

LIFE STUDIES

Marriage for Life Workbook

A CURRICULUM MADE BY PURCELLVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

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L.I.F.E STARTER JOURNALING

The Bible journaling method called LIFE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.

L.I.F.E. stands for Listen, Investigate, Focus and Engage.

L=Listen

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses.

I = Investigate

Next, you investigate the context around the Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus

The next step is focusing on the text to make it applicable for your own life. What does the text mean today? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read? Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

E = Engage

The final step in the journaling process is engaging God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR SPOUSE

Preliminary Profile Preparation:

Prior to the class, visit www.IgnitePurpose.org and complete the Marriage questionnaire a profiles.

Welcome and Program Overview: 10 minutes

Session #1 Teaching: : 10 minutes

Understanding Your Spouse

When marriage partners possess a clear understanding of both their spouse's spiritual gifts and their own, they can often circumvent marital conflict. A vital step towards finding deeper fulfillment in the marriage relationship involves taking a closer look at the importance of spiritual gifts. God graciously grants to each Christian, at the point of his or her conversion, various gifts, skills and abilities for the purpose of glorifying Himself and building up the Body of Christ. The seven motivational gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8 provide an excellent basis for an investigation into an understanding of how spiritual gifts function within marriage.

Husbands and wives must strive to gain insight from God's Word as to the necessity of varying gifts and perspectives within the Body of Christ. Only then can they pray more effectively for their life partner and experience new depths of love and admiration for one another.

Today, we will begin this program by taking time to review your profile information and really get to know how we are wired

Profile & Growth Area Reviews: 20 minutes

Break up into couple groups and review your profile and growth area information.

Profile & Growth Area Reviews: 20 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 10 minutes

- Review "stressors" from Session #1 and talk about them using active listening.
- Pick 5 new and innovative strategies to address those "stressors".
- Walk away and apply the above tips individually and then re-discuss at another time this week.

Homework:

- 1. Read out loud to each other your personality, gifting and love languages and engage in a conversation about them. Also, review the NEW document I'm sending today about how to get the most out of your relationship because of your personality profiles.**
- 2. Take your 3 things you'd like to work on improving (that you both sent us) and discuss them together and add action items to HOW you will begin to change those areas.**
- 3. Discuss "rules of engagement" together. What are triggers and indicators that things are tense and how will you relieve that tension without ignoring the issue?**
- 4. Own up to your part and start communicating with more questions around each area, DON'T JUDGE, BUT LEARN.**
 - e. Ask for forgiveness.**
 - f. Don't stop communicating until forgiveness can be found.**
 - g. Also, be sure that it stops here and CAN NOT be brought up again.**
- 5. Practice active listening daily.**

SESSION 2: LOVE YOUR SPOUSE

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Session #2 Teaching: Loving Your Spouse: 10 minutes

As married couples, we are called to love our spouse. We can so center our homes on our children that we neglect our marriages, and a neglected marriage will become an unhappy marriage

Read Ephesians 5:21-33:

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church — 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband

NOW PRAY for UNITY before discussing these questions.

This Scripture is intimidating and possibly overwhelming, but it is what we are called to do in our marriage covenant. As a husband, ***it is intimidating to think of being to your wife what Christ is to the church.*** Husbands are commanded to love their wives.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

What does it look like for husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church? Also, how can wives help their husbands obey this command?

As a wife, it is equally intimidating to think of submitting to your husband as you should to the Lord. "Submission" is frowned on in the world's eyes, but it's a clear command to wives in Scripture.

What does it look (and not look) like for wives to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ? Also, how can husbands make it easier to submit to them?

If you have embraced the gospel, then the Holy Spirit lives in you. You are not alone! The Holy Spirit will help you do what God has commanded you to do.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

This Week's Homework:

Read Ephesians 5:21-33:

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church — 30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband

PRAY AGAIN for UNITY before discussing these questions.

This Scripture is intimidating and possibly overwhelming, but it is what we are called to do in our marriage covenant. As a husband, **it is intimidating to think of being to your wife what Christ is to the church.** Husbands are commanded to love their wives.

Review the questions from last week's class and discuss again:

What does it look like for husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church? Also, how can wives help their husbands obey this command?

As a wife, it is equally intimidating to think of submitting to your husband as you should to the Lord. “Submission” is frowned on in the world's eyes, but it's a clear command to wives in Scripture.

What does it look (and not look) like for wives to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ? Also, how can husbands make it easier to submit to them?

If you have embraced the gospel, then the Holy Spirit lives in you. You are not alone! The Holy Spirit will help you do what God has commanded you to do.

Discuss together how you can love and respect each other more openly. Be intentional and make commitments to each other on specific improvement areas to represent Jesus' model for a Godly marriage?

