

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 1 – “What Did You Expect?” & Chapter 2 – “Reasons to Continue”

Overview – The Wrong Path

Do you remember everything you had to do as you planned for your wedding day? All the countless hours you spent going over the schedule, the phone calls to the different vendors, the dress shopping, the food and cake tasting, the countless questions and decisions, the wedding favors, who’s in and who’s out for the guest list, and all the money spent to make your wedding day, your “dream” day.

Can you see the problems newlyweds face from the beginning of their marriage? If their “dream” wedding is the best day they will have as a couple, it is quite a bleak future for their marriage. Another problem is the establishing of unrealistic expectation that romance and fairy tales is what keeps the sizzle in a marriage. Unfortunately all married couples know that the sizzle becomes a chill at times. Romance is not the foundation for a marriage.

Do you remember what some of your expectations were when you first got married? Maybe you expected that you would always have those deep and lengthy conversations like the ones you had while dating? Exquisite meals using your new china and flatware as you sit together for every dinner? Learning and growing your relationships with Jesus as you gathered for Bible studies, read books, spent hours in prayer together? Money problems were in the rear view mirror?

But as the honeymoon became a more distant memory something happened, you found yourself thinking, “Is this what marriage is all about? What happened to us? What happened to me?”

These are the problems that have led many marriages down the wrong path as soon as the newlyweds took their first step down the aisle after being christened as husband and wife. In the first two chapters of the book, these issues will be addressed and we’ll be given another path to take, a path that will lead to a marriage of unity, understanding, and love.

A word of encouragement for married couples . . .

Establishing and growing a God honoring marriage will take a lot of work. As you and your spouse embark on this adventure you already may be hesitant about opening doors that have led to major arguments in the past, you’re thinking, “What’s going to change now? Why go through all the trouble this study will bring if we’re going to end up mad at each other again?” As we will find out in greater detail, we can be encouraged that things will change because of God’s grace found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is grace that will transform your marriage so that you may individually and as a married couple be the people God had created you to be!

So be encouraged and remember that spectacular sunsets are often seen after a storm. You will go through storms in this study if you and your spouse take it seriously, but you will also know that you will also see your marriage grow and flourish in ways that you never could have expected.

Enjoy the journey, husband and wife!

A word of encouragement for singles . . .

There may have been thoughts when you heard the small groups were going through the topic of marriage, such as, “Why go through this if it’s going to make me want to be married more?” “I’m not planning on getting married any time soon or ever.” “It’s going to make me feel like an outsider.”

First, thank you for going through this study on marriage because this study can also be applied to all relationships and friendships. Yes, marriage between a husband and wife is unique, like no other relationship, but the truths that build up a strong marriage are the same in building up strong friendships.

Remember as you love Christ with all your heart, your mind, and all your strength that it is seen in how you love your neighbors! Look forward to how God will use you to become a better loving son or daughter, a more loving friend or aunty, a more God focused uncle or roommate or a more patient co-worker or church member.

Enjoy the journey, lover of Christ!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapters 1 and 2 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes from Chapters 1 & 2

- “Unrealistic expectations always lead to disappointment.” (16)
- “Knowing that you are living between the already and the not yet tells you where you are located in God’s story of redemption.”(18)
- “At the foundational level, the difficulties in our marriages do not first come because we don’t love one another enough. They happen because we don’t love God enough; and because we don’t love God enough we don’t treat one another with the kind of love that makes marriages work.” (36)

Learning God’s Truths

Note: For singles, as you go through the questions you may try and answer the question as it relates to marriage in general or you may try and substitute the word “marriage” with “friendships.”

For married couples and singles: There will also be separate questions that will be designated in the study.

Know Where We Are in God's Story

1. Read Tripp's quote about living in the middle of the already and not yet, "It is hard to live in the middle, but that is exactly where we live. We live in a world that is still sadly and terribly broken. Your marriage will not escape its brokenness. We live with flawed people. Your marriage will not be protected from those flaws. When you start unpacking what life is really like between the already and the not yet, you gain perspectives that are enormously helpful for understanding the things you need to face if you want a marriage that is wholesome and healthy in the eyes of God." (19) How do these words shatter the popular notion that, "they lived happily ever after"? Does this truth encourage or discourage you in your marriage?

Know the Dangers of Unrealistic Expectations and Wrong Foundations in Marriage

1. For marrieds: Write down some unrealistic expectations you had or still hold to in marriage.

2. For singles: Write down the expectations you have for marriage and for a potential marriage partner.

3. What are things that couples make as their foundation for their marriage?

If you put down Jesus Christ or God, why do many Christian couples still struggle in their marriages?

Know the Value of Realistic Expectations

1. Fill in the blanks for the three realistic expectations Scripture gives.

1. Realistic expectation #1:

You are conducting your marriage in a _____ world.
(21-23)

2. Realistic expectation #2:

You are a _____ married to a _____. (23-25)

3. Realistic expectation #3:

God is _____, powerful, and _____.
(25-26)

Know Worship is the Only Foundation for a Marriage
“Sturdy horizontal love always begins vertically.”(36)

1. Vertical love with Jesus Christ is a must in order for a husband and wife to horizontally love one another. What happens if a couple does not start with the vertical relationship? On the flip side, what happens if a couple does start with the vertical relationship in their marriage?

1. Tripp writes, “Worship that gives you sturdy marital love and a reason to continue will flow out of three ways that you must worship God” (36).

See pages 36-39 to fill in the table below.

3 Ways You Must Worship God: A marriage of love, unity, and understanding will flow out of a daily worship of God as . . .	Define this characteristic of God.	How should your worship of God in this attribute play a part in your marriage?
#1:		
#2:		
#3:		

8. Have you ever wondered why Paul wrote what he did in Galatians 5:14? It is an interesting answer for he writes, "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" On page 36, how does Paul Tripp make sense of this verse? What does this truth have to do with marriage?

Applying God's Truths

Note: For married couples . . .

- Please plan a time (around 15-30 minutes) for you discuss the following questions without distractions (kids, television, texts, phone calls, etc.).
- Make a commitment to not argue or blame.
- Know that God is with your marriage and you are allowing Him to renew and grow it!

For married couples to do together:

1. Pray that God will continue to cultivate a heart of humility within each of you.
2. Share with your spouse what you wrote down for question #2.
3. If you took a step back from your marriage, what would you say the foundation of your marriage is?
4. What keeps you (individually) and you (as a couple) from worshiping God? How has it negatively impacted your marriage?
5. Pray that you will be worshipers of God and that Jesus Christ will be at the center of your marriage.

For singles:

1. Pray that God will continue to cultivate a heart of humility within you.
2. Prayerfully go over what you wrote down for question #3. What do they say in comparison to the three realistic expectations found in question #5?
3. What keep you from worshiping God? How has it negatively impacted a relationship? Pick one that is upon your heart (a father or mother, a friend, a neighbor).
4. Pray that you will be a worshiper of God and that Jesus Christ will be at the center of your life and relationships.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“You will only find your reasons to continue by looking up.” (40)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 3 – “Whose Kingdom?” & Chapter 4 – “Day by Day”

Overview – “The First Time”

Do you remember your “firsts” in marriage? Your first time purchasing a big ticket item together? Your first time waking up together (what a surprise, of course in a good way)? Your first time decorating your home? Your first time cooking that special meal together?

It was exciting. The big things and even the everyday was exciting because you were doing it together. But after a few months the newness of everything wears off and it just becomes normal everyday life. Unfortunately our marriages fall into this pattern as well and if we are not aware we slowly begin taking for granted our spouse. Our words become curt. Our sighs become more pronounced. Our rolling of the eyes becomes normal. Our prayers for each other become less frequent. Each day of incrementally taking one another for granted results in a couple being light years apart from one another decades later, even though they live and see each other every single day.

Tripp writes, “We must have a ‘day-by-day’ approach to everything in our lives, and if we do, we will choose our bricks carefully and place them strategically.” Remember as Christians we have hope to rebuild our marriages and to bring couples back together. The reason for our hope is God’s grace. Remember that it is God’s grace and His grace only that will renew your marriage and grow you in ways you never could have imagined.

