

MARRIAGE IS A MINISTRY SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE



Eight-Week Group Study

Volumes 1-5

For use with complete workbook series and videos

Craig Caster

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

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Marriage Is a Ministry Series *Leader's Guide* by Craig Caster
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09012020 revision

A special thanks to Jenne Acevedo for her assistance with this project.

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Titles in the Marriage Is a Ministry Series

Strong Foundation (volume 1)
What Love Is (volume 2)
Unique Needs (volume 3)
Physical Fulfillment (volume 4)
Godly Leadership (volume 5)

Other Workbooks by Family Discipleship Ministries

Christian Foundational Truths: A Strong Foundation for a Disciple by Craig Caster
Parenting Is a Ministry series by Craig Caster
Understanding Teens by Craig Caster

All FDM.world workbooks are recommended for individual study, for small groups, as discipleship tools, and in counseling.

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Letter of Encouragement

Dear Leader,

As a husband for forty years and a leader in family ministry for more than twenty-five years, I am absolutely convinced that God's Word is a complete manual for marriage. I have witnessed within my own marriage and hundreds of others through counseling that the principles taught in this series, if fulfilled, will bless and transform any marriage relationship.

This series reveals biblical truths and brings clarity to God's will and purpose for marriage. If we are ignorant to God's nonnegotiable principles for marriage, how can we expect to succeed in a fulfilling marriage relationship?

I encourage you to be in prayer daily, seeking how you can help couples understand these truths. Our adversary, Satan, hates marriage and is doing everything he can to destroy it, so being prayed up and remembering you are in a spiritual battle are important. Know that God created marriage. His Word and grace are sufficient to help believers who yield and ask for His help.

Your Fellow Servant,

Pastor Craig Caster

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.
(1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Introduction

Thank you for responding to the call of making disciples (Matthew 28:19) by leading this marriage group study. Pastor Craig Caster's powerful, no-nonsense, inspiring message has helped thousands of men and women across the globe know God's will for them in fulfilling their roles as husbands and wives. The complete Marriage Is a Ministry series, which includes five workbooks, five brief videos, and this leader's guide, benefits both traditional and blended families and assists in premarital, marital, and postmarital mentoring and counseling.

Most of the teaching is done through the workbook and personal study, but your part is important. When you follow this leader's guide, you will bring understanding to those who are struggling and help them to do what God has called them to do as husband or wife—no matter how long they have been walking apart from God's will.

Small groups come in different shapes and sizes. A church small group is primarily for reaching people within your own body or existing Sunday school classes. A neighborhood small group could include neighbors, friends, family members, your child's friends' parents, or your child's teammates' parents. Other select small groups may be a women's or men's small group, a discipleship group, or a home Bible study. This series can also be used for one-on-one discipleship with someone God has providentially put in your life. This leader's guide will help you in these settings and will prove beneficial for any discipler.

God exhorts you as a leader to know *and apply* God's principles for marriage in your own home before you can disciple someone else (1 Timothy 3:5). You must be working out these truths so your testimony represents what you are teaching. However, do not wait until you are perfect and flawless (which is impossible). If you have not yet completed the workbook series and implemented God's principles in your own home, we suggest you do this before trying to lead a class.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for improvement, please email us at info@FDM.world. We consider your suggestions for continual improvement in our endeavor to assist the body of Christ.

Preparing to Lead

Promote your class approximately four to six weeks in advance. If your group is derived from your church, we suggest that you advertise the class in your weekly bulletin, on flyers, on your church website, via social media, and by talking to others about it. If possible, have your pastor exhort the congregation to invest in being disciplined in marriage. Be prepared to take sign-ups whenever possible. All promotional resources are available online at FDM.world. Or to receive a promotional package via email, contact info@FDM.world.

The class can be hosted in your church or in a home (recommended). The intimate setting of a home helps people relax and communicate more openly. It can be the home of someone the Lord has called simply to host the class while you lead it or the home of someone in your group.

Make sure you have considered childcare. You are not required to provide childcare, but the lack of childcare may prevent some from participating. You may need consider babysitting and transportation for some couples to be able to attend the class.

You may consider serving some refreshments before, during a break, or after the class. Hospitality will promote unity and fellowship within the group. The couples can even take turns bringing treats to spread the responsibility.

Make sure you have been practicing the principles you are about to share with your class to be a living example of the life He has taught us to live. The Enemy will look for any opportunity to disrupt what God wants to do through you, so make sure you are diligent in the things the Lord has called you to do personally. As a leader, it is crucial that you are abiding in Christ, spending time daily in the Word and prayer. You are an example. Make sure your own home and your relationship with your spouse and family are in order before God. Be ready for the battles that will come, and be prayed up daily as a family.

Getting Started

Once you have planned the class schedule for eight weeks, determined the location and childcare needs of the participants, and decided how you wish to handle refreshments, you are ready to get started on the material. Each workbook (volume) has an accompanying video available on our website (FDM.world) under the *Marriage* tab. Preview each video prior to the class. Be sure to have all materials for your class, including the electronics necessary to watch the videos. Keep this leader's guide with you while preparing for or engaged in discipling others. And have your own completed workbook with you for reference when answering questions during class.

Each spouse should have their own workbook for their personal study. If a couple has only one copy of the series, one spouse may not engage as desired. Most of the homework should first be completed individually and then as a couple to discuss and implement what they have learned. Be clear with this direction while promoting the class.

Make sure the seating arrangements provide everyone the best opportunity to see so the full effect of the message is communicated. This will also help the disciples remain attentive.

Stay on schedule. You may find it helpful to position a clock or watch in your clear view to keep the class running on time.

Goals and Responsibilities

The goal of the Marriage Is a Ministry series is to teach and encourage couples to be the godly spouses God designed them to be. The group leader provides a safe environment for couples to learn and grow closer and stronger while honoring God in their marriages. The following goals and responsibilities assist in this process.

During this workbook and group study, husbands and wives will learn the following:

- God's design for the family
- God's purposes for marriage

- The importance of unity in the marriage relationship
- To experience God's power in marriage
- To meet their spouse's emotional needs through loving communication
- To meet each other's unique companionship needs
- To understand God's plan for leadership within the home
- To incorporate changes and start over as needed

The leader's responsibilities are as follows:

- Oversee and conduct eight weekly marriage discipleship classes.
- Begin and end each class with prayer.
- Have a complete understanding of the workbook, the leader's guide, and the videos prior to each session of the small group study.
- Assist participants with application of the principles learned in the material.
- Lead discussions and encourage participation in both the group and individual studies.
- Begin and end the class on time, and stay on schedule.
- Keep the conversation on track.
- Encourage the introverts and monitor the extroverts.
- Refer participants to pastoral counsel if necessary. Do not counsel without pastoral permission and oversight.