Read “Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution” on page 13 before session.

SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Genesis 2

Focus on Genesis 2:24 and journal about what God says about becoming ONE flesh

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Ecclesiastes 4

Focus on Ecclesiastes 4:12 and journal about what God says about the unity of marriage

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Ephesians 5:25-33

Think about how you can do YOUR part to treat your spouse like God expects. Journal about that.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 2: **Weekly Devotional: Day 4**

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Pray about the fruits of the Spirit and areas that YOU need to improve to show God's love to your spouse.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 3: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Read (below) “Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution” before session.

Welcome and Review Last Week’s Homework: 15 minutes

Session #3 Teaching: Review Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution: 10 minutes

Define the problem and stick to the issue. Clearly define the issue and stay on topic during the discussion. Conflict deteriorates when the issue that started the conflict gets lost in angry words, past issues, or hurts tossed into the mix.

Pursue purity of heart. “Take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:5 NASB). Before approaching others regarding their faults and shortcomings, prayerfully face up to your own. Confess any way you might have contributed to the problem.

Plan a time for the discussion. Plan a time to meet with the other person when you are both rested and likely to respond in love to the other person’s concerns. When you are tired, stressed, and distracted with other responsibilities, things rarely will go well.

Affirm the Relationship. Affirm the relationship before clearly defining the problem

Listen carefully. Once you share your feelings, listen to the other person’s perspective. Lean in; be present.

Forgive.

Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you. Make forgiveness concrete with four promises:

I promise I won’t bring this up and use it against you in the future.

I promise I’m not going to dwell on it in my own heart and mind.

I’m not going to talk to other people about it.

I’m not going to let it stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

Propose a solution. Remember the relationship is more important than the issue. When working toward a solution, consider Philippians 2:4-5: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” Seek solutions that keep everyone’s best interests in mind

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

When you review the “tips” above, what area is the HARDEST for you to do? Why?

- Talk about some solutions that YOU think can help your situation.
- Can you really PROMISE to forgive? Discuss why or why not.
- What are you willing to commit to moving forward?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week’s Homework: 5 minutes

- Discuss how conflict is a GOOD thing. Without some conflict, we are not growing, so talk about how you can embrace it.
- Discuss how you’ve dealt with conflict in the past and how you want to handle it moving forward.
- Discuss how you can improve conflict resolution with your family.
- Discuss as a family if applicable

SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Philippians 2:1-8

Resolving conflict requires defeating selfishness

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 2: **Weekly Devotional: Day 2**

Read Romans 12:9-21

Resolving conflict requires pursuing the other person.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Ephesians 4

Resolving conflict requires forgiveness.

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SESSION 2: **Weekly Devotional: Day 4**

Read 1 Peter 3:8-22

Resolving conflict requires returning a blessing for an insult.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: RADICAL CHANGE NEEDED

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Session #4 Teaching: Radical Change Needed: 10 minutes

WHY CHANGE?

Change is something God originated, and leaving Him out—or using principles and practices that contradict His Truths—always leads to highly unsatisfying results. Change is Hard; Transformational Change is Impossible... Without God. The ability to change... **RADICALLY**... exists; and God's offers us a free will choice in the matter exists along side.

Radical change starts with trusting God. To trust God, you need to KNOW God. To know God is to understand the **TRINITY** (God the Father, His Son, Jesus, and our current Counselor, the Holy Spirit). Before anything at all existed, the pre-existent Godhead the Father thought, God the Son spoke, and God the Spirit **fluttered** and all of creation leapt into existence.

THE PROBLEM WITH INCREMENTAL CHANGE

The problem with incremental change...is that it brings incremental results. If you want incremental results, then embrace incremental change. The reality is that most of us don't want incremental results. You dream of significant results. Of radically different results. Radical change brings the potential for radical results and incremental change never does.

There are at least three reasons leaders choose "incremental change":

1. You Fear People's Reaction To Significant Change

You've seen other leaders get crucified for ushering in change. And you don't want that to be you. Fear is one of the main reasons change isn't happening fast enough in the church or in many organizations today. Personally, I think it would be a terrible thing to stand before God one day and explain that the main reason you didn't do what you were called to do is because you were afraid.

2. Past Opposition To Change

You tried change once, and it failed. Well, awesome. You also had a bad meal once, but you didn't stop eating. Maybe the change itself isn't the problem. Maybe your strategy is the problem. Just because you failed at leading change once doesn't mean you'll fail forever. Get a new strategy. What's at stake is far too important not to!

