

FAMILYLIFE® presents

the art of 
marriage™
getting to the heart of God's design

PRAYER GUIDE

THE ART OF MARRIAGE® PRAYER GUIDE

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First Edition

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Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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INTRODUCTION

We praise God that you have been called to take “the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17b NIV) and pray for those whom God draws to attend this Art of Marriage event.

In order to give you some flexibility to fit your schedule, we have organized this prayer guide into eight “weeks” of five days each. You have the freedom, however, to use this guide in whatever way you like, based on a frequency that works for your schedule. Each of the forty days includes quoted Scripture passages, and suggestions for targeting your prayer. Believing in the transforming power of the Word of God, we encourage you to incorporate the actual words of the selected Scriptures into your daily prayers.

When you pray Scripture for these couples, you are imparting the life and power of God. As you enter the world of intercession, you place yourselves on the front battle line for God. In order to combat spiritual attack, one **MUST** be prepared. Begin now by reading Ephesians 6:10-18, and taking up the armor of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Each day we encourage you to follow the **A.C.T.S.** acrostic as you come before the throne of grace. **A.C.T.S.** simply stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. It is an excellent and trustworthy roadmap for guiding the prayers of the believer.

ADORATION: This is praising God for who He is. It is a deep and heartfelt expression of love, reverence, worship, and awe before a holy and omnipotent Lord. Your adoration may include reciting Scripture, singing psalms or hymns, and saying simple prayers of praise.

CONFESSION: None of us is without sin, and it is this sin that short-circuits our prayers, disrupting our fellowship with the Lord. ... *Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear* (Is 59:2b). If we desire any eternal results from our prayers, we must first address our own condition. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).

THANKSGIVING: Like adoration, in thanksgiving you are also praising God, yet now you are thanking Him for what He has done -- for you, for His people, and for all of creation. You may also express thanks for what you are trusting Him to do in the future, especially through your Art of Marriage event. *Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!* (Ps 107:1)

SUPPLICATION: Supplication is the act of petitioning and interceding on behalf of yourself and others. This is the hard work of intercession -- coming before the Lord in heart-felt prayer, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to intercede on behalf of others. *This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.* (1 John 5:14-15 NASB).

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ABOUT INTERCESSORY PRAYER

All believers are called to pray and intercede. Regarding prayer, we are to follow the example of Christ, the greatest intercessor of all. He lives to intercede. *“He [Christ] always lives to make intercession for them”* (Hebrews 7:25 NASB)

Not all prayer is intercession. Most people offer prayers of petition. True intercession includes seeking the heart of God in particular situations, listening for discernment from the Holy Spirit about how to pray, and asking God for divine intervention.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, to “intercede” is “to go or pass between; to act between parties with a view to reconcile those who differ or contend; to interpose; to mediate or make intercession; mediation.”⁽¹⁾ The Hebrew word used for intercession is “paga” which means “to meet.” Intercessors meet with God, asking Him to meet with someone else. We become the go-between: “Heavenly Father, I come to you today (a meeting) asking you to touch Tom (another meeting).” On the opposite end of the spectrum, as Christ did through spiritual warfare, we also *meet* with the enemy and engage in spiritual warfare. In this case, our meeting with the enemy is to *undo* a meeting.

When we think of interceding for others, we can use the Scriptures to “weep with those who weep” and “bear one another’s burdens” (Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2 NASB). Two Greek words used for bearing are “anechomai” and “bastazo.” “Anechomai” means to sustain, bear, or hold up against a thing. (Think of a tomato plant staked to sustain its weight.) “Bastazo” means to bear, lift, or carry with the idea being to carry away or remove it. So intercession is “paga”: He “lays on” us someone else’s need. “Anechomai”: We “stake” ourselves to that person. “Bastazo”: We “carry away” the weakness or burden. ⁽²⁾

Humanity needs Christ’s intercession, which is to go between God and us and reconcile us to God. We need Christ to go between Satan and us and to separate us from him. Our prayers of intercession are an extension of Jesus’ work of intercession.

footnotes:

1. *The Consolidated Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publisher, 1954), p. 384.
2. Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1996), p.70.

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SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLYING A.C.T.S DAILY

ADORATION

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100 (NIV)

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

Psalm 146:1-2,5-8

Additional praise Scriptures include Psalms 103, 145:1-7, 147:1-11, 148 149, and 150.

