



# *Marriage By Design*

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

This *Marriage by Design* small group leadership guide is a six-week Bible study as a follow up to the *Marriage by Design* seminar. It is profitable for the married and unmarried alike. Pastors, parishioners, and those who are outside the church have also benefited from this study. *Marriage by Design* focuses on the root issues that destroy marriages from the inside out.

The six small group studies in this book take the most common issues in counseling to allow couples to work on them proactively in a small group rather than having to deal with it reactively in counseling and/or therapy. *Marriage by Design* addresses the common issues by comparing our preconceived notions or cultural expectations about marriage and puts them up to the mirror of God's Word. Within His Word, we find it to be sufficient in dealing with all issues that come up in marriage.

## **Expectations**

- \* The Word of God tells us how marriage began, how marriage should be, and how each participant can best glorify God independently of their spouse's behavior.
- \* This study applies principles found in God's Word, allowing participants the opportunity to experience the hope, help, and freedom of the Gospel in their marriage relationship.

## **Time Line**

- \* 7 weeks (Introduction week and 1 week to cover each of the 6 chapters). It is also recommended to have an 8th meeting for fellowship.
- \* 90 minute classes that can be modified for your specific group

## **Small Group Study**

- \* The study, when done in a small group setting is ideal for 4-5 couples. Larger groups can be less effective due to the potentially intimate nature of the study.
- \* It is helpful to have both a husband/wife leadership team, and an associate husband/wife assistant leadership team present. This allows for the men and women to divide into smaller groups to pray and encourage one another.
- \* Names of class members should be exchanged at the end of the first class in order to pray for one another throughout the coming week.
- \* Starting and finishing on time is important, but participants are welcome to stay afterwards and connect with other participants.

5 min..... Leader: Welcome and prayer

5 min..... Review memory verse(s)

15 min..... Discuss what God is teaching you and how the Holy Spirit is changing you

60 min..... Answer the questions from the book chapter and review homework

5 min..... Assign homework and close in prayer

**Focus Statements** are found at the beginning of each week's chapter lesson. This is the main idea that the chapter will cover. The goal of this study is that you will have a deeper understanding of how to live out the focus of the week's lesson.

**Additional Scripture** is provided and you will have references listed and space provided so you can take notes. Different bible translations are welcome and can be helpful when studying and memorizing a passage.

**Recordings** of the teaching for each chapter can be found at <http://www.cbccala.org/category/sermons/marriage-by-design/>

**Projects for Growth** are assigned at the end of each class. These projects are designed to help couples grow together in a variety of areas. The projects are on their own page to make it easy to copy and give out to the class. They are broken down into the following 6 categories:

- **Growing in Knowledge of God's Word** (Psalm 119:92): There will be specific, measurable, and purposeful Scripture to meet each person where they are and direct them to glorify God.
- **Growing in Hiding God's Word** (Psalm 119:11): Memory Verses are a critical part of the success of this class. God's Word is not just our source for information. It is our source for hope, help, comfort, and encouragement. You might find it helpful to write the verses out on a 3x5 card and carry them with you throughout the week.
- **Growing in Theological Understanding** (Psalm 119:12): Each week there will be a resource provided to deepen the understanding of theological truth based on the theme for each week. It could be in the form of a booklet, sermon, video, etc...
- **Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ** (Hebrews 10:24-25): In developing consistency in spiritual growth, there should be a commitment to the body of Christ. Each person should attend their Sunday morning service in their local church and an additional service ie. Sunday school, bible study, small group, etc. Small group members will speak about what they learned from the service that helps in their relationship.
- **Grow in Love for One Another** (John 13:35): A practical outworking to considering others as more important than yourself can be in the form of a date night, service project, note of encouragement, or a host of other things. Participants should be encouraged to be creative and have fun.
- **Grow in Intimacy with God** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18): All participants should be encouraged to pray for themselves, pray for their spouse, pray for the small group leader, and the prayer requests from the participants in the class.

**Questions** for each week are based on the *Marriage by Design* sessions and projects for growth. The second question each week will be, "What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?" The reason for the emphasis of this question is this author's belief that one cannot spend consistent time in the Scriptures and God not teach them and the Holy Spirit not change them.