The leader should not do the following:

- Counsel participants and solve problems outside the scope of this material (unless pastor has approved).
- Dominate class time discussing his own family.
- Give his personal opinion or advice.
- Discuss any information from participants in the class with others outside the class.
- Use class time to promote or teach personal views or debate the views of other participants.
- Deviate from the materials and the teachings contained in the series.

Missed Class Contingency Plan

In case of a true emergency, as determined by the small group leader, the participant shall complete the workbook lessons (homework), view the video missed (available online), and contact the leader for questions. The leader should make sure participants do not abuse this contingency plan by having a frank discussion with couples or individuals who miss more than one class.

Master Plan

Be sure to review this leader's guide thoroughly before you begin. This guide will cover eight weeks of study, each with five lessons per week from the workbooks. Each workbook volume has five or ten lessons, which equals one or two weeks of group study. The participants should do the homework of five lessons each week between meetings. These are designed to be done each day, but they can be combined as needed based on time commitments.

Series Materials

Marriage Is a Ministry series workbooks (all five volumes)
 Five brief videos at FDM.world (under the *Marriage* tab)
 Leader's guide
 Timer
 Bible
 Extra pens and pencils for participants

All materials are available online in downloadable format. Videos can be streamed directly from the website during group meetings. For those who prefer printed workbooks (recommended), order them online prior to the first meeting. Bring your Bible for reference and encourage the participants to do the same.

Suggested Schedule

To get the most out of the group's time together, meet for eight consecutive weeks. Schedule the class to avoid holidays and vacation times, and include a one-week break if necessary. Provide a schedule for the participants during the first meeting so they know what to expect each week. See the details for each meeting on the next page.

Weekly Meetings

Each meeting will take approximately sixty to ninety minutes. Provide additional time if you wish to have refreshments or do prayer requests. Each meeting includes five sections. Do each one in order as you lead the class. Weeks 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 have videos. Reduce the Workbook/Appendix Review time to finish in ninety minutes. Determine *in advance* how much time to spend on each lesson and section. Note the appropriate time to move to the next section, and keep track of time with a timer or watch.

- **Leader Prep** provides key points for your consideration as you *prepare* to lead the class.
- **Workbook Review** examines the *previous week's homework*, except week 1, which introduces the discipleship process. (30–40 minutes)
- **Appendix Review** examines the *previous week's appendices*. (10–20 minutes)
- **Video and Group Questions** provides material for discussion after watching the video. Five weeks have videos of approximately five minutes each. (0–20 minutes)
- **Final Words** provides encouragement and introduces the new homework. (10 minutes)

Detailed Weekly Plan

Week 1

Strong Foundation (part 1)
 Review course plan
 Watch **volume 1 video** (8 minutes)
 Discuss video 1 questions
 Assign volume 1, lessons 1–5

Week 2

Strong Foundation (part 2)
 Review volume 1, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices A, B, R
 No video
 Assign volume 1, lessons 6–10

Week 3

What Love Is
 Review volume 1, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices B, C, D, R
 Watch **volume 2 video** (6 minutes)
 Discuss video 2 questions
 Assign volume 2, lessons 1–5

Week 4

Unique Needs (part 1)
 Review volume 2, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices E, F, G, P, R
 Watch **volume 3 video** (3 minutes)
 Discuss video 3 questions
 Assign volume 3, lessons 1–5

Week 5

Unique Needs (part 2)
 Review volume 3, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices H, L, M, P, R
 No video
 Assign volume 3, lessons 6–10

Week 6

Physical Fulfillment
 Review volume 3, lessons 6–10
 Review appendices G, I, J, K, L, M, R
 Watch **volume 4 video** (3 minutes)
 Discuss video 4 questions
 Assign volume 4, lessons 1–5

Week 7

Godly Leadership
 Review volume 4, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices M, N, O, P, R
 Watch **volume 5 video** (4 minutes)
 Discuss video 5 questions
 Assign volume 5, lessons 1–5

Week 8

Follow-up
 Review volume 5, lessons 1–5
 Review appendices M, P, Q, R
 No video
 No assignments
 Discussion and reflections



Group Week 1

Strong Foundation, Volume 1

Part 1: God's Purposes for Marriage

Leader Prep

This is it! Welcome to your first class. You will do great. Make sure you read and understand this week's material prior to leading. Preview the video and have it cued up. Follow the plan established in this leader's guide. It works!

This Week's Plan

- Review course plan
- Watch volume 1 video (8 minutes)
- Discuss video 1 questions
- Assign volume 1, lessons 1–5

Be sensitive to the fact that most people are private about what goes on inside their homes. Because marriage can be a serious or even emotionally charged subject, be sensitive to times when you need to interject light humor. Whenever possible, alleviate potential tension with encouraging statements like these:

- Let's encourage our spouses here, not discourage or belittle them.
- We are all here to learn.
- God has a big job on His hands, but He is faithful.
- God did not make a mistake when He gave us our spouses.
- God knows what He is doing. We must trust Him to tell us.
- It's okay that you didn't know this before. God knows you are ready to receive it now.
- We have a powerful God. He can redeem our failures and mistakes.
- God has given our spouses a free will.
- We only need to be obedient to do our parts. God will be faithful to do His part.

Keep discussion comments to no more than one or two minutes. You will learn who the talkers are in your group. If allowed, some individuals will consume the conversation. A gentle and humorous reminder at the beginning of the class, as well as getting the group accustomed to a timer, is a good solution to this potential, distracting problem.

Be in prayer for those you are discipling. As the Lord begins the process of transformation in their lives, the Enemy will attempt to disrupt this process. Pray that they will hear the Lord speak to them, they will abide in Him, and they will apply His Word to their lives. Pray that God would grant each of them the strength and courage to repent of their old ways that were contrary to His Word and to embrace His Word for their marriages.

Remember that you are called to lead the group. You may not be a counselor, pastor, Bible scholar, or God-appointed problem solver. You are a disciple making other disciples.

Workbook Review

Since this is the first group meeting, there is nothing to review from the workbook. Instead, we will get to know one another and introduce the discipleship process.