CONFESSION

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Jas 4:8)

Is there anyone you have not forgiven?

Is there anything in your life right now that will hinder God from hearing your prayers?

Is your life self-controlled or God-controlled?

THANKSGIVING

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thess 5:18)

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Col 3:15)

THANK God for the lives He is going to change.

THANK God for the facilities, the equipment, the technology, and all other physical things He has provided to make the event possible.

THANK Him for allowing you and others the privilege of serving Him.

THANK Him in the midst of difficulties and challenges, trusting that He will use them to glorify Himself and grow your faith.

SUPPLICATION

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people. (1 Tim 2:1)

The following subjects are general areas to “ask” God for each time you begin to pray:

INVITATION: Invite the Holy Spirit into the event as the day approaches; into the building, meeting room, hallways, couples, and leaders (John 14:25-26 and John 16:5-11). Ask the Spirit of Unity to be among all those attending and working (Psalm 133 and Ephesians 4:3-6).

FACILITATORS: Pray that the facilitator / emcee will be refreshed and filled with His Holy Spirit and anointing. Also pray that they will be sensitive when speaking to the group (Romans 12:1-21; Colossians 1:9-12a).

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. ... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5,13 NIV)

GOD'S PURPOSE: Pray that God's purpose will be accomplished in each person attending. Pray that God will direct couples of His choice to be in attendance.

THE COUPLES: Pray that couples will ask the question, “What does God have for us?” Pray that they begin to investigate what God is saying to them through 1 John 1:7 . . . to walk in the light of Jesus, so that we may have unbroken fellowship with Him and with one another. Pray that God's presence will be evident in their hearts and in their homes! Pray for safety in traveling. Pray for peace and protection for children at home.

TEACHING TRUTHS: Pray that the teaching truths will be clear and that the Word of God will penetrate deep into their hearts. Pray confidently that it will accomplish the work that God intends and will not return void.

MAKING IT PERSONAL: Pray that each individual will approach these applications with integrity and honesty.

A prayer for yourself and those attending might look like this: “Lord, enable all of us to honor you by submitting to each other (Ephesians 5:21). Give us patience, faithfulness, and encouragement; and help us to live in complete harmony with the attitude of Christ toward each other (Romans 15:5). Keep us vigilant to guard against any separation of spirit between us.”

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DAILY AND WEEKLY PRAYER OUTLINE

WEEK 1

Day 1 –

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God. (2 Corinthians 3:5)

- ❖ Pray for the host couple and all others who are helping with the details before, during, and after the Art of Marriage (AOM) event. Ask that they will rely on Christ and not solely on their own strength.

Day 2 –

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!' (Deuteronomy 33:27)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

- ❖ Acknowledge that there is an enemy who is opposed to the work being done to rescue and restore marriages, families, and homes. The ultimate opposition is toward the sharing of the gospel, the truth that sets all mankind free. Acknowledge that God is greater and ask Him to drive out all ungodly opposition.

Day 3 –

Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you. (Psalm 33:20–22)

- ❖ Pray that the couples who attend AOM will be spiritually attentive to God. Ask that they will believe He can answer their heartfelt questions, address their concerns, and meet their deepest needs.

Day 4 –

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20–21)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1–3)

- ❖ Pray for the host couple and all who are promoting AOM and inviting couples to attend. Pray that their passion for serving marriages will be so strong that they will

be proactive in all areas, and quickly respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to contact those He brings to mind. Pray for renewed strength in these efforts.

Day 5 –

And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. (Ezekiel 34:26)

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. (Matthew 18:20)

- ❖ Thank God for providing the location for your AOM event. Pray over that location, that God will be glorified there and that the room will be conducive for the attendees to hear from Him.

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WEEK 2

Day 6 –

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
(Psalm 51:6 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that each couple attending AOM will clearly hear what God has to say to them. Pray that God's Word will penetrate each heart and mind, and that each person will respond truthfully.

Day 7 –

But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner. (1 Corinthians 14:40 NASB)

For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. (Colossians 2:5)

- ❖ Pray over the details and logistics of AOM: that the materials will be ordered and received on time; for the preparation of the facility; for the lighting, sound, temperature, seating, safety, food preparation, serving, parking, and the technical equipment. Pray for any other details the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

Day 8 –

I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. (Isaiah 45:2)

- ❖ Ask God to remove every hindrance that might keep couples from attending your AOM event—child-care issues, weather, illness, conflicts, etc. Ask the Most High God to clear their paths, to allow them to participate.