## **Week 1**

### **INTRODUCTORY CLASS**

#### **Study Objective**

Study and apply biblical principles found in God's Word, giving couples the opportunity to experience an enjoyable marriage and not just an enduring marriage.

#### **Getting to Know Each Other (When in a Class Setting)**

- \* Tell the group how long you have been married (this question can be adjusted for those who are engaged or unattached) and ask each of the participants to share about their marriage relationship.
- \* How long have you been married?
- \* How did you meet?
- \* How many children do you have?
- \* How old were you when you believe you became a Christian?
- \* How old were you when you clearly began living for Christ alone and worshiping Him.
- \* What are you hoping to get out of this study?

**NOTE:** Mirror and magnifying glass.

(Read) Our tendency in dreaming of a great marriage is to look through a magnifying glass at all the things our spouse does wrong. The magnifying glass magnifies the things that he or she needs to do differently if we are going to have the marriage the way God designed it to be.

This began in the Garden. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on.

Rather than looking through the magnifying glass at the problems of your marriage, look at the problems in your marriage in a mirror. After all, the only one you can change is the one you see looking back at you.

Explain the principle behind the projects for growth and encourage all participants to make the investment into their marriage by doing each of these projects.

**Romans 8:28-29** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*

Have you ever considered that the things that bug you so much about your husband or wife may just be the things that God is using to make you more like Christ? If God is sovereign (and He

is), this promise to Christians is one we need to take to heart to be able to see the big picture of what God has done and is doing to make you more like Christ.

How does Romans 8:28-29 encourage or challenge you?

### **Additional Scripture**

**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Within 1 Corinthians 10:13, there are four promises. Can you find them? Which one of these promises do you need to depend on most often?

**James 1:5** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

What a wonderful promise this is from God and a good thing to begin praying for. We all need a generous portion of wisdom. Let's ask for that this week.

<i><b>Week 1 Projects for Growth</b></i>	<i><b>Specific Project</b></i>
<i><b>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</b></i>	Read through Ephesians chapters 1-3 at least twice this week. As you read through these chapters, write down and be ready to speak about the benefits of being in Christ. Define any words that may be new to you.
<i><b>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</b></i>	Memorize and be ready to recite 1 Corinthians 10:31
<i><b>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</b></i>	Listen/watch part 1 of the Marriage by Design series found at  Answer the following questions: 1. Which of the "A's" have been true in your marriage or have a tendency towards? 2. If your marriage continues in the direction it is going right now, will you be closer together or further apart? Why? 3. What challenges or encouragements were revealed to you through listening/watching the first session of Marriage by Design?
<i><b>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</b></i>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<i><b>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</b></i>	Go on a date together (husband in charge of doing something his wife would enjoy).  Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.
<i><b>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</b></i>	1. Pray for yourself through this bible study that you will be teachable and willing to change as God gives conviction and guidance.  2. Pray for your spouse that God will use this to speak to his or her heart in order to have a marriage that pictures Christ and His bride  3. Pray with each other at least once this week (before a meal does not count)

NOTE: It is important to the group dynamic that information shared in the group be kept within the group and not repeated to others, not even under the guise of a "Prayer Request."

## **Week 2**

### **THE PRIORITY OF MARRIAGE**

#### **Focus Statement**

There are two types of pain; The pain of discipline and the pain of regret. If you will not go through the pain of discipline, you will experience the pain of regret.

#### **Session Questions**

1. What did you do on your date night together?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. What does it mean to be “In” Christ according to Ephesians 1-3
4. Which of these promises in Ephesians 1-3 are most encouraging to you?
5. Which of the “A’s” have been “seasons” in your marriage?
6. Which of the “A’s” have turned into a direction for your marriage?
7. If your marriage continues in the direction it is going right now, will you be closer together or further apart? Why?
8. What challenges or encouragements were revealed to you through listening/watching the first session of Marriage by Design?
9. Name 5 significant facts from the Scripture passage below about the marriage relationship.

#### **Additional Scripture**

**Genesis 2:18-25** *Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib, which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined (cleave) to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

#### **Interesting Thought**

In God’s perfect design for marriage, we are ONE.

