

SESSION

1

BECOMING  
ONE

## **MEMORY VERSE**

**“Therefore a man shall leave  
his father and his mother and  
hold fast to his wife, and they  
shall become one flesh.”**

**GENESIS 2:24**

*We all want to feel valued, significant, and loved. Most of us probably thought those needs would be met in marriage. While marriage can be wonderful, it can also be challenging. We want to discover the truth about marriage to experience the full life God offers us.*

*The secret, of course, is in the Word of God.*

## SESSION 1

# GROUP DISCUSSION

- Introduce yourselves to each other: Share where you work, how many children you have, etc.
- Share the story of how you met your wife and got engaged.
- What do you hope to learn during *Wisdom for Marriage*?





## SESSION 1

# NOTES FOR LEADERS

If your group is watching the video together, you can use this page to summarize the lesson afterward. However, if each person watches the video independently, you can use this page as an outline to teach the lesson when your small group gathers. By watching the videos, you can gain more insight as a leader.

### **Read Key Scripture – Matthew 22:37-39**

*...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

#### **KEY POINT**

We need the right priorities to build a strong marriage and our relationship with God is the first priority. Your first and most important neighbor is your wife.

### **Ask the Group**

- How can you put God's Word into practice this week, and what can you share with others in your group that has worked for you?

### **Read Key Scripture – Matthew 7:24-27**

*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.*

#### **KEY POINT**

The two things you need to do in order to be wise in building your relationship with your wife are to listen to God's Word and put it into practice.

### **Read Key Scripture – Genesis 2:24**

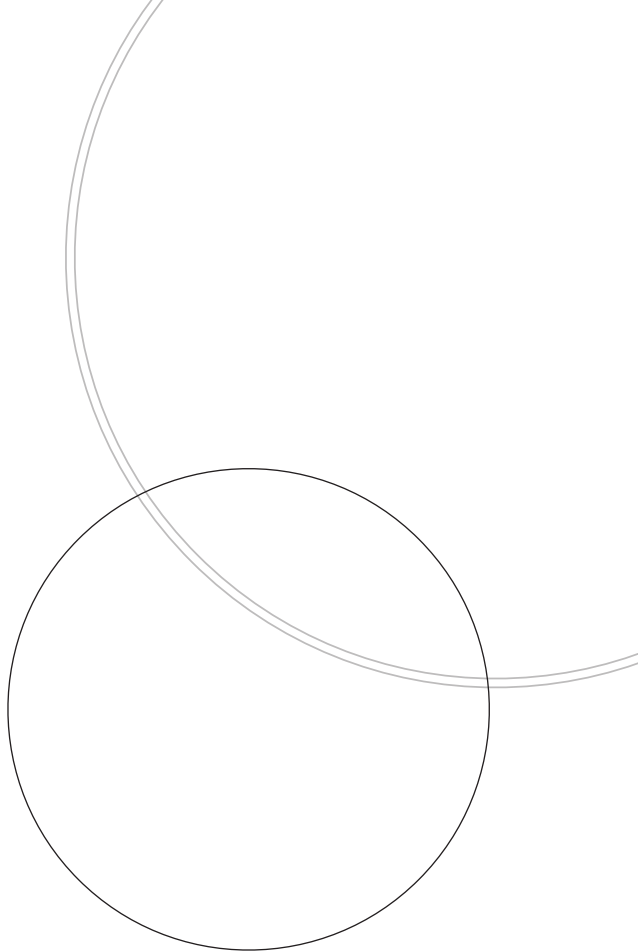
*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

#### **KEY POINT**

Being “one” in spirit, soul, and body is the goal and privilege of marriage.

### **Ask the Group**

- What does it mean to become “one” in marriage? How can you become one in spirit? What is the best way to become soulmates?



DAY 1

# THE RIGHT PRIORITIES

*I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. Please, Lord, grant me to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit in my inner being so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith. In Your name, I pray. Amen.*



## Our Story

Denise and I married at ages 19 and 22 during our university years. We were active believers in the large church near our campus and loved Jesus and the Word of God. If someone had asked us about the key priorities for building a godly home, we probably wouldn't have had a good response. Seven years into our marriage, when we hit a low point in our relationship, we learned the answer to this important question.