Day 9 –

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:33–34 NIV)

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:25–26)

- ❖ Pray that all of the couples attending AOM will be able to transition from the busyness of their week to being still and quiet, where their hearts are able to receive God's Word. Pray that hearts will be tender and eager to learn and apply the biblical principles that are presented. Pray for protection from distractions.

Day 10 –

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3 NIV)

God again set a certain day, calling it ‘Today.’ ... ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.’ (Hebrews 4:7 NIV)

- ❖ Pray for your AOM guests, that they will have peace and be protected from the enemy. Pray against discouragement and for them to persevere through any obstacles the enemy has put or will put in their way. Pray that each individual will not harden his or her heart to the Holy Spirit and will receive correction through each session’s teaching.

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WEEK 3

Day 11 –

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12–13)

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23–24)

- ❖ Pray that God will peel away any layers of deception at work in the couples attending the AOM event, and that each person will see him or herself honestly. Pray that all will have an willingness to share with their spouses openly. Ask God to stir their hearts so that oneness will be the desire of their souls.

Day 12 –

By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (Proverbs 24:3–4)

A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word! (Proverbs 15:23 NIV)

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)

- ❖ Pray that, as biblical principles are taught, the couples will be able to respond with humility and openness. Pray that self-centered desires and motives will be forsaken and replaced with Christ-likeness. Pray that, where needed, each spouse will give the other honesty, forgiveness, and gentleness.

Day 13 –

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV)

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; (James 1:19)

- ❖ Pray that each AOM guest will be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Pray that anger and resentment will not be allowed to grow, and that walls built by anger will be brought down. Pray that the Lord will bring hope to every heart as each spouse embraces God's design and purpose for their marriage.

Day 14 –

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22–23 NIV)

Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ (Genesis 2:18)

He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:4–6)

- ❖ Pray that each couple attending will understand that a godly marriage is a picture of Christ’s relationship with His followers. Pray that couples will receive God’s truth for marriage and begin to live according to His purpose, reflecting God’s image, mutually completing each other, and developing a godly legacy.

Day 15 –

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. (Psalm 34:4–5)

I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 56:5)

- ❖ Pray for any AOM couples who have lost a child or who are unable to have children—that they will be comforted by the Lord. Ask God to restore their joy and hope, and to heal any anger or resentment this situation may have brought to their marriage.

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WEEK 4

Day 16 –

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh... they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. (Matthew 19:5-6 NIV)

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

- ❖ Pray that each AOM guest will end any unhealthy dependence on his or her parents. Ask the Lord to draw the spouses together and bind them to each other emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Pray that each couple will allow God to use their differences as individuals to make them stronger as a couple.

Day 17 –

They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 37:23)

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. (1 John 5:4)

- ❖ Pray these scriptures for each AOM guest who may be dealing with issues of abuse, infidelity, or addiction. Ask the Lord to destroy every effort of Satan to defeat oneness and every human excuse to reject God's plan. Pray for complete healing and restoration.

Day 18 –

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6)

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I will count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. (Psalm 139:17-18)

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

- ❖ Pray that God will create a hunger in the soul of each person and draw all to Himself through the Holy Spirit. Pray that all will understand the depth of God's love for them individually. Pray that nothing will hinder the truth from being heard and received.

Day 19 –

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

- ❖ Pray that each unbeliever or seeker in attendance will truly understand the depth of his or her depravity and isolation from God. Pray that the Holy Spirit will awaken and call them to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Day 20 –

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:16, 26)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

- ❖ Pray that each AOM guest will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Pray that all will understand what the Holy Spirit does in their lives and what it means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Pray that couples will read and listen to God's Word, confess and repent of their sins, fellowship with other believers, and spend time praying together. Pray that the fruit of the Spirit will become increasingly evident.

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WEEK 5

Day 21 –

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. (James 4:1–2)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:2)

- ❖ Pray that the attending couples will understand the damage caused by anger and bitterness. Pray that husbands and wives will have the courage to resolve their conflicts, taking personal responsibility for what they have done. Pray for couples to walk humbly through the process of resolving conflict with the goal of attaining oneness.