#### **Further Questions to Ask Myself**

1. In what ways am I contributing to my marriage resembling a biblical marriage?
2. Am I enduring my marriage or enjoying it?
3. Am I more focused on my relationship with God or my relationship with my spouse?
4. Am I easy to be married to?

<b><i>Week 2 Projects for Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Specific Project</i></b>
<b><i>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</i></b>	Read the story of Rachel and Leah from Genesis 29:1 - 30:24 and take note of the idols of the heart that Jacob, Rachel, Laban, and Leah had.
<b><i>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</i></b>	Memorize and be ready to recite 2 Corinthians 5:9
<b><i>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</i></b>	Listen/watch part 2 of the Marriage by Design series and be ready to speak about a biblical definition of love along with a clear understanding of how the affections of our heart explain why we do the things we do.
<b><i>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</i></b>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<b><i>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</i></b>	<p>Go on a date together (wife in charge of doing something her husband would enjoy).</p> <p>Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.</p>
<b><i>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pray for yourself as God reveals your heart idols (affections) that you will forsake them and purpose to live for Him.</li> <li>2. Pray for your spouse that God will use this study to help him or her understand the misplaced affections in their hearts</li> <li>3. Pray with each other at least twice this week (before a meal does not count)</li> <li>4. Pray for specific requests from those in your small group.</li> </ol>



## **Week 3**

### **THE ROOT OF ENDURING MARRIAGE**

#### **Focus Statement**

I do what I do because I want what I want. How do I change my wants so that I only want what God wants?

#### **Session Questions**

1. What did you do on your date night together?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. How would you define biblical love? How does biblical love differ from the world's view?
4. Think of the story of Rachel and Leah. Do you identify more with Rachel or Leah? How does God's dealings with both of them comfort, challenge, or encourage you?
5. Think about areas of your marriage in which you struggle with sin. Can you see any connection between your habitual sin and any possible idolatry?
6. Do you find it ironic that the one who said, "Give me children lest I die" (Rachel) died in childbirth? What can we learn about heart idols and misplaced affections from that?
7. Draw out and explain the Y-chart as it relates to the choices that have to be made in the marriage relationship. What is longterm fruit of making decisions based on emotions?

#### **Additional Scripture**

**Jeremiah 17:9** *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?*

**James 4:1-10** *1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

**Matthew 15:17-20** *17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."*

## **Interesting Thought**

“Marriage is not 50/50. Divorce is 50/50. Marriage is you giving 100% regardless what you get in return.”

## **Further Questions to Ask Myself**

1. How would you complete this sentence, “Give me \_\_\_\_\_ or else I die!”
2. Who, or what do I give my affections to most?
3. What is it that I want so bad that I am willing to sin in order to get it or sin if I do not get it?

<b><i>Week 3 Projects for Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Specific Project</i></b>
<b><i>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</i></b>	Read Ephesians chapter 5 each day. From that passage, write out as many things you can find about the specific things it says about imitating Christ and being filled with the Spirit.
<b><i>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</i></b>	Memorize and be ready to recite Ephesians 5:33
<b><i>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</i></b>	Listen/watch part 3 of the Marriage by Design series and be ready to speak about the role of the husband.
<b><i>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</i></b>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<b><i>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</i></b>	Go on a date together (husband in charge of doing something his wife would enjoy).  Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.
<b><i>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></b>	1. Husband: Pray for yourself to be the husband God has called you to be. Trust that God would never call you to something that He would not also equip you to do.  2. Wife: Pray for your husband to be able to take the truths of what God has called him to and do them well in spite of your shortcomings and the pressures from the world.  3. Pray with each other at least three times this week (before a meal does not count)  4. Pray for specific requests from those in your small group.