3. Belief That Progress Should Come Without Pain

Now we get closer to the heart of the matter. Many leaders secretly wish progress came without pain. Progress almost never comes without pain. Significant things are rarely accomplished without significant struggle. Our heroes are always people who suffered to bring about a better end. Part of us wants to live like that, and part of us doesn't. The leadership question is whether you're willing to endure pain for the sake of a better future. Real leaders say yes to that. They honestly do.

So...if you want significantly different results, push past the fear and stop thinking incrementally. God's RADICAL Change Management Plan and Process includes the Holy Spirit!

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

- Are you sensitive to sin that may block the Holy Spirit and RADICAL change?
- Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life? How?
- Do you have an increasing presence and growth of The Fruit of the Spirit in your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?
- Are you angry, indignant, offended, insulted, or so confused that you're reeling inside... by any of the questions above? Why? Discuss.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minute

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minute

Spend 20 minutes each day this week in "***Listening Prayer***," thinking about today's study and the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Focus on the ***LIFE Journaling Method*** and it will give you more insight to your passions!

- Discuss the radical changes you may need to make with each other and make practical commitments to change, including HOW.
- Go back to the "love languages" profile and discuss some practical ways to show each other love.
- Do your "love jars" and be ready to discuss at the next session

SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Ezekiel 11:14-25

Journal about "restoration" and radical change needed in your life.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

God has made you a NEW creation, so accept that fact and start acting like one.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Romans 8:1-9

We need the Holy Spirit to overcome our flesh and to live with the gifts that God wants us to experience.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11

Are YOU living for God? What changes do you need to make to fully live for God

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SESSION 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Session #5 Teaching: Financial Management: 10 minutes

WHY put God in the middle of your finances:

Having a good sense of money management skills is an effective way to reduce stress, so as we evaluate our financial situation, God should be in the center of the equation. Remember, **God is the provider**, so embrace **Matthew 6:31** in your money management. Don't become materialistic but keep in mind that we are not supposed to constantly worry about money, but, at the same time, if we live without being fiscally responsible, we end up being foolish. Be thankful for the opportunities within your financial blessings that God provides, but own your obligations.

THE PROBLEM WITH INCREMENTAL CHANGE

Always discuss finances as a couple. One spouse likely has more financial skills than the other and will naturally take the lead, but this is no excuse for the other spouse not to be involved in the family financial situation. You both need to understand the issues that you are facing, and make decisions as a team. Above all, listen to what God may be saying to you through your financial circumstances. Finances can be a dividing factor in marriage, but they can also bring you together in a new and deeper way, as you trust God together and follow His plan.

1. Give to God First

As Christians, our first financial priority, just as in every other area of life, should be God and His work. The issue of managing all of our gifts, including our finances, is of great importance to God. The Bible instructs us to give a tithe, or one-tenth or our income back to God. This is a great starting point for Christian giving and should be calculated on the gross salary. Luke 6:38 talks about the importance of giving. This is another way we put God first on a daily basis. It's important to remember that God provides you with the strength to work each day, therefore, it's only right to give financially to bring Jesus to our hurting world.

2. Set Up and Keep a Budget

In order to understand your financial situation and to keep on the same page with your spouse, you must keep and maintain a budget. Keep records so you can know where and what your funds are being spent on. Proverbs 24:3-4 talks about the wisdom around understanding your finances.

3. Set Aside Savings

It's critical to establish the discipline of setting aside money for savings. Proverbs 21:20 challenges Christians to see the bigger picture and what saving money each month can equate to. As a family grows, having savings built up will provide a foundation will allow for less stress. Consider getting 6 months of "emergency" money saved, and remember NOT to make savings an afterthought.

4. Stay Out of Debt

If you are willing follow this simple plan and begin to intelligently and prayerfully give away 10% of your income, I believe your financial situation will improve. More importantly, you will be storing up treasures in heaven, which is what really counts. After a few months, please write us and let us know what is happening to your financial position. I have never met an ex-tither and I would love to hear your story as you seek to control your finances and serve God in this way.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

If you are willing follow this simple plan and begin to intelligently and prayerfully give away 10% of your income, I believe your financial situation will improve. More importantly, you will be storing up treasures in heaven, which is what really counts. After a few months, please write us and let us know what is happening to your financial position. I have never met an ex-tither and I would love to hear your story as you seek to control your finances and serve God in this way.

