

Reclaiming the Beauty of Marriage Workbook

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Orientation to Marriage Counseling: Dynamics of Marriage Counseling
Dr. Heath Lambert

- I. Problems and Patterns in Marriage Counseling
 - A. Common Problems in Most Marriage Conflicts

 - B. Core Problem in All Marriage Conflict

- II. Techniques and Methods in Marriage Counseling
 - A. Pursue Christ

 - B. Pursue the Bible

 - C. Pursue Unity

 - D. Pursue Joy

- III. Purpose and Plan in Marriage Counseling
 - A. What the goal is not

 - B. What the goal is

Premarital Counseling
Sean Perron

I. Five categories:

- A. The Glory of God
- B. The Word of God
- C. The Gospel of God
- D. The Holiness of God
- E. The Church of God

II. Key Qualities:

A. Character

- Romans 8:29
- 1 Corinthians 15:33
- Prov. 31:30
- Psalm 112:1
- John 17:3
- 1 John 2:4

B. Convictions

- Jude 1:3
- Ephesians 4:11-16

C. Compatibility / Harmony

- 1 Timothy 3
- Luke 2:52
- Gal. 5:22-6:1

- Proverbs 6:25
- 1 Peter 3:4

D. Course / Trajectory

- Philippians 1:17

E. Life circumstances

III. Here are some guidelines to think through:

- A. Spiritually
- B. Financially
- C. Directionally

IV. Important and Controversial Issues in Pre-Marriage Counseling:

- A. Gospel
- B. Divorce
- C. Gender Roles
- D. Sex in the Past
- E. Sex in the Present
- F. Sex in the Future
- G. Money
- H. In-Laws
- I. Parenting
- J. Communication / Conflict

The Role of the Husband in Marriage
Dr. Ryan Trzeciak

I. The Role of the Husband

A. Provider (Gen 2:15)

B. Protector (Gen 2:15)

C. Priest (Gen 2:16-17)

II. The Responsibility of the Husband

A. Lover (Eph 5:25, 28, 33; Col 3:19)

B. Leader (Eph 5:23-25; Col 3:19)

C. Learner (1 Pet 3:7)

III. The Role Model for the Husband

A. Christ is our Provider, Protector, and Priest.

1. Christ is our Provider

a. John 6:1-59

b. John 10:1-21

c. Hebrews 5:1-10; 10:11-18; 12:2

B. Christ Loves, Leads, and Learns (i.e., Knows)

1. Christ Loves

- a. Christ loved first (1 John 4:19).
- b. Christ loved most (Gal 2:20).
- c. Christ loved best (1 John 3:16-18).

2. Christ Leads

- a. Christ is the Head of man (1 Cor 11:3).
- b. Christ is the Head of the church (Col 1:15-20).
- c. Christ is the Head of all Creation (Matt 28:16-20).

3. Christ Learns/Knows/Understands

- a. Christ is intimately united with his people (Matt 25:31-46; Acts 9:4-5).
- b. Christ experiences what we experience (Heb 2:14-18).
- c. Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses, helps us when we are tempted, and gives us grace and mercy in our time of need (Heb 4:14-16).

Dealing with Sexual Issues in Marriage
Sean Perron

WANTS AND WORRIES

WAYS AND WHYS

- Hebrews 13:4
- Romans 14:23
- Matthew 7:5

Discussion Questions

1. What are your sexual wants? Why do you want them?
2. What are your spouse's sexual wants? Why does he or she want them?
3. What are your sexual worries? What are your spouse's sexual worries?
4. When was the last time you talked about sex with your spouse?

Frequency of Sex

1 Corinthians 7:5

Sex Isn't Ultimately about Your Body

1 Corinthians 6:20

1 Corinthians 7:3–4

Practical Details

Sex should be prioritized and planned.

1 Corinthians 7:5

See Heath Lambert and Brad Bigney, "Glorifying God In Your Sexual Relationship," April 5, 2017, in Truth in Love, produced by Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, podcast, mp3 audio, 13:14, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/til-087-glorifying-god-sexual-relationship-feat-brad-bigney/>.

Sex should be pleasurable.

1 Corinthians 7

Proverbs 5:15-20

Hebrews 13:4

1 Corinthians 10:31

Luke 10:27

Discussion Questions

1. How often do you and your spouse have sex?
2. Do you want to have more sex? Does your spouse want to have more sex?
3. Is sex a priority in your marriage? Why or why not? How do you plan to overcome a busy schedule in order to make it a priority?

On Sexual Difficulty (Husbands)

Colossians 1:20

Genesis 2:25

A Difficult Problem for Husbands

Circumstantial

- 1 Corinthians 10:13; Mark 7:21–22; Luke 6:45

Internal

- Fear
- Sadness
- Despair
- Conflict
- Past or present sexual sin

See Ed Wheat and Gaye Wheat, *Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2010), 128, 134.

Medical

Five Principles for Male Performance Issues

Bear with each other.

- Ephesians 4:2

Patience and peace

Lose yourself in order to find yourself.

Cultivate thankfulness.

The gospel.

- 1 John 4:18; Romans 5:1, 8; 8:1

Discussion Questions

1. What are the factors (whether circumstantial, internal, or medical) that you think could be contributing to your sexual difficulty?
2. If fear is a contributing factor, what passages of Scripture can help to renew your mind and put your fear to death?
3. What are some qualities and characteristics of your wife that you can enjoy and think about during the day?

On Sexual Difficulty (Wives)

Is There a Problem?

The Goal and Opportunity

- Prov. 5:18; Eccl. 9:9; Song 4:12–16; Mark 12:31

Reasons for Difficulties

- Relational
- Personal
- Medical

Suggestions for Real Change

- Acknowledge and address the issue.
- Clear a pathway in your thoughts.
- Your spouse will enjoy sex more if you do.
- Linger and love.

See Song 4:16; Genesis 2:25; Psalm 16:11; Hebrews 4:16

Discussion Questions

1. What are the factors (whether relational, personal, or medical) that you think could be contributing to your sexual difficulty?
2. If fear is a contributing factor, what passages of Scripture can help to renew your mind and put your fear to death?
3. What are some qualities and characteristics of your husband that you can enjoy and think about during the day?

Impurity in Marriage

A spouse can be impure in various ways—through lust, masturbation, homosexuality, physical adultery, inappropriate emotional relationships, pornography, sexting, and more. Whichever form impurity takes, its impact on the other spouse is real and sin cannot be ignored.

Turning to God

- Ephesians 5:5–6
- 1 John 2:1
- Christians walk in the light (John 8:12; 1 John 1:7–9).
- Ephesians 5:8, 11
- *Your spouse*
- *Others who have been impacted by your sin*
- *An accountability partner*
- James 5:16; Proverbs 27:6

How Should You Confess?

- Ephesians 5:12–13

How Should You Respond?