**Week 4**  
**GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUSBANDS**

**Focus Statement**

"Better today than yesterday. Better tomorrow than today" ~ Voddie Baucham

**Session Questions**

1. What did you do for your date night?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. (H) Do you tend to lean more towards being an arrogant dictator or passive pleaser?
4. (W) In what ways can you help your husband not be an arrogant dictator or passive pleaser?
5. In what ways is a husband called to lovingly lead his family? Speak about each character trait from Ephesians 5:25-32 (Unconditional, Sacrificial, Purifying, Selfless, Intimate)
6. How does this style of leadership differ from the idea of being an arrogant dictator or passive pleaser?
7. What are some practical steps to take in order to prioritize your family?
8. How would the husband leading and loving like Christ be a picture of Christ and His bride?

**Additional Scripture**

**1 Peter 3:7** *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

**Interesting Thought**

Men can make it easy for their wives to respect them and submit to their authority by simply loving them as Christ loves the church.

**Further Question to Ask Myself (Husband)**

1. In what ways have I abdicated my responsibilities as a husband? What are specific ways to change that?
2. What will I do this week to prioritize my family?
3. What do I need to add and/or remove from my life in order to best lead?

**Further Questions to Ask Myself (Wife)**

1. How can I help my husband to lead well?
2. In what ways am I undermining my husband's leadership?
3. What specific way will I change as a result of what I have seen/heard this week?

<b><i>Week 4 Projects for Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Specific Project</i></b>
<b><i>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</i></b>	Read Colossians 3 each day this week. From that passage, write out as many things as you can find about the person who has been raised up with Christ.
<b><i>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</i></b>	Memorize and be ready to recite Colossians 3:17
<b><i>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</i></b>	Listen/watch part 4 of the Marriage by Design series and be ready to speak about the role of the wife.
<b><i>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</i></b>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<b><i>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</i></b>	Go on a date together (wife in charge of doing something her husband would enjoy).  Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.
<b><i>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></b>	1. Husband: Pray for your wife to be the woman that God has called her to be in spite of your shortcomings and the pressure from the world.  2. Wife: Pray for yourself that you will be able to do what God has called you to do  3. Pray with each other at least four times this week (before a meal does not count)  4. Pray for specific requests from those in your small group.

## **Week 5**

### **GOD'S DESIGN FOR WIVES**

#### **Focus Statement**

The Bible calls the wife her husband's helper. This is not an insignificant role or one of inferiority. We know that because the Holy Spirit is also called the helper.

#### **Session Questions**

1. What did you do for your date night?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. How does the understanding of the status of women to the Greeks, Romans, and Jews in New Testament times help you see the Bible is not against women but very much for them?
4. Why do you think submission is such a "touchy" word in the world today in spite of the fact that submission is seen in so many different areas of life?
5. Do you have a clearer understanding of the problem of abuse within the church? In what practical ways can you better minister to the abused and the abusers?
6. What does it mean to submit to your husband "as unto the Lord?"
7. Explain what it means for submission to be a "voluntary act" and a "testimony."

#### **Additional Scripture**

**Colossians 3:18** *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

**1 Corinthians 11:3** *"But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."*

**1 Peter 3:1-5** *"In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands. Then, even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live, when they see your pure and reverent conduct. Let your beauty not be merely external--the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes--but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight. For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands,"*

For more information about domestic violence in the church, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDYllpG4Rjg&t=2949s>. Or search on YouTube "chris moles BCTC 2018"

#### **Interesting Thought**

Leadership is about influence, not title.

#### **Further Questions to Ask Myself (Wife)**

1. What specific ways does my heart need to change?
2. In what ways have I encouraged my children or others to disrespect my husband?

#### **Further Questions to Ask Myself (Husband)**

1. What specific ways can I make it easier for my wife to submit and respect my leadership?
2. What specific ways can I encourage my wife this week?

<b><i>Week 5 Projects for Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Specific Project</i></b>
<b><i>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</i></b>	Read Ephesians 4 each day this week. Write out the things from that chapter that are indicative of those who are diligent to pursue peace.
<b><i>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</i></b>	Memorize and be ready to recite Ephesians 4:32
<b><i>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</i></b>	Listen/watch part 5 of the Marriage by Design series and be ready to speak about communication and conflict resolution
<b><i>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</i></b>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<b><i>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</i></b>	Go on a date together (husband in charge of doing something his wife would enjoy).  Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.
<b><i>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></b>	1. Pray for your hearts to be open to changing the way you communicate and resolve conflict.  2. Pray for consistency in your roles as husband/wife.  3. Pray with and for each other at least five times this week (before a meal does not count)  4. Pray for specific requests from those in your small group.