- **Talk about tithing.**
- **Discuss the importance of budgeting.**
 - How is the “budgeter” in the family?
- **Discuss how and when to save.**
 - What has been modeled for you in the past?
- **Talk about debt.**
 - How do you feel about debt?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week’s Homework: 5 minutes

- **Discuss how conflict is a GOOD thing. Without some conflict, we are not growing, so talk about how you can embrace it.**
- **Discuss how you’ve dealt with conflict in the past and how you want to handle it moving forward.**
- **Discuss how you can improve conflict resolution with your family.**
- **Discuss as a family if applicable.**

Discuss This Week’s Homework: 10 minutes

Focus on the **LIFE Journaling Method** and it will give you more insight to what God says about money

- **Pray for financial freedom and the work involved in getting there.**
- **Make some practical commitments (and RADICAL CHANGE) to address your finances.**
 - What are those commitments and when can you begin the journey toward financial freedom?
- **NOW, spend time this week creating a budget that you both can live and also create a savings plan to get a 6-month “emergency fund” set up. Be ready to review and discuss next week.**
- **Read info for Session #6 on pages 33-34**

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Matthew 6:19-34

God is the provider. Try to engulf Matthew 6:31 in your regiment of money management.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Luke 6:37-49

As a Christian, it's important to remember that God provides you with the strength to work each day therefore, it's only right to give back to the church and to charities that have the intent to better the world.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Proverbs 21

Christians should be able to see the bigger picture and identify what saving a little money each month can equate to.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Proverbs 24

Finally, money management is essential in Christian homes – especially the Biblical aspect that’s associated with budgeting. It’s important to remember God’s wisdom in everything we do – especially finances!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 6: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Welcome & Review Last Week's Homework (Discuss Budgets): 20 min
Review #6 Teaching BEFORE Session:

THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF A HUSBAND

Here are five biblical pointers that will help redirect husbands back to loving and leading their wives God's way.

1. A husband needs to grow in Christ (2 Pet. 1:3-11)

The Bible teaches to continue to grow in Christ, so that, "He will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him" (Eph. 3:17, NLT). The strength of the husband comes from the strength he receives from growing in the love of God (Ex. 34:6; Deut. 30:6; Neh. 9:32)! If a man isn't growing in his faith, then he is incapable of building up the faith of his wife and family.

2. A husband needs to love his wife (Eph. 5:25-33)

The Bible teaches "husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Eph. 5:25). The word "love" used here is "agape," referring to the love of God (1 Jn. 4:8), and the love He showed on Calvary (Jn. 3:16). This is the same love the Holy Spirit pours out on us (Gal. 5:22).

3. A husband is not to be bitter with his wife (Col. 3:18)

Paul reminds husbands "not to be bitter" towards his wife (Col. 3:18). A husband who loves his wife forgives his wife. Elsewhere, Peter commands husbands to "dwell with his wife in understanding" and to "give honor to her" (1 Pet. 3:7). Once again, it's the responsibility of the husband to keep the lines of communication open and to always make sure he honors his wife (no matter what!).

4. A husband is to teach his wife the Word of God (Eph. 5:26)

Paul writes that husbands are to "sanctify," "cleanse," and "wash" their wives in the Word of God. That is to mean, a husband's primary responsibility is to present his wife holy before God (Eph. 5:27).

4. A husband is to lead, protect, and provide for his wife (1 Cor. 11:3)

The Lord has placed the husband as the head of the home (1 Cor. 11:3). Thus, within this leadership, the husband has the primary role of providing for his family (1 Tim. 5:8), teaching and instructing his children (Eph. 6:4), and setting an example for his wife and children to follow (1 Cor. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:2).

THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF A WIFE

1. A wife is to be godly before her husband (1 Tim. 2:10)

The first role of a wife is to put Christ first in her marriage. Nothing is to come in-between her and her relationship with her Savior. The Bible teaches women are to be: "self-controlled" (1 Tim. 2:9, 15), "godly" (1 Tim. 2:10), "holy" (1 Tim. 2:15), "submissive" (Eph. 5:21, 22; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1), "reverent" (Tit. 2:3), and "pure" (Tit. 2:5). This is a call to be like their Savior. That is why when wives submit to their husbands, it is a reflection of their submission and holiness unto Christ.

2. A wife is to respect her husband (Eph. 5:22-24, 33)

The wife is to make it her aim to "submit" to her husband's leadership in the home. This is not to say that she is of second-rate status (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:21). The word "submit" (Gk, hupotasso), means "to line up under." Literally, the wife is to take her position under the shelter and headship of her husband. But it also carries the idea (military term) of the wife fulfilling the role as a senior advisor in the home as she loves her husband (Tit. 2:4), remains faithful in marriage (Rom. 7:2, 3), and takes care of the children (Pro. 31:26-29). The submissive conduct of a godly wife is an extremely powerful testimony because it pleases the Lord (1 Pet. 3:4, 5), influences her husband (1 Pet. 3:1, 2), teaches and presents the truth (Tit. 2:3, 5), trains younger women (Tit. 2:4), and completes good works (1 Tim. 2:10). Thus, the family is the primary place for wives to live out their submission to God as wife and mother (Col. 3:18).