- Psalm 55:12–23
- Matthew 26:21–25, 48–50
- Romans 1:20–22; Colossians 1:15–18; 3:5
- 1 John 5:21
- The book of Hosea
- Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 86:5; Joel 2:13
- Matthew 18:23–35
- Hebrews 13:5
- Matthew 19:26; Mark 14:36
- Ephesians 5:14

Discussion Questions

1. If you don't currently have a godly accountability partner, who is someone you can reach out to today?
2. Are there any secret sins that you need to confess to a godly accountability partner?
3. Are there any secret sins that you need to confess to your spouse?

For a helpful booklet on working through the aftermath of an affair, see Robert D. Jones, *Restoring Your Broken Marriage: Healing after Adultery* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009).

Perron, Sean, and Spencer Harmon. *Letters to a Romantic: On Dating*. P&R Publishing, 2017.

Perron, Sean, and Spencer Harmon. *Letters to a Romantic: On Engagement*. P&R Publishing, 2017.

Perron, Sean, and Spencer Harmon. *Letters to a Romantic: First Years of Marriage*. P&R Publishing, 2020.

The Role of the Wife in Marriage
Dr. Ryan Trzeciak

I. Role of the Wife

- A. Helper (Genesis 2:18, 22)

- B. Life-Giver (Genesis 1:28; 3:20; c.f. 1 Cor 11:12)

- C. Nurturer (Genesis 3:20)

II. Responsibility of the Wife

- A. Love her Husband (Titus 2:4-5)

- B. Love her Children (Titus 2:4b)

- C. Love her Home (Titus 2:5)

- D. Love the Gospel (Titus 2:5)

III. Reverent Attitude of the Wife

- A. Self-Controlled (Titus 2:5)

- B. Submissive (Eph 5:22, 33; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1)

1. What it does not mean . . .

2. Biblical evidence

a. Ephesians 5:22

b. Ephesians 5:33

c. Colossians 3:18

d. 1 Peter 3:1

3. Biblical evidence

a. Ephesians 5:21

b. Genesis 2; 1 Corinthians 11, 14

c. Ephesians 5:22

d. Ephesians 5:24

e. John 14:21

f. Ephesians 5:25-27

C. Spiritually Beautiful (1 Pet 3:1-6)

1. Not merely outward (v. 3; cf. 1 Timothy 2:9)

2. Mainly inward (v. 4)

3. Manifested in Wisdom (Proverbs 31:10-31)

The Strategic Importance of Family Worship
Dr. Ernie Baker

Introduction:

I. A theology of family worship.

A. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Context: We see a pattern of the Word of God being central in the home for dealing with the perplexities of life.

B. Ephesians 6:4 (“Home Sweet Home—When Christ is First”)

1. Context

2. The words

“Fathers”—biblical manhood (to lead, provide for and protect).

“Bring them up”

“Discipline”

“Instruction”

3. This is a way for me to fulfill the “great commission” with my family.

“Make disciples”

C. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Our homes are to be “God saturated” homes)

Worship should be the atmosphere of our homes (Psalm 34:1; Psalm 113:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

I desire my children to be so satisfied in the LORD that the world will not have the allure it normally does.

D. The picture of the New Testament Church

By the way—what does your family _____? What gets priority in your home?

II. The advantages of family worship (“The family that prays together, stays together.”).

-
-
-
-

-
-
-

III. Suggestions for carrying out family devotions.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.
- F.
- G.
- H.
- I.
- J.

IV. Discipleship applications

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

V. Answering practical questions

- A. What if the husband is an unbeliever or will not lead?

B. How do we put this into a busy schedule?

C. What if a husband says, "I don't know the Bible very well and won't know what to say?"

Conclusion:

Puritan church of Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1677: "We covenant, as a church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, to reform our families, engaging ourselves to a conscientious care to set up and maintain the worship of God in our homes. And to walk in our homes with perfect hearts. We resolve, in a faithful discharge of all domestic duties in seeking to educate, instruct and charge our little ones and our whole households to seek to keep the ways of the Lord."

Ernie Baker (thankful to be able to do this seminar with Rose)
Pastor of Counseling Supervision and Equipping
First Baptist Church, Jacksonville
Chair, On-line BA in Biblical Counseling
The Master's University
ACBC Fellow

Orientation to Marriage Counseling: Divorce and Remarriage
Dr. Heath Lambert

- I. Evangelical Views on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage
 - A. The Erasmian View
 - B. The Patristic View
 - C. The Permanence View

- II. Key Biblical Passages on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage
 - A. Genesis 2:24-25
 - B. Deuteronomy 24:1-4
 - C. Malachi 2:13-16
 - D. Matthew 5:31-32
 - E. Matthew 19:1-9
 - F. Mark 10:1-12

G. Luke 16:18

H. Romans 7:1-3

I. 1 Cor 7:10-15, 39

III. Responding to these debates in marriage and in evangelicalism

A. The real issues in marriage

B. Disagreeing with faithful people

Issues in Marriage Counseling: Ministry to Blended Families
John Blount

1. “Blended” (Reconstructed) Family Structures

- a. BLENDING = creating a new family unit from other families, particularly involving children
- b. Blended families are common
- c. Various causes (death, divorce, single-parent, adoption, fostering, Grand-parenting)
- d. Biblical accounts of blended families

i. Isaac & Ishmael

Genesis 21:9–11

⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” ¹¹ And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son.

ii. God uniting Jew and Gentile in the Church

Romans 9:25–26

²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’ ” ²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’ ”

- e. Blending is difficult
 - i. complexity: relationships, opposition, change, disruption, schedules, money, responsibilities, communication, in-laws & out-laws
- f. Hope for Blended Families through Christ
 - i. Jesus was from a blended family (John 7:5; Mark 3:2)
 - ii. Jesus is assembling the ultimate blended family

Revelation 5:9b

...you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

- iii. Jesus shows the way to successfully create a blended family

Philippians 2:1–12

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to

the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

2. The Foundation of a Reconstructed Family

- a. Loving God supremely and seeking His glory in your life (Matthew 22:37-38)
- b. Loving your family (bio's, steps, halves, exes) as you love yourself (Matt. 22: 39-40)
- c. Obey God's commands to you (James 1:22-27). (Doers of word, not hearers only)
- d. Rely on God's miraculous power to transform:
 - i. Your mind (Romans 12:1-2)
 - ii. Your practices

2 Peter 1:3-7

³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

- iii. Your capacity to love (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- iv. Your influence for good

1 Peter 3:8-17

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." ¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Loving God, loving your family (all), obeying God, and relying on God's power to transform, are the solid foundation needed for reconstructing a family.