Introduction

- Welcome the group and open in prayer. Thank them for coming and congratulate them on making this important commitment to their marriages.
- Introduce yourself and your wife. Mention the names and ages of your children. Share how you came to know this material and how it has blessed your marriage.
- Share the goals of the Marriage Is a Ministry class (see *Goals and Responsibilities*), a brief introduction of Pastor Craig Caster (see *About the Author*) and the ministry of FDM (see *About FDM*), the format that will be followed each week (see *Master Plan*), and the commitment that is required from the disciples to complete the course (see below).
- Explain that the group will meet for eight sessions, including this first class. It is essential that disciples attend all classes. If there is a possibility that they will not be able to finish the course, encourage them to postpone for a more convenient time. Should they miss a class unexpectedly, the material is available online.
- Announce the dates and locations for all meetings. Provide them a printed schedule.
- Each disciple should have all five Marriage Is a Ministry workbooks for their personal study. (Note that each volume is available as a free download at FDM.world if anyone is unable to purchase the series.) Encourage both husbands and wives that they must each commit to doing their *own workbook* and then discussing the material as a couple. Do all sections, including Self-Examinations and Dig Deeper. These apply to everyone.
- Each week will have five lessons of homework. Encourage participants to complete each lesson, one per day if possible, to be prepared for the next class and get the most out of the material.
- Encourage the disciples to pay special attention to the Scriptures in the workbook, which are the basis for the marriage principles emphasized in the lessons.
- Remind the disciples that everything discussed in the class is confidential. They are not to share anything they hear in class, give their opinions, or counsel other couples in response to the problems that will be discussed. (In addition, if problems arise between a husband and wife, do not attempt to handle the situation yourself unless you have your pastor's permission. Refer the couple to the pastor for counsel.)
- Encourage the couples to be committed to this opportunity that God has provided for them to be disciplined in marriage.
- Encourage couples to participate in discussions and get to know other couples.

Getting to Know One Another

- Ask disciples to introduce themselves and share whether they are in a traditional or blended family, how long they have been married, and the names and ages of their children. If the class is large, these introductions can be excluded or done in smaller groups.

- Ask disciples to share why they are attending the class and what they hope to gain. If the class is large, select a few individuals to share to the whole group and have everyone share in smaller groups. (Firmly, yet gently, hold each person to a one- to two-minute limit. You may want to use a timer or phone app to be consistent with each participant.)
- Pass out 3 x 5 cards. Ask couples to write their names and the names and ages of their children. Collect the cards. Upon leaving the class, each couple will take a card (make sure they do not get their own card) and commit to pray for that couple for the duration of the class.

Appendix Review

Since this is the first group meeting, there is nothing to review from the appendices. This section will begin next time.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 1 (8 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group. You may choose to discuss them as a whole group or break into smaller groups or tables as appropriate. Some answers from the video are included after the questions. Others will vary and are asked to get them thinking about how the material applies to their own marriages.

1. Why are many marriages struggling today?
Ignorance. Not knowing God's will for marriage. Other answers will vary.
2. What is the difference between knowing and doing God's will?
Various answers from participants.
3. Who taught you to be a husband or wife? How has this affected your view of marriage?
Various answers from participants.
4. How are we to treat our spouse?
Honor them. Tend to them in a way that glorifies God's nature.
5. What does God reveal through our marriage relationships?
Things He wants to transform in us. Three main areas: how we are not like Him, how ignorant we are of His Word and His ways, and how we are independent from Him (wanting our own way, not willing to trust Him, putting conditions on our obedience).
6. How do you feel at the beginning of this study, and what do you hope to learn?
7. After listening to the first video, what do you think you are most struggling with in your marriage right now?

If you have time, ask your own questions or let them pose questions that relate to the material.

Final Words

As a leader, you set the tone for this study. Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, remember that God has a purpose and plan for us in our marriages, our trials, our differences, our personalities, and the raising of our children.
- Ask for and extend forgiveness freely. God will bless our marriages beyond our imaginations.
- This week you begin your journey to a healthier and stronger marriage. You will learn the importance of having a strong foundation based on God's Word and your relationship with Him. That foundation is critical to everything else you will learn in this series.
- You may not be used to reading books cover to cover, but it is imperative for this course that you do not miss anything. If you haven't already opened volume 1, do so now. Notice the *Preface* and *Introduction*. Those are included to prepare you for the lessons ahead. Don't skip them.
- The first workbook has ten lessons, so this will take us two weeks to complete. We will do the first five this week. I encourage you to do one lesson each day. Try to stay on schedule to complete all five lessons. If you get behind, set aside time to finish the material before we meet next week.
- Be sure to complete all appendices referenced in the material. They are designed to deepen your understanding. It is okay to skip an appendix that does not pertain to you. However, it is recommended that both spouses at least review the material in the appendices directed at the other spouse. A husband can learn from the wife's material and vice versa. It will also give you things to discuss during your review time as a couple.
- Pray before you begin, asking God to open your heart to what He wants to teach you through these truths, the faith to trust Him, and the grace to work them out. And pray for your spouse each day.
- Your faithfulness to complete all homework is the beginning of a truly wonderful relationship with your spouse in Christ.
- Do your individual study first in your own workbook. Then schedule a time to discuss as a couple what you learned and what impacted you the most. Begin this time with prayer. Share your self-evaluations and action plans. Listen to what God is teaching your spouse, support them, and encourage them in their journey.
- Each part of the lesson is important to your progress. Remember, we are not simply gaining intellectual knowledge. We are learning to implement the principles God teaches in His Word.
- Commit to walk in the Spirit, and trust God with the results.
- Remember that God blesses obedience.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 1, *Strong Foundation*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—A Personal Journey
Lesson 2—In the Beginning

Lesson 3—God, the Creator of Marriage
Lesson 4—God’s Purposes for Marriage
Lesson 5—Cooperating with God’s Discipline

Close the class in prayer.

As the class leaves, be sure each couple takes a card to pray for another family during the week.

Be available for questions after the class. It’s best to have the male leader talk to the husbands and the female leader talk to the wives.

You’ve made it through your first class. *Well done.*



Group Week 2

Strong Foundation, Volume 1

Part 2: Be Transformed

Leader Prep

Although you may have completed the entire workbook series recently, be sure to review volume 1, lessons 1-5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week's leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would be speaking to them clearly about what He wants to do in their lives and their marriages.

Encourage each person to be willing to share their answers with the group. This may encourage others who are struggling to get started.

Begin the meeting with prayer.

This Week's Plan

- Review volume 1, lessons 1-5
- Review appendices A, B, R
- No video
- Assign volume 1, lessons 6-10

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1-5 in volume 1, *Strong Foundation*. This first volume is critical to understanding everything that follows. Without a solid foundation in Christ, we will struggle to understand and carry out the principles for a godly marriage.

Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—A Personal Journey

- We all have our own story, different from anyone else. This makes us unique.
- We were designed by God for a personal relationship with Him, to *need* Him.

Discussion Questions

- How has your personal journey affected your marriage relationship?
- What is your philosophy for marriage?
- Who have been your examples for marriage? Are they positive or negative examples?

Lesson 2—In the Beginning

- God designed marriage as a perfect union, which is radically different than how many see it today.

- Each spouse must invest time to learn God’s will and expectations for their marriage.

Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to you about your expectations of your spouse?
- What did God reveal to you about His plan for you in marriage?

