

Class & Overview

Big Picture:

Our marriage EquipU class will seek to equip in the biblical purposes, principles, & practices of God's design for this most important relationship. The class format will utilize lectures, reading, and a workbook with weekly marriage-building homework assignments. Our hope for you is to not only to strengthen your own marriage, but also to give you practical tools by which you can assist / encourage others in their marriages.

Structure: 9 week course

1. Weekly Teaching
2. Weekly Procedure
 - a. Attend Class for Lesson Teaching
 - b. Read Assigned Reading
 - c. Complete Individual Homework Questions
 - d. Discuss Homework & Complete Marriage-Building Exercises with Spouse

Schedule:

Session	Topic
PART I: Understanding God's Design	
1	Covenant of Companionship
2	Comprehensive Oneness
3	Transformative Oneness
4	Complementary Oneness
PART II: Practicing the Principles	
5	Prioritizing Oneness
6	Relational Oneness
7	Restoring Oneness
8	Sexual Oneness
9	Special Topics

Required Book: *Sweethearts for a Lifetime*, Wayne Mack (2006) + BCO Marriage Workbook

Marriage EquipU

Session 1

Session 1 OUTLINE

1. God's Fundamental Design

- a. Covenant –a binding, accountable, relationship-defining promise

Definition of Marriage: A marriage is a Godward covenant union of a specific man and woman to be 'one-flesh' (exclusive, affectionate companionship) for life.
Mal 2:10-11,14, Prov 2:17

- b. Godward Covenant – Gen1:27, 2:18, 2:22, 2:24, Matt 19:6

- Marriage was God's Design
- God gave away the first Bride
- God stated the Design of Marriage
- God (still) Performs the 'one-flesh' Union

- c. For the Presentation of Christ & His Church – Eph 5:31-33

2. Your Fundamental Marriage Commitment – Mark 12:28-31

...to follow His design for marriage, to the best of our ability, according to His Word, and by the enablement of His Spirit within.

Specific Applications

1. Marital Health = Spiritual Health
2. Marital Sacrifice = Acceptable Service of Worship
3. Local Church = Bride of Christ

Because of the Gospel...¹

1. Christians have become new creations (2 Cor 5:17) – Therefore in our marriage, our past does not define us, confine us, or determine our future. [Too many marriages are being haunted by things in the past that have not been brought into the healing environment of Gospel commitment.
2. We are forgiven (Eph 1:7) – Therefore we can live free of all guilt and condemnation for the sins we have committed in our marriage. We trust God, by His Gospel, that He is and forever will be gracious to us. And thus our fundamental stance and relationship toward our spouse can be as one who is whole and healed, not guilty and paranoid.
3. We can forgive, just as Christ forgave us (Eph 4:32) – Nothing done against us compares to our sin against God. Therefore all offenses, hostility, and bitterness between two Christians can be completely forgiven and then removed from active consideration in our relationships.
4. We are accepted by God (Rom 15:7) – Therefore we are not needily dependent on a spouse for who we are or what we need.
5. Sin's ruling power over us is broken (Rom 6:6,14) – Therefore we can truly obey all that God calls us to do in our marriage, regardless of any circumstance or situation.
6. We have power to fight and overcome remaining sin (Rom 7:19-21, 24-25, Gal 5:16-17) – Therefore we (and our spouse) can change to become more conformed to Christ in the days ahead.
7. We have access to God through Christ (Heb 4:14-16) – Therefore we can at any time take any need in our marriage to the One who can do all things, and know that He will hear us and act according to His good grace and sovereign plan.
8. Christ dwells in us by his Holy Spirit (Gal 3:13-14) – Therefore we are confident that God is always with us and is always at work in our marriage, even when progress is imperceptible (1 Th 5:23-24).
9. We have hope (Rom 5:1-4) – Therefore we can endure any marital difficulty, hardship, or suffering, with the assurance that God is working all to our greatest good (Rom 8:28), even if we can't see it at the time.

The Place of the Local Church in Marriage²

The local church is the biblical home for Christian marriage, the indispensable context where love and marriage are to be lived out. Without the church we will be squeezed inexorably into the world's mold. Consider God's provision and protection through the church...

- *The church is the place where men and women exchange worldly independence for biblical humility*
- *The church is the place where marriages are fed and supported with truth*
- *The church is the place where marriages are helped in seasons of need*

It is the local church – Christians living a shared life biblically before God and one another – that will ultimately secure the place and role of marriage and family from generation to generation.

¹ Ricucci, Gary, *Love that Lasts*, 22-23.

² Ricucci, Gary, *Love that Lasts*, 23-26.