3. Biblical Responses to Blended Family Challenges

a. Marital relationships

- i. Permanence & commitment (Genesis 2:24)
 - i. Though a marriage may have failed, you are now one flesh, divorce is not a solution to marital conflict.
- ii. Roles in Marriage (Helpmates)
 - i. Mourning & Recovering (1 Samuel 25:3, 32-33, 36-39)
 - a. What deaths have occurred? What has been lost?
 - i) physically, relationally, emotionally, financially, familial
 - b. Who has been affected and how?
 - c. Sadness, anxiety, grieving are to be expected
 - d. Consistent patience, kindness, thoughtful understanding required
 - ii. Loving leadership and respectful support (Ephesians 5:22-25, 33)
 - iii. Becoming one (Genesis 2:22-25)
 - iv. Adapting
 - a. Role reversal: (dysfunction often means a spouse has assumed the role of the mate along with their own role)
 - i. Affirm each spouse's God-assigned responsibilities
 - ii. Acknowledge where reversal needs to occur
 - iii. Work through the letting go process humbly, patiently & slowly
 - iv. Considerations:
 1. Spiritual leadership
 2. Decision-making
 3. Provision & Protection
 4. Parenting
 - b. Desires & expectations, opinions, differences
 - i. Collaborative problem-solving
 1. Finances & Budget
 2. Domestic responsibility sharing
 3. Time & Schedule
 4. Sex
 5. Leisure
 6. Parenting
- iii. Roles in Parenting
 - i. Collaborative unity (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 6:20)
 - ii. Humble adaptation to a new unified philosophy & practice
 - a. Ask for kids input in new practices & rules
 - b. Consistently live by the agreed expectation

- iii. Transition the application of discipline
 - a. Bio-parent responsible for discipline until healthy relationship is established with child and new parent
 - b. New parent collaborate with bio-parent during transition
 - c. New parent differs to bio-parent's decisions
 - d. Progress toward the voicing of the unity of both parents to child

b. Parenting relationships with all children in the blended home

- i. God-centered training (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)
- ii. Respectful treatment (Ephesians 6:1-4)
- iii. Loving (John 13:34-35) love one another
- iv. Godward humility, respect, service (Romans 12:9-13) genuine love, honor, serving
- v. Others-oriented (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a) traits of love

c. Parenting relationships outside the blended home: with former spouses, former grandparents, adult children from another marriage

- i. Humble peace-seeking (Romans 12:16-18)
- ii. Loving as far as you are concerned (Romans 13:8-10)
- iii. Glorifying God, demonstrating Him to them in tangible ways (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)

4. Helps for Successful Blending of Families

a. Establish stability

- i. Consistently perform responsibilities and roles
 - i. Husband / Father (one flesh with wife, God-given responsibility as parent)
 - ii. Wife / Mother (one flesh with husband, God-given responsibility as parent)
 - iii. Brothers and Sisters (equality among all, mutual love, honor, respect)
 - iv. Unity of authority (Dad & Mom equal and one)
 - v. Wisdom in discipline (transition to unity)
 - vi. Patience with all as a new family is created
- ii. Create a foundation of love
 - i. Equality of love, honor, and respect to all
 - ii. Listen to each other with the heart
 - iii. Respond to each other's needs & desires
- iii. Communicate openly
 - i. Express affection, affirmation, and appreciation to all daily
 - ii. Speak truth in love at all times
 - iii. Establish a Family Values Statement & Live according to it (see guide & sample)
 - iv. Establish Child Behavior Agreements & abide by them in all correction & discipline
 - a. See "Keys to Successful Step-Families"— Jeff & Amy Baker, pgs 51-70)
 - b. Parent's application of Ephesians 6:1-4 specific to each child
 - c. Child's strengths... weakness... desired outcomes... consequences & rewards
 - v. Establish consistent Family Talk Times
 - a. Dinner time (around the table)... or other strategic time

- b. Discuss what's happening in each family member's life
- c. Questions, desires, concerns are requested from each family member
- d. Not a 'business meeting' or a 'gripe session'
- e. Laugh together / tell stories
- f. Pray for each other's needs / requests
- g. Share a Bible promise or lesson learned from personal study
- vi. Follow-up individually as needs, concerns, and questions dictate

b. Establish Atmosphere of Peace and Unity

- i. seeking peace with a former spouse(s) (have current spouse present in meeting)
 - i. Acknowledge your sinful contributions to the marriage break-up
 - ii. Confess & apologize / ask their forgiveness as called for by scripture
 - iii. Express lessons learned and being applied in current marriage
 - iv. Express desires for continued relationship through co-parenting
- ii. seeking unity concerning parenting
 - i. Request former spouse's input in a Co-Parenting Agreement (see sample guide at Children's Rights Council crckids.org)
 - ii. Entrust former spouse to abide by Agreement (no micro-managing by you)
 - iii. Communicate with ex as you would want them to do to you
 - iv. Respectfully speak about former spouse to children
 - v. Encourage children to love their step-parent (bio-parent's spouse, if applicable)
 - vi. If co-parenting is not possible due to toxic relationship
 - a. Parallel Parenting Agreement & system
 - i. Minimal communication
 - ii. Mediated agreement regarding responsibilities
 - iii. Use of App to communicate (AppClose, WeParent, Our Family Wizard)
- iii. Avoid making children bear the weight of any adult disgruntlement
 - i. No complaining to your child about ex-spouse
 - ii. No using your child to communicate to ex for you
 - iii. No pitting your child against ex or forcing them to choose between you
 - iv. No using kids as informants about your ex

c. Dealing with conflict

- i. Confronting sinful behavior
 - i. God's Word is the basis for addressing sin (not subjective opinion) (Psalm 19:7-9; Hebrews 4:12)
 - ii. Humble love is required in confronting sin (Galatians 6:1)
 - iii. Help the sinner see their sin (Psalm 51:3-4; 1 John 1:8-10)
 - iv. Invite the sinner to receive God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
 - v. Help the sinner be reconciled to the offended (Matthew 18:21-22)
- ii. Reconciling conflict: PAUSE Principle
 - i. Prepare your heart (James 4:2-4; Matthew 7:3-5)
 - ii. Affirm the relationship (Romans 14:10-13; John 13:34-35)

- iii. Understand their issues and concerns
- iv. Seek Solutions (Romans 15:1-2)
- v. Enter into agreement
- iii. Objectives in all conflict
 - i. Glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)
 - ii. Grow in your faith and Christlikeness (James 1:2-4)
 - iii. Be an example to others in obedience to God (1 Peter 2:12)
 - iv. Display love to all (John 17:22-23)
- iv. Parenting conflicts between bio-parents
 - i. Sinfully arguing (demeaning, accusing, attacking) (Matthew 5:22)
 - ii. Spiteful / divisive behaviors (Hebrews 12:15, Titus 3:10-11)
 - iii. Not abiding by co-parenting agreement (Matthew 5:23-26; 18:13-15)
 - iv. Parenting disagreements (Proverbs 12:15 / PAUSE Principle)
- v. Parenting issues between children and the new parent
 - i. Wisdom: defer discipline to bio-parent until loving relationship is established between child and new parent
 - ii. Unity of husband and wife / equal authority (Ephesians 6:1-3)
 - iii. Seek biblical direction for all parenting issues (Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 3:1-8)
 - iv. Communicate 'why's' of decisions along with 'what's' (training the heart)
- vi. Conflict between siblings (step & half, minors and adults)
 - i. Turf wars (James 4:1-4)
 - ii. Accusations of preferential treatment by bio-parent
 - a. Examine yourself (Psalm 139:23-24; 2 Corinthians 18:1)
 - b. Seek to understand the complaint
 - c. Confess / repent / seek forgiveness if complaint is true
 - d. Be reconciled (PAUSE Principle)
 - iii. Disrespect between 'families' (bios against steps / halves)
 - a. We are all one family (Ephesians 2:14)
 - b. We live based on love (Colossians 3:11-15)
 - c. Unlove to our brother / sister is sin (1 John 2:9-11)
 - iv. Loving respect is practice of Christians in relationships (John 13:34-35)

Recommended Resources:

Keys to Successful Stepfamilies – Jeff & Amy Baker (Faith Resources (www.frlafayette.org))

*Preparing to Blend – Ron L. Deal (for premarital counseling) **

*Living in the Family Blender: 10 Principles of a Successful Blended Family – Clarke & Leah Burbidge**

Peacemaking for Families – Ken Sande

Resolving Everyday Conflict – Ken Sande & Kevin Johnson

(*) This is not a biblical counseling resource. However, it offers helpful, practical guidance that addresses many blended-family challenges.