Lesson 3—God, the Creator of Marriage

- God created marriage for our benefit.
- He provides clear instructions in His Word.

Discussion Questions

- How did your perspective change this week as you learned how God created marriage?
- How confident are you that you can minister to your spouse according to God’s Word?

Lesson 4—God’s Purposes for Marriage

- God’s role for us in marriage is to be a minister to our spouses.
- God’s first two purposes for marriage are His glorification and our own transformation.
- He allows trials in our lives to make us more like Him.

Discussion Questions

- What does ministering to your spouse look like to you?
- Why hasn’t God been first in your marriage? Has it been due to ignorance, rebellion, or any other reason?
- What are one or two tangible things you can do to reflect God in your marriage?

Lesson 5—Cooperating with God’s Discipline

- Transformation begins when we take ownership of our behaviors.
- God’s next two purposes for marriage are meeting each other’s needs and raising children.
- He has high standards for us in marriage. Only through Him can we meet them.

Discussion Questions

- What did God reveal to you that He wants to change?
- Who or what gives your spouse value? How are you demonstrating that value?
- What steps can you take to build a strong foundation?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this first week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Note: A good place to begin the practice of daily devotions is FDM's workbook called *Christian Foundational Truths*, available at FDM.world. It encourages daily Bible reading and journaling. It challenges the disciple to learn who Jesus is, important truths about Christian faith, and God's promises to them.

Appendix Review

Appendices are included in each volume for deeper understanding of the material. Some participants will complete all appendices, while others may complete only what pertains to them. Encourage the participants to do all material necessary for their transformation. For example, the nonbeliever or unsure believer may wish to review appendix B if unclear about their salvation, while the solid believers can skip that material.

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix A: Commitment Letter

- Share what this commitment means to you.

Appendix B: Committing Your Life to Christ

- When did you commit your life to Christ? Share a brief testimony.
- How has your marriage changed since you committed your life to Christ?
- If you made this commitment *this week*, would you share that with us now?

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 1. Use this time for additional discussion.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- This week was our first major review of the material. It's a lot to take in. Talk to your spouse about things that came up in our discussions. Communication in your marriage is key. Did something surprise you? Concern you? Stand out for another reason?
- Pay attention to what God is teaching you this week.
- Continue to abide in Christ through daily devotions to receive His grace to love your spouse. To see Jesus work miracles, the disciples had to *follow* Him. In the same way, you abide in Him to see Him work in your life and your spouse's life.
- Accept your marital roles and purposes as defined in God's Word. Trust Him for the results.

- Look for ways to minister to your spouse. Don't just think of ideas—do them. It doesn't need to be big or expensive or time-consuming. You know your spouse. You know what thrills them, helps them, honors them. Ask God to provide opportunities.
- Pray for your spouse each day.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 1, *Strong Foundation*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 6—Strong Foundation

Lesson 7—Three Essential Ingredients

Lesson 8—God Wants Your Affection

Lesson 9—The Chief Cornerstone

Lesson 10—Amazing Transformation

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 3

What Love Is, Volume 2

Leader Prep

Review volume 1, lessons 6–10 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would open their hearts to truly understand what it means to love their spouses as God loves.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 1, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices B, C, D, R
- Watch volume 2 video (6 minutes)
- Discuss video 2 questions
- Assign volume 2, lessons 1–5

Encourage participation in the discussions each week. You may need to monitor the talkers and seek answers from the quiet observers throughout the duration of the class.

Begin the meeting with prayer.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 6–10 in volume 1, *Strong Foundation*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—Strong Foundation

- Our first priority is a strong foundation in God. Seek Him first.
- Study God’s Word to know and obey it.

Discussion Questions

- If God hasn’t been your foundation, what has?
- Why can a weak foundation cause marriage and family problems?

Lesson 7—Three Essential Ingredients

- The three essentials are receiving Jesus, having a daily relationship with Him, and obeying God’s Word.
- We must continually examine our actions and intentions to line up with Christ.

Discussion Questions

- If we are already following Christ, why do we need to *continually* examine our lives?
- What is the importance of meditation?

Lesson 8—God Wants Your Affection

- God wants you to *want* to spend time with Him.
- We are in a battle with our flesh every day. Temptation surrounds us.
- Obedience is not passive—it's active.

Discussion Questions

- How do you show affection for God?
- How do you avoid falling to temptation?
- What do your current actions show about your priorities? Are they in the right place?

Lesson 9—The Chief Cornerstone

- Abiding in Christ is the key to obeying Him.
- Choosing to do things your own way is rebellion.

Discussion Questions

- How is your abiding relationship with Christ?
- How will you train your mind to focus on Jesus first?

Lesson 10—Amazing Transformation

- Trials are necessary to develop sincere, abiding faith.
- God's plan for us is inner transformation and His glorification.

Discussion Questions

- Share a time when a trial brought you closer to God.
- What is God revealing to you in your current circumstances?
- What *one thing* can you begin this week to go back to your first love—Jesus?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary. Some appendices are repeated for reference in multiple volumes. Participants may not need the appendix in one lesson but may decide to do it as they learn (and experience) more. Encourage them to share.

Since this week is the second part of volume 1, some appendices are the same. Resist the temptation to skip duplicates. These questions might prompt new discussion.

Appendix B: Committing Your Life to Christ

- When did you commit your life to Christ? Share a brief testimony.
- How has your marriage changed since you committed your life to Christ?
- If you made this commitment *this week*, would you share that with us now?

Appendix C: Developing Daily Intimacy with God

- Are you are engaged in personal daily devotions? Be honest.
- How does daily intimacy with God affect your life and marriage?

Appendix D: Recommended Books

- Share anything you've learned from one of the recommended books.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 2 (6 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. What companionship need do both men and women have?
To be loved.
2. When we do not feel loved, how do we react?
React in anger, carnality, criticalness, resentment. And we start justifying our unloving behavior toward each other.
3. What is agape love?
A choice. Not a feeling. A love of the will rather than our emotion. We are only able to give it by God's grace.
4. What is the difference between condemnation and conviction?
God does not want us to feel condemned. Our sins have already been paid for. But we all have failed. Conviction comes from Christ and leads us toward repentance and desiring to do God's will.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, only when we cooperate with God's process will we see His transformation.
- Commit to learn and obey His will. Trust God for the results.
- Let us respond to each other in truth, not our sinful words or anger.
- Prayerfully consider what God is teaching you this week as you learn about love. Set aside any preconceived ideas about what you know about love and learn what God says.