## Week 6

### GOD'S DESIGN FOR COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

#### Focus Statement

Fires destroys houses...Our words can destroy homes. There have been more homes destroyed by words than houses destroyed by fire.

#### Session Questions

1. What did you do on your date night?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. Work through Ephesians 4:25-32 together as a group. What are each of the put "offs" and put "ons" that you find? How do these foster good communication?
4. Why do you think the writer to the Hebrews used Esau as an example of one who allowed bitterness to "spring up and cause trouble?"
5. How will "attacking the problem and not the person" help solve communication issues?
6. Why is clamming up as sinful as blowing up? When can clamming up or being silent be considered wise?
7. What do my words say about my heart? (Luke 6:45)

#### Additional Scripture

**Proverbs 12:18** *Speaking recklessly is like the thrusts of a sword, but the words of the wise bring healing.*

**James 3:5-6** *So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.*

**Ephesians 4:25-32** *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

**Ephesians 4:29** *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those who hear.*



## **Interesting Thought**

Imagine how different our disagreements would look if we were all focused on building up, being kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, encouraging, and making sure to always extend grace?

## **Further Questions to Ask Myself**

1. In what ways has bitterness sprung up in my heart?
2. In what ways do I attack the person rather than the problem?
3. What specific words do I need to start putting off?

<b><i>Week 6 Projects for Growth</i></b>	<b><i>Specific Project</i></b>
<b><i>Grow in Knowledge of God's Word Psalm 119:92</i></b>	Read Romans 12 and Matthew 18 throughout the week. Take note of the variety of methods these passages reference in order to build and maintain a level of trust.
<b><i>Grow in Hiding God's Word In Your Heart Psalm 119:11</i></b>	Memorize and be ready to recite Proverbs 11:13
<b><i>Grow in Theological Understanding Psalm 119:12</i></b>	Listen/watch part 6 of the Marriage by Design series and be ready to speak about how to build and maintain trust in your marriage.  Be ready to speak about how biblical forgiveness is defined.
<b><i>Grow in Commitment to the Body of Christ Hebrews 10:24-25</i></b>	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself and/or your marriage relationship
<b><i>Grow in Love for One Another John 13:35</i></b>	Go on a date together (wife in charge of doing something her husband would enjoy).  Do 3 acts of kindness for your spouse this week (above and beyond the normal things you do). Write them down and be ready to speak about them.
<b><i>Grow in Intimacy with God 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></b>	1. Pray together for the areas that trust has been broken in your relationship. Read Psalm 139 and ask God to search your heart in this.  2. Pray for consistency in your roles as husband/wife.  3. Pray with and for each other at least six times this week (before a meal does not count)  4. Pray for specific requests from those in your small group.

## **Week 7**

### **GOD'S DESIGN FOR BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST**

#### **Focus Statement**

Trust is built through consistent trustworthy behavior over a long period of time. Consistent failure in the little things destroys trust.

#### **Session Questions**

1. What did you do on your date night?
2. What is God teaching you and how is the Holy Spirit changing you?
3. In what ways have people destroyed trust in your life? How has that affected the way you trust others?
4. What was the most challenging thing about this session? What was most encouraging?
5. What are the four promises of biblical forgiveness?
6. When do you and your spouse communicate best?
7. Why is it important to confess specific sins and ask forgiveness for those specific sins?
8. You have spent the past 7 weeks investing in your marriage. What is your next investment?

#### **Additional Scripture**

**Proverbs 11:13** *A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.*

**Philippians 2:3-4** *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**Matthew 18:21-22** *Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

**Romans 12:17-21** *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

#### **Interesting Thought**

"My wife doesn't get hysterical. She gets historical. She keeps bringing up the past." ~ Emmerson Eggerichs

#### **Further Questions to Ask Myself**

1. What specific steps do I need to take in order to take 100% responsibility for my wrongs?
2. Will I commit to practicing confession, repentance, and forgiveness consistently?