If we wanted a successful marriage and home, we had to prioritize our relationship with God above all else. Our marriage had to become our next priority over work and serving others. Our children were our third priority, but our marriage had to take precedence, even over our relationship with them.

It took a difficult time in our relationship to help us make God our top priority and to realize that our nearest neighbor was each other. We finally learned that just as in building a new house, we had to have a strong foundation with our priorities in the right order so that our house would stand when the storms of life came.

Our prayer is that this Bible study not only teaches you the right priorities but also gives you the Biblical wisdom and practical instruction to build a marriage and home that withstands the storms of life.



## Spend Time in God's Word

### **Priorities in Order**

When God began rebuilding our marriage, we first learned that God had to be our top priority. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-40, *"...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

As I began to put God first in my life, the rest of my priorities also became clear from the teaching of scripture. My first and most important "neighbor" is my wife, followed by my children. Then, after my family, the Bible teaches me to "make disciples" in the world through the work and the ministry God has given me.

### **The Right Foundation for Your Marriage**

Just as in building a new house, if you don't have a strong foundation when severe storms come, your house could come tumbling down! Jesus makes this principle very clear in Matthew 7:24-27, *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."*

*<sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.  
<sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”*

- What characterized the wise man’s house?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What two things do you need to do in order to be wise in building your relationship with your wife?

In this passage from Matthew 7, Jesus is speaking at the end of his powerful Sermon on the Mount. Verses 24 and 26 contain warnings about the contrast between building our lives on a rock-solid foundation versus a weak one on the sand. The call is to build our marriages on a firm foundation, like a house on a rock, but ultimately, the choice is ours. We can’t simply listen to Jesus’ words; we must also put them into practice and become doers of His Word.

The early days of our marriage were like a house built on sand. Even though we went to church every Sunday, attended a weekday Bible study, and had many Christian friends, we did not “live out our Christian faith” at home. And it got us into trouble.



God's Word is powerful and is the best marriage manual you will ever read. It gives clear instructions for men and women in all cultures and societies. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* But you have to read it and apply it to your everyday life.

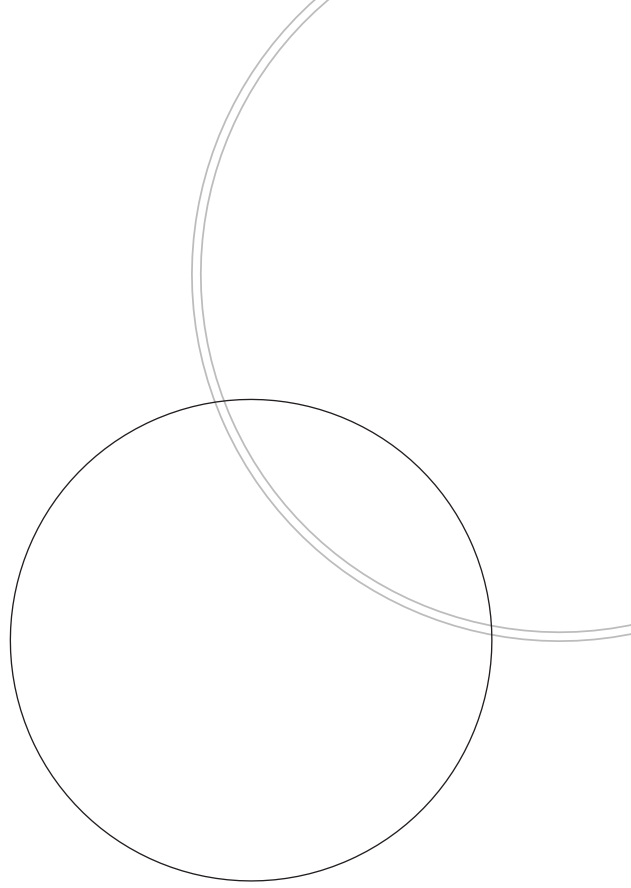
The most important advice we could give anyone is to get your priorities in order, make God your number one focus, and put your marriage above other earthly relationships and pursuits. The purpose of this Bible study is to get you into His Word so you can put into practice God's principles for building your marriage and experience all that God intends for it to be.