Day 22 –

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death. . . .But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. (Psalm 13:2–3, 5 NIV)

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. (Jeremiah 31:13)

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

- ❖ Pray for those guests who may be struggling with depression. Pray that they will be willing to seek counsel. Ask God to make clear to them any root issues that might be feeding their depression. Pray also for understanding as couples hear about loving confrontation—that the Holy Spirit will prepare their hearts to share, receive, and respond.

Day 23 –

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must

forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12–14)

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that couples will understand the power of forgiveness. Pray for the Lord to begin the process of rebuilding trust in hurting marriages. Pray for individuals to put their trust in the Lord and His ability to “make all things new” and to “hold all things together.” Also, pray that each person will be prepared to receive their spouse’s confession, await repentance, and extend forgiveness with God’s grace.

Day 24 –

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

- ❖ Pray that God will prepare the hearts of the AOM couples to understand the extent to which any physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual factors are affecting sexual intimacy. Pray that the Lord will provide guidance as the couples address these issues. Pray for couples to increase in companionship, commitment, passion, and intimacy.

Day 25 –

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:12–14)

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:3-4 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that all guests at the AOM will turn from sexual sin and run from all temptation. Pray that any bondage to sin will be broken (emotional and/or physical relationships outside of marriage; homosexuality, pornography, romantic fantasies, etc.).

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WEEK 6

Day 26 –

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Psalm 34:18-19)

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten... (Joel 2:25 NIV)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalms 147:3)

- ❖ Pray that AOM guests will be healed of any abuse, for God is the Lord who heals. Pray that He will “bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” according to Isaiah 61:3 (NIV). Pray for release from any shame and fear resulting from sexual sin or the sin of others that has affected them.

Day 27 –

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

- ❖ Pray that each person attending will choose to love their spouse – even if it is out of obedience to Christ. Pray they will choose to be generous with both asking for forgiveness and accepting it. Pray they will choose to encourage rather than criticize, and love freely rather than love conditionally.

Day 28 –

Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:23–25)

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that all of the couples will recognize that sex is a gift from God and that an attitude of giving establishes oneness. Pray God will prepare the hearts of the couples to be able to appreciate, affirm, renew, and rebuild intimacy. Pray that the marriage relationship will truly reflect God's plan for the family. Pray also for those who may not be intimate with each other - that those couples will truly surrender their sex life to the Lord, aligning their thinking about sex with God's thoughts and purposes.

Day 29 –

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. (Proverbs 31:10–12 NIV)

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. (Titus 2:3-5)

- ❖ Pray that all women attending AOM will personally embrace God's design for their roles as wives and mothers. Pray for women to prioritize wisely. Pray that Jesus Christ will be each woman's first love. Pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit for each woman to love Jesus, her husband, and her children with all her heart. Pray for the wives to understand the honor of being called "helper," ("ezer" in Hebrew) even as God uses the same title for Himself more than a dozen times (e.g. Ps 33:20, 115:11). Pray that each woman will be genuinely awed by the honor God has bestowed on her.

Day 30 –

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Ephesians 5:25-28 NIV)

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

- ❖ Pray that every man attending AOM will accept God's design for marriage. Pray for husbands to love like the Savior and lead like a servant. Pray that husbands will understand their role as the family leader and ask the Lord for godly character and wisdom. Pray that men will commit to live their lives submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit and love their wives like Christ loved the church.

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WEEK 7

Day 31 –

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15 NIV)

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

- ❖ Pray that every couple will commit to leaving a godly legacy. Ask God to guide them in a commitment to influence the next generation of believers. Pray that the Lord will give them the courage to persevere through all challenges and difficulties in raising children as they rely on Christ for wisdom and guidance.

Day 32 –

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4 NIV)

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.' (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that every guest will commit to pursuing Christ, both as an individual and in partnership as a couple. Ask the Lord to draw them into a closer walk with Him and with each other, and to give them a vision for what they could accomplish together for God's Kingdom.

Day 33 –

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33 NASB)

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

- ❖ Pray these scriptures over any AOM guests who are engaged or dating. Pray for each person to seek God's will for his or her life and marriage. Pray that these couples will seek and listen to wise counsel. Pray that they will honestly evaluate issues from past relationships that could become stumbling blocks. Pray that they will be set free from any bondage or wounds so that they can truly understand the will of God for their lives.