3. A wife is to be a helpmate to her husband (Gen. 2:18)

You've heard the saying, "Dogs are man's best friend." But according to Genesis 2:18, a man's best friend is really his wife. She is his "helpmate." This term, "helpmate," is only used elsewhere when referring to God as our help. Now that's some powerful help coming from the wife! Her role is to make her husband the best man of God he possibly can be.

4. A wife is to love her husband (Tit. 2:4)

Paul writes, "Wives love your husbands" (Tit. 2:4). This love that is mentioned has to do with "unconditional acceptance." Far too often, wives gripe and complain about their husbands, rather than love them for who they are. A wife is not to view her husband as a project. She is to view him as the love of her life. When a husband is loved and respected by his wife, he feels he can do anything! But when he is not loved, he remains defeated.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- *From the information about the Biblical roles of husbands and wives...*
- *Rate yourself on how you live out these roles now.*
 - How can YOU improve in each area?
 - Plan to make specific commitments on how YOU need to change to be a better Biblical role model as a husband or wife.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

- *What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?*

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

Focus on the LIFE Journaling Method and it will give you more insight to what God says about spouse roles!

- *Discuss your future roles and how you can shape your expectations.*
- *Read info for Session #7 on pages 39-40.*

SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Ephesians 5:23-33

Journal about what YOU can do differently to fulfill your BIBLICAL role as a spouse.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Are YOU living a life defined by LOVE?

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Colossians 3

Is YOUR marriage a representation of someone who is “Living as Those Made Alive in Christ?”

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Ephesians 6

As we step into the next week and the parenting session, journal about training up children for Jesus!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 7: PARENTING

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Review #7 Teaching BEFORE Session: 10 minutes

Traits of Effective Parenting

Parents may excel in some of these areas and fall short in others, but each trait can transform your parenting, filling your children's hearts and minds with God's truth and bringing wisdom into your homes:

Love

John the apostle tells us that we learn love by looking at the love God has shown us. God's love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Do you know what you love? Look at the people, activities and things you're attached to. Look at the sacrifices you make to see those people, do those activities or use those things. These are the areas of your life where you love. Children can see where your priorities are, where your love is directed.

God's love helps parents counteract our natural selfishness. His love reveals itself in His commitment to us and His sacrifice for us, long after our emotions have faded away. Children learn God's love through the sacrificial commitments we make to them and teach them to make.

Respect

The apostle Paul writes that we should think like Christ and treat others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Respect recognizes the best in people. It is more than acknowledging a child's accomplishments. Children and teens are worthy of respect because God created them and loves them.

Respect teaches us not to treat others as unimportant. Nothing hurts a child more than being treated as if he is useless, and almost nothing encourages him more than being respected and valued.

One way to show respect to your family is to watch your language. Refuse to use cruel language — whether directed toward family members in your home or outsiders. Our language habits really do influence our ability to model respect to our children.

Intentionality

Being intentional means talking about and living out our Biblical core-values and priorities before allowing other influences into our home. This trait nurtures a consistency in family life that reinforces the other traits. When parents are intentional, they grow in wisdom and are able to keep their focus on how they act as believing parents (Colossians 1:10).

It is easy to be passive and let media and other influences set our family's priorities, but it's more effective to pay careful attention to how we live our lives. This is intentionality: making decisions as parents about how we will own the spiritual atmosphere in our homes.

Boundaries and Limits

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, authors of the "Boundaries" book series, write that the purpose of boundaries in parenting to "let good things in and keep bad things out." Hebrews 12:1 says that in order to run our race well, we need to shake off the things that keep us from reaching our goal. Ordering our home with healthy boundaries for kids and adults helps us do that.

Being deliberate about boundaries — for media, behavior, relationships, godly living and a vibrant faith — means we do not let culture determine what is healthy for our family. Proverbs tells us, “Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge” (14:7). If we don’t set our own boundaries in our families, other influences — culture, extended family or trends — will set our children’s moral boundaries, and we may become surprised and dismayed by what they have learned.

Gratitude

As Paul begins his letter to the Philippians, he tells them how thankful he is every time he thinks of them (1:3-4). Gratitude is not just a polite reaction to something good. It is a cultivated habit and a vital part of healthy relationships.

When we practice gratitude in our families, it helps children and parents fight selfishness, which causes division among families and friends. When gratitude is expressed on a regular basis and in deliberate ways, it helps our children learn to see all the good God does in our lives. A natural outcome of this is that we learn to naturally praise Him, regardless of how we feel in the moment.