Developing a Family Values Statement

The foundation for healthy family life is Christ and God's Word. Living according to Christ's example and God's commands will be life to your family and will yield all manner of delightful fruit (Psalm 128:1-4).

Training up children to know the Lord and His Word is the responsibility of every Christian parent (Eph. 6:1-4)

The following is a biblical guide for developing your own Family Values statement.

Love

God	(Matthew 22:36-37)
Others	(Matthew 22:38)
Enemies	(Matthew 5:44)

Communication

Truth	(Ephesians 4:25)
Kindness	(Galatians 5:22)
Encourage	(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Honor

Parents	(Exodus 20:12)
Others	(Romans 12:10)
Be Harmless	(Ephesians 4:29)

Kindness

Patient	(Galatians 5:22)
Forgiving	(Ephesians 4:32)
Generous	(Luke 6:38)

Worship

Sing	(Psalm 100)
Pray	(Philippians 4:6)
Bible	(Psalm 1:2-3)

Behaviors of Love (1 Corinthians 13)

Not complaining / but patient

Not hurtful / but kind

Not jealous / but joyful for others

Not prideful / but humble

Not rude / but respectful

Not selfish / but helpful

Not moody / but self-controlled

Not bitter / but forgiving

A Sample Family Values Statement

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Corinthians 13:1)

Because God has loved us, our family will reflect the love of God by being...

1. Patient... not complainers
2. Kind... not hurting each other
3. Joyful for each other... not jealous
4. Humble ... not prideful
5. Respectful... not rude or mean
6. Helpful... not selfish
7. Self-controlled... not moody
8. Forgiving... not bitter

In these ways we will make joyful noises to God and not be clanging cymbals and banging gongs!

Parenting Pressures in Marriage
Dr. Ryan Trzeciak

I. Basis for Parenting Biblically

- A. Romans 11:36
- B. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 31
- C. Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:21
- D. Psalm 51:5
- E. Numerous Proverbs
- F. Matthew 22:34-40
- G. Matthew 28:18-20

II. Maintaining Marital Unity

- A. Marriage is first in chronology (Genesis 1–2; Ephesians 5–6; Colossians 3).
- B. Marriage is first in longevity (Genesis 2:24).
- C. Marriage is first in priority (Song of Solomon; Matthew 22:34-40).

II. Disciplining and Discipling Biblically

- A. The aim is the heart (Prov 23:26).
- B. The tool is the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- C. The vehicle is the gospel (Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 3:15).
- D. The fuel is grace (1 Thess 2:1-12).
- E. The method is discipline and training (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21).
 - 1. Never in anger (Ephesians 4:29).
 - 2. Rules ought to support relationships, not preferences.

3. Distinguish between disobedience and development.
4. Discipline issues are discipleship opportunities.
5. Address the heart, not just behavior.
6. Seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

F. The goal is faithfulness (John 21:20-22; Gal 2:20; Romans 11:36).

III. Longevity in Loving Greatly

- A. Love and trust are a constant (Matthew 22:34-40; Isaiah 26:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:58).
- B. Structure and direction in the younger years (Prov 22:15; Prov 29:15; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 2:21).
- C. Wisdom and influence in the teen years (Prov 1:8-9; Prov 6:20-23; Colossians 3:21; 2 Cor 5:17-21).
- D. Support and "Letting Go" of adult children (Rom 11:36; Gen 2:24; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
 1. Pray for Wisdom!
 2. Look to the "One Anothers"
- E. Loving the Prodigals
 1. Draw near the Lord (Ps 34:18; 46:1-2; 62:8; 73:28; Phil 4:6; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:7).
 2. Find your hope in the Lord (Phil 1:21; 2 Cor 5:9; Heb 13:5-6).
 3. Remember to seek his kingdom (Matt 6:25-34).
 4. Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is Merciful (Luke 6:27-36).
 5. Show wisdom in dealing with issues (Matt 23:24).
 6. Their story is not over (Is 59:1).
 7. Trust that God is sovereign, wise, and good.

Communication in Marriage
Dr. Ryan Trzeciak

- I. Foundations for Godly Communication
 - A. Love for God and Neighbor (Mark 12:30-31).

 - B. Love for Family Unity (Eph 4:1-3; 5:1).

 - C. Love for the Gospel (John 13:34-35).

- II. Reasons for Communication Breakdown
 - A. Peace breaker (James 4:1-3; 3:6-12).

 - B. Peace faker (Prov 29:25; James 4:17).

 - C. Being quick to speak and slow to listen (James 1:19-21; 3:13-18).

 - D. Committing "Assumicide" (Prov 18:13, 17).

- III. Guidelines for Biblical Communication (Ephesians 4)
 - A. Listen Patiently (4:1-6).

B. Speak Lovingly (Eph 4:15, 25).

C. Communicate Timely (Eph 4:26-27).

D. Edify Graciously (Eph 4:29-30).

E. Act Kindly (Eph 4:31-32).

IV Practical Helps

A. Conference Table

B. 3-2-1-1 Communication Assignment

C. 50 Questions to Ask Your Spouse

Issues in Marriage Counseling: Family Finances
John Blount

Objectives of This Talk . . .

1. Understand the connection between money and the heart.
2. Develop a biblical view of and attitude about money.
3. Explore common conflicts involving money in marriage.
4. Examine God's instructions for managing financial resources.