Day 34 –

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:10–13)

- ❖ Pray that each couple attending the AOM will have an understanding of God's spiritual armor, and the importance of being armed as they lead their families through the battles of daily life in our fallen world. Pray that couples will lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with the challenges they will face.

Day 35

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' (Isaiah 52:7)

- ❖ Pray that every AOM guest will have a desire to reach out to the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray that all will rely on the Holy Spirit to lead them in sharing what God has done in their own lives. Ask the Lord to give them boldness to share biblical principles of love, repentance, confession, forgiveness, and restoration.

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WEEK 8

Day 36 –

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5, 7)

- ❖ Pray that every person will have ears to hear the Bible's instruction about the sanctity of the marriage bed. Again, pray for any couples that are engaged to be married, that God will grant them purity and self-control. Also ask the Lord that the husbands and wives will not deprive one another of sexual intimacy.

Day 37 –

If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved...for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' (Romans 10:9-10, 13 NIV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- ❖ Pray that any AOM guest who does not yet know Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior will come to this knowledge and receive His free gift of eternal life. Also ask the Lord to remove any deceptions that might hinder the truth from speaking to anyone in need of salvation.

Day 38 –

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40)

- ❖ Pray for those providing childcare during the AOM. Ask God to provide willing and competent helpers so that the guests will not be distracted by this concern.

Day 39 –

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, (Ephesians 3:20)

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. (Hebrews 6:10 NIV)

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that all of the leaders and helpers for this AOM will acknowledge and receive God's equipping power and blessings, so they can joyfully fulfill their specific roles with excellence. Ask the Lord to enrich and encourage them as they serve the guests.

Day 40 –

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV)

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5 NIV)

- ❖ Pray this scripture on behalf of the AOM hosts, all other workers, and the guests. Rejoice in what God will do in hearts and homes through this event.

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On Site Prayer Guide

Introduction

It is our hope that this Art of Marriage Prayer Guide will help you develop a worshipful time of prayer during the course of the event. This Prayer Guide is filled with the Word of God for you to declare as you intercede for those attending. When you pray Scripture for these couples and individuals, you are imparting the life and power of God. As you enter the world of intercession, you place yourselves on the front battle line for God. In order to combat spiritual attack, one MUST be prepared. Begin now by reading Ephesians 6:10-18, taking up the armor of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

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Session 1 - Love Happens

Main Teaching Truths:

1. God designed marriage and has a great plan in mind.
2. The primary purpose of marriage is to reflect God's glory.
3. It is important to receive your spouse as God's perfect gift for you.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:1,10)

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that the Holy Spirit will fall fresh on every couple in a personal way throughout the event.
- ❖ Pray for the couples who have not yet arrived – for peace and protection from the enemy, and that they will persevere through any obstacles standing in their way.
- ❖ Pray that each person will have a tender, open, and humble heart as the material is presented.
- ❖ Pray for open, honest, and healing conversations as issues are exposed and addressed throughout the event.
- ❖ Pray that couples will be free from distractions and worries during the event. May children be well cared for and at peace away from their parents.
- ❖ Pray for all the leaders and workers as they serve throughout this event, that they be Spirit-filled and eager to serve.

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22-23 NIV)

- ❖ Pray for each couple to get the right picture of a godly marriage in this session, and to understand that their marriage is a tool to display the relationship between Christ and His followers.
- ❖ Ask God to stir in the couples' hearts so that unity and oneness will be the desire of their souls

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6 NIV)

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (Genesis 2:18)

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that couples will receive each other as God's perfect gift and provision.
- ❖ Pray for a fresh reminder of God's great design for marriage.
- ❖ Pray that couples will develop a resolve to see marriage as a commitment for life, and that the Lord will remove distorted worldviews and messages.
- ❖ Pray that individuals will leave any dependence on parents or other things and cleave to one another emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- ❖ For the couples facing significant obstacles to oneness due to difficult issues in the past or present (unfaithfulness, infidelity, addictions, etc.): pray that Satan’s schemes against them are defeated so that healing and oneness can occur.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Ephesians 3:16-17)

- ❖ Pray that couples will realize that the strength to "do marriage" does not come from them, but from God.
- ❖ Pray that God will break down any walls and barriers between husband and wife.
- ❖ Pray that couples will rely on God for power, love, strength, wisdom, and endurance in their marriage.
- ❖ Pray that couples will understand that marriage is about giving and serving, not just receiving -- serving one another, and serving God together.