Reading Assignment

Please read chapters 3 and 4 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes from Chapters 3 & 4

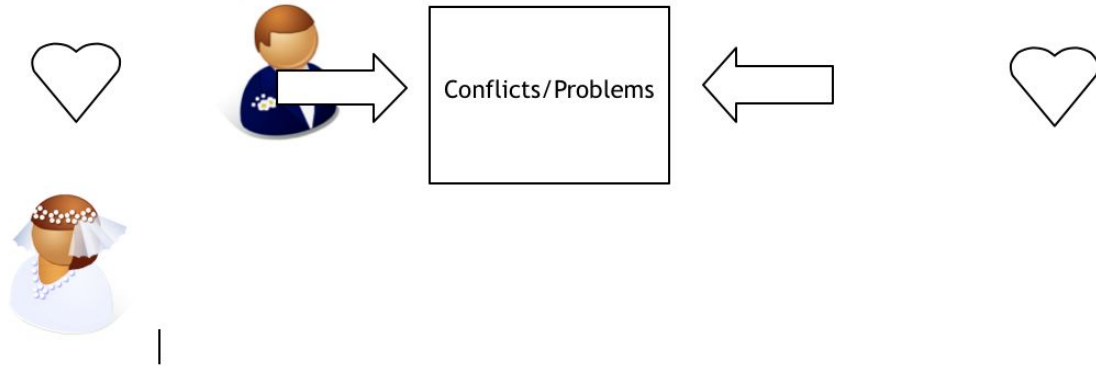
- “Marriage is a beautiful thing that only reaches what it was designed to be through the methodology of a painful process.” (52)
- “The reconciliation of a marriage must be a lifestyle, not just the response you have when things go bad.” (57)
- “We must have a ‘day-by-day’ approach to everything in our lives, and if we do, we will choose our bricks carefully and place them strategically.” (58)

Learning God’s Truths

1. Take a look at the two illustrations on the differences in a self-serving versus a God serving marriage.

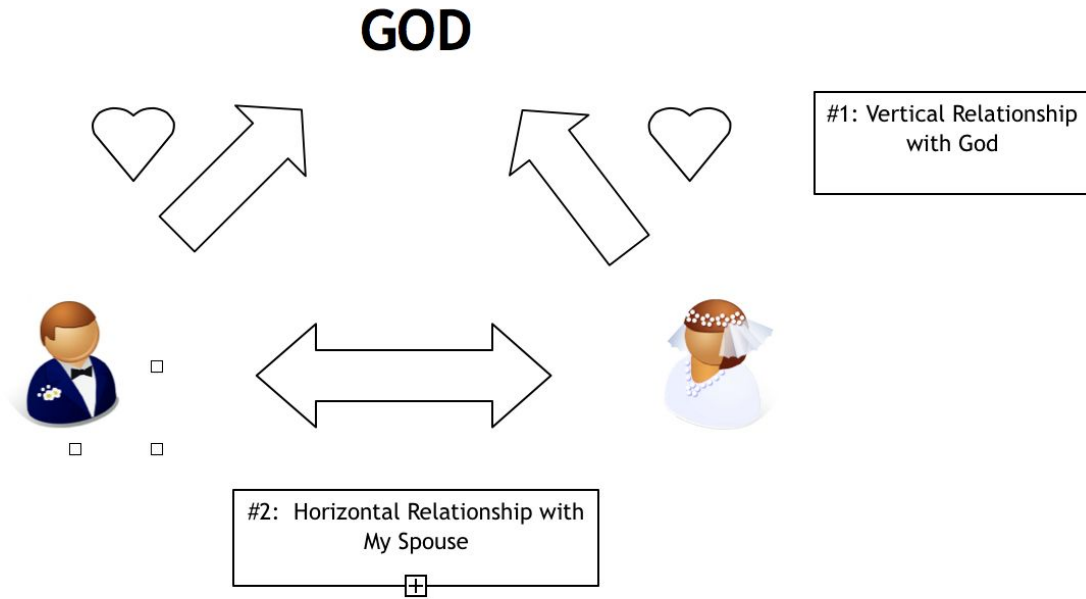
Illustration #1 of a Self-worshipping marriage:

GOD



Chapter 3 sheds light on why couples have conflicts and problems. Thinking back in particular to chapter 3 and also to chapters 1 and 2, use the illustration above and write down the reasons for the couples' conflicts and disagreements.

Illustration #2 of a God worshipping marriage:



“All of the horizontal battles are the fruit of a deeper war.” (46) What is the “deeper war?” How does “it” cause conflicts and arguments in a marriage? See pages 47-50. How does addressing “it” help in the horizontal relationship within a marriage?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. What does God’s Word have to say about who we are and the only way for our marriages to be what they should be?

2. Why is laziness the sinful fruit of self-centeredness? Why is laziness so detrimental for a marriage?

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3. To counter our sinful selves we must be reminded that Christ is in us as Christians and we have been given a different mentality to live by. There are three provided in chapter 4

1. #1: You must live in your marriage with a harvest mentality.

Think back at your marriage and write down one "fruit" from your harvest in your marriage.

2. #2: You must live in your marriage with an investment mentality.

List three things that you value in your marriage.

3. #3: You must live in your marriage with a grace mentality.

Write down two ways grace can be seen in an everyday marriage?

Applying God's Truths

1. Tripp asks the following questions, take time to reflect on them. "Whose kingdom shapes your marriage?" "Could it be that your anger reveals how zealously committed you are to the purposes of your own kingdom?" (53)

1. Please read Tripp's quote. "There are few couples that understand the one thing they need to understand in order for lasting change to take place in their marriage. They think their battle is with the other, or they think the circumstances in which they find themselves are what need to change. But here is the reality: all of the horizontal battles

are the fruit of a deeper war. The most important war, the one that needs to be won, is not the war they are having with each other, but a war that wages within them individually. Real change is all about winning this war.” (46) How has this been true in your life and marriage? In what things have you blamed your spouse for the cause of conflicts in your marriage?

2. In what ways have you inadvertently or purposefully quit paying attention to your marriage? Why?

For marrieds:

1. Read the following paragraph and then share 1) how you have seen your marriage grow sweeter and more beautiful and 2) what are two areas you need to do some restoration.

“Things don’t go bad in a marriage in an instant. The character of a marriage is not formed in one grand moment. Things in a marriage go bad progressively. Things become sweet and beautiful progressively. The development and deepening of the love in a marriage happens by things that are done daily; this is also true with the sad deterioration of a marriage. The problem is that we simply don’t pay attention, and because of this we allow ourselves to think, desire, say, and do things we shouldn’t.” (58)

For singles:

1. In what ways have you seen your relationship with Christ slide for the worse? Turn to Christ and ask for His grace to cause change in your life.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“Reconciling your marriage begins when you begin to reconcile with God.” (53)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 5 – “Coming Clean: Confession”

Overview – “I Confess!”

Have you ever watched a movie with a dramatic courtroom scene where the tension keeps building and then the key witness makes a confession? The courtroom gasps for the witness’s admission completely exonerates the person on trial and makes clear what the truth is. Often times when we hear the word “confession” this is the mental picture that comes to mind. In chapter 5 we are taught that confession is not a one time, big event that you do once and for all in a marriage relationship, but it is the result of God cultivating humble hearts in the life of a husband and wife.

Paul Tripp writes, “Confession is a doorway to growth and change in your relationship. It is essential. It is fundamental. Without it you are relegated to a cycle of repeated and deepening patterns of misunderstanding, wrong, and conflict. With it, the future is bright and hopeful, no matter how big the issues that you are now facing.” (73)

I hope you will see how confessing our sins before God and our spouses will provide the soil for our marriages to grow and flourish. We must remember that confession always begins with acknowledging our sin before our holy God!

So let’s see how confession plays a part in our everyday marriages.

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 5 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 5

- Commitment #1: “We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of **confession** and **forgiveness.**”
- “No change takes place in a marriage that does not begin with confession” (72).

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 4:17-32 with a focus on verses 17-24.

Learning God’s Truths

1. We must remember that confession is admitting and agreeing with God that we have sinned and are no longer hiding or excusing our sins. Confession must always begin with the vertical before we are to confess horizontally. Christians are called to confess our sins before God. This demonstrates the humility that only comes when He gives

Christians new life. What does it mean for a spouse to confess his/her sins to the other spouse? Why is it important for a marriage?

2. Take time to read Ephesians 4:17-24. Paul is reminding the Christians living in the city of Ephesus that they are no longer to live as they did before Christ saved them.

1. Verse 17 says, "That you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds." What is Paul referring to when he says, "the futility of their minds?"

2. Verse 20 is the transition to who they really are, Christians! Paul now gives three directives in verses 22-24. What are they?

1. #1: _____ old self (v. 22)
2. #2: To be renewed in _____ (v. 23)
3. #3: _____ new self (v. 24)

3. Distinctive #1 tells us to put off our old self. This means we no longer have to live enslaved to our previous sinful desires and hardness of heart.

4. Distinctive #3 tells us what we are to put on. The reason is that we are "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Wow! Think about how that way of living would transform your marriage.

5. But the key to the putting off and putting on is distinctive #2, "be renewed in the spirit of your minds." Paul is creating a contrast with verse 17. What is he saying about renewing our minds?

6. This renewal is accomplished by the Holy Spirit residing within believers, but we still struggle with the “futility of [our] minds” and sin. We need to bring our sin to the cross and into the light through confession to God and others. This demonstrates a humble heart versus a hard heart.

3. What does it mean that confession is a grace from God?

4. Fill in the blanks for the eight ways confession is a grace.

1. #1: It is a grace to know right from _____.
2. #2: It is a grace to understand the concept of _____ sin.
3. #3: It is a grace to have a properly functioning _____.
4. #4: It is only grace that protects us from self-_____.
5. #5: It is a grace to see ourselves with _____.
6. #6: It is a grace to be willing to _____ and _____ criticism and rebuke.
7. #7: It is a grace not to be paralyzed by _____.
8. #8: It is a grace to know we can face our wrongs because _____ has carried our guilt and shame.