- If you need to start over in any area, you must be willing to trust and forgive. Be sure your faith and trust in God are the foundation, and then work on the issue.
- Pray for your spouse. You are learning and growing, but the Enemy doesn't want your transformation. Cover each other in prayer.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 2, *What Love Is*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—Biblical Love

Lesson 2—Responding in Love

Lesson 3—Be Kind

Lesson 4—Glorify God, Not Our Flesh

Lesson 5—Focus on Truth, Not Sin

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 4

Unique Needs, Volume 3

Part 1: Men's Needs

Leader Prep

Review volume 2, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week's leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would teach them what it means to lead as husbands and submit as wives, not as the world believes, but as God commands.

This Week's Plan

- Review volume 2, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices E, F, G, P, R
- Watch volume 3 video (3 minutes)
- Discuss video 3 questions
- Assign volume 3, lessons 1–5

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 2, *What Love Is*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—Biblical Love

- Love is our greatest companionship need. It is the most powerful motivator.
- Biblical love is supernatural, unselfish, sacrificial, and a daily choice—agape love.
- We are to respond to our spouse in love, not react in the flesh.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between agape love and phileo love?
- How do you motivate your spouse?
- How do you demonstrate agape love to your spouse?

Lesson 2—Responding in Love

- Learning to respond in love takes time, thought, and self-control.
- Repentance and obedience affect your relationship with God and your spouse.

Discussion Questions

- What bad behaviors must you unlearn?
- Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Which ones are you doing well? Which do you need to work on?

Lesson 3—Be Kind

- Speak lovingly to your spouse and have the right attitude.
- Do not provoke your spouse or exalt yourself.

Discussion Questions

- Consider how you speak to your spouse. What do you need to change?
- What did your actions this week show about how you love your spouse?

Lesson 4—Glorify God, Not Our Flesh

- Build up your spouse—encourage them.
- Put your spouse's needs above your own.
- Offer forgiveness freely and ask for forgiveness with a repentant heart.

Discussion Questions

- What can you do this week that requires compromise?
- How can you change your attitude about your spouse?

Lesson 5—Focus on Truth, Not Sin

- Rejoice with your spouse and praise them.
- The God-given task of marriage takes work, time, and sacrifice.
- With God, you can trust your spouse, endure hard times, and come out stronger.

Discussion Questions

- What impressed you about your spouse this week?
- What did you learn about love that you didn't know?
- What did you learn about marriage that you didn't know?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix E: Effective Listening Self-Evaluation

- What habits did this worksheet reveal about your ability to listen to your spouse?
- If you were surprised by your score, what can you do to improve?

Appendix F: Improving Your Loving Communication

- How did your loving communication improve after doing this worksheet?

Appendix G: Breaking the Cycle

- How has your marriage changed after doing this worksheet?

Appendix P: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 3 (3 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. Where are we to look for our companionship needs?
To God's Word. He will supply all our needs, according to His glory, not ours. Not by our power, but by His riches and grace.
2. What is the goal of your marriage?
Ultimately to glorify God. Other answers will vary.
3. Why are we not to put conditions on meeting the needs of our spouse?
God places those needs there. It's a process. It takes cooperation and understanding to work out our unique needs together.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, understanding your spouse's needs is a process. You won't get it overnight. And that's okay. You will be blessed if you stick with it.
- Continue to practice forgiveness and reconciliation with God and your spouse after a mistake is made.
- The next lesson is dedicated to the unique companionship needs of the husband. The unique companionship needs of the wife will be the focus of the following week's lesson.
- The message of men's needs is not only controversial in our culture, but it is also foreign to many Christian couples.
- You may discover some biblical truths about men's needs that are different from your expectations. Pray for God to open your heart to what He wants to teach you about men's needs and the role wives play.
- Commit to gain God's perspective on the uniqueness and value of your spouse. And trust God for the results.

- Pray for your spouse this week.
- Continue to daily abide with Jesus to build your strong foundation.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 3, *Unique Needs*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—Biblical Companionship Needs

Lesson 2—Men’s Needs

Lesson 3—Beware of Worldly Influence

Lesson 4—An Affirming Wife

Lesson 5—Common Non-Affirming Practices

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 5

Unique Needs, Volume 3

Part 2: Women's Needs

Leader Prep

Review volume 3, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week's leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would continue to impress on their hearts the unique needs He created in each of them and that they would seek ways to serve their spouse.

This Week's Plan

- Review volume 3, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices H, L, M, P, R
- No video
- Assign volume 3, lessons 6–10

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 3, *Unique Needs*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—Biblical Companionship Needs

- God gave men and women these companionship needs—and they are defined by Him, not us, our culture, or our world.
- God is the author and designer of marriage.
- God has given your spouse to you to meet your companionship needs.

Discussion Questions

- To jog our memories from previous lessons, what is the main purpose of marriage?
- Why did God create a helper for man?
- What unrealistic expectations have you placed on your spouse?

Lesson 2—Men's Needs

- Success only comes by way of obedience—when we yield to God.
- Man shall “rule over” his wife, which is leadership, and she shall desire him.
- Our spouse's needs are as important to God as our own.

Discussion Questions

- How do you feel about biblical submission? (See workbook pages 9–10 and 12–13 for a description.)
- What obstacles are currently hindering your ability to meet your spouse's needs?

Lesson 3—Beware of Worldly Influence

- Our beliefs about marriage must align with God's Word, not our culture or anything else.
- Happiness does not come from your spouse.

Discussion Questions

- In what ways are you following cultural norms rather than those of God?
- Husbands, what things might be hindering your wife's ability to submit to you, and what can *you* do to change it?
- Wives, what things might be hindering your ability to submit to your husband, and what can *you* do to change it?

Lesson 4—An Affirming Wife

- Wives need to affirm their husbands.
- The husband's leadership and the wife's submission are not outdated.

Discussion Questions

- Wives, does your husband feel like your top priority, second only to God?
- Husbands, where did you learn how to lead?

Lesson 5—Common Non-Affirming Practices

- Wives must edify their husbands with their words—both *to* him and *about* him.
- Sex is one of the most significant ways men are affirmed.

Discussion Questions

- Wives, how do you serve your husband?
- How can you improve your communication about finances?
- How can you improve your intimacy? Discuss at home if preferred.

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix H: Husband's Needs

- Share what you would like to adjust after doing this worksheet.

Appendix L: Companionship Needs

- Share one way you applied what you learned.

Appendix M: Common Stumbling Blocks

- Share one example from the strongholds that you are working to change.

Appendix P: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

There is no video this week since we already watched the video for volume 3. Use this time for additional discussion.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- Transformation is a process, not an event. Trust in the power of Christ and in His Word in times of struggle.
- Ephesians 5:21 says to submit “to one another in the fear of God.” To have a truly fulfilling marriage, we must have an open mind and a willing heart that desires to receive God’s grace and instructions above all else to fulfill His commands as a husband or wife.
- God uses loving communication, biblical forgiveness, and reconciliation to break up the hardened soil of our hearts so His Word and grace can have the impact He desires.
- We are moving on to the wife’s needs, which is not only controversial in our world’s views but is also foreign to many Christian couples.
- Pray for protection from the attacks of the Enemy.
- Continue to gain God’s perspective on the uniqueness and value of your spouse. Trust God for the results.
- Husbands, ask God for grace and gentleness in your communication and leadership, and pray for your wife.

