20-year process of pursuing Christ and “God changing us and getting rid of our junk.”

Lisa told the story of Francis coming home from Africa and wanting to sell their home and move into a home that was half the size. Initially, she didn’t want to sell their home, but after they did they ended up having some of the best times in their relationship. Other people didn’t understand or even support their decision, but Lisa said that after she went to Africa herself, she repented and wished they had done it earlier.

What is God calling you to do? Are you willing to pursue God’s mission for your marriage even over your own comfort? What scares you about fully submitting to what God has called you to do? What does it mean for your lifestyle?

What happens if only one spouse feels a particular calling to do something?

Note: Francis and Lisa do a great job in their book discussing their understanding of the biblical roles of a husband and wife. Take a look at pages 72–74 (and then the rest of Chapter 3) for their thoughts on God-honoring love and submission.

Francis encouraged us with, “…if you know that this is what God wants you to do, then go for it! God did show us how He was working through it, but it is a sacrifice.”

It seems like God’s call often requires sacrifice. Why do you think God requires us to sacrifice our time and resources for others? What does that change in you?

Francis and Lisa both talked about the difficulty of staying on mission—that it was a daily battle. Francis loves to “play all the time” and Lisa longs for moments to herself. But both agree that the moments when they choose to be missional and fight against their selfishness in order to make a difference in someone else’s life are the most rewarding.

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 and someone else read Hebrews 12:1.

What do these verses teach us about staying on mission? Why does the Apostle Paul use imagery of an athlete to make his point? How does that relate to marriage?

Near the end of the video, Lisa challenged us to find something “simple to do. Bake cookies and give them to your neighbors. Open the door for relationship. Pray and ask God that he’ll show you who you can minister to. Take a small step of faith… do something to love others.” Francis echoed her thoughts and added, “You have to decide right now… or you’ll do nothing. We [often] have a convicting Bible study and then do nothing about it. Make a decision. Commit.”

Who can you bless this week? Who can you serve?

How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?
Session 5: Marriage in Light of God’s Promises

Introduction: Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 5 in the book—looks at what Scripture has to say about the eternal promises of God and how those promises should impact our marriage.

Watch Session 5: Marriage in Light of God’s Promises (13 minutes)

Re-View: We live in such a tangible, tactile world that it’s easy to forget about the reality of heaven. Our lives here on earth consume our attention and our affections, yet how often do we pause and consider how momentary our time on earth is compared to the eternity we will spend with our Lord in heaven?

Have someone read Matthew 6:19–24.

Think about the treasures you are storing up on earth (savings accounts, 401Ks, investment properties, collections, etc.). Those things aren’t necessarily bad. God expects us to be wise stewards of His resources, which includes taking care of our families (Prov. 13:22). Are you as intentional about making eternal investments and deposits? What do those look like?

What does your current investment strategy tell you about your heart?

Francis joked about not having cheese on his burger as an example of the tendency to sacrifice because of guilt, self-righteousness, or the desire to gain the approval of others instead of out of love.

What motivates you to live sacrificially? Why is guilt not a good motivator?

Francis also said that the proper posture in sacrificial giving is one of expectant joy in God, excited about the future rewards that will bring and the glory our sacrifice brings to God. Have someone read Mark 10:27–31.

How do you feel about sacrificing for others in order to gain a reward in heaven? Do you think that’s an appropriate, godly motive? Why or why not?

Francis reminds us that it’s Christ Himself who initiates this eternal investment plan. We will be shocked at how generous God is toward us, even though He’s the one who graciously gives us the resources and the strength to serve others.

In addition to the eternal rewards, has intentional sacrifice on your part had any impact on you this side of heaven? If so, what changed? How would you describe that?
One of the ways Lisa keeps herself from becoming too attached to worldly possessions is to purchase used things. Lisa said, “I do want my home to look nice, but I’m careful to have used stuff so I don’t care too much about the wrong things.” That also enables her to spend less and have more resources to invest in eternal things.

Have someone read 1 John 2:15–17. Lisa quoted these verses as she talked about being careful not to become attached to worldly possessions.

**How do you keep yourself from loving the world and the things in the world?**

**How do you feel about purchasing used things instead of buying things that are new? Is it wrong to buy new furniture or a new car?**

One of the dangers we could fall into here is to assume that everyone should sacrifice in the same way. We might look at a fellow brother or sister in Christ and judge them because of the kind of car they drive or home they live in.

**How might we keep ourselves focused on what God is calling us to do without becoming distracted by what others are doing?**

Francis talked about his friend who keeps a hole in the drywall of his home in order to remind him that this world and this life isn’t all there is. **What reminders do you have of eternity? If you don’t have any, what tangible reminder can you create for yourself and for your family?**

Francis ended the video by talking about the reality of the new heavens and the new earth. Divide the following Scripture passages up and have several people read them in this order:

- Revelation 21:1–4
- Revelation 21:22–27
- Revelation 22:12–16

**What stands out to you the most about this picture of heaven and what’s to come?**

In Revelation 22:12, Jesus specifically mentions that He’s returning with rewards that He will distribute according to what we have done. **How does this change how you will live your life and what you will do? As an individual, and as a married couple?**

**How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?**
Session 6: Parenting to the Glory of God

**Introduction:** Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 6 in the book—challenges us to consider the overall goal and direction of parenting.

If you have engaged couples or married couples without children in your group, encourage them that this session has valuable content for them as well. Also, be very sensitive to those in your group that may be dealing with infertility. We are all responsible to help teach the next generation to love and honor Christ.

**Watch Session 6: Parenting to the Glory of God (16 minutes)**

**Re-View:** Let’s begin by looking at how God views children. Have someone read Psalm 127:3–5.

What do these verses teach us about God and children?