Applying God’s Truths

1. What are some of your reoccurring sins that are often times targeted towards your spouse?

1. Tripp writes, “the Bible calls us to humbly confess that the greatest, deepest, most abiding problem each of us faces is inside, not outside, of us. The Bible names that problem—sin.” (73) In the context of your marriage, when you sin, do you think the problem is outside of you? If so, how does Tripp’s quote challenge you?

2. Who is harder to confess your sins to, God or to your spouse? Why?

3. Here is a list of "The Daily Habits of a Confessional Lifestyle." Please read through the list and assess yourself within the context of your marriage.

1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = At times a part of my life 4 = Definitely a part of my life
 The Score You Give Yourself

#1: I am lovingly honest.	_____
#2: I am humble when exposed.	_____
#3: I admit I'm a sinner.	_____
#4: I am quick to admit wrongs.	_____
#5: I listen and examine.	_____
#6: I greet confession with encouragement.	_____
#7: I am patient, persevering, and gentle in the face of wrong.	_____
#8: I am forgiving of the other's past sins.	_____
#9: I put my hope in Christ.	_____

Now take a look at your scores and spend time with Jesus confessing your sins before Him. Plead that He will change you and give you a humble heart that you may have a confessional lifestyle.

For marrieds:

1. Look at question 7 and write down how your sin has contributed to hurting your marriage instead of caring for it.

2. Share with your spouse what you learned by going through question 7. Confess to your spouse if you have not been the spouse that God has called you to be.

The Daily Habits of a Confession Lifestyle

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

For singles:

1. Look at question 7 and write down how your sin has contributed to hurting your relationships instead of caring for them.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

"My greatest marital problem is me." (74)

**“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 6 – “Canceling Debts”**

Overview – “What Child Are We Like?”

I’m sure you have seen the scene where a parent makes his or her child say, “Sorry for . . .” pushing, taking something away, saying something hurtful, and the list goes on and on. There are times when the child understands the severity of his actions and is truly sorry, but there are times when he is just sorry he got caught and is going through the motions. It is not heartfelt and meaningful. We’ve all seen it.

Chapters 5 and 6 form “commitment #1” in building a marriage based on unity, understanding, and love. Our focus will now be on the topic of forgiveness. Within the walls of the Christian church we hear about how Christ has forgiven us and we are encouraged to forgive others. This is not new, but the challenge is to really understand what biblical forgiveness is and how we are to put it into practice.

If we don’t take seriously the command to confess and ask forgiveness of God and our spouses, then we will never have the soil for our marriages to grow and flourish. Remember every spouse is a sinner and conflicts are inevitable when two sinners are married to each other. Only when we plead with God to give us humble hearts are we then able to confess and ask and grant forgiveness.

Let us be a people who are heartfelt in desiring our relationships to be restored.

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 6 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 6

- Commitment #1: “We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of **confession** and **forgiveness**.”
- “Healthy marriages are healthy because the people in those marriages find joy in canceling debts. I cannot think of a more essential ingredient in marriage than forgiveness.” (85-86)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 4:17-32 with a focus on verses 25-32.

Learning God’s Truths

1. What is forgiveness? See pages 92-94.

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Our focus will be on verses 25-32. All these verses are examples of the “put off,” “renewal of the mind,” and “put on” that we learned about in the last study.

1. For example: In verse 25 . . .

1. Put off: “Put away falsehood”
2. Put on: “Let each of you speak the truth with his neighbor”
3. What is the motivation? Renewed mind: “For we are members one of another”

2. Now do this for verse 32 . . .

1. Put off: _____
2. Put on: _____
3. What is the motivation? Renewed mind:

2. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” In order to be sincere in asking our spouse for forgiveness when we wrong them, why must we start with Jesus’ forgiveness of us? What does this teach you about asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness in your marriage?

3. On pages 87-90 there is a list of seven things couples will harvest if they are unforgiving. Why does being unforgiving in a marriage lead to these things?

4. What are the five things listed for why spouses don’t want to forgive?

5. Forgiveness requires and returns the following:

1. #1: Forgiveness requires humility.
2. #2: Forgiveness requires compassion.
3. #3: Forgiveness requires trust.
4. #4: Forgiveness requires self-control.
5. #5: Forgiveness requires sacrifice.
6. #6: Forgiveness requires remembering.

Applying God's Truths

1. What do you think your spouse would say if someone asked him or her, "Is your spouse a forgiving person?" Why?

2. Tripp writes, "The Bible calls us to humbly confess that the greatest, deepest, most abiding problem each of us faces is inside, not outside, of us. The Bible names that problem—sin." (73) In the context of your marriage, when you sin, do you think the problem is outside of you? If so, how does Tripp's quote challenge you?

3. Take time to read and reflect on Ephesians 4:32. Make a list of how God spoke to you through this verse.

4. Here is a list of “The Daily Habits of a Confessional Lifestyle.” Please read through the list and assess yourself within the context of your marriage.

1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = At times a part of my life 4 = Definitely a part of my life
 The Score You Give Yourself

- #1: I am lovingly honest. _____
- #2: I am humble when exposed. _____
- #3: I admit I’m a sinner. _____
- #4: I am quick to admit wrongs. _____
- #5: I listen and examine. _____
- #6: I greet confession with encouragement. _____
- #7: I am patient, persevering, and gentle in the face of wrong. _____
- #8: I am forgiving of the other’s past sins. _____
- #9: I put my hope in Christ. _____

Now take a look at your scores and spend time with Jesus confessing your sins before Him. Plead that He will change you and give you a humble heart that you may have a confessional lifestyle.

For marrieds:

1. Look at question 7 and write down how your sin has contributed to hurting your marriage instead of caring for it.

2. Share with your spouse what you learned by going through question 7. Confess to your spouse if you have not been the spouse that God has called you to be.

The Daily Habits of a Confession Lifestyle

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

For singles:

1. Look at question 7 and write down how your sin has contributed to hurting your relationships instead of caring for them.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“Forgiveness is the fertile soil in which unity in marriage grows.” (98)

**“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 7 – “Pulling Weeds”**

Overview – “It Was Just a Tiny Weed”

Last week a person from the Gas Company came by to check our gas meter. As she attempted to check the meter she mentioned how we should keep bushes and weeds away from the meter so that it can be easily read. What had happened was the little weed a few months back was now a full on weed bush!

The illustration of the weed can illustrate sin in our lives. Our sin starts off “small” in our marriages beginning with an inconsiderate remark that then turns into sharp or snide comments, which then leads to defiant or an argumentative attitude. Mix into these comments a lack of asking for and granting forgiveness and the result is a marriage where words are not used to build one another up, but rather used to destroy and tear down. Our sinful words start off small, but over time they become huge areas of conflict.

Can you see the weeds and weed bushes in your marriage?

Take heart because chapters 7 and 8 will guide us as we daily commit to growing and changing by God’s grace. So let’s begin with chapter 7 and begin pulling up weeds!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 7 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 7

- Commitment #2: “We will make growth and change our daily agenda.”
- “Perhaps one of the fundamental sins that we all commit in our marriages is the sin of inattention.” (101)
- “What keeps you too busy or too exhausted to address the struggles of your marriage and to do the good things that make your marriage grow?” (107)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 4:1-16

Learning God’s Truths

1. Let’s open up our Bibles and read Ephesians 4:1-16. We’ll be spending time in this study and the next study going over the truths found in this passage. Beginning in verse 1, there is a transition from the theology of the letter (chapters 1-3) to the application

(chapters 4-6). Paul begins his application speaking about the unity Christians have because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. In verses 1-3 what does it look like "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling?" See verses 2 and 3.

2. From the list of characteristics of a gospel centered person found in verses 2 and 3, write definitions of each.

3. Verses 4-6 speaks about the unity Christians have. What unifies Christians?

2. How does the sin of inattention cause conflicts in marriages? See pages 101-104.

3. There are six areas that hinder and stop growth from happening in a marriage. Write down descriptions of each.

1. Selfishness:

2. Busyness:

3. Inattention:

4. Self-righteousness:

5. Fear:

6. Laziness:

Applying God's Truths

1. Pick one godly characteristic from Ephesians 4:2-3 and think of ways of asking the Lord to grow that in you.

2. Think about your marriage and **choose two descriptions** from the list of six things that keep marriages from growing. Answer the questions for the description. Remember the truths found in Ephesians 4. Combat sin with the truth.

1. Selfishness: "So where are the weeds of selfishness in your marriage? How are you doing at finding them and pulling them?"

2. Busyness: "What keeps you too busy or too exhausted to address the struggles of your marriage and to do the good things that you're your marriage grow?"

3. Inattention: "Is your marriage suffering from inattention? Have you become comfortable with taking one another for granted? Are you neglecting the work that is necessary to keep your relationship healthy?"

4. Self-righteousness: "What thoughts, desires, motives, goals, choices, words, or actions need to be uprooted if your marriage is ever going to experience what

God's grace makes possible to experience?"