A black and white photograph of two wedding rings resting on a wooden surface. The rings are positioned diagonally, with one ring slightly overlapping the other. The lighting creates soft shadows and highlights the texture of the wood and the metal of the rings.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



Commit to studying God's Word each day. Use this study to get started. Use the Group Discussion questions and the Date Night assignments to have meaningful time with your wife each week to build your marriage. Be open to all the Lord wants to teach you through His Word.



DAY 2

# THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

*Lord, Your Word says that everyone who hears Your words and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. I pray that You will make me a wise man and give me the grace to obey Your Word concerning my marriage. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.*



## Our Story

Denise and I didn't know much about marriage when we got engaged. We thought marriage would be simple because we were both Christians and very much in love. We took secular marriage classes at the university we attended and learned some basic things about household finances and childbirth, but not the key biblical and relational truths we needed. We desperately needed help to build our marriage.



## Spend Time in God's Word

Ephesians 5:22-33 explains the meaning of marriage, which is to be a picture to the world of an unbreakable covenant relationship. We see it in the relationship of Christ and His Bride, the Church, and reflected in the best earthly marriages. In verse 25, Paul tells us, *“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”*

The Message, a paraphrased version of the Bible, states verse 32 like this: *“This is a huge mystery and I don’t pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the Church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her...”*

A husband might say, “Do you want to see how Christ loves the Church? Then look at how I love my wife.” A wife might say, “Do you want to see how the Church respects Christ? Look at how I honor and respect my husband.” Our marriages are to be a picture to the world of how much Christ loves the Church and how much the Church respects and honors Christ. As much as I love my wife and our marriage, it will someday end when we go to heaven, but our relationship with the Lord Jesus is an unbreakable covenant. rooted in unconditional, sacrificial love that will last forever.

Understanding the “big picture” of what our marriages mean and represent is helpful, but I have a question. If my marriage is “an unbreakable covenant relationship, rooted in unconditional love,” why is it such a struggle sometimes? Why do we bicker

and argue? To answer this question, we need to understand some fundamentals of how God created us as human beings.

## **Getting Our Basic Needs Met**

God created two basic needs in each of us, which are true in every culture and people group. The first primary need of humans is security, knowing we are loved and accepted. Both men and women need love and acceptance, especially from families, friends, and co-workers.

The second basic need, significance, is vital for both sexes, but men often prioritize getting this need met. To prove my point, after they introduce themselves to another man, many men will ask, “What do you do?” Knowing we have meaning and purpose is a great need for men, and we tend to get our significance from our work and are tempted to make that our focus at the expense of our wives and children.

Many couples enter marriage with high expectations of getting these personal needs met by the person they marry. She is thinking about security: “Oh, I’ve finally met a man who will *love me* the way I was meant to be loved.” While he is thinking about significance: “Oh, I’ve finally met a woman who will *respect me* the way I was meant to be respected.” This is why so many marriages fail. We look to our spouses to fulfill our basic needs (security and significance) when only God can truly meet them.

Jesus said in John 15:5, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing.”* When we draw life from Christ Jesus, allowing Him to meet our personal needs, we can pour His love and life into our wives and children.