Grace and Forgiveness

Grace and forgiveness shock us. God forgave us while we were still sinners. He shows grace to imperfect people and continues to involve them in His plan.

Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost. Human nature prevents us from easily giving grace and forgiveness, yet we learn from God’s Word that we need to give both or we can’t expect to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).

Adaptability

While he was in prison, Paul said something amazing: “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (Philippians 4:11). Paul learned to find peace in Christ, despite his situation. His personal happiness was not attached to his position, how well he was doing or what he was doing.

Teaching adaptability helps our children find peace — a deep peace that is stronger than the stresses and trials of life. Peace counteracts the unproductive worry that causes us to lose our trust in God. This flexibility and resilience, grown in difficult circumstances, allows a family to face both hardships and joys together, as they grow deeper in their faith.

Good Traits, Good Decisions

God’s wisdom gives us direction for not only recognizing our mistakes, but also correcting them. In parenting, it is no different. God’s way of life is the abundant life (John 10:10), and this life gives parents the opportunity to watch their children grow up making good decisions and avoiding decisions they may later regret. And learning how to live out these traits in our parenting gives our children a model for living out His abundant life.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

•**From the information about the Traits of Effective Parenting:**

•**Rate yourself on how you live out these traits now and discuss.**

- How can YOU improve in each area?

- Plan to make specific commitments on how YOU need to change to be a more effective parent.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

•What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

•Review Session #8 and start the Family Values Exercise.

SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read 1 John 4:7-21

God's love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. Journal about how YOU show your family love.

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Philippians 1:3-11

Are YOU living a life defined by LOVE?

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Proverbs 14

Are you raising kids to be wise or foolish?

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SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Matthew 6:5-14

Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 8: YOUR FAMILY VALUES

Welcome and Review Family Values Worksheet: 10 minutes

Review #8 Teaching: 10 minutes

Taking the time to figure out your family values is a transformative experience. As a couple and as parents, one of our biggest jobs is to help our family develop their own God-given internal compass – a framework to help them make decisions when we aren't around. But with all of the outside influences we experience today, how can we make sure that we really understand what qualities and traits are important to our family? One way is to create a family mission statement. The family mission statement is a concept described in Stephen Covey's 1989 book "*7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*." Many successful corporations craft mission statements so that all employees can work together toward a common goal. Covey contends that families, like businesses, need common goals and values to function well:

***"A family mission statement is a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about – what it is you really want to do and be – and the principles you choose to govern your family life."* – Stephen Covey**

A family mission statement is a starting point in the unfolding map of your family's journey. Not only does it create the basis for family interaction and a goal to which every family member can contribute, most importantly, it establishes the framework for family direction and decisions.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

- *What do you want your kids to remember about your family life?*
- *When people look at your family what would you want them to see?*
- *What values do you place on your possessions & status, and does it line up with God's Word?*
- *How will your family understand God's character as seen through your example?*
- *How does your family communicate—both in times of conflict and peace?*
- *What families inspire you? What about them do you want to emulate?*
- *What do you want your family to look like in 20 years?*
- *Discuss the value of this exercise to YOUR family. Will you do it?*

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 10 minutes

WHY: Create a Family Mission Statement?

Sadly, many parents find a reason to think about family values after something has gone wrong. By then it's usually too late – things have already begun to unravel, and it will take much more time and effort to right the ship. The best time to begin creating a family culture is as early as possible (like right now!) – when things are still good (but you want them to be even better). A family mission statement lays out a vision for your family of where you want to go and how you want to get there. It provides a path and guideposts. Pointing the way ahead and illuminating the curves and bumps along the way.

Having a shared vision – a shared sense of values and purpose – bonds families together. It guides your parenting decisions and offers your children clear ideals to strive for and guidance in what choices to make. A mission statement also articulates the standards by which each member of the family can evaluate each other's behavior, and children and parents will ideally check and encourage one another as they make their way down this agreed upon path. Another benefit is that a family mission statement serves to distinguish your family from others – providing its members a sense of meaning and identity and giving your children the feeling of being part of something important and special.

HOW: Where to begin

The purpose of this activity will help you to learn what's most important to each person in your family; your values. When you talk about what you value, it can help you to get along better in the future. Values are deeply held views of what we find worthwhile. Talking about our values together as a family can help us to understand our motivation behind our actions and be used as a decision making tool.

Tips:

-Spend time really thinking about your personal values and what they mean to you. Don't just pick words quickly. This is not just an intellectual exercise. It should also have a connection with your feelings.

-When you start the family exercise, listen and ask questions. The intention is to explore and learn about one another's values, not to impose your values on others.

-At the end, take time to reflect on what was most meaningful about your conversation.