5. Fear: "Is there a way in which your husband or wife has become your replacement messiah? Are you so afraid of failure that it keeps you from doing with courage the things God has called you to do in your marriage? Do the 'what ifs' keep you from living in your marriage with joy in the here and now?"

6. Laziness: In what ways has your laziness hurt your marriage? Where will laziness lead your marriage ten years down the road? Why are you lazy?

For marrieds:

1. Share the two descriptions you chose for question 5. Come up as a couple with one thing you want to be more attentive to in your marriage. For example: We are going to make sure we keep Wednesday and Sunday evening free from commitments or appointments so that we can have a family dinner and a time to spend with one another. We give each other freedom to ask this question . . . Remember the point is to fight against sin, not one another. Support one another as your spouse changes sinful habits and attitudes. Give each other the benefit of the doubt!

For singles:

1. Think of a Christian brother or sister who you trust and send them an email asking them to help you to grow. Send them an email asking for feedback in the following questions: a) Am I a humble person or only in certain situations? b) Am I gentle with other people, especially with those who differ from me? c) What situations have you seen me become impatient? d) Do I bear with others in love? e) Am I a person who seeks unity? Remember that hearing truth about ourselves is sometimes hard to hear, but the person is trying to help you to grow in your friendships with others.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“What keeps you too busy or too exhausted to address the struggles of your marriage and to do the good things that make your marriage grow?” (107)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 8 – “Planting Seeds”

Overview – “Little Seeds, Big Harvest”

Since I was a kid I’ve had the opportunity to grow a lot of different things, lima beans, strawberries, tomatoes, lettuce, eggplant, bell peppers, soy beans, a watermelon, and even a pineapple. I am still amazed at how each of these plants began as a small seed. When talking about small seeds, what comes to mind is when my wife grew baby bok choy. The seeds from the packet were tiny, but she picked up each seed (a task in itself), then planted them one by one. Tedious and time consuming, but our garden looked great with the baby bok choy growing in nice, neat rows.

Paul Tripp writes about chapter 8, “The last chapter (chapter 7) was about examining your marriage, searching for those little thoughts, attitudes, and actions that you must say no to, and this chapter is about considering the things that you must say yes to, and in so doing give them room to shape your marriage” (115). We’ll learn how in the midst of weaknesses, that through Christ we can plant God honoring seeds for our marriage to flourish.

So are you ready for the tedious and time consuming task of planting seeds? I hope so, because what awaits is a fruitful harvest!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 8 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 8

- Commitment #2: “We will make **growth** and **change** our daily agenda.”
- **F – A lways grow together – T L – A – P**
- “God has made you a person of influence in the life of your spouse. You will always be influential in some way.” (117)
- “Sin can so fill our eyes with our needs that we become functionally blind to the needs of others. We can be so focused on our interest that we have little interest in the interest of others. Now, think about this: if the DNA of sin is selfishness, then sin in its fundamental form is antisocial. The needs of the individual trump the needs of the other person or the needs of the relationship.” (118)
- “Selfishness is one of the big weeds that choke the life out of a marriage, and we must continually recognize that selfishness is first a condition of the heart before it is ever a set of choices, words, and behaviors.” (119)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 4:1-16

Learning God's Truths

1. We'll continue to study Ephesians 4:1-16, but our focus for this study guide will be on verses 13 through 16. Read the passage and pay particular attention to the verses we're going to focus in on. Verse 12 speaks about the need for church leaders to equip those in the church to "build up the body of Christ." This body building needs to continue "until 1) we all attain to the unity of the faith and 2) of the knowledge of the Son of God."

Verse 14 gives the reason why we need to grow in unity and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. What are the reasons and why is this important for a Christian to know for his or her life?

Verses 15 and 16 provide the positive picture of what the church should look like when God's people "build up the body of Christ." How are we to speak to one another? Who are we to become like? And what is the goal for all the different "joints?"

Why does Paul stress the importance of the "head?" Who is the "head" and why is He important in Paul's analogy of the body?

Looking at verses 15 and 16, describe how these truths can be applied to your marriage.

2. Paul Tripp also applies another passage on relationships to marriage. He points our eyes to Galatians 5:13-26. It is within this passage that the fruit of the Spirit is found. He writes, "Your response to the rest of this amazing passage will be determined by the degree to which you have embraced the warning of verse 15." Verse 15 says, "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." Why does he say your response

to this verse will dictate how you will apply the rest of the verses? What words describe your conversations you're your spouse (i.e. sarcastic, argumentative, etc.)?

Tripp writes that “the DNA of sin is selfishness.” Sin causes humans to be self-focused, “antisocial, it dehumanizes the people in our lives,” and it a “condition of the heart before it is important to recognize that selfishness expresses itself in a catalog of behaviors” (119).

We have spoken about pulling weeds, but unless good seeds are planted, the weeds will start to spring up again. This is why the Apostle Paul continues in Galatians 5:22-23 by describing the fruit of the Spirit. Tripp says that we need to plant seeds of love in our marriages. Based on the fruit of the Spirit, please write down a description of what “serving in love” looks like in a marriage that bears the fruit of the Spirit.

“Serving in love means being committed to *joy*” (124).

“Serving in love requires being committed to *peace*” (124).

“Serving our spouses in love also means being committed to responding to them in ways that are *kind* and to do to them only what is good” (124).

“Serving in love also means that you are *faithful* to the vows you made when you got married” (125).

“Serving in love means being committed to *gentleness*” (125).

“Serving in love means being committed to the daily exercise of *self-control*” (125-126).

Applying God’s Truths

1. The observation is made that each of us influences those around us. This can be seen in our marriages, our parenting, our friends, and co-workers. What type of influence have you had on your spouse in the past three months?

2. In what ways has sin made you self-focused and antisocial? What do you think are specific sins that lead to your sinful actions?

3. “Let me say it in this way: the spiritual gardening that will make for a beautiful marriage (pulling and planting) must largely be done within your own heart. There are self-centered thoughts, attitudes, desires, motives, choices, and goals that must be uprooted from the soil of your heart, and new seeds of other-focused thoughts, attitudes, desires, motives, choices, and goals must be planted in their place. And you need to remember that this pulling and planting is not a one-time thing, but something that must become the lifestyle of your union.” (128)

What are three things you can pray that God will plant in your life? See the list from above. How will you try and cultivate them with the help from the Holy Spirit?

For marrieds:

1. On your own, take a look at the list of the fruit of the Spirit and rate how your marriage is.

	Fruit is Evident	Sometimes	Needs Works
1. Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Joy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Peace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Patience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Goodness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Faithfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Gentleness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Self-Control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Share with your spouse your evaluations. Talk about them, but make sure you don't accuse, argue or bring up specific past sins or events. The purpose of this is to see where God can cause you to grow as a couple.

Which one do you want to work on as a couple? Think about how you can grow this fruit in your marriage.

For singles:

1. Take a look at the list of the fruit of the Spirit and rate how evident it is or is not in your life.

	Fruit is Evident	Sometimes	Needs Works
1. Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Joy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Peace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Patience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Goodness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Faithfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Gentleness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Self-Control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which one do you want to work on? How can you grow this fruit in your life?

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“God hadn’t left them alone with only the hand tools of their own wisdom and strength; no, he had given the most powerful tool of transformation that they could ever have—himself. And he offers the same help to you.” (131)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapters 9 & 10 – “Sticking Your Neck Out” & “Someone to Be Trusted”

Overview – “A Crumbling Foundation”

When purchasing a home our realtor told us to look for certain warning flags and one of the things she told us was to open and close doors. Seems strange, but she said that if a door does not close or scrapes it could be that it was not fitted correctly or it could point to a bigger problem, the house has foundation issues. She also told us to look for cracks above doorways. We saw this first hand with a house we visited. Both bedroom doors would not close and we looked up and saw cracks above each doorway. The house’s foundation was crumbling or settling unevenly.

Unfortunately many marriages have an eroding foundation of trust with one another, but the ultimate problem is that spouses have a trust problem with the Lord. Spouses don’t trust that God can change you and your spouse. Spouses don’t trust that God is into rescuing marriages from tough times. Spouses don’t trust that God’s forgiveness is powerful enough to transform a hard and bitter heart. When we don’t trust God, then we will never trust one another. May the Lord work on our hearts as He teaches us to trust Him, then we’ll learn how to restore the foundation of trust in our marriages.

Reading Assignment

Please read chapters 9 and 10 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 9 & 10

- Commitment #3: “We will work **together** to build a sturdy bond of **trust**.”
- F – A – **Trusting One Another** L – A – P
- “One of the essential foundation stones of marriage is trust. No trust, no marriage—at least, not the kind of marriage that God designed when he created this lifelong relationship. You can have cohabitation without trust. You can have relational détente without trust. But you cannot have the intimate, vulnerable, mutually cooperative, one-flesh union that marriage is intended to be without trust.” (138-139)
- “Trust—it’s readily given, easily broken, and costly to restore.” (152)
- “If your marriage is going to be what God intended it to be, trust must be built, maintained, and protected, and restored when broken.” (152)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 2:1-10

Learning God’s Truths

1. Paul Tripp defines “trust” by writing, “Trust is being so convinced that you can rely on the integrity, strength, character, and faithfulness of another that you are willing to place yourself in his or her care.” (138) What he says is true, but we are all sinners and there will be times when trust is broken, even with your spouse. Tripp continues in chapter 10, “The building of trust between you begins vertically before it ever begins horizontally.”