The Connection Between Money and the Heart

1. Money Cannot Satisfy a Person's Heart (Ecclesiastes 2:8-11, 18-20)

*I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.⁹ So **I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem.** Also my wisdom remained with me.*

*¹⁰ And **whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.** I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.¹¹ **Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind,** and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.*

*¹⁸ I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me,¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.²⁰ **So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun.***

- a. The vanity (emptiness) of money –
 - i. It tends toward self-centeredness (8-10)
 - ii. It is a commodity to be used, not a guarantor of happiness (20)

2. Money is Deceptive: (Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17-19)

***“Take care lest you forget the LORD your God** by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them,¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,¹⁴ **then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God,** who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,*

*¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, **‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’**¹⁸ You shall **remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth,** that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.¹⁹ **And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish.***

- a. Wealth tempts a person to believe they are independent of God (11-14, 17-18)
- b. Wealth's deception leads to death (19) (end result of idolatry)

3. Only God Satisfies the Heart: (Psalm 21:1–7)

¹ O LORD, **in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults!** ² You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah ³ For you meet him with rich blessings; you set a crown of fine gold upon his head. ⁴ He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. ⁵ His glory is great through your salvation; splendor and majesty you bestow on him. ⁶ **For you make him most blessed forever; you make him glad with the joy of your presence.** ⁷ **For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.**

- a. God's provision is greater than wealth (1-5)
- b. God's love establishes the heart's joy (6-7)

Developing a Biblical View and Attitude About Money

1. God's Purposes for Money

Luke 12:32–34

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. **Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.** ³⁴ For **where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

- a. Growing a soul's faith in God rather than the world
 - i. Does God really care for me? (31)
 - ii. Prove that God's promises are true and reliable (32-33)
 - iii. Joy & confident rest in God is experienced (34)

Matthew 19:16–23

¹⁶ And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"...

(Jesus replies with last 5 of the Ten Commandments)

²⁰ The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and **you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.**" ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. ²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

- b. Revealing a soul's genuine love
 - i. Personal morality is not God's primary interest... love is (20-21)
 - ii. What a person is not willing to lose is what they truly value (22)
 - iii. Failing to accurately assess the worth of God & His kingdom is common (23)

2 Corinthians 9:7–15

⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.** ⁹ As it is written, "He

has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.¹¹ **You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.**¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.¹³ **By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,**¹⁴ **while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.**¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

- c. Expanding God’s Kingdom
 - i. Abounding grace for every good work (8-9)
 - ii. Enriched in every way that produces thanksgiving to God (11-12)
 - iii. Spreading of the gospel and demonstration of God’s transformative love (13-14)

When Money Becomes a Topic of Conflict

Money becomes a topic of conflict in a marriage when the hearts a spouse (one or both) begin to orient their desire toward the things of earth. They buy the deceiving offers money makes.

Matthew 6:22–24

²² **“The eye is the lamp of the body.** So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,²³ but **if your eye is bad,** your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!²⁴ **“No one can serve two masters,** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**

1. ***What is the eye of the person / couple set on?***
The things of the world (bad / darkness)...or the things of God (healthy / light)?
2. ***What are they serving... giving their energy, attention, mind, emotion, longing to?***
There is no middle ground... either give yourself to one or the other

1 John 2:15–17

¹⁵ **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** ¹⁶ For **all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.** ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

3. ***Divided allegiances between God and money lead to personal conflict...***

James 4:1–4

¹ **What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?**² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet 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 wrongly, to spend it on your passions.** ⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Conflict over money in a marriage is always evidence of misplaced allegiance to money. The key to moving through money problems is to set your 'eye' on God as your treasure and hope. Then, in faith, do what God commands you to do with the money you have.

Counseling Financial Faithfulness

1. **Acknowledge: How did money become a source of conflict in your marriage?**

You started trusting it... rather than God

Living beyond your income... desiring more... newer... better... Chasing material happiness

Or, A financial event went against you and put you into trouble

Debt ensued and is consuming your earnings more and more every day.

2. **Confess your sinful actions:**

1 John 1:8–9

⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

3. **Embrace God's authority and power in your financial trial**

James 1:2–8

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵ **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.** ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

- a. **Check your faith:** financial trials are spiritual in nature. They get to the heart of a person. What are you hoping in, God or money?
- b. **Seek God's wisdom:** reorder your wants and priorities to conform to God's priorities (growing your faith, revealing your love, expanding God's Kingdom)
- c. **Anchor yourself and your finances to God:** refuse to give in to emotions, fears, or math. Trust God's goodness and power to bring your finances into their proper place and function.

4. Align your heart's allegiance and practices to God:

Colossians 3:23–24

²³ Whatever you do, **work heartily, as for the Lord** and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. **You are serving the Lord Christ.**

a. Earn Money

- i. Seek additional income (extra employment, side hustle)
- ii. Embrace frugality (live on far less, make a game of it)
- iii. Kill the materialist beast in your heart

b. Manage Money:

- i. Budgeting: create and track an assigned spending plan
- ii. Saving: setting aside for future use (debt reduction, larger purchases,)
- iii. Investing: growing money through earnings & interest

c. Deploy Money:

- i. By Worshipping God with It

Luke 12:20–21

²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ **So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.**"

- ii. By Giving It to Help Others

2 Corinthians 8:1–4

¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, **their abundance of joy** and their extreme poverty have **overflowed in a wealth of generosity** on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, **of their own accord,** ⁴ **begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—**

- iii. By Using It According to God's Purposes:

1 Timothy 6:17–19

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, **nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.** ¹⁸ They are to do good, to **be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,** ¹⁹ **thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.**

Recommended Resources:

Redeeming Money – Paul David Tripp

Money, Debt and Finances: Critical Questions and Answers – Jim Newheiser

Issues of Domestic Abuse
Dr. Ernie Baker, John Blount, and Mrs. Martha Peace

Introduction:

This is the word of truth and love,
Sent to the nations from above;
Jehovah here resolves to shew,
What his Almighty grace can do.

This remedy did wisdom find,
To heal diseases of the mind;
This sov'reign balm. Whose virtues can,
Restore the ruined creature man.

Where Satan reigned in shades of night,
The gospel strikes a heavenly light.
Our lusts its wondrous pow'r controls,
And calms the rage of angry souls.

Lions and beasts of savage name,
Put on the nature of the Lamb;
While the wide world esteem it strange,
Gaze and admire, and hate the change. (Isaac Watts)

I. What might be going on in the heart? Is it always about power and control?

- A. What is the heart? (these categories are from Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius and Koehler, Baumgartner lexicons.)

Mind, will, emotions, affections, desires, lusts, appetites, passions

- B. The heart of the abuser—it's not just about power and control even though that is a predominant theme. FYI, power and control terminology originated with The Duluth Model. This is also the source of the "power and control wheel."
- Fear of man
 - Pleasure
 - Success
- C. The heart of the wife—what might be motivating her?
- Security
 - Fear of man
 - Worship of children

II. What is abuse?

A. Definitions:

Abuse is defined as specific acts limited to three broad categories: physical and sexual harm, reviling and corrupting speech, and restriction of economic and relational resources. Victims of abuse experience symptoms from these acts of abuse in a multitude of ways including emotional, spiritual, and physical distress that can compound over time.