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Session 2 - Love Fades

Main Teaching Truths:

1. Couples naturally drift toward isolation.
2. Our differences and weaknesses can push us apart.
3. Sin has affected every marriage.
4. The gospel brings healing and reconciliation.
5. Couples must learn to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit in marriage.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23-24)

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. (Psalm 95:7b-8a NIV)

Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart." (Matthew 12:25 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that God will soften hardened hearts and set healing in motion for those with deep emotional wounds.
- ❖ Pray that God will bring to light any deception, blame shifting, and manipulation, and that each spouse will see themselves honestly.
- ❖ Pray for each couple to recognize and confess the threats affecting their marriage – unresolved conflicts, societal pressures, difficulties, extramarital affairs, and pride.
- ❖ Pray that each couple will allow God to use their differences and weaknesses to build interdependence and unity.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3 NIV)

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17 NASB)

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. (Philippians 2:3 NASB)

- ❖ Pray for greater insight to reveal the deeper issues behind arguments and conflicts, issues that might perpetuate strife in their marriage.
- ❖ Pray that God will transform couples to complete each other rather than compete with each other (Eph. 6:12).

- ❖ Pray that God will begin to melt feelings of criticism, contempt, and defensiveness from their hearts.
- ❖ Pray that couples will have open, honest, and healing conversations as issues are exposed and addressed.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.... He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. (Psalm 103:8, 10-13 NIV)

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NASB)

- ❖ Pray that each person will understand the depth of God's love for them.
- ❖ Pray that couples will walk in fellowship with God, enjoying His blessing, approval, and pleasure.
- ❖ Where there is unforgiveness and defensiveness, pray that guests will begin to humble their hearts before God.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

For the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23a NLT)

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. (Isaiah 51:1-5 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that each unbeliever will understand the depth of their depravity and the resulting isolation from God.
- ❖ Pray that each spouse will realize their need for God's love, hope, and help in their lives and marriage.
- ❖ Pray that couples will yield their wills and open their hearts in total surrender to the Spirit

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6 NASB)

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10 NIV)

- ❖ Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal the person of Jesus Christ to anyone who does not know Him.
- ❖ Pray that God will draw anyone unsaved to Himself during this event, developing in them a desire to surrender their lives to Christ.
- ❖ Pray that anyone who has not prayed to accept Christ will choose to do so today, by faith, and not delay. Today is the day of salvation!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

For by grace you've been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever will draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ... But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. (John 14:16,26 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that those who accepted Christ will begin to understand they are a new creation, and that they need to turn away from past destructive patterns.
- ❖ Pray that God will deliver couples from any addictions to self and slavery to sin.
- ❖ Pray that each spouse will commit to grow in their faith – whether they are a new believer or not.
- ❖ Pray that couples will develop a desire to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Pray that all will understand what the Holy Spirit does in their lives, and what it means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Pray that God will infuse the energy and discipline it takes for couples to nurture their relationship by the Spirit's power.

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Project 1 – Resisting the Drift

(Couples will be working on this project tonight as they go home and also as they return in the morning).

Topics Couples Will Work Through:

1. Receiving Your Spouse
2. The Natural Drift Toward Isolation
3. Every Marriage Needs Christ

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:23)

Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart.” (Matthew 12:25 NLT)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17 NIV)

- ❖ Pray for couples to receive one another as God’s perfect provision.
- ❖ Pray for insight into how couples can change the way they relate to one another so that it promotes unity.
- ❖ Pray that couples will become aware of areas in their marriage that need more attention in order to prevent further drifting apart.
- ❖ Pray that each spouse will let go of past mistakes and allow for fresh starts.
- ❖ Pray they can express verbally the ways in which they are thankful for each other.
- ❖ Pray for a renewed ability to walk by the Spirit.
- ❖ Pray that couples will allow each other to feel "safe" as they share and communicate heart issues.
- ❖ Pray that God will speak through each question, according to His divine plan for them.