1. Please re-read the last paragraph on page 154 and continue till it ends on page 155. Describe why it is so essential for a spouse to place his or her faith and complete trust in Jesus Christ first and foremost. What happens if a spouse places his or her complete trust in their spouse first and not in Christ?

2. As we will see in Ephesians 2, we can only learn how to trust one another because our trust is in a faithful God. Let’s learn more about the God who we place our trust in. Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2 and we’ll be looking at verses 1 through 10.

1. There are two main sections to this passage. Part 1 is verses 1 through _____ and Part 2 is verses _____ through 10.

2. Describe what our lives were like before God saved us? See Part 1 of the passage.

3. There are two wonderful words that now transition what we were like to who we are now in Christ. What are these two wonderful words? See verse 4.

4. Describe what God the Father and God the Son are like in Part 2 of this passage.
-
-
-
-
5. Why can we place our complete trust and faith in God?
-
-
-
-
6. This is the God who we place our complete trust and faith in as believers. If we are to trust our spouses as God would want, we must emphasize again that our trust must be in our God. If we are to learn how to trust our spouses, let us learn how to trust our God for He is trustworthy. It is only then can we fulfill what God says, “we are his workmanship” and were “created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
3. Chapter 10 is broken down into three major sections: 1) The building and maintaining of trust; 2) the protecting of trust; and 3) the restoring of trust when broken.

1. Trust: Marriage’s Construction Project (152-161)

1. Write a short description of each point.

Play It Straight:

Be Good for Your Word:

Face Up to Your Wrongs:

Watch Out for the Other Person:

Keep Short Accounts:

Remember That Trust is War:

2. Trust: Homeland Security (161-162)

1. What are the two things needed to protect your marital trust?

1. _____

2. _____

3. Trust: Restoring What's Broken (163-165)

1. There are six things that Tripp recommends to help restore trust in a marriage. Write down why a person or a couple does not do what is recommended. There are numerous answers to each recommendation. An example for "Get Help" is to think that your marriage is the only one that needs help, it is embarrassing or our problems really aren't that bad.

#1: Admit Your Need:

#2: Get Help:

#3: Don't Give Up:

#4: Stick Your Neck Out:

#5: Get Back Up Again:

#6: Remember Jesus:

Applying God's Truths

1. Here's the "Trust Questionnaire." Take time and circle two or three that stand out to you. Take time and answer those two or three questions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#10: Would your spouse say that you are good for your word and faithful to your promises?

#11: Do you carry wrongs around with you, or do you trust one another to confront and confess?

#12: Do you ever wonder what the other is doing when not with you?

#13: Are you conscious of editing your words and withholding your feelings because you can't trust the other to deal with them properly?

#14: Is your marriage partner the best friend in your life, or has your dream of this kind of companionship evaporated?

#15: Is your sexual relationship mutually satisfying, or is it hard for you to give yourself physically to your spouse?

#16: Do you say things to other people about your spouse that you have not communicated to him or her?

#17: Do you look forward to sharing times together, and when you have these times are they peaceful and enjoyable?

#18: Are there problems between you that remain unsolved because you don't have the bond of trust necessary to work together on a solution?

#19: Are you comfortable with the vulnerability that a good marriage involves?

#20: Do you ever wonder if you made a mistake in marrying the person who is your spouse?

#21: Do you ever fear that you are being manipulated or taken advantage of in any way?

#22: Do you ever wonder if your spouse cares for him- or herself more than for you?

Question # ____:

Question # ____:

Question # ____:

1. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

1. Write down three to five ways God created you to do "good works" in your marriage.

2. Make a list of three to five things that God created your spouse to do "good works" in your marriage.

For marrieds:

1. How have you had to trust God in your marriage? What did or is the Lord teaching you through those times? Take time to answer these questions and then share with your spouse what you wrote.

For singles:

1. How have you had to trust God in your life? What did or is the Lord teaching you through those times? Take time to spend with the Lord thanking Him that you can trust in such an awesome God.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“Trust is a beautiful thing when it is the glue that holds a husband and wife together, and it is a sad thing when it is what keeps them apart. Where are you when it comes to trust, and how is God calling you to get from where you are to where he can enable you to be?” (165)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 11 – “All You Need is Love”

Overview – “Love is . . .”

In the newspaper you can find a little cartoon titled, “Love is . . .” followed by a picture of a baby faced boy and girl. The cartoon was created by Kim Grove when she wrote love notes to her future husband, Roberto Casali. Since 1970 the cartoons have been published around the world.

It is quite amazing to think that love can be expressed in so many ways. According to my calculations, 2011 minus 1970 equals 41 years. 41 years times 365 days equals 14,965. Wow! All this to say is that often times in marriage we glance over the little things we appreciated when we were dating. We forget to do the little things that express our love to our spouses. We get so busy that we take our spouses for granted and overlook thanking them and God for this person we were so enthralled with on our wedding day.

By God’s grace, let’s learn how to love again!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 11 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 11

- Commitment #4: “We will commit to **building** a relationship of **love**.”
- F – A – T **Loving One Another** – A – P
- “From the outside it looked as though they had a good marriage, but a marriage is exactly what they didn’t have. What they had was a peacefully avoidant lifestyle of cohabitation.” (172)
- “Love sees sex as an act of celebration of the relationship of self-sacrificing love that the marriage is all about.” (173)
- “Counterfeit love wears convincing masks.” (174)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 5:1-21

Learning God’s Truths

1. “When it comes to love, we have two problems. First, there are many things we call love that simply do not rise to the level of what love is. And we lack a clear definition of what love is and what love does” (168).

1. What are some things you use the word “love” with that should not be used with the word?

2. How do you define love?

1. We come to section in Ephesians that the ESV Bible titles “Walk in Love.” For the next two studies we’ll be focusing in on Ephesians 5:1-21. We are in the second half of Ephesians, the application of the theology found in chapters 1-3, hence the “therefore” in verse 1.

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. God’s children are to “walk in love.” How do we learn how to live like that? How does this verse speak about marriage? What are practical ways this can be done in a marriage?

2. Now read Ephesians 5:3-6. So what keeps believers from walking in love? The answer is sin. What are the sins listed by the Apostle Paul? Look at that list and you can see why they keep a spouse from loving the other spouse. We have all coveted, we’ve all said hurtful and foolish things, we’re all idolaters, and we’ve all sinned in our hearts. But what counters these sins? Look at the end of verse 4. Who should that be directed to? Only through Him can we be washed clean and to be able to speak wholeheartedly with love to our spouses without feeling guilt or like a hypocrite. Bring your sin to the cross of Christ!

3. Finish be reading Ephesians 5:7-14. Remember that believers are “children of light.” We are to be lights in a dark society, in our workplaces, and yes, in our homes. What are common sins that “darken” a marriage? Remember to let the light of Christ shine brightly in your marriage and home!

2. Paul Tripp gives five markers for a marriage that is lacking in living and active love. Write down a few sentences how each marker destroys love between a husband and wife. Do any Bible passages speak to having unity, understanding, closeness, physical oneness and peace in a marriage?

1. Disunity (170-171)

2. Misunderstanding (171-172)

3. Separation (172)

4. Physical dysfunction (172-174)

5. Conflict (174)

3. There are four areas to watch out for false love. They are physical attraction, emotional connection, spiritual unity, and culture. What are the dangers in building a marriage on any of these four areas?

4. Tripp writes, "Perhaps you are drawn to your spouse not because you love her [or him], but because you love yourself, and you are stunned by how much she [or he] agrees with you." (178) How do you help another believer if he or she realizes that his or her marriage has been built on a selfish love?

Applying God's Truths

1. Answer the following questions:

1. "Is the unity of your marriage growing?"

2. "Do you live together in the joy of street-level understanding?"

3. "Is your marriage more a picture of cohabitation than it is of relationship?"

4. "Is your sexual relationship a picture of patient, self-sacrificing love?"

5. "In your marriage, do you hate conflict and do you work in whatever way you can to create peace?"

2. Read Tripp's quote. "They think their marriage is okay. They would say they think they have a pretty normal marriage, but they think this because what should be abnormal to them became so regular that it became the new normal, and when it did, they quit seeing and hearing it. The problem for these couples is not that they are dissatisfied with their marriage. No, their problem is that they are all too satisfied with something that falls way short of what God designed a normal marriage to be" (169).

1. What are some areas in your marriage (or life) that you think are normal, but after using the Word of God to examine you, you realize you have settled for far less than God designed you and your marriage for?

For marrieds:

1. On your own, look at the list of five markers that hurt loving marriages. Which one do you think is the most pressing in your marriage? How have you contributed to this destructive marker in your marriage? Ask the Lord, "How do you want me to change?"