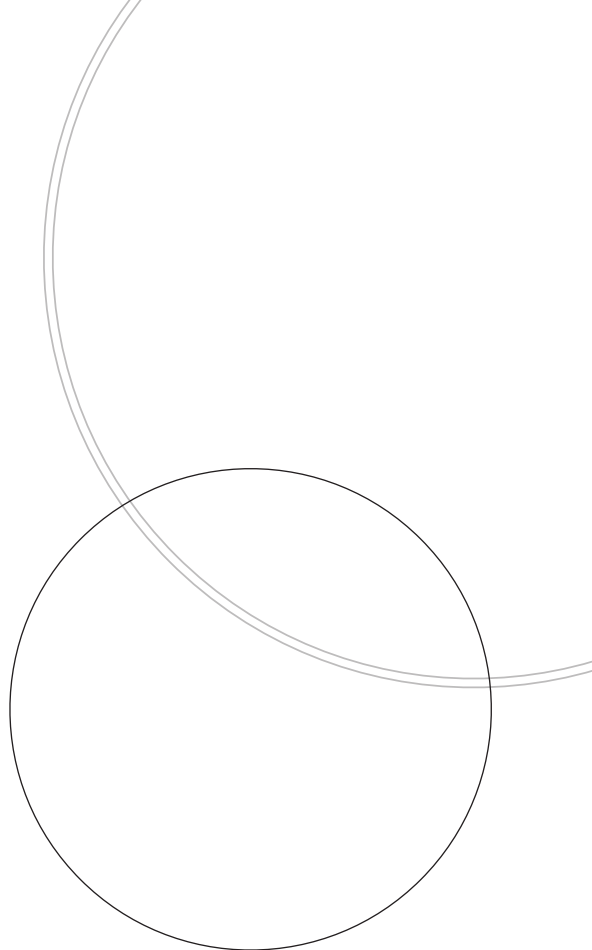




PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



The best way to love your wife is to get your priorities in order. Put God first with time spent every day in prayer and Bible study. Then make your wife the number one priority on planet Earth. She is more important than your kids, your work, or your hobbies, and she knows it if she's not. Send her a message of love with the way you schedule time to be with her.



DAY 5

## THE GOAL OF MARRAIGE: ONENESS

*Lord God, thank You for forming me and breathing into me the breath of life. Your Word says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Father, show me how to receive the gift of the beautiful wife You have brought to me and how to love her deeply. In Jesus' name. Amen.*



## Our Story

During the early days of my career, I realized the significance of setting goals. The organization I was working for made it a top priority to create written goals every year. However, as a newlywed husband, I didn't fully understand that bringing goal-setting into my family life and having a clear objective for my marriage would help us rise above petty squabbles. It was only after I learned to establish a biblically-based goal for our relationship that we started building the right kind of marriage.

# Spend Time in God's Word



## **The Goal of Marriage: To Become One**

Marriage was God's idea from the beginning. Genesis 2 tells us: *"<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

*<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."<sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man..."*

God created Adam, and for the first time in creation, something wasn't "good." Adam had a need the Garden couldn't fulfill. God promised to give Adam a "suitable helper," and, strangely, God brought the animals to him. God knew those animals weren't the solution to man's problem of loneliness. Adam must have realized the animals were all in pairs, yet he was alone. So, God created beautiful Eve, his lover and companion in life.

Genesis 2:24.

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Look at the stated goal of marriage in this verse: to become one, uniting a man and woman spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Two become one. They each separate from their

families of origin and begin a new nuclear family, with you, the husband, as the new head.

Sometimes, “leaving” your parents and “cleaving” to your wife can be a problem. You love and honor your parents but have created a new family unit, and your marriage takes priority. You will need to establish boundaries with your parents and her parents, welcoming their counsel but making the final decisions yourselves.

### **Spirit Oneness**

God brought the two of you together as one. Now, you’re one in spirit, one in soul, and one in body. So, what is spirit oneness? It’s when both partners are connected to God in an intimate relationship, having their need for security and significance met by Him. In spiritual oneness, you come to the Lord together, as a couple, with humility and pray:

*“Lord, neither one of us can minister to each other apart from You. Only You can ultimately minister to our basic needs for security and significance through Your Word and Your Spirit. We come to You to be filled so that we might serve each other. In Your name, we pray. Amen.”*

Perhaps you haven’t taken the first important step to become a believer and follower of Jesus. You can’t have spirit oneness with your mate if you are not yet in a relationship with God. Maybe you have been to church since childhood but have never made a personal decision to accept His Lordship over your life. There is no time like today.

If you're ready, say a prayer like this: *"Lord Jesus, I humble myself before You. I ask You to forgive my sin. Thank You for dying on the Cross to pay the death penalty for all my sins. I now accept Your forgiveness. I am asking You to be the Lord of my life and take over the controls. I surrender myself into Your hands. Thank You for Your love that will never leave me. Today, I am Your child. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

Once you make that decision, you are free to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and your mate as you love yourself. When the two of you seek God with all of your hearts and join together to bow before Him in worship and obedience, you will experience a unity of heart and mind you never imagined. As believers in Jesus Christ married to each other, we can experience life on a higher plane in spirit oneness that most of the world only dreams about.