Using biblical terms and concepts including oppress, violate, defile, humiliate, deceive, weaken, scheme, bring low, self-interest, selfish ambition, and others to replace ambiguous psychological terms provides a biblical roadmap and solution for counsel. Using these biblical terms and concepts better depict the sinful depravity of abuse against the dignity and personal capacities of those created in God's image. Expressions of abuse are always seeking self-interest in the misuse and defilement of another person

Moles points to biblical categories of abusive actions and effects. Namely, you see abuse through physical force (Psalm 11:5), intimidation (Psalm 34:15-16), ridicule (Proverbs 12:18), isolation (Ecclesiastes 4:12), denial and blame (Proverbs 28:13), using the children (Luke 17:2), male privilege (Ephesians 5:25, in the sense of abusing the position of headship and authority), economic control (1 Timothy 5:8), and coercion and threats (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). (Chris Moles, *The Heart of Domestic Abuse*)

B. Biblical categories:

1. Oppression

Biblically I am called to respect the personhood of others, the image of God in them (even the way I use my tongue, see James 3:8-10).

Scripture warns against the sinful use of others, especially misuses of authority, which diminishes and degrades their personhood for selfish gain.

In a plenary session titled "Abuse and the Abuser" at the 2018 annual conference of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, Dr. Dale Johnson defined an abuser as "someone who demands his wants rather than submits to his responsibilities at the expense of someone else's dignity." The elements of demanding behavior, failure to fulfill the responsibility of exhibiting virtue, and the denigration and humiliation of another are all present in that definition.

2. Authority/position is to be used in godly, Christlike ways; He is a servant (Philippians 2:3-5; Mark 10:45; John 13; Matthew 11:28-30).

3. What about complementarianism? Complementarianism properly practiced is not the problem it is a blessing.

4. What about verbal abuse? (Psalm 64:3; Jeremiah 9:8)

While we believe that we can be sinned against grievously by the way others speak to us, we must be careful to gather much information when a counselee says he or she is being “verbally” or “emotionally” abused. These must be handled on a case-by-case basis and require wisdom. The pastor over that area of ministry and possibly the Pastor of Counseling should be consulted before counseling separation (FBC policy and procedures manual).

5. Ways domestic abuse manifests

- Control of money
- Blocking doorways
- Hitting
- Verbal intimidation
- Degrading verbally
- Degrading acts sexually
- Nonconsensual sex (this is spousal rape)
- Hidden cameras
- Stalking
- Tracking vehicles
- Tracking in general
- Manipulating children

6. Specialized terminology

Gaslighting— Trying to influence someone’s perception of reality and to question their interpretation of events.

Male privilege—Male privilege is a sociological term that refers quite generally to any special rights or status granted to men in a society, on the basis of their sex or gender, but usually denied to women. [citation needed]

III. The responsibility of a local church

A. Shepherding and protecting the flock (John 10:12)

B. Confronting sin (Galatians 6:1-3)

C. Church discipline—if you have cases where your department has practiced Matthew 18:15-16, please document that you have followed scriptural guidelines and then inform Sean in writing, and he will determine if it is time to involve the Deacon Member Care and Restoration Committee.

IV. Initial protocols when abuse is revealed

Reporting abuse: It is crucial that consent to report be obtained from the abused party before reporting since it is considered unethical to report abuse in the State of Florida without the consent of the abused. If there is imminent danger (see #16), 911 should be called even without

informed consent. Keeping the above in mind, we lean toward reporting and urging abused parties to report. (FBC policy and procedures manual)

If there is uncertainty about how to proceed with any report of abuse, please convene a “counsel of three,” two of which must be ministry staff members to consult with one another and make a decision. This typically could be the pastor over that area of ministry, the Pastor of Counseling and one other ministry staff member or lay counselor. (FBC policy and procedures manual)

- A. Often domestic abuse will initially present itself as a marriage counseling case. But, for any counseling where your counselee is married, be watching for red flags. In other words, any marriage case is a potential abuse case. A key red flag is anger issues.
- B. As soon as you suspect abuse, please consult with your advisor to consider whether the counseling strategy needs to be changed to separate counseling instead of marriage counseling. If your advisor is not available, then consult with the Pastor of Counseling and Discipleship.
- C. If domestic abuse is confirmed and there is imminent danger, call 911.
 - Physical assaults
 - If there are threatening verbal assaults like, “I am going to kill you,” or, “You will be sorry if you tell anyone,” please understand these also could justify a 911 call. Please remember our “counsel of three” procedure that is explained in the policy manual.
- D. If domestic abuse is confirmed but there is not imminent danger, we would like you to call the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline, but you need informed consent from the abused spouse first. The Florida Domestic Violence Hotline number is 1-800-500-1119.
- E. A call to DCF (1-800-962-2873) is necessary if children have ever witnessed violence but may also be necessary if there is a history of physical or verbal sin and children are in the home. If it was a verbal assault, then talk to your advisor and possibly use the “counsel of three” rule.
- F. Get the facts. We need documentation for the sake of the counselee. This is necessary in case she needs help in a custody battle to protect the children. Facts are also necessary for lovingly confronting the abuser by the church as we follow the Matthew 18:15-17 process.
 - On this date, at this time, this, this and this occurred, and these people were present.
 - What has been the history? How long has this been going on? What have been other occurrences?
 - What led up to this?

- G. Develop a safety plan with the abused. Please see the safety plan that is in our policy manual. Part of this safety plan, especially if there has been physical abuse, is getting the abused to a safe house. Duval County has Hubbard House as an option as well. Hubbard House may provide legal services pro bono.
- H. When it becomes clear that you have a domestic abuse situation, please inform church security.
- I. Contact whoever oversees counseling at your campus to arrange for a safe house. We have homes available for housing a single individual or also a mother with children. In addition, we have homes available on a moment's notice and also long-term up to two months. You will not be told who these loving individuals are or where the homes are located. It is imperative that these homes be kept on a strict need-to-know basis.

Walking alongside a Victim of Domestic Abuse

Considerations/Questions to Ask the Victim before She Reports:

- The wife should call 911. If we call for her, it could put her in imminent danger.
- Has she made a Safety Plan? If not, work with her on this.
 - If she has one, asked to see it and compare it with the counseling office safety plan to make sure nothing is missed.
- Does she currently feel safe? It is important to demonstrate your concern for her safety.
- Are the children safe? Has he harmed them? Are they around when the attacks come? Often, the children are in bed, and the wife believes they do not know about the abuse and/or believes he would not harm them.
- Children in the home bring another layer of reporting.

Lessons Learned When Children Are in the Home:

- When husbands have a history of domestic violence, children need to know they can and should call 911 when there is a domestic violence event.
- It is not uncommon for the husband to be arrested but then bond out the same day.
- The husband may promise to attend counseling if the wife will drop the injunction or restraining order but then not follow through once the injunction is dropped.
- When DCF is involved, they (DCF) will counsel not to drop injunctions/restraining orders and can require close friends or near-of-kin to sign a contract stating that if they know the wife has contact or goes back to husband, they are to call DCF.
- Even when the husband moves out and the wife changes the locks, she still has to be cautious. An example: the husband was able to have a key made and continued to come to her home, sneaking in late and continuing his abuse.
- The wife needs to hear the truth that she does not need to be a slave to her husband's sin, which includes participating in his sin, as well as enabling him to continue in his sin. Scriptures to help emphasize these truths include Romans 6; Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1-7; 6:10-20; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Timothy 5:22 (not share in other people's sin).
- Children are aware of what is going on. The oldest was waking up in the middle of the night to stay near her door, worried her mother was in danger.
- As counselors we have the responsibility to report abuse. The state can hold us as counselors liable, and they could also charge the wife with negligence and endangerment, including taking the children away, if she stays in an abusive situation. Even though the children have never been in danger, the state considers their mental state.
 - It is important to share this information and our obligation to report with the wife, so she understands the seriousness of the situation.
- When moving the wife and children to a safe house, all phones, vehicles, computers, and other devices that could have a tracing app placed on them need to be left behind. This may mean leaving with only a few clothes and toiletries.
- The wife may be impacted financially and need help with a rental car, plus processing her financial situation, if the husband empties their bank accounts.