2. With your spouse, share your thoughts from question #8. Pray for your marriage.

For singles:

1. Look at the following list, disunity, misunderstanding, separation, and conflict. Do any of these words describe your relationships with those who are close to you? With who? Think about your parents, your roommate, your best friend, your significant other.

Look at a figurative mirror and examine yourself. How do you contribute to these relationship destroyers? Come before the Lord with humility seeking His grace asking Him to change you and to restore your relationships.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

"What about you? Could there be a love drought in your marriage? Could it be that what you have called love is not really love? Could it be that God is bringing you to the end of yourselves so that you will look at yourselves with new eyes and seek the help that only he can give? Could it be that a brand-new commitment in love is what is needed for you to experience a brand-new beginning for your marriage? (183)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 12 – “Ready, Willing, and Waiting”

Overview – “Your Wedding Vow”

As a kid I used to think that the wedding ceremony was boring. I had to sit down in uncomfortable clothes and endure a ceremony of words, rings, and a kiss. The real fun is at the reception. Unfortunately many adults think the same thing. Let’s get this ceremony moving because the wedding is all about the celebration and reception.

Today I realize that the wedding is all about the words shared during the wedding ceremony, in particular, the vows shared between a groom and a bride. Do you remember saying your vows? Many of us don’t because we didn’t want to mess up or we were too nervous or everything happened so fast. Well, here is your chance to reflect and take time to think about your vows you said to your love.

Fill in the blanks . . .

I, _____, take you, _____,
 to be my wedded husband/wife,
 and I do promise and covenant
 before God and these witnesses,
 to be your loving and faithful husband/wife,
 in plenty and in want,
 in joy and in sorrow,
 in sickness and in health,
 to love and to cherish,
 as long as we both shall live.

These are powerful words. Our vows are moving. Our commitments are for our lifetime. They are said to your special one, they are said before your guests, and they are said before a God who will always remember them. These words are so much more than just your everyday words.

So every wedding my wife and I attend, when the vows are about to be promised, I take my wife’s hand and hold it and we remember the words we promised to each other . . . special and meaningful words, our vows to each other.

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 12 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 12

- Commitment #4: “We will commit to **building** a relationship of **love**.”
- F – A – T **Loving One Another** – A – P
- “Cruciform love.”

- “My core problem is not that I don’t love my spouse enough. No, my problem is that I don’t love God enough, and because I don’t love God enough, I don’t love my spouse as I should.” (190)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 5:1-21

Learning God’s Truths

1. Paul Tripp writes that the love Christians need to strive for is “cruciform” love. He explains, “Love that shapes itself to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ” (187). “So what does cruciform love look like? Let me give you a definition and then unpack it. *Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving*” (188). Give a brief explanation of each part of Tripp’s definition.

Love is **willing**:

Love is **self-sacrifice**:

Love is **for the good of another**:

Love **that does not require reciprocation**:

Or that the person being loved **is deserving**:

1. On page 190, what does Tripp mean when he writes, “Perhaps one of the most unrecognized sins in marriage is the sin of forgetfulness?”

2. We continue to study Ephesians 5:1-21. Our attention will be on verses 15-21. Take time to read Ephesians 5:15-21.

1. We have been encouraged from verse 1 of chapter 5 to “be imitators of God” and to “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” Verse 8 continues, “Walk as children of light” and verse 15 commands Christians to “look carefully then how you walk.” Your actions are always dictated by your heart. What does your “walk” look like? What does that say about your heart?

2. What is the contrast Paul makes in verse 18?

3. What does a person who is filled with the Spirit look like? See verses 19-20.

4. Loving your spouse as God desires takes being filled with the Spirit. Look at question 3c and write down some practical ways you can practice those in your marriage.

Applying God’s Truths

1. Please check the box that best applies to whether your love looks like the description given.

#1: “Love is being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of your husband or wife without impatience or anger.”

By God’s grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#2: “Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise.”

By God’s grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#3: "Love is the daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#4: "Love is being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding, and being more committed to unity and love than you are to winning, accusing, or being right."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#5: "Love is a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the blame."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#6: "Love means being willing, when confronted by your spouse, to examine your heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#7: "Love is a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to your husband or wife is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#8: "Love is being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged but to look for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#9: "Love is being a good student of your spouse, looking for his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support him as he carries it, or encourages him along the way."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#10: "Love means being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the problems that you face as a couple, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#11: "Love is always being willing to ask forgiveness and always being committed to grant forgiveness when it is requested."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#12: "Love is recognizing the high value of trust in a marriage and being faithful to your promises and true to your word."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#13: "Love is speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack your spouse's character or assault his or her intelligence."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#14: "Love is being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt your spouse into giving you what you want or doing something your way."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#15: "Love is being unwilling to ask your spouse to be the source of your identity, meaning and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of his or hers."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#16: "Love is the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to do as a husband or a wife."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#17: "Love is a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your marriage."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#18: "Love is staying faithful to your commitment to treat your spouse with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when he or she doesn't seem to deserve it or is unwilling to reciprocate."

By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#19: "Love is the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of your marriage without asking anything in return or using your sacrifices to place your spouse in your debt."

- By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#20: "Love is being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm your marriage, hurt your husband or wife, or weaken the bond of trust between you."

- By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#21: "Love is refusing to be self-focused or demanding but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired."

- By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

#22: "Love is daily admitting to yourself, your spouse, and God that you are not able to love this way without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace."

- By God's grace, doing well At times a problem, need to change Definite problem

1. Looking at the list above.

1. Pick three statements above that you would like God to transform you in.
2. After picking the three, take time to write down what type of fruit your life will sow if you DON'T let God transform you. Then write down a description of what fruit your life will sow if God's grace changes you.
3. Statement # _____:

1. Sowing Bad Fruit:

2. Sowing Good Fruit:

4. Statement # _____:

1. Sowing Bad Fruit:

2. Sowing Good Fruit:

5. Statement # _____:

1. Sowing Bad Fruit:

2. Sowing Good Fruit:

For marrieds:

1. Take out your wedding album. Don't be lazy, go and find it and dust it off. Crack it open and share about things that were memorable. Think about your guests, how your spouse looked, the mishaps, the special glances, etc.
2. Then take time and read your wedding vow to your spouse.
 1. I, _____, take you, _____,

to be my wedded husband/wife,
 and I do promise and covenant
 before God and these witnesses,
 to be your loving and faithful husband/wife,
 in plenty and in want,
 in joy and in sorrow,
 in sickness and in health,
 to love and to cherish,
 as long as we both shall live.

1. Take a look at the list of 22 statements of what love looks like and share with your spouse one (1) sentence you think they are doing well in and then share with your spouse one (1) sentence you would like to see them change in.

Remember how God has grown your marriage and thank God that He is allowing you to continue to grow in your love for your spouse.
 Take time and pray with your beloved.

For singles:

1. Look again at question 5 and create an action plan of how you want to grow in the three sentences you chose. Think about how your mind needs to be renewed by your faith in Jesus Christ. Write out your action plan below. If possible, share it with a brother or sister who you are close to.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“Is your marriage fueled, moved, and motivated by real God-worshiping, other-focused, self-giving, willing love?” (191)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapters 13 & 14 – “Amazing Grace” & “Before Dark”

Overview – “God the Creator”

The Bible teaches that God is the one and only Creator. He is the one who formed the millions and millions of stars, to the vast array of flowers, to the intricate mechanisms of how cells form and operate. In the whole world, from the largest of things to the microscopic we see diversity and order.

The same can be said of humans. Every human has been uniquely created by the one and only Creator, even identical twins are not the same. God is the one who places within us certain personality traits, abilities, aesthetics, logic, and the list goes on and on.

It is amazing to think that God wants diversity and order in your marriage. You and your spouse are two different people with two different past experiences with two different personalities with two different skill sets. But for Christians, what unites the uniqueness of a husband and wife is the order that God commands in His Word.

He has created an order for how marriage is to operate, even amidst the backdrop of diversity. God is sovereign and He wanted you and your spouse to be married in order for you to become the man or woman God created you to be. Be blessed amidst the diversity and order of your marriage!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapters 13 and 14 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapters 13 and 14

- Commitment #5: “We will deal with our differences with appreciation and grace.”
- F – A – T L – **Appreciating Our Differences** – P
- “The more you look at your husband or wife and honor God as creator, the more you will tend to esteem and appreciate the person who you live with, who is so incredibly different from you” (210).
- “He is working to rescue you from you, to deliver you from sin, and to form the character of Jesus in you” (214).
- “Why do we have both these themes in the Bible? Because God is inviting us to understand that when we place our trust in him, we don’t have to sacrifice either honesty or hope. The honesty of the Bible is not softened by its hope, and the hope of the Bible is not negated by its honesty. Because of who God is and because of the grace he has given us in Jesus Christ, we can face reality unafraid” (223).
- “Your King and Savior is at work, even when you have given up. He loves you even when you don’t have sense enough to love one another or to love him in return” (231).