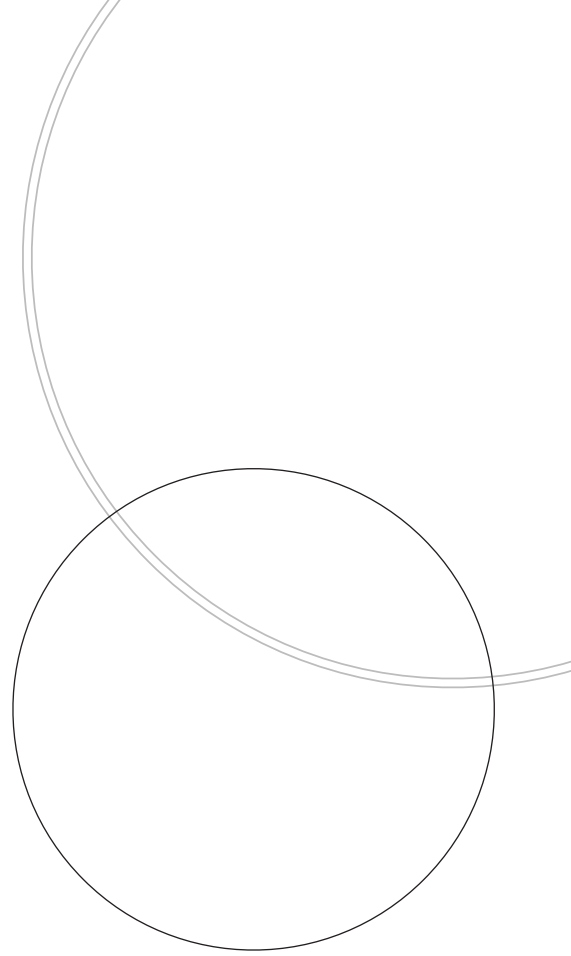




PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



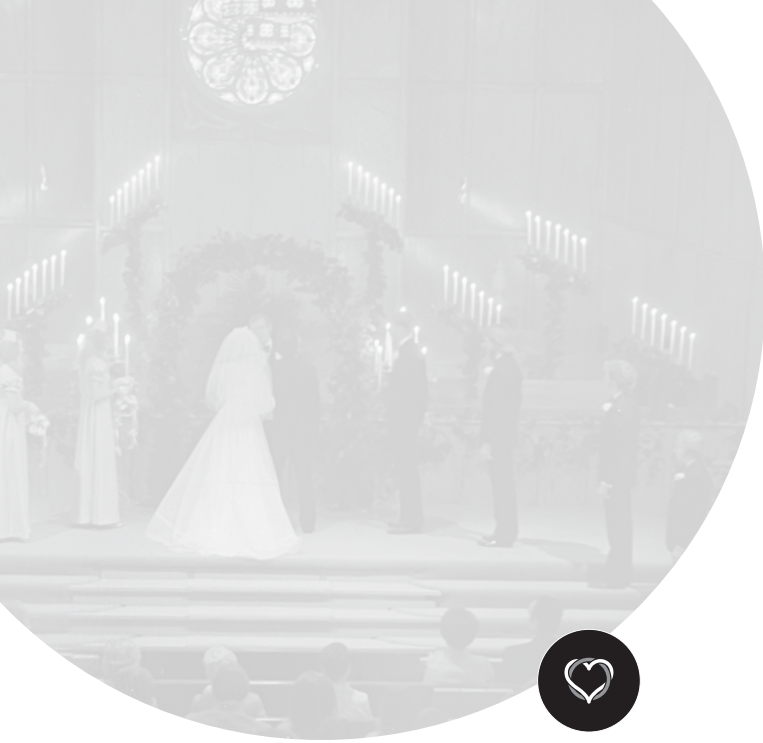
One of the best ways to build spirit oneness in your marriage is to pray together regularly. Make this a priority. Even if you only have five minutes, it will make a big impact on your marriage!



DAY 4

# THE GOAL OF MARRIAGE: SOUL ONENESS

*Father, Your Word says many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. Please expand my capacity to love my wife with this unshakeable, unconditional love expressed in scripture. Amen.*



## Our Story

One of the main reasons I wanted to marry Denise was because we were such good friends. We could stay up half the night at the university where we met, talking about everything and nothing! While we were dating, we enjoyed everything we had in common, but after we were married, it seemed all our differences caused conflict because now, we shared the same apartment, towels, and toothpaste!