- Wives, resist the Enemy's attacks to discourage or frustrate you about submission. Ask God to fill you with His peace and understanding in this area and to show you how to affirm your husband. Pray for your husband.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 6–10 in volume 3, *Unique Needs*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 6—Women's Needs

Lesson 7—A Gift from God

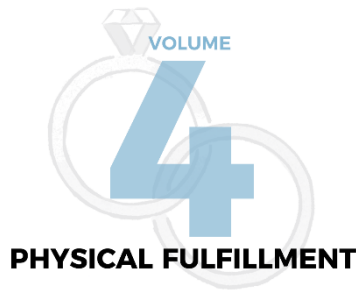
Lesson 8—Cherishing Your Wife

Lesson 9—Family Leadership Is a Man's Job

Lesson 10—Proper Leadership Is Consistent

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 6

Physical Fulfillment, Volume 4

Leader Prep

Review volume 3, lessons 6–10 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would teach them His view of physical fulfillment and that He would guard their hearts from Satan’s lies.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 3, lessons 6–10
- Review appendices G, I, J, K, L, M, R
- Watch volume 4 video (3 minutes)
- Discuss video 4 questions
- Assign volume 4, lessons 1–5

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 6–10 in volume 3, *Unique Needs*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 6—Women’s Needs

- God created both men’s and women’s companionship needs.
- How a man loves his wife should make her feel secure.
- Men are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (her first companionship need).

Discussion Questions

- Wives, give an example of one thing your husband does to make you feel secure.
- Husbands, what could you do to see your wife’s heart change?

Lesson 7—A Gift from God

- Measure your behavior toward your spouse based only on God’s Word.
- Men are to minister to their wives with God’s Word and their actions (her second companionship need).
- Men, as the spiritual leader, must initiate prayer with their wives.

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to “sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the Word”? (See workbook pages 45–46.)
- Men, how do you lead by example?

- How often do you pray together, talk about what God is doing in your lives, and share your concerns?

Lesson 8—Cherishing Your Wife

- Do not settle for less than God wants for your marriage (her third companionship need).
- Husbands must sacrificially love their wives, as they do their own bodies (her fourth companionship need).
- Husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives (her fifth companionship need).

Discussion Questions

- How has your marriage become less than God desires?
- How is sacrificial love different from the way many view love?
- Husbands, are you meeting your wife's companionship needs?
- Wives, how does your husband pursue you?

Lesson 9—Family Leadership Is a Man's Job

- Men are the peacekeepers of the home, overseeing and establishing discipline.
- Men, it takes time, willingness, and communication to tend to your wife.
- Women, if your husband's leadership is a struggle for you for any reason, seek God for the encouragement and wisdom to find rest.

Discussion Questions

- Husbands, how can you be more involved in peacekeeping?
- Wives, how can you defer leadership in the home to your husband?
- How can you improve communication in your home?

Lesson 10—Proper Leadership Is Consistent

- Disengagement, opposition, and disrespect damage a relationship.
- Do not let your marriage become routine.

Discussion Questions

- What routine in your home needs to change?
- What do you need to take responsibility for in your marriage?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Additional Activity

If you have time, do this fun activity with your class.

1. Write the following sentence on a whiteboard (or print for each participant):
Woman without her man is lost.
2. Give the following instructions:
Do this on your own. Place two commas in the sentence wherever you think they are appropriate to give the sentence meaning.
3. Wait about thirty seconds, and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
4. There are two possible answers:
Woman, without her, man is lost. –OR– Woman, without her man, is lost.
5. Without changing any words, this sentence can have two distinct meanings depending on comma placement. In marriage, both answers are equally true. Discuss as a group.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix G: Breaking the Cycle

- How has your marriage changed after doing this worksheet?

Appendix I: Husband's Biblical Response to Opposition

- Share how your responses changed after doing this worksheet.

Appendix J: Biblical Ways a Husband Sanctifies His Wife

- Share one new way you learned how to lead your wife.

Appendix K: Wife's Needs

- Share what you would like to adjust after doing this worksheet.

Appendix L: Companionship Needs

- Share one way you applied what you learned.

Appendix M: Common Stumbling Blocks

- Share one example from the strongholds that you are working to change.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 4 (3 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. Why did God create sex?
For married couples to enjoy.
2. Why is sex a difficult area for many couples, even Christians?
Abuse, sinful choices, hurtful things, unforgiveness, and more. Satan is trying to rob us of this gift of physical fulfillment in our marriages.
3. How will identifying these issues in our marriages improve our physical fulfillment?
Hurts, fears, and selfishness hinder our relationships, which directly relates to our physical fulfillment. Forgiveness allows God to begin a healing work in your marriage.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, God wants to be glorified in every area of our marriages, including physical fulfillment. Allow God to examine your heart this week, and be open to change in order to see sex as an incredible blessing and source of joy in your relationship.
- Not allowing God to work in your heart gives Satan the ability to destroy your marriage. Pray this week about what *you* need to change, not what *your spouse* needs to change.
- The world has a very different view of sex than God does. You may have learned how God created sex and already understand these principles. Or you may have learned the world's way and are trying to change your perception. Either way, God wants to speak to you this week and bless you with His beautiful gift of intimacy.
- Pray for your spouse this week.
- If you have a desire to be discipled or if God is laying it on your heart, actively seek a discipler, or see me for suggestions. We recommend using *Christian Foundational Truths*, available at FDM.world under the *Discipleship* tab.
- If you feel qualified and are willing to disciple others, or if you know of someone else who would be willing to disciple others who hunger to learn and grow, let me know.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 4, *Physical Fulfillment*. We will review and discuss them next week.

Lesson 1—The Gift of Sex
Lesson 2—Common Unbiblical Perceptions
Lesson 3—A Gift, Not a Weapon
Lesson 4—Enjoying Each Other
Lesson 5—A Great Sex Life

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 7

Godly Leadership, Volume 5

Leader Prep

Review volume 4, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would bring peace to their hearts as they learn about godly leadership and that those who struggle with it will find new insights.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 4, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices M, N, O, P, R
- Watch volume 5 video (4 minutes)
- Discuss video 5 questions
- Assign volume 5, lessons 1–5

Understand that this week’s participation may be a little different from previous weeks. People are often hesitant to share anything about sex, and that’s okay. Encourage them to share what they are comfortable with. You may see some squirm, and you’ll probably hear lots of laughter. Keep it light. Do not allow anyone to get too descriptive. Carefully turn the discussion by asking a new question or making a lighthearted remark. You know your group by now, and you will do great.