Similar to their observations about marriage, Lisa begins the video by stating the importance of humility in parenting and the need for our utter dependence upon the Lord. Lisa challenges us to make our personal walk with God a priority since “you have to know God and be close to Him so you can speak truth into your children.” But, as parents, even more than just speaking truth, we also need to live truth.

If our children learn more from what we do than what we say, then what are your children learning from your life? How do you model Christlikeness for your children?

Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:4–8.

What do these verses teach us about the parents’ role in raising godly children?

Francis told an embarrassing story about yelling “shut-up” at his 18-month old daughter. **Why do our children often bring out “the worst” in us?**

How might God be using your children in your own sanctification? How have you matured in Christ as your children have grown?

Francis made a remarkable observation, in that we often don’t treat our own children like we treat other Christians. When dealing with other believers, we often appeal to the Holy Spirit in them, yet in parenting, we think we can handle it on our own.
How can you rely more on the Holy Spirit in your parenting? How can you see your children as God sees them and allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives?

Part of the difficulty here is that relying on the Holy Spirit requires that we give up control. Francis talked about being “tougher” on your children when they are young and then loosening up as they grow older.

What do you think about the idea of gradually loosening your control of your children as they grow older? How do we help our children transition from being under our leadership to being under the leadership of the Holy Spirit?

Have someone read James 1:2–4. We often think of these verses in regards to how God is maturing us. What is the significance of these verses in regards to how God is growing your children to become more like Christ?

Francis said, “We want to be our kid’s savior and protect them from everything. But they need to grow in the Lord on their own as well.”

Do you do too much for your children? Are you teaching them to be responsible? What things might you consider changing?

Lisa said, “You have to have enough trust and love for God to choose Him over safety and concern for your kids. It’s easy to let parenting rule you instead of God rule over you. Don’t stand in the way of what God will do in their lives. Lay them down at God’s feet. Don’t stand in the way of something God will do through your kids.”

How do you feel about Lisa’s statement? Has parenting become more of a priority in your life than your own relationship with God? Why must God remain your first priority?

Have someone read Luke 14:26. That’s a tough verse, but it speaks to making God our priority. How does this verse relate to Lisa’s statement above?

Francis offered encouragement to parents who felt like they were failing. Again, the key is focusing on your walk with the Lord. Francis said, “If you are walking with God, you will become a better parent.”

Do you think it’s that easy? Do you believe that if you focus more on abiding in Christ than in parenting techniques that you’ll be a better parent? Why or why not?

How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?
Introduction: Today’s session—which corresponds to Chapter 7 in the book—encourages us to put into practice all that we’ve learned over the past 6 sessions and to finish strong.

Watch Session 7: Marriage in Light of Eternity (8 minutes)

Re-View: It’s clear that both Francis and Lisa are concerned that we might sit through these seven sessions and hear their passionate plea to live as husbands and wives committed to each other and to God’s mission through our marriage, but end up doing nothing about it.

What changes have occurred in your life these past weeks as a result of God working in you because of something you’ve read or watched or discussed in this series?

If nothing has changed, why do you think that is?

Have someone read 1 John 3:16–18.

What do these verses have to do with marriage and our discussion today?

In the book, Francis and Lisa compare life to a marathon. They write, “We can run faster as the race goes on. In our final years, we can sprint, knowing that we can collapse into His arms.” (pg. 184)

How does this idea of actually running faster toward the end compare to most people’s idea of retirement?

In the book, Francis and Lisa look to Joshua and Caleb as examples of people who finished strong. Have someone read Joshua 23:14.

What must you do right now, as an individual and as a couple, to ensure that you’ll be able to give a similar speech to your children and your grandchildren some day?

What steps will you take to make sure that your lives—and marriages—will remain an example for others to follow?

Take a moment to consider the story of your life. How do you want it to end? How do you want to approach God in heaven when you die? Why is it important to answer those questions?
Some people in your group may never have thought about those questions before. Encourage them to not only think about them, but to actually answer them. In coming up with concrete answers, they’ll be able to establish a goal, an endpoint—something to work toward.

Have someone read Philippians 3:12–16 and someone else read 2 Timothy 4:6–8. The Apostle Paul wrote all of these verses.

**What do these verses tell us about the Apostle Paul? What do these verses teach us about finishing well?**

At the end of the video, Francis encourages us to get serious about prayer. It’s an acknowledgment that we need supernatural power to run a good race, to develop marriages that bring honor and glory to God, and to parent in light of eternity.

**Who is praying for your marriage right now? Whose marriage could you be praying for right now?**

**How often do you as a couple seek the Lord in prayer? What needs to happen for prayer to become a natural part of your relationship? Why is it important for you to pray as a couple?**

Consider challenging the couples in your group to spend some time this coming week praying “through their home.” Go room by room (and don’t forget the garage), considering all that God has entrusted you with—including your children and your belongings—and diligently seek God’s will in every area of your life. Ask God to give you clarity on these questions:

- How is God calling you to invest in eternity?
- What does God want to do in and through your marriage?
- What changes do you need to make with your children in order to make sure they see your priority is in God first, then in fostering a loving relationship with your spouse?
- How can you better utilize your resources for eternal purposes?
- Who is God specifically calling you to serve?

As your wrap up your time this week, spend an extended time in prayer. Don’t let this be just another Bible study. Beg God to change your heart, life, and marriage in light of His truth. Pray that He would take your marriage and use it in powerful and unexpected ways for the sake of His mission and His glory.

And one last time: **How will your actions change this coming week because of what you heard and studied today?**