Our families of origin were really different, and after we got married, we both reverted to “home life” as we knew it. We struggled with resentment and anger because the other person wouldn’t see it “my” way! Then, because of the arguments, we both felt insecure and insignificant. We had to learn that to be true soulmates, we needed to learn to compromise and to serve each other.

# Spend Time in God's Word



## Learn to be a Soulmate

When you are “filled up” with Christ's love and significance, you can pour that love and significance into your wife's heart. This is called “soul oneness.” We minister to our wife's heart needs through the power of Jesus. We will explore soul oneness today and discover more on this subject in the coming weeks. Let's begin by looking at the origin of marriage.

Genesis 2:21-22.

*So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.<sup>22</sup> And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.*

The first Adam shed his blood for the creation of his bride. The second Adam, Jesus (see I Corinthians 15:45), shed His blood to create His Bride, the Church. The first Adam's side was pierced for the creation of his bride. The second Adam's side was pierced for the creation of His Bride (John 19:34).

Can you see the tremendous impact of this event? Man needed a suitable helper. God cut the man and pulled his “helper” out of his own body. They are one because they began as one. They are two parts of a single whole. “*What therefore God has joined together let no man separate*” (Matthew 19:6b). God provided the perfect soulmate for man.



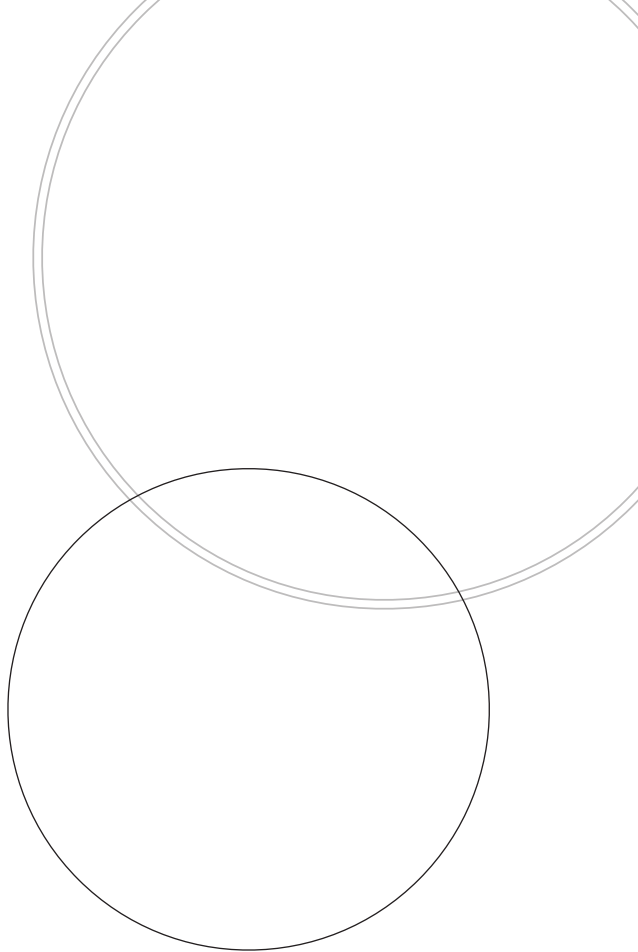


PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



Doing things together is one of the best ways to build soul oneness in your marriage. Maybe you both like tennis or some other sport. Try simple things like taking a walk together and watching and discussing the same movie or TV program. Discuss what you enjoy doing together, and then make a plan to enjoy them with your soulmate.





DAY 5

# THE GOAL OF MARRIAGE: BODY ONENESS

*Father, I commit our sex life into Your hands. Bless our intimacy and bring us together as one. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# Spend Time in God's Word



Genesis 2:25 tells us, *“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”*

- Why were Adam and Eve not ashamed of their nakedness?

To say that we live in a sex-saturated culture is an understatement. It confuses believers who want a love life as God intended. Sex is to be enjoyed in a committed marriage covenant relationship. Marital sex is what the Bible describes as becoming “one flesh.” There is no shame attached to two naked bodies designed to connect in the most profound, most intimate way. So, we know sex is good. But how does biblical “one flesh” differ from R and X-rated movie versions of sex?