Begin the meeting with prayer.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 4, *Physical Fulfillment*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—The Gift of Sex

- God blessed us with the ability to experience pleasure.
- By His design, the gift of sex joins the husband and wife as one flesh, produces children, and provides sheer pleasure.

Discussion Questions

- What was your view of sex before beginning this lesson, and where did you learn it?
- Which biblical principle of sex surprises you most and why?

Lesson 2—Common Unbiblical Perceptions

- Our world provides plenty of unbiblical perceptions about sex, many of which unknowingly trap us.

- We must let go of any negative world views, sexual past, sexual abuse, bitterness about sex, or sexual idolatry (five unbiblical perspectives).
- God can heal all wounds. Seek Him for whatever stronghold Satan has on you about sex.

Discussion Questions

- What unbiblical perception about sex did you first learn?
- How can you let go of a stronghold in this area?

Lesson 3—A Gift, Not a Weapon

- Past hurts, ignorance, and mistakes can hinder our physical fulfillment in marriage.
- Do not use this gift as a weapon against your spouse. If you need help, seek it immediately.

Discussion Questions

- What should your attitude be about sex with your spouse?
- How did the Holy Spirit challenge you about your perceptions this week?

Lesson 4—Enjoying Each Other

- The heart of the sexual experience for a husband and wife is connection.
- Solomon wrote about the beauty of God's gift and how to use it.
- Good sex requires communication and open discussion.

Discussion Questions

- What surprised you most about Song of Solomon?
- What did you learn from Solomon, the suggested reading, or other godly counsel?

Lesson 5—A Great Sex Life

- Physical fulfillment is not limited to intercourse.
- Since men and women are designed by God to be fulfilled differently in this area, learn to adapt and cooperate to find true intimacy and fulfillment in your marriage.

Discussion Questions

- Why is communication so important?
- What did the Holy Spirit put on your heart this week as you learned about sex?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Note: Please tell the disciples to contact the church office to seek help if they are involved in any sexual sin or are struggling with physical intimacy.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix M: Common Stumbling Blocks

- Share one example from the strongholds that you are working to change.

Appendix N: Physical Intimacy in Marriage for Men

- Share how this changed your view of physical intimacy and your response to that.

Appendix O: Physical Intimacy in Marriage for Women

- Share how this changed your view of physical intimacy and your response to that.

Appendix P: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Video and Group Questions

Watch the video for volume 5 (4 minutes), and then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. Why is godly leadership a difficult issue for men today?
Most men don't know how to lead their families. They feel inadequate. They didn't have a good role model, and the church has done a poor job teaching them.
2. What does a godly leader look like?
He glorifies God in his marriage and how he raises his children. He encourages his wife and family. He looks to God for wisdom. He is not a dictator, not harsh. He is not passive, nor does he yield his responsibility to his wife.
3. What is the wife's role in this?
A cheerleader. Wives are to learn about their husband's important role in order to encourage and pray for them.

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig said in the video, godly leadership doesn't come naturally. It is a learned skill. Men, you must find a mentor to disciple you and use these tools to show you how to be a

godly leader in your home. I commend you for being here and doing just this. Know and believe that God anointed you to be the leader over your family.

- Submission and authority in the home is God's plan and will. It is not a matter of superiority and inferiority. It is a faith and trust issue. We must be willing to trust the Lord and follow His will, not our own way or understanding.
- Those who do not pursue and practice this type of godly leadership, either by husbands not leading or wives not submitting, will experience God's discipline and judgment.
- Cover each other in prayer as you learn godly leadership. Ask God for grace and gentleness in your communication. Ask Him for a receptive heart without becoming defensive. And ask for protection from the attacks of the Enemy.

Explain the homework expectations.

This week we will complete lessons 1–5 in volume 5, *Godly Leadership*. We will review and discuss them next week in our final class.

Lesson 1—Leading God's Way
Lesson 2—Believe God's Promises
Lesson 3—Trusting God Daily
Lesson 4—The Father's Influence
Lesson 5—Priests of the Home

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.



Group Week 8

Review and Reflection

Leader Prep

Review volume 5, lessons 1–5 (including the appropriate appendices) and familiarize yourself with this week’s leader materials prior to class.

Be praying for the disciples: that God would help them continue to implement all the principles they’ve been learning and that they would grow stronger as a couple in Him.

This Week’s Plan

- Review volume 5, lessons 1–5
- Review appendices M, P, Q, R
- No video
- No assignments
- Discussion and reflections

Begin the meeting with prayer, and encourage participation in the discussion.

Workbook Review

Over the last week the group has completed lessons 1–5 in volume 5, *Godly Leadership*. Review the highlights of each lesson below. Ask for volunteers to share their answers and engage in a discussion about what they learned. Remind them that everything shared is confidential within the group. If you have time after this review, allow participants to share anything that stood out to them in the workbook.

Lesson 1—Leading God’s Way

- The husband is the caretaker, and the wife is the helper. Both roles are vital to God’s plan.
- Men, God has called you, has anointed you, and is trusting you with the leadership of your family.

Discussion Questions

- Why can your role be difficult to understand?
- How do you trust God with your role?

Lesson 2—Believe God’s Promises

- Your past does not define who you are in God now.
- To be a godly leader, you must first be a follower of God.

Discussion Questions

- How have you left your past behind?
- How did this lesson change your view of your role?

Lesson 3—Trusting God Daily

- Our responsibility is to God first.
- Women are to affirm their husbands, which will help them be godly leaders.
- Men are to lead as servants, be gentle and humble, and bring correction.

Discussion Questions

- What order did God establish in Scripture regarding the family?
- What reservations do you have about your responsibility?

Lesson 4—The Father’s Influence

- All authority is appointed by God.
- Men must trust God to lead, and women must trust God to let their husbands lead.
- Men are responsible for the training and discipline of the children.

Discussion Questions

- Identify any area where you struggle with trust.
- What makes it difficult for the husband to lead the children?

Lesson 5—Priests of the Home

- As priests of the home, men minister to their wives and children through daily devotion, personal example, prayer, discipleship, faithfully attending church, and financial stewardship (the six elements of priesthood).
- Men are to provide for their families based on God’s priorities.

Discussion Questions

- Husbands, which element of priesthood would you like to improve, and how do you plan to do so?
- Wives, which element of priesthood is most difficult for you to support and why?

General Discussion Questions

- Share how your discussion time as a couple went this week.
- What changes have you seen in *yourself* this week?
- How has your view of marriage changed this week?
- Share an example from the last week in your home that pertains to anything we learned in these lessons.

Appendix Review

Ask the group what they learned in any of these appendices that stood out to them during their personal study. Answers will vary.

