

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 2

Session Questions

1. What did you do on your date night together? (husband was in charge of doing something his wife would enjoy)
2. What is God teaching you and how is He changing you?
(There's an expectation that, if you are spending time in God's Word, praying, memorizing Scripture, and being in church that God will be teaching you and changing you)
3. What does it mean to be "In" Christ according to Ephesians 1-3? Which of these are most encouraging? Which are most challenging?
4. Which of the "A's" we discussed last week have been "seasons" in your marriage?
5. Which of the "A's" have turned into a direction for your marriage?
6. If your marriage continues in the direction it is going, will you be closer together or further apart? Why?
7. What challenges/encouragements resulted from the first session of Marriage by Design?
8. Recite 2 Corinthians 5:9

Further Questions to Ask Myself

- In what ways can I begin contributing to my marriage to best become ONE?
- Am I enduring my marriage or enjoying it?
- Am I more focused on my relationship with God or my relationship with my spouse?
- Am I easy to be married to?

Homework from last week

Scripture	Read Ephesians chapters 1-3. From these chapters, write out as many benefits of being in Christ as you can find (should be close to 30). Be ready to talk about them when we come together next week.
Scripture Memory	Memorize and be ready to recite 2 Corinthians 5:9
Theological Reading	Read the booklet, "What do you do when your marriage goes sour?" and write out how the author defines "love" and "forgiveness." Be ready to speak about them next week.
To "Do"	Go on a date together (husband in charge of doing something his wife would enjoy). Needs to be pre-planned and intentional.
Prayer	1. Pray for yourself through this seminar 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)
Church	Attend at least two services this week and write down the things that God is teaching you about yourself or your marriage.

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 3

1. How was your date night this week? What did you do? What did you talk about?
2. Rachel said, “Give me children, lest I die.” In pointing out this idolatrous statement last week, how would you complete this sentence, “Give me _____ or else I will _____?”
3. Notice the downward progression from desire to sin in the following chart:

I desire	These are good, God-given desires. Desires are not necessarily sinful. We want things like love, respect, safety, security, acceptance, Godly family, marriage, children, provide for family, etc.
I deserve	A slippery slope occurs where we start thinking what we want is what we need in order to be happy, fulfilled, pleased, etc., in life.
I demand	Here we say, “I must have” or “I deserve to have” my desires met. Both feet are in the sin pool now and idolatry has taken root.
I am angry	When we don’t get what we really, really, really, really, really want, we question God’s character, love and mercy. We get angry, depressed, fearful, etc.
I judge	Because idols demand a sacrifice, we play the judge and issue a verdict that needs to be carried out because our desire (functional savior) did not get satisfied.
I punish	When our desires don’t get satisfied, we respond by lashing out in anger, tearing down the person, or inflict self-harm to ourselves in the form of “addiction” or other ways.

As you look at this list, how would you be able to stop the downward progression at each stage?

1. Have someone draw and explain the Y chart that we discussed last week.
2. Explain true forgiveness from last week’s talk and addendum.
3. What are the benefits of being in Christ according to Colossians 1 and 2?
4. Please recite 1 Corinthians 10:31
5. If time, what was taught or preached over the last week that applied specifically to your marriage?

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 4

Last week, we did a deep dive into the idea of mutual submission in Christ from Ephesians 5:21. So far, we have seen that our identity in Christ is explicitly detailed in the first 3 chapters of Ephesians. When you get to chapter 4, it begins with “therefore.” In other words, because of who you are in Christ, this is how you should behave. While we have not yet gone into chapter 4, we spent the majority of last week speaking about how chapters 5 and 6 play out in our day to day lives.

Question 1:

What does the Spirit-controlled life look like as it relates to individuals, marriages, parenting, and our work places?

Answer:

1. How we speak to one another (5:19)
2. If we are thankful (5:20)
3. Our general attitude of submission (5:21)
4. Wives (5:22-24; 33)
5. Husbands (5:25-29; 33)
6. Children (6:1-3)
7. Parents (6:4)
8. Employees (6:5-8)
9. Employers (6:9)

Question 2:

As you read through Ephesians 5 this week, what are some specific things God has called to to “do” because of who you are in Christ?