Issues of Domestic Abuse: Counseling the Abuser
Rev. John Blount

The Heart of the Counselor of an Abuser

Warning:

Abusive men are skilled manipulators

They are practiced liars, deniers, blamers and intimidators

Creating confusion is their way of shaping a narrative, influencing others, and directing attention away from themselves

They motivate others through a variety of skills: threat, volatility, emotional ploy, flattery, compliment.

They have lived by these skills since childhood or teens.

Their behaviors are deep-rooted, effective, and will keep a counselor off-balance / off-focus.

Their aim is to control the outcome.

They are driven and determined to win.

Counseling an abuser will be some of the most challenging counseling you will ever do.

Statistics indicate that the great majority of abusers will not change. Those that do will do so very slowly, over a long period of intensive counseling (years), with many reversions to their abusive manipulative, controlling norm.

The process of counseling an abuser will take a significant toll on the biblical counselor.

So why counsel an abusive man?

For the sake of his soul

For the sake of his wife & family

For the sake of God's glory and the gospel

The Counselor's preparation for counseling must include:

Reliance on God's wisdom, discernment, and truth (Prayer)

Awareness of and attention to the counselee's patterns of behavior (Sin patterns)

Confidence in God's truth to stand against the deceitfulness of sin (Word of God)

Denounce your own hubris / bias / unfounded judgments / 'reading between the lines'

A rigorous practice of assessing every session with a biblical (not emotional) filter

Loving compassion for a person captured by sin

(Perhaps) A biblically astute co-counselor or observer to debrief with after each session

The Heart of the Abusive Counselee

Why have they come to you for counsel?

Court Order?

Threat of Wife Leaving?

Fix his Marriage (wife)?

Desire to Personally Change?

What impacts have his actions had on his wife & family?

- Listen for blame shifting, ‘a misunderstanding’, denying or minimizing facts
- Listen for diversion, storytelling, judgment, condemning of others, laying fault on spouse
- Listen for honesty, admission of guilt, sorrow, shame about their behavior
- Listen for humble request for help to change himself

What is his view of God and God’s Word as his authority for living?

- Listen for dismissiveness, lip-service, biblical error
- Listen for arrogant boasting of Bible knowledge
- Listen for reverent acknowledgment of God as His authority
- Listen for personal conviction of sinfulness

What is his vision of manhood?

- Listen for ‘success’, admiration, achieving manly feats (sports, hobbies, business)
- Listen for entitlement, expectations of respect, being served, control (money, leisure, wife, kids)
- Listen for serving others, caring, protecting, leading
- Listen for honoring God, loving, self-giving

What is his vision of womanhood?

- Listen for complaint, making light of women, derogatory / dismissiveness
- Listen for service to him (admiration, sex, housework, kids), objection to her working
- Listen for contributing to support of family (money, kids), wanting a play-friend
- Listen for honor, respect, admiration, encouragement of her

A Biblical Process of Counseling Change in the Heart of an Abuser

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Awareness of his ways | (1 John 1:5) | |
| 2. Admission of the hurtfulness of his ways | (1 John 1:6-7) | |
| 3. Identification of his motives for his ways | (James 4:1-3) | |
| 4. Confession of the sinfulness of his ways | (1 John 1:8-10) | |
| 5. Turning from his ways | (1 John 2:1-6) | |
| 6. Apologizing for his ways | (Matthew 5:23-24) | |
| 7. Making amends for his ways | (Matthew 5:25-26) | |
| 8. Accepting the consequences of his ways | (Luke 19:8-9) | |
| 9. Releasing others from all blame he has cast on them as the cause of his ways | | |
| (Matthew 7:1-5) | | |
| 10. Fully accepting the blame for his ways | | (Luke 18:10-14) |
| 11. Refusing to minimize the damage of his ways | | (Matthew 18:23-34) |
| 12. Relinquishing all demand of forgiveness from those he has hurt | | (1 Timothy 1:15-17) |
| 13. Replacing his ways with loving ways | | (Colossians 3:5-14) |
| 14. Expending life-long effort and energy to personal heart change | | (2 Peter 1:3-7) |
| 15. Inviting regular accountability for his ways going forward | | (Galatians 6:1-3) |

Systematic and rigorous progress through this biblical process is the means God has provided for the heart change of an abuser. In this process the power of God can transform an abusive man, formerly conformed to sin and self, and renew his mind about himself, his God, his wife and family.

Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Mark 9:21–24 (ESV)

²¹ And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

Wisdom for the Counseling of an Abuser

1. Church support is essential (pastoral oversight, debriefing, ministry to the counselors)
2. Separation of the couple is essential until reconciliation can be safely pursued
3. A counseling Team should be composed of
 - a. Male counselor (for husband)
 - b. Male co-counselor / observer
 - c. Female counselor (for wife)
 - d. Church Pastor
4. The wife is to be in regular ongoing counseling while the husband is
5. Counseling Team should meet with the wife of the abuser regularly (monthly / bi-monthly)
 - a. Encourage and support her
 - b. Seek insight into the counselee
 - c. Corroborate information
 - d. Check her heart concerning reconciliation
6. Male Counselor should meet with the wife’s counselor regularly (weekly / bi-weekly)
 - a. Compare notes / expose any inconsistencies
 - b. Raise issues and questions to be addressed in counseling
 - c. Coordinate counseling objectives, resources, timing
 - d. Collaborate on making recommendations to the wife or couple

7. The Counseling Team must all agree before suggesting moving toward reconciliation
 - a. Determine appropriate steps
 - b. Develop a plan of action
 - c. Schedule supervised contacts
 - d. Conduct couple's counseling
 - e. Plan other steps toward reconciliation when appropriate

Recommended Resources:

A Biblical Counselor's Approach to Marital Abuse: Roadmap to Reunification – Ganschow and Schlacks

Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims – Darby Strickland

*Why Does He Do That: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men - Lundy Bancroft **

(*) This is not a biblical counseling resource, but offers much helpful information regarding Abusers

Theological Foundations of Marriage: The Nature and Purpose of Marriage
Dr. Heath Lambert

- I. The Nature of Marriage
 - A. Marriage as a contract

 - B. Marriage is a covenant

- II. The Elements of Marriage
 - A. Leaving

 - B. Cleaving

 - C. One-Flesh

- III. The Participants in Marriage
 - A. The nature of the marital relationship
 - 1. What is egalitarianism?