Appendix M: Common Stumbling Blocks

- Share one example from the strongholds that you are working to change.

Appendix P: Trust and Forgiveness

- Share what God is doing in your heart about trust and forgiveness.

Appendix Q: Marriage Self-Evaluation

- Share what God is putting on your heart to change within yourself.

Appendix R: Glossary

- Share anything new you learned from these concepts.

Group Reflection

Take some time as a group to reflect on what you learned throughout the series. The purpose is for disciples to share their praise reports, as well as their struggles, and to encourage one another.

Begin with a refresher. Review the basic principles in each volume.

- What is your *Strong Foundation*, and why is it important in marriage? (volume 1)
- Explain *What Love Is* and what it is not. (volume 2)
- What are the *Unique Needs* of men and women in marriage? (volume 3)
- What is God's view of *Physical Fulfillment*, and how is it different from the world's? (volume 4)
- What is the importance of *Godly Leadership* in the home? (volume 5)

Discuss specific principles by volume.

- From volume 1, abiding in Christ is the only way to receive the wisdom and strength to persevere through the seasons ordained by God in marriage. How has this impacted your life?
- From volume 2, loving communication involves two things: *eliminating* unloving communication and *increasing* encouraging communication and quality time. How has breaking the cycle of unloving communication changed your marriage?
- From volume 3, meeting your spouse's unique companionship needs requires diligent intentional prayer and commitment to fulfilling God's will. How have you improved at meeting your spouse's needs?
- From volume 4, changing your perceptions about sex from what the world says to the beautiful gift God created leads to fulfilling intimacy in marriage. How has God's view of sex changed your marriage?
- From volume 5, embracing God's provision, protection, and marital roles results in successful leadership in our homes. How has understanding these principles changed your home?

Ask the disciples what they learned during your time together.

- How do you feel at the end of this study? Did you learn what you hoped to learn?

- Share one or more of the promises God has given to you personally throughout this class.
- Share how your commitment to learning God's ways has changed during this class.
- What has God revealed in you that He wants to change?
- Have your children noticed any changes in your relationship and commented about it?
- How have others noticed a change in you or your marriage?
- How has God transformed your marriage over the last eight weeks?
- How has your view of marriage changed throughout this study?

Final Words

Encourage the participants with these thoughts:

- As Craig challenged us in the last video, look for people who God has put in your life, or will put in your life, to be an example of what you have learned. He may be calling you to disciple them.
- Continue to abide in Christ through daily devotions and prayer to build your strong foundation and to receive His grace to love your spouse. To see Jesus work miracles, the disciples had to *follow* Him. In the same way, you abide in Him to see Him work in your life and your spouse's life.
- Continuous practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, when necessary, promotes the unity God desires all married couples to achieve. Review *Appendix P: Trust and Forgiveness* whenever hurts arise.
- Continue to use *Appendix G: Breaking the Cycle* each time there is unloving communication between you and your spouse. God desires to heal.
- Pray diligently about improving how you meet your spouse's companionship needs. Over the next six months, review *Appendix H: Husband's Needs* and *Appendix K: Wife's Needs*. We often settle for less than God wants because things have gotten better. Instead, press in and strive for what God wants—so every area of your marriage glorifies God and His will.
- Transformation is a process, not an event, and to trust in the power of Christ and in His Word in times of struggle.
- These principles were never designed to be in focus for only a short period of time. They are to be a new way of living according to the Word of God. It takes time and commitment to break these bad habits. Refer back to your workbooks when needed.
- Seek help from your pastor if you are continuing to struggle or think you have a special circumstance in your home.
- Pray for each other as you implement God's plan for raising your children. And pray for your children.
- Remember that God blesses obedience.
- More materials are available at FDM.world for discipleship, marriage, parenting, and family issues. You may also ask questions and provide feedback about this material or suggest other material you would like to see offered.

- Thank you for being a part of this class. If you don't already have a support network, I encourage you to stay in touch with at least one other couple from this study.
- If you are interested in leading a study about discipleship or marriage, come see me.

Some couples may need some special attention due to a difficult situation or are simply having a hard time breaking their old habits. Encourage them to seek counsel as needed.

For the strong couples who are interested in leading this study or another one from FDM, encourage them to contact the church office or FDM.world for more information. Offer to give them support as they lead their own study.

You have completed eight weeks of study. Well done. Hopefully you have been implementing these principles along the way and seen God's amazing transformation in your marriage. But it's not over. A godly marriage, just like our walk with Christ, is a daily journey. We will continue to learn new things as God teaches us about ourselves through our spouses and our experiences.

Close the class in prayer.

Be available for questions after the class.

About the Author

A fool. A student with dyslexia. A high school graduate with a third-grade reading level. An ignorant husband and abusive father. All described Pastor Craig Caster at one time in his life, but God had a different plan for him. Despite Craig's fear of public speaking, God called him to full-time ministry in 1994. He stepped out in faith without formal education or a seminary degree. He was ordained in 1995 and has since written four books; disciplined many men; counseled hundreds; led countless to Christ; and taught thousands through marriage and parenting seminars, men's retreats, and pastors' conferences throughout the US and internationally. All by the grace and power of God.

Although Craig gave His life to Jesus in 1979, his transformation started when he began to abide in Jesus and His Word daily. He truly believes Jesus desires a close relationship with each one of us. His life is forever changed because he pursues this relationship and is completely dependent on Christ.

Be Encouraged

If you are struggling to trust that God can work in and through your life, be encouraged by Pastor Craig's story. Don't let your past sins, learning disabilities, fear of teaching or speaking, or lack of education stop you from being obedient to the call of God on your life. God desires to make you His disciple, and if you are married or have children, He wants to form you into a spouse and parent who honors Him. His grace is amazing and limitless. He loves you and desires to be glorified through you.

God's Promise to You

Thanks be to God for His abundant promises and provision. Meditate on His promises from the words of "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ."

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:1-8)

About Family Discipleship Ministries

Family Discipleship Ministries (FDM), a nonprofit ministry established in 1994 by founder and director Pastor Craig Caster, strives to support, educate, and train the body of Christ to minister to families. To accomplish this goal, FDM offers workbooks, supporting videos, and online materials for individual study, small groups, home-group study, and one-on-one discipleship. They conduct seminars on marriage, parenting, understanding teens, and church discipleship planning.

FDM's ministry goal is to exhort, train, and equip leaders of Christian churches to develop a vision for discipleship and provide biblically solid workbooks to help them minister to their church families. Since 1995, thousands of people have completed the marriage and parenting classes, and hundreds of churches within the US and abroad have ministered to their congregations using FDM materials. Their ministry also helps many families through free online resources found at FDM.world.

FDM actively ministers internationally in countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Cuba, Mexico, Africa, Singapore, Japan, and China. Find out more at FDM.world.