Answer:

1. Imitate God (5:1)
2. Walk in love (5:2)
3. Not let immorality/impurity/greed be named among you (5:3)
4. No filthiness, silly talk, or coarse jesting, but rather giving thanks (You may want to spend time on what these things mean) (5:4)
5. Do not participate in disobedience (5:6-7)
6. Walk as children of light (5:8)
7. Learn what is pleasing to the Lord (5:10)
8. And on and on and on...

Question 3:

Tell us about your date night. Husbands were in charge...what did you do?

Question 4:

Recite James 1:19-20 from memory. How do you think anger and being quick to speak correlate? When we get angry, it is usually because we think we are more right than the person we are angry with. What does this verse say about our anger achieving righteousness? What are practical ways to combat this according to verse 19?

Question 5:

What random acts of kindness did you do for your spouse this week that you do not normally do?

Question 6:

What did you learn from church or bible studies this week that relate directly to your marriage and mutual submission in Christ? What is God teaching you? How is He changing you?

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 5

God is still in the business of changing people. The way He normally does that is by using His Word, His Spirit, His people, and the circumstances of life.

1. In what ways have you seen God changing you through Marriage by Design?
2. What are some specific things that God is teaching you? (About self, spouse, heart, etc...)
3. What are specific things you found in Ephesians 4 that you can begin doing as a result of being in Christ? This should be a long list...
4. Recite Ephesians 4:32
5. What random acts of kindness have you done for your spouse this week that you do not normally do?
6. For the wives...what are specific things you did this week from the addendum on how a wife can respectfully submit to her husband?
7. For the husbands...what are specific things your wife normally does that demonstrate her love for you from the addendum?
8. In your own words, how would you explain what respectful submission is?
9. What did you do on your date night?
10. What are you most looking forward to learning tonight as it relates to the husband's role to sacrificially submit to his wife?

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 6

As we begin to wrap things up with Marriage by Design, these final two weeks, we will be focusing on the fact that “Marriage Means Conflict.” Everyone has conflict in their marriages but why is it that some couples seem to be able to work through conflict together while others are destroyed by conflict?

1. In what ways have you seen God changing you through Marriage by Design?
2. What are some specific things that God is teaching you? (About self, spouse, heart, etc...)
3. What are specific things you found in Ephesians 5 that you can begin doing as a result of being in Christ? This should be a long list...
4. Recite James 1:19-20
5. What random acts of kindness have you done for your spouse this week that you do not normally do?
6. For the husbands...what are specific things you did this week from the addendum on how a husband can sacrificially submit to his wife?
7. For the wives...what are specific things your husband normally does that demonstrates his love for you from the addendum?
8. In your own words, how would you explain what sacrificial submission is?
9. What specific challenges do you find in submission (respectful and sacrificial)?
10. What did you do on your date night?
11. How does conflict normally get resolved in your home?

Small Group Leader's Guide – Week 7

Last week, we saw that “Marriage Means Conflict.” We also saw that conflict gives us 1) an opportunity to Glorify God, 2) an opportunity to Get the log out, and 3) an opportunity to Gently restore.

Today, we will look at our fourth and final G – Go and be reconciled.

As our normal process for ending marriage counseling is to release the couple into the care of their local church.

In doing that, we have our counselees complete a self-assessment form to set goals in order to carry this momentum into the future. Since this is a small group, please answer these questions together.

1. What did you do on your date night this week?
2. What random acts of kindness have you done for your spouse this week?
3. Summarize the things you have learned (about God, yourself, others, life, gospel, your living situation, etc.) during Marriage by Design.
4. By God's grace, what are the things that have changed since you began attending Marriage by Design? What specific changes have you made to become more like Christ and please God as it relates to your marriage or other relationships?
5. What are things / areas you still need to learn more about (areas of confusion or doubt), and what are things / areas that still need to be changed?
6. What is your plan to continue to address these areas? What are the things you can put in place to keep you changing and growing in these areas?

Ideas:

- Exchange contact info and gather together again in a month
- Go through the Marriage by Design videos with a small group of others in your church
- Start a text thread to encourage one another
- Read Peacemaking for Families and do the homework at the end of each chapter
- Make it a point to do date nights with other couples as a way to encourage one another