 - 2. What is complementarianism?

 - B. The role of the husband

 - C. The role of the wife

Enjoying Intimacy
Sean Perron

What does God think about intimacy in marriage? What does he have to say about sex?

Hebrews 13:4

Ephesians 5:3–4

The ultimate purpose is to magnify God.

Main point: Sex is full of gospel symbolism. God created sex to demonstrate exclusive commitment, intimate union, passionate pursuit and pleasure, and to make him look glorious.

1. Exclusive Commitment

- 1 Peter 1:8
- Genesis 2:1
- Hebrews 13:4
- John 3:16
- Philippians 2:5–7
- Luke 14:25–26
- Matthew 7:13–14
- 1 Corinthians 3:23

How can you nurture this exclusive commitment?

- Ephesians 5:3–4
- Proverbs 5:19
- Proverbs 5:15–23

Practical application:

- What are you doing to cultivate exclusive devotion to your spouse?
 - o Heart
 - o Head
 - o Hands

- Are you doing anything that is beyond the bounds of this exclusive covenant?
 - Flirting with others
 - Looking at pornography whether individually or together
 - Masturbating (This is a self-centered act)

2. Intimate Union

Unity and peace are reinforced in sexual intimacy.

- Ephesians 5:22-23
- Ephesians 5:28–33
- 1 Corinthians 6:16-17
- Genesis 2:24-25
- Deuteronomy 10:20
- Genesis 2:24–25
- Hebrews 6:14
- Hebrews 4:16

Practical application:

What fixes insecurity? The security of the cross.

3. Passionate Pursuit and Pleasure

- Song of Solomon 1:6
- Song of Solomon 1:8–10

Practical application:

How are you seeking to be like Jesus and lovingly and tenderly overcome any obstacles or hinderances?

- Psalm 16:11
- Zephaniah 3:17

1. Sex should be selfless, it should be a laying down of your life for the other.
 - a. What are their preferences and desires?
 - b. What do they enjoy?
2. Sex isn't just an isolated act.
3. This means that sex is more than a feeling.
4. It should be frequent and something you look forward to.

God's glory – Evangelistic Invitation – to make God look glorious.

Content for this lecture comes from *Letters to a Romantic: On Engagement* by Spencer Harmon and Sean Perron, published by P&R Publishing, 2017.

Resources:

Mahaney, C.J., and Carolyn Mahaney. *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*. Crossway, 2018.

Piper, John. *This Momentary Marriage*. Crossway, 2009.

Serving Your Spouse
Spencer Harmon

1. Fuel Serving with God's Love, Not Your Spouses

2. Shape Serving after Christ's Cross, Not Your Spouse

3. Aim Serving toward Worship, Not Your Spouse

Conflict Resolution
Dr. Ernie Baker

Help! We're in a Conflict

Introduction:

- I. The glory of God is a sure foundation for conflict resolution.
 - A. We are to do all things in life as an act of worship to the creator God of the universe.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - B. The awesomeness of God should shape the way we handle conflict.
 - Isaiah 40:11-18

Principle: Who or what is on the throne of your life?

- II. A gospel saturated mindset ruling your attitudes and actions changes the way you do conflict resolution.
 - A. The gospel and conflict resolution
 - Grace
 - Forgiveness
 - Mercy
 - B. This mindset effects our character traits and then the atmosphere of relationships (Ephesians 4:1-3).
 - Humble vs. self-centered
 - Gentle vs. harsh
 - Patient vs. irritable
 - Bearing with one another vs. intolerant

Which one do you need to work on the most to change the atmosphere of your home?

- III. Confession and forgiveness lead to restoration (and eventually rebuilding trust).
 - A. Confession – Proverbs 28:13
 - Address everyone involved (Private sin, private confession. Public sin, public confession. The confession is as broad as the offense).
 - Avoid if, but, and maybe (be sincere).
 - Admit specifically (including the heart motives as much as possible).
 - Acknowledge hurt
 - Accept the consequences

- Alter your behavior (repentance) Ephesians 4:20-24
- Ask for forgiveness

B. Granting forgiveness (Ephesians 4:30-31)

Forgiveness is a decision to give undeserved pardon based upon understanding how much you have been forgiven by the Lord.

Remember: “Bitterness is the poisonous pill we swallow hoping it will kill someone else.”

A serious question to consider—How would you like it if God treated you the way you’re treating your spouse?

IV. A strategy for having difficult conversations (Phil. 2:3-5).

What do you do when you have to confront an issue?

A servant mindset changes the way you handle tensions in relationships.

P repare (Get the log out of your own eye first)

A ffirm

U nderstand interests

Issues (turn the issues into strategic questions to answer)

Positions

Interests

The better you understand your spouses’ interests the more likely you will be to find mutually satisfying solutions.

S earch for creative solutions

E valuate options objectively and wisely

This takes discipline and is better than allowing issues to fester. What do you treasure in your heart that is keeping you from dealing with issues or is causing you to react the way you do?

- Desires for control?
- Desires for respect?
- Desires for comfort?
- Desires for approval?

Conclusion:

ACBC Marriage Specialization

Please use the below link for complete information.

<https://biblicalcounseling.com/training/specializations/marriage-counseling/>

This specialization will ground the counselor in a solid theology of marriage and family so they can effectively address problems that arise in the home.

Core Training Requirements

To receive the specialization in marriage counseling a certified member must first complete a minimum of 15 hours of instruction. This three-day conference covers the core training requirements.

Reading Requirements

To receive specialization in marriage counseling a member must complete 700 pages of reading from the following approved books:

<i>When Sinners Say I Do</i>	Dave Harvey
<i>God, Marriage, and Family</i>	Andreas Kostenberger
<i>The Exemplary Husband</i>	Stuart Scott
<i>The Excellent Wife</i>	Martha Peace
<i>Peacemaking for Families</i>	Ken Sande
<i>Solving Marriage Problems</i>	Jay Adams
<i>Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God</i>	C.J. Mahaney
<i>Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage:</i>	
<i>Critical Questions and Answers</i>	Jim Newheiser
<i>This Momentary Marriage</i>	John Piper

Examination Phase

- The second phase of specialization training will provide an opportunity for ACBC Certified Counselors to demonstrate their understanding of subject matter through an objective question exam and a written exam that contains case studies.
- In order to be cleared for the Examination Phase, you will need to log into your ACBC account and enter the Specialization Dashboard. Once in the dashboard, you can apply for specialization exam access.

Multiple Choice Exam

- This online exam contains questions from the reading and training and provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the material they have learned. The Multiple Choice is closed note/book/Bible.
- Once you successfully complete the Multiple Choice Exam, you will be granted access to the Written Exam.

Written Exam

- This exam is comprised up of in-depth case studies challenging the student in areas including content and methodology.
- The Written Exam is closed note/book.
- You may use your Bible.
- There is a \$50 fee associated with the Written Exam.