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 5:22-33

Learning God's Truths

1. As we have read in the two chapters of our book, we are to appreciate our differences as husbands and wives. In this study and the next, we'll be camping out on Ephesians 5:22-33. This is one of the key passages on what is expected in God's plan for a husband and a wife.

This passage of Scripture displays our wonderful Creator's order in marriage. Unfortunately God's plan for marriage has been under attack for many centuries. His plan does not advocate inequality between a man and a woman, but it does teach that men and women are equal, but are given different roles, specifically differing roles in the home and in God's church. Turn to Ephesians 5 and read verses 22 through 33. Our focus will be on verses 22-24 for this study.

1. In verse 22 God gives the command through Paul of the wife's role in a marriage relationship. The role of a wife is to submit to her own husband. The word "submit" has many negative connotations in our society today. Pastor John Piper defines the wife's role to submit and the husband's role to lead.
 1. "Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.
 2. Submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts."

What is the purpose for submission?

1. What are the main responsibilities of a wife . . .
 1. In the eyes of American culture:

2. In the eyes of God:

2. In the negative light that society gives to the term “submission” for a wife, what reason does God give to the wife to submit to her husband?

1. We must connect the dots and return to the premise that in chapters 4-6, Paul is making the argument of how a Christian is to live in light of the glories of the gospel. He talks about how we are to walk. Chapter 4, verse 15 mentions walking and says in verse 21 that God honoring walking is seen in submitting to one another, because every believer submits to Christ. In verses 23 and 24, the verses speak that the Church is supposed to submit to the head, Christ. In your understanding, how does the Church submit to Christ?

2. On page 211, Tripp writes, “When you begin to think and act as though your hardwiring makes you better, more mature, or more righteous than your spouse, you will act and respond in ways that are dismissive and disrespectful.” When we read this quote it makes complete sense, but what makes living this truth out challenging?

3. In chapter 13 on page 215, Tripp gives three main tools of difference that reveal and change our heart. What are the three tools?

1. Tool #1:

2. Tool #2:

3. Tool #3:

4. "What should you do as you are confronted with daily differences between you and your spouse when it comes to the way that you think about and respond to the issues and situations of daily life?" (222) Fill in the blanks from pages 222-231.
1. #1: Face _____
 2. #2: Deal _____ with your anger
 3. #3: Communicate in ways that are _____
 4. #4: Run to your _____
 5. #5: Resist the _____ of the enemy
 6. #6: Create something _____
 7. #7: Humbly _____ your ongoing struggle

Applying God's Truths

1. FOR WIVES:

1. What makes fulfilling God's call to submit difficult for you?

2. What motivates you to submit to your husband? What do you think the good fruit will be?

2. FOR HUSBANDS:

1. What do you do or don't do that makes it difficult for your wife to submit to you?

2. If you happen to blame your wife in your mind, what do you tend to focus on? For example: she doesn't think about the details.

3. FOR BOTH:

1. "He (God) has designed marriage to be one of his most effective and efficient tools of personal holiness. He has designed your marriage to change you" (214). How has this been the case in your life?

For marrieds:

On Your Own

1. What were the things that attracted you to your spouse that differed from you?

2. As time has progressed, how have you seen these differences? Joyfully? Hindrances? Problem causers? Annoyances? Wonderful gifts?

3. Make a list of how you have seen these differences bear fruit in your marriage.

Share Together

1. Share what you wrote down for questions 8-10. Focus on the truth that God is the one who brought you together and that without the other, you would not be able to fulfill what God had planned for you.

For singles:

1. Examine your life and make a list of things that God has uniquely gifted you with. Personality traits? Abilities? Personal experiences?

-
-
2. Think about your friendships and interactions with others. How do you deal with people who are completely different than you? Is God telling you something?
-
-
-
-

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

"You and I are not the authors of our own story." (207)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapter 15 – “Eyes Wide Open”

Overview – “Protection”

What do all of the following items have in common? Oatmeal, a helmet, a plastic latch, and a wedding ring. They are all items used to protect something valuable. A bowl of oatmeal helps protect your health from cholesterol. A helmet protects your head in case of an accident. A plastic latch protects little ones from touching and drinking things they should not be. A wedding ring protects you by reminding you of your wedding vows. We all protect people and things we value. We will be encouraged to think about our marriages in the same way. We will need to work hard in protecting them!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapter 15 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapter 15

- Commitment #6: “We will work to protect our marriage.”
- F – A – T L – A – P rotecting Our Marriage
- “But there is one thing that you need to accept: your marriage may be great, but it is not safe. No marriage this side of eternity is totally problem protected. No marriage is all that it could be.” (238)
- “There is no doubt about it—a marriage of unity, understanding, and love is the result of good attitudes, which result in the instituting of good habits” (240).
- Have you become a bad student in the laboratory room of the school of love? (240)
- “Remember, marriage is spiritual warfare . . . So we must remain alert. We must commit ourselves to being watchful” (246).

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 5:22-33

Learning God’s Truths

1. In our last study we focused our attention on God’s command for wives from Ephesians 5 verses 22 through 24. This study will deal with God’s command for husbands from Ephesians 5:25 through 33. Read Ephesians 5:22-33.
 1. The Apostle Paul makes clear how a husband is to honor God in a marriage and that is to love his wife in the beginning of verse 25. The command sounds pretty easy compared to submitting. Many people think, “Love her, that’s easy, bring her flowers on the big occasions, mix in some chocolate throughout the year, tell her, ‘I love you.’ and voila, it’s love.” This would be easy, except the second part

of verse 25 gives the ultimate example of what type of love a husband is to have for his wife, "As Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Write down what type of "love" a husband is to have for his wife. How does this type of love differ from the world's view of love?

Verses 26 and 27 give the reasons for what Christ's love was to accomplish. What were the reasons? What do these reasons teach a husband about how to love his wife?

Verses 28-30 continue the Apostle Paul's argument in how a husband is to love his wife. He moves from Christ's sacrificial love to how this type of love is to be displayed in concrete and everyday ways. How does a man care for himself? Think broadly and in specific everyday ways.

Verses 31-32 describe the result of sacrificial love and willing submission in both a marriage between a man and a woman and between Christ and the Church.

Verse 33 concludes this section on appreciating the different roles between a husband and a wife. Describe the positive, God honoring cycle of how these two commands for husbands and wives complement one another. What type of fruit is born?

Also describe the negative cycle when these commands are not lived out. In what ways does the marriage suffer?

1. There are six characteristics of a coasting couple mentioned in this chapter.
 1. #1: Visual lethargy
 1. What does it mean to be a good student of your spouse?

 2. #2: Habit inconsistency
 1. What are good habits that help produce a marriage of unity, understanding, and love?

 3. #3: Laziness
 1. In what ways can laziness creep into a marriage?

 4. #4: Impatience
 1. Spouses often times have a narrow view of marriage, but God has a grander view of marriage. Write down some of the wider goals God has as a result of your marriage? See page 244.

 5. #5: Responding in discouragement
 1. During discouraging times, what are some biblical truths God trying to remind you of? May these biblical truths encourage you, even during discouraging times.

 6. #6: Dining with the enemy
 1. How should the truth that “marriage is spiritual warfare” spur a Christian couple?

Applying God’s Truths

1. Please read the following quote. "I think they quit doing the good things that make a marriage sturdy and beautiful not because they had a bad marriage but because they had a good marriage. At some point they quit watching and praying. At some point they began to lie back and enjoy the ride. They took good as an invitation to quit working, and now they were paying the price. This was not a marriage without hope; this was a marriage without work, and this side of heaven, walking away from the work never works." (234-235).

Did you ever think that marriage was going to be hard work or did you think that after you got married you would automatically grow closer? What are areas you can work on in your marriage?

1. Pick TWO characteristics of a coasting couple and personally answer the question associated with it:
 1. #1: Visual lethargy

"Where is there evidence in your marriage that you have been living with lazy eyes?"

1. #2: Habit inconsistency

"Are there good habits that were once a regular part of your life together that you have now forsaken?"

2. #3: Laziness

"Where is laziness damaging the health and beauty of your marriage?"

3. #4: Impatience

“Are there places where you are demanding in an instant what will only be formed in a process?”

4. #5: Responding in discouragement

“Where are you tempted to respond in discouragement and fear?”

5. #6: Dining with the enemy

“Are there places right here, right now, in your marriage where you are giving the Devil and opportunity?”

For marrieds:

For Husbands

1. Husbands, please grade yourself in the following areas.

Your walk with Jesus:

A B C D F

Why?

You financially providing for the family:

A B C D F

Why?

You spiritually leading your wife:

A B C D F

Why?

If you have a child, you spiritually leading:

A B C D F

Why?

You are protecting your family from harm:

A B C D F

- Decide on one “coasting” characteristic that both of you would like to change in your marriage.

For singles:

1. Take a look at the following list and grade yourself.

Your walk with Jesus: A B C D F
Why?

Your handling of finances: A B C D F
Why?

You spiritually encouraging those at church: A B C D F
Why?

Your use of free/spare time: A B C D F
Why?

