



Marriage
S E M I N A R



HICKORY GROVE
BAPTIST CHURCH



Purpose

This three-week seminar aims to encourage and strengthen your marriage, using Paul David Tripp's book, *Marriage*, looking at six commitments that result from looking at marriage through the lens of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether you have been married for many years, just recently married, or if you are engaged, we desire your marriage to be a grace-based marriage that displays the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church.

6

Commitments

COMMITMENT 1

We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness.

COMMITMENT 2

We will make growth and change our daily agenda.

COMMITMENT 3

We will work together to build a sturdy bond of trust.

COMMITMENT 4

We will commit to building a relationship of love.

COMMITMENT 5

We will deal with our differences with appreciation and grace.

COMMITMENT 6

We will work to protect our marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage & The Gospel

FOCUS PASSAGE

Ephesians 5:22-33

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

MAIN IDEA

A grace-based marriage is designed to display the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church.

COMMITMENT 1

We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness.

FOCUS PASSAGE

1 John 1:5-10

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

MAIN IDEA

Confession and forgiveness are a doorway to growth and change in your marriage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Review these nine daily habits of a confession lifestyle:

- 1. We will be lovingly honest.*
- 2. We will be humble when exposed.*
- 3. We will not excuse.*
- 4. We will be quick to admit wrongs.*
- 5. We will listen and examine.*
- 6. We will greet confession with encouragement.*
- 7. We will be patient, persevering, and gentle in the face of wrong.*
- 8. We will not return to the past.*
- 9. We will put our hope in Christ.*

1. Discuss with each other which one is most difficult for you.

2. What is one step you will take this week to cultivate that grace of confession in your life?

COMMITMENT 2

We will make growth and change our daily agenda.

FOCUS PASSAGE

Galatians 5:13–26

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

MAIN IDEA

You have to be committed to pulling weeds and planting seeds, or you will not have the marriage that grace makes possible.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the pitfalls do you struggle with the most: selfishness, busyness, inattention, self-righteousness, fear, or laziness? How is that affecting your relationship? If you aren't sure, ask with humility and an open mind.

2. What are some things you would like to tear down or dig up in your relationship to make it stronger? Be honest and open with your feelings, and listen to each other's list without judgment or defensiveness.

3. What are some things you would like to build up or cultivate in your relationship to make it stronger? Be honest and open with your feelings, and listen to each other's list without judgment or defensiveness.

4. What fruits of the spirit (listed in Gal. 5:22-23) does your relationship need the most right now? What is one practical thing you will do this week to serve each other in love?

COMMITMENT 3

We will work together to build a sturdy bond of trust.

FOCUS PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:25-32

²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

MAIN IDEA

If your marriage is going to be what God intended it to be, trust must be built, maintained, and protected, and restored when broken.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look over briefly the *Trust Questionnaire* below together. Discuss one thing you do or can do to build trust with each other?

2. Set aside a time this week to talk, listen, and pray with each other about building trust in your marriage. This conversation needs to be ongoing, not just a onetime event!

A Trust Questionnaire

1. Is there more unity, understanding, and love in your marriage now than there has ever been?

2. Do you both do what you promise in the time that you have promised?

3. Are you attentive to what your spouse sees as important?

4. Do you make excuses for failures to do what you have promised, or are you ready to confess?

5. Do you listen well to your spouse and act on what you have heard?

6. Do you follow through with mutually agreed-upon plans?

7. Do you work together on planning and scheduling priorities, or do you demand that the other do it your way?

8. Do you share with your spouse your thoughts, desires, hopes, dreams, and concerns, or is it easier for you to be quiet or to share with someone else?

9. Is there any evidence that you have withdrawn from the other in protective distance?

10. Could your spouse say that you are good for your word and faithful to your promises?
11. Do you carry wrongs around with you, or do you trust one another to confront and confess?
12. Do you ever wonder what the other is doing when not with you?
13. Are you conscious of editing your words and withholding your feelings because you can't trust your spouse to deal with them properly?
14. Is your marriage partner the best friend in your life, or has your dream of this kind of companionship evaporated?
15. Is your sexual relationship mutually satisfying, or is it hard for you to give yourself physically to your spouse?
16. Do you say things to other people about your spouse that you have not communicated to him or her?
17. Do you look forward to sharing times together, and when you have these times are they peaceful and enjoyable?
18. Are there problems between you that remain unsolved because you don't have the bond of trust necessary to work together on a solution?
19. Are you comfortable with the vulnerability that a good marriage involves?
20. Do you ever wonder if you made a mistake in marrying the person who is your spouse?
21. Do you ever fear that you are being manipulated or taken advantage of in any way?
22. Do you ever wonder if your spouse cares for him- or herself more than for you?

COMMITMENT 4

We will commit to building a relationship of love.

FOCUS PASSAGE

1 John 4:7-11

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In 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. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

MAIN IDEA

In order to have a marriage that is a lifelong relationship of unity and understanding we need to evaluate what true love looks like in our marriage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you see any of the signs of drought in your marriage: disunity, misunderstanding, separation, physical dysfunction, or conflict?

2. Which ones might you be headed toward, and how can you work to refresh that area of connection?

COMMITMENT 5

We will deal with our differences with appreciation and grace.

FOCUS PASSAGES

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

MAIN IDEA

God is creator and the biblical story is the only story that can make sense out of the story of your life and your marriage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What differences have caused the most friction between you?

2. What are the differences you have come to appreciate the most, and why?

COMMITMENT 6

We will work to protect our marriage.

FOCUS PASSAGE

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this:

⁹*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*

¹⁰*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹*Give us this day our daily bread,*

¹²*and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

MAIN IDEA

Marriage is hard work but by his grace and through prayer you can have a marriage of unity, understanding, and love.

Prayer Points

1

Confession and forgiveness

2

Pulling weeds and planting seeds

3

Trust

4

Love for each other

5

Our differences

6

Love for God

Resources

Tying the Knot:

A Premarital Guide to a Strong and Lasting Marriage

Rob Green

This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence

John Piper

When Sinners Say I Do:

Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage

Dave Harvey

Men and Women in the Church:

A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction

Kevin DeYoung



HICKORY GROVE
BAPTIST CHURCH