Step 1. Together with your spouse answer the following questions:

- ***Why did we get married?***
- ***Why did we start a family?***
- ***What do we want our family to look like in 20 years?***
- ***What do we want our children to learn from us?***
- ***Do any scriptures come to mind that we want our family to live by?***
- ***What makes our family unique?***
- ***What are the noticeable gifts and strengths of each member of the family?***
- ***What are the noticeable weaknesses for each member of the family?***
- ***When is our family at its best?***
- ***When is our family at its worst?***
- ***What is our family's favorite way to spend time together?***
- ***What are practical ways we can serve one another?***
- ***What three words best describe our family?***
- ***What do other people say about our family?***
- ***What do we want others to say about our family?***
- ***How do people feel when they walk into our home?***
- ***How do we want people to feel when they walk into our home?***
- ***What is the main purpose of our home?***
- ***What is the secondary purpose of our home?***
- ***How can we support one another in our collective goals?***
- ***What families inspire us?***
- ***What about them do we want to emulate?***

Step 2. Together with your spouse, from the list below, pick the ten words or phrases that are most important to you and line up with your Personal Values. Feel free to add your own words!

- accountabilitydoing what you say you will do
- achievement.....reaching your goals
- balance (home/work).....balancing school, work and play time
- commitment.....working hard on what we believe in
- compassion.....being kind and understanding
- competence.....being good at what you do
- continuous learning.....being good at what you do
- cooperation.....working well with other people
- courage.....being brave
- creativity.....using your imagination
- enthusiasm.....being excited and confident
- efficiency.....making good use of time
- ethics.....doing the right thing
- excellence.....doing excellent work or sport
- fairness.....being fair
- family.....family
- financial stability.....having enough money
- friendships.....having friends
- future generations.....caring about children of the future
- health.....keeping healthy
- honesty.....telling the truth
- humor/fun.....laughing and having fun
- independence.....able to do things on your own
- integrity.....being honest, trustworthy and live a balanced life
- initiative.....making decisions for yourself
- making a difference.....making life better for others
- open communication.....talking openly and freely with others
- openness.....telling others about thoughts and feelings
- personal fulfillment.....having a full and happy life
- personal growth.....improving myself
- respect.....showing respect
- responsibility.....being responsible
- risk-taking.....being brave to try something new
- self discipline.....controlling my behavior
- success.....being successful
- trust.....trusting others
- wisdom.....being wise

Step 3. Be sure to include fun values as well as more serious values. Your list will likely be very long initially. You might need to get together more than once to whittle it down. The end goal of creating your family mission statement, which will be a memorable sentence or short paragraph. When you are ready, pick your top three words from the above list and go on to Step 4.

Step 4. Now that you have identified your three family values, complete the worksheet below.

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Step 5. Now that you have identified your three family values, apply Scripture to each value. (Tip: Go to <https://www.openbible.info/topics/> and type in your values to match Scripture verses.)

Step 6. Discuss what you've learned from this exercise with each other and write a narrative of values and how you plan to live those values from your list above. This narrative becomes your family mission statement. It's important that you take the time to really talk about it and own it. The real learning occurs when you slow down, connect, and listen with your hearts and then activate what you've learned. Taking the time to figure out what your family is meant to be a transformative experience.

Sample Family Mission Statements:

#1: The Jones Family Mission Statement: The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of ministry. We will first minister to the needs within our family, first between husband and wife and then to our children. We will cultivate a loving atmosphere where we can grow closer to each other and to God. As a family and individually, we will then minister to others as a reflection of our faith in Christ.

#2: The Criswell Family Mission Statement: More than anything else, it is our desire that this family be built around God's plan, purpose, and desire for the family. We will reflect Him in everything we do.

- We will be a family of worship. Both formally and informally, at church and at home, worship will be a priority in our life.
- We will be a family of prayer. Together and individually, we will pray for and with each other, about everything.
- We will be a family of service. We will serve each other within our family, and we will serve each other in the world around us.

What to Do with Your Family Mission Statement

Now that you have developed a family mission statement, post it anywhere your family can refer to it often.

Refer to your family mission statement daily and try to memorize the words, write them on your hearts, in order that you may live them out loud.

Your family mission statement can now be the foundation by which all of your decisions, plans and routines are established.

Other ideas for displaying your mission statement:

- Frame it as a wall decoration
 - Post it on your bathroom mirror
 - Put it in your Bible
 - Put it with your calendar
 - Use it as a background on your phone or computer
- In the end, your mission statement will be your go-to resource when making ALL decisions

SESSION 8: **Weekly Devotional: Day 1**

Read 2 Corinthians 10

How do we consistently “sow” thoughts that make us into the people God intends us to be?