Biblical oneness for couples has three parts: spirit, soul, and body oneness. Body oneness is the natural outcome of an intimate and vital marriage relationship, which comes from having spirit and soul oneness, where you pray together as a couple and minister to one another out of the richness of Christ's love. From this, body oneness flows naturally and wonderfully. It's legitimate physical pleasure with rich personal meaning.<sup>1</sup> This is the way God intended sex to be.

Your intimate love life in marriage is critical to building oneness with your wife. In their book, *The Meaning of*

*Marriage*, Tim and Kathy Keller write, “Indeed, sex is perhaps the most powerful God-created way to help you give your entire self to another human being. Sex is God’s appointed way for two people to reciprocally say to one another, ‘I belong completely, permanently, and exclusively to you.’ [Sex] is your covenant renewal service.”<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the enemy tells lies to us about this beautiful truth. It’s what Larry Crabb, in his book *The Marriage Builder*, calls “Jungle Sex” — physical pleasure without personal meaning. It’s Satan’s counterfeit of God’s gift, using physical pleasure to relieve personal pain.<sup>4</sup> Some men try to get their sexual needs met through illicit sex or pornography, even to the point of addiction. It is a destructive secret sin that is not only in the world but also within the Church. If this struggle is your “thorn in the flesh,” you will need the power of God to be set free. Let me encourage you from 2 Corinthians 12:9a, “*But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’*” Come to Jesus and confess your sins, admit your weakness, and get help.

Receiving professional help is a priority, along with a dedicated prayer warrior who will battle in prayer with you. Thankfully, today, there are resources available to believers who sincerely long to be free. Jesus wants to demonstrate His power through His all-sufficient grace in healing, redemption, restoration, and deliverance.

The Bible isn’t shy about instructing us in the intimate part of marriage. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, “*The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her*

*husband. <sup>4</sup> For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”*

The sexual relationship between you and your wife will be the lab for you to practice the ultimate in your God-given roles in marriage. Your part is to sacrificially love and lead your wife, giving yourself to her in selfless devotion. Your wife’s role is to sacrificially follow you, her husband, submitting herself to you. For sex to be as good as it can get, both partners submit themselves to these roles, emptying themselves of their selfish desires to fulfill the needs of the other. The husband reigns in his passions to arouse her desire, while the wife opens herself freely to his advances, exploring the wonders of the holy union of their hearts and bodies.

Some husbands are selfishly demanding. The more demanding a husband becomes, the more tightly his wife closes herself to him, and the battle ensues. The wall between them grows by the day. In some marriages, it is the reverse. The wife waits for the husband to initiate sex, but he does not come to her as often as she desires. She begins to feel unloved and unattractive.

Marriage is a dance where both partners must adjust to each other’s rhythm. There will be give and take in all aspects of marriage, especially regarding sex. If it’s been weeks or months since you’ve had sex with your wife, something is

wrong. Don't wait to get help. See a medical doctor and seek help from a biblical counselor. You may need to see a Christian sex therapist. When you discover the problem, investing time, money, and expertise into your sex life is the best investment you can make. It's really important to get this part right.

God knows and cares about this most intimate, holy aspect of your lives. The Heavenly Father created you both for pleasure and deep emotional connection, and the Holy Spirit is a wonderful counselor. Seek His wisdom and guidance and follow where He leads.

There are great resources from Christian authors Clifford and Joyce Penner to help you navigate an intimate relationship that will make your marriage sizzle.

<sup>1</sup> Larry Crabb, *The Marriage Builder*, Zondervan, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Tim and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, Dutton, 2011.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



Good resources for learning more about healing from sexual sin:

*Unwanted: How Sexual Brokenness Reveals Our Way to Healing*,  
Jay Stringer, NavPress, 2018

The website and its resources at [X3watch.com](http://X3watch.com)

The website and its resources at Men of Valor Ministries  
([movministries.org](http://movministries.org))

Find time to talk about sex when you are not in the bedroom, and you can both be calm, collected, and reasonable. Express your concerns to each other and be willing to listen. Both of you will need to compromise for a sex life that is satisfying for both of you.



## SESSION 1

# DATE NIGHT



**Touch:** Kiss passionately for 20 seconds.



**Talk:** What is the most fun we've ever had together?



**Tell:** Both of you share your favorite character traits of your mate, such as kindness, humor, organization, or peacemaking.



**To Remember:** What was the best part of your first date together?



**Thanksgiving:** Thank God for your mate's special talents.