You protecting yourself from the world (wisdom, idols, lies, etc.) A B C D F
Why?

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

“They learned the importance of being committed to watch and pray no matter how good things were and to respond in hope no matter how bad things seemed, and they learned that they were never alone.” (247)

“What Did You Expect?” by Paul Tripp
Study Guide for Chapters 16 & 17 – “On Your Knees” and “Worship, Work, and Grace”

Overview – “The End . . . The Beginning”

Every good book must come to an end. If you have to read a book assigned for a class, most likely you can't wait to see the words, “The end.” On the other hand, if you are enthralled in a book you are reading, you don't want to see the words, “The end.” I don't know which end of the spectrum you are on with regards to this book, but there is an ending.

There is an ending to this book, but just the beginning for our marriages. For some, this study has been challenging and opened up old wounds. There have been times of shedding tears and realizing that there have been lost years for your marriage. For some, this study have been challenging and caused new buds of love to sprout on the first days of spring.

Regardless of where your marriage is at, remember one truth, God's grace is there. It is what gives us hope for hopeless marriages and it is what gives hope for hope-filled marriages. So as we conclude this book and this season's study may it just be the beginning for grace saturated marriages. Looking forward to seeing a new chapter begin in your marriage story!

Reading Assignment

Please read chapters 16 & 17 in “What Did You Expect?”

Key Quotes and Lists from Chapters 16 & 17

- Commitment #6: “We will work to protect our marriage.”
- F – A – T L – A – P rotecting Our Marriage
- “Prayer calls you away from the kingdom of self, which is so destructive to everything a marriage is intended to be, and welcomes you to the kingdom of God, where a God of love rules in love.” (265)
- “When you pray for your marriage, you remind yourself that you are not alone. When you pray, you remind yourself that grace has invaded your marriage, and because it has, there is hope. There really is.” (265)
- “Worship of God puts us in our place. It teaches us that every good thing in our lives is an underserved gift from the hand of one who is the definition of love and grace. Worship turns demanding husbands and wives into thankful husbands and wives. Worship turns entitled spouses into grateful spouses. Worship turns disappointed husbands and wives into joyful celebrants.” (273)
- “What has this book been about? It has been a detailed description of the daily work of love that must be done with commitment and joy when a flawed person is married to a flawed person and they are living in a fallen world.” (282)

Bible Passage Focus

- Ephesians 6:10-20

Learning God's Truths

1. As our Bible study through this book and the letter to the Ephesians comes to an end it is fitting that both Paul Tripp and the Apostle Paul end with protection. Commitment #6 is "We will work to protect our marriage." And the title given to Ephesians 6:10-20 is "The Whole Armor of God." Both authors remind the believers that God-honoring marriages and living is always combated by Satan and sin.

Please open up your Bible and read Ephesians 6:10 through 20.

The imagery the Apostle Paul uses is one of battle. He teaches the believers that they are in a spiritual war. The theology that changed their lives in chapters 1-3 will be met with opposition. The world teaches a philosophy that is counter to Christ. The family members and friends who surround us may think we are lunatics as we follow the Bible. And ultimately Satan is the enemy fighting against God's people.

Write down "what" believers are to do from verse 10.

Write down "how" believers are to accomplish the "what" in verse 11a.

Write down "why" believers are to do what Paul asks them. Find the "why" in verses 11b and 12.

Verse 13 is the conclusion to verses 10 through 12. Believers live in the "evil day" and they must "stand firm."

Now that believers know what they are to do and why, Paul instructs the believers on what they are to put on and take up for the whole armor of God from verses 14 through 17. Write down how these items protect a believer in a marriage relationship.

1. Put on the belt of truth:

2. Put on the breastplate of righteousness:

3. Put on the sandals of the gospel of peace:

4. Take the shield of faith:

5. Take the helmet of salvation:

6. Take the sword of the Spirit:

1. Verses 18 through 20 conclude Paul's section on the armor of God. Our attention will be on verse 18. What are the two things a believer is to do with the armor of God on? Believers are to _____.

Believers are to _____.

These two things are elaborated on in chapter 16 and chapter 17, respectively.

Tripp opens chapter 16 by saying, "If marriage is a flawed person living with a flawed person in a fallen world, and if the war for control of our hearts still rages, then we cannot and must not quit seeking God's help for our marriage. This side of heaven there is nothing more important for our marriage than to pray without ceasing. There is never a moment in our marriage when we are not in need of the rescuing, enabling, delivering grace of the Redeemer" (249).

And he writes in chapter 17, “The fundamental problem of every marriage is misplaced worship. The cure for every marriage is renewed worship of God” (269). This takes being alert of the battle we wage each day within us and outside of us.

1. In chapter 16, Paul Tripp writes about the importance of the Lord’s Prayer as a means of God’s protection and working in and through you and your spouse. In each section of the Lord’s Prayer, write about one aspect that teaches you more about God and your marriage.

1. “Our Father in heaven . . . “

2. “Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

3. “Give us this day our daily bread”

4. “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”

5. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

6. “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”

2. In chapter 17, Paul Tripp makes the argument that the problems in marriage all stem from misplaced worship and the opposite holds true as well, the great joys in marriage all stem from right worship. Why is worship so vital to understanding why it can be the greatest hindrance to a marriage of unity, understanding, and love or greatest gateway to marriage of unity, understanding and love?

REVIEW OF OUR STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK

Throughout our time in this book we were shown, taught, and even hit on the head with biblical truths that differed with what we held to concerning our marriages. Our sins became blotches of paint on the pure white canvas of God's plan for marriage and His children.

The theme throughout this book has been building a marriage of unity, understanding, and love. What we found out is that marriage is not the end goal, it's just another means that God uses for us to become more like His Son. This is what relationships are all about, Christians facing sins and dealing with them in a way that brings Christ honor.

Let's reflect on different truths from this book that are needed in order to invite God's grace into your life and marriage.

First, in order to have a marriage of unity, understanding, and love must begin with the vertical relationship. All problems in marriages and relationships arise when our vertical worship is misplaced or removed.

LOVING GOD = WORSHIP (VERTICAL)

1. Are you growing in your worship of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
2. What are your personal "idols" that divert you away from the vertical worship of Jesus?
3. How do those "idols" negatively impact your marriage?

Second, in order to have a marriage of unity, understanding, and love means seeing and applying the gospel to your life and marriage. There are six commitments every marriage needs and the only reason why we can have these things is because of Christ.

Jesus teaches us what forgiveness is, what it means to grow in relationship, what it means to trust, what it means to love, what it means to appreciate our differences as we fulfill our differing roles, and what it means to be protected.

LOVING MY SPOUSE/OTHERS (HORIZONTAL) = F A T L A P

1. FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER
 1. Only through Christ's strength will you be able to ask for forgiveness and to forgive when you are hurt.
2. ALWAYS GROWING TOGETHER
 1. Only through Christ's grace will you continue to grow as one amidst the challenges of living in a sinful world with another sinner.
3. TRUSTING ONE ANOTHER
 1. Only through Christ's example will you learn how to trust.

4. LOVING ONE ANOTHER
 1. Only through Christ's love will you love sacrificially.
5. APPRECIATING OUR DIFFERENCES
 1. Only through Christ's submission to the Father will you be able to fulfill your role as a husband or wife.
6. PROTECTING ONE ANOTHER
 1. Only through Christ's care will you be protected so that you can protect each other.

"What is the hope of your marriage? This may seem strange to read at this point in the book, but it must be said: the hope of your marriage is not all the principles, insights, and perspectives found in this book. No, the hope of your marriage can be captured in one glorious, powerful, and transforming word—**grace**."

"God's grace guarantees . . . assures . . . gives . . . enables . . . reminds" (284).

Applying God's Truths

1. Take time to reflect on this study and the truths found in this book. Make a list of items you would like to focus on through application and prayer.

Yourself: _____

Your Spouse: _____

Your Marriage: _____

1. Look at the section titled "Worship and Work" on pages 280-283. Make your own list of ways you can work hard to make your marriage beautiful.

For marrieds:

Individually

1. Take time to watch the video found at this website:
<http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/the-story-of-ian-larissa>

How can you see the gospel in Ian and Larissa's story?

Why do you think their story resonates within the heart of a Christian?

1. Think big, think small and make a list of how God has graciously used your spouse so that you can become the child of God that He can use.

Sharing Together

1. Share what you wrote down for question 7.
2. Look over question 4 and together decide on three things you want to continue to work on after this study ends.

1. #1:

2. #2:

3. #3:

For singles:

1. Take time to watch the video found at this website:
<http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/the-story-of-ian-larissa>

How can you see the gospel in Ian and Larissa's story?

Why do you think their story resonates within the heart of a Christian?

1. Make a list of what you have learned about God honoring marriages.

Personal Take Home Truth

Write down what truth stood out to you from the reading or study.

"Your marriage is not a destination" (251).

"It really is true—a marriage of unity, understanding, and love is not rooted in romance. It is rooted in worship. It is when we love God more than we love ourselves and when we quit building our own little kingdom and start seeking his that we will love our spouse" (286).