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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I = Investigate: the context around today’s Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?

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E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Romans 12

How does the renewing of our minds and focus on Biblical values impact in our daily lives?

L=Listen: In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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SESSION 8: **Weekly Devotional: Day 3**

Read Hebrews 10

Our transformational process is not instantaneous, as it's a process wherein the Holy Spirit writes God's laws on our hearts (Heb. 10:16). We are not passive participants in this process—we have an essential, active part to play. Journal about the part YOU need to play!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary:

Bible Study Tools, or **Easy English Bible**

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F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

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SESSION 8: **Weekly Devotional: Day 4**

Read Joshua 1

We read in Joshua: "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Constant renewal is necessary for flourishing with our values! As we are committed to the transformative process, we must be actively seeking out the wisdom of God's principles found in His Word. The Bible underscores the importance of studying God's word on a daily basis to allow our Biblical values to stay alive.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: Bible Study Tools, or Easy English Bible

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SESSION 9: SHARING YOUR FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT AND PLAN

Welcome and Share your Family Mission Statements: 30 minutes
Small Group Discussion: Assessment and Future Commitments: 15 min

Also, reflect back on this program and talk about how your perspective is different:

- What is MORE important to now? • How have your beliefs shifted?
- Is your heart different for Jesus? Do you FEEL Him? Why or why not?
- How will you interact with your spouse and family differently?
- How will you interact with God differently?
- What are the radical changes you need to make your family mission statement come alive and how will you execute these changes?

Small Group Wrap-Up: How can this study be improved?: 15 minutes

- *What are the top THREE takeaways from this study?*
- *What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?*
- *Was the LIFE Method of Journalling helpful and did you actually do it? Why or why not?*
- *Would you refer others for this class? Why or why not?*
- *Are you ready to participate in the NEXT Ignite Purpose program?*

Be part of this movement and give us your feedback please!

- Write out a testimony about how this class changed your parenting.
- Shoot a short 2-minute testimony video if you feel led.
- Fill out the assessment forms (emailed tomorrow).
- Consider your involvement in the next semester classes (also emailed)

Please take the time to give us feedback, as we want to improve these classes and have the biggest impact for God's Kingdom and generations to come!

HOMework: FINAL ASSESSMENT/REVIEW:

Covenant with Your Spouse: Igniting YOUR Promise for LIFE!

“Success in marriage does not come merely through finding the right mate, but through being the right mate.” – Barnett R. Brickner

I pray this class heightened your covenantal commitment for your marriage. ***Make a commitment to PRAY together every day as a couple!*** Your obedience to this spiritual discipline will remind you who really is the Source of strength in your marriage and keep you connected and communicating.

Second, take the opportunity to grow in selflessness, as you serve your spouse and children. At its core, love is a decision to be committed to another person. Feelings come and go, but a true decision to be committed lasts for a life time—and that is what defines healthy marriages. In fact, more marriages are broken up by selfishness than any other reason. A selfish person is committed only to himself or herself, shows little patience, and never learns how to be a successful spouse.

Third, Learn to ***forgive*** and ***DON'T be offended*** — Because no one is perfect, patience and forgiveness will always be required in a marriage relationship. Successful marriage partners learn to show unending patience and forgiveness to their partner. They humbly admit their own faults and do not expect perfection from their partner. They do not bring up past errors in an effort to hold their partner hostage. ***They chose to be UNOFFENDABLE***, and they do not seek to get revenge when mistakes occur. If you are holding onto a past hurt from your partner, forgive him or her. It will set your heart and relationship free.

Fourth, ***Invest the time*** — Relationships with each other and WITH GOD don't work without ***time investment***. Any successful relationship requires intentional, quantity time together. Remember, ***quality time*** rarely happens when quantity time is absent. The relationship with your spouse should be the ***SECOND*** most intimate (***God being FIRST***) and deep relationship you have, so, it is going to require time. If possible, set aside time each day for your spouse and have a regular date-night. This is a simple call to value our marriages, treat them with great care, and invest in them daily.

Finally, ***do what you promised***. Don't let temptations and heartaches keep you from loving each other unconditionally, from caring for each other “in sickness and in health,” or from finishing strong in your marriage. Also, ***urge others to keep their covenant***. We need to band together to fight divorce. We serve a God who said: ***“I hate divorce”*** (Malachi 2:16). We need to combat divorce in the most positive way—by ***honoring our covenants*** and encouraging others to do the same. Together we can become known in our culture as the keepers and protectors of the marriage covenant.

Renewed devotion to the marriage covenant will be a significant factor in helping countless couples stick to their vows and achieve the satisfaction and joy God wants from marriage.