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Session 3 - Love Dances

Main Teaching Truths:

1. God designed different responsibilities for men and women in marriage.
2. Though their responsibilities are different, men and women are still equal in value.
3. God calls men to sacrificially love and lead their wives.
4. God calls women to respect and support their husbands.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman. (1 Corinthians 11:11)

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Romans 12:3)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. (Romans 12:4-6)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

- ❖ Pray that couples will recognize and embrace God's design for their different roles.
- ❖ Pray that couples learn to recognize and celebrate each others' unique strengths and gifts.
- ❖ Pray that any false ideas and unrealistic expectations they have for each other are brought to light and released.
- ❖ Pray for a spirit of unity and interdependence.
- ❖ Pray that couples learn how to work together as they share and embrace their God-given gifts.
- ❖ Pray that their marriages will glorify God, and that He will mold them into the image of Jesus.

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23 NASB)

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18 NASB)

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. (Ephesians 5:25 AMP)

- ❖ Pray that husbands will accept God's design for their role in marriage.
- ❖ Pray for husbands to love like the Savior, showing sacrificial love for their wives.
- ❖ Pray that each man will lead like a servant.
- ❖ Pray that each husband grows in his desire to understand and listen to his wife, demonstrating patience and love to her.
- ❖ Pray for the men who have neglected or abused their role as the spiritual leader of the home. Pray for conviction, repentance, confession during sharing time, and complete restoration.
- ❖ Pray that God will show each husband how to nurture and cherish his wife.

Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. (Exodus 18:21 NASB)

*He must be one who manages his own household well. (1 Timothy 3:4 NASB)
But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers. (1 Timothy 5:8 NLT)*

He cared for them with a true heart and led them with skillful hands. (Psalm 78:72 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that husbands will understand their roles as family leader, and that they will grow in godly character.
- ❖ Pray for husbands to be good and godly family managers, family ministers, and family models.

- ❖ Pray for husbands to be providers and protectors of their wives and children.
- ❖ Pray for conviction for men involved in emotional or physical affairs. Ask the Lord to move them to repent, return to their wives, and get right with God.

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. (Proverbs 31:10-12)

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interest, but take an interest in others too. You must have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had. (Philippians 2:3-5 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that each woman will personally embrace God's design for them as wife and mother.
- ❖ Pray for the women to prioritize wisely. Pray that Jesus Christ will be each woman's first love.
- ❖ Pray for the Holy Spirit to show each woman how to model her love for Christ through works of love in her home.
- ❖ Pray for repentance where sin and ungodly attitudes and behaviors have taken root towards her husband and family.
- ❖ Pray that each woman will lay her own life down for her husband and family.

And let the wife see to it that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly]. (Ephesians 5:33b AMP)

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18)

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (Ephesians 5:22-23)

- ❖ Pray that each wife will submit, love, support, and respect her husband through encouraging words, actions, and attitudes.

- ❖ Pray that each wife will support her husband as the spiritual head of their family.
- ❖ Pray that the Holy Spirit will give wives the desire and the discipline to pray for their husbands every day, and to then be content and trust God with his leadership.
- ❖ Pray for the women to have open hearts regarding the definition of “helper.” Pray that each woman will be genuinely awed by the honor God himself has bestowed on the role of helper.
- ❖ Pray that each woman will intimately know God as her Helper in adjusting her priorities, and in her heart to be obedient to His design for her life.
- ❖ Pray that each woman will understand that submission does not mean she is inferior, or that she should blindly follow her husband into sin, or subject herself to verbal or physical abuse. Pray that women in these situations will get help.
- ❖ Likewise, pray for conviction for women involved in emotional or physical affairs. Ask the Lord to move them to repent, return to their husbands, and get right with Him.

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Project 2 – Affirming and Encouraging Each Other

Topics Couples Will Work Through:

1. Individual Time (30-40 min)
 - a. Part One: Each will spend time in prayer using the prayer points given in the guide
 - b. Part Two: Each will write a love letter to their spouse
2. Time Together (15-20 min)
 - a. Couples will share and discuss their love letter with each other.
 - b. Couples will express the commitments they made to God during their individual prayer time.
 - c. Couples will close their time together by praying and taking turns thanking God for each other.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17 NIV)

*And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21 NLT)
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NIV)*

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

- ❖ Pray for couples' hearts to be made tender and open to share with their spouse in new ways.
- ❖ Pray that the Holy Spirit fills hearts with a fresh commitment based on God's unconditional love, the same love that He wants us to have for our spouses.
- ❖ Pray that each couple turns complaints and negative thinking into prayer requests.
- ❖ Pray that couples confess sins of rejection, bitterness, and withdrawal.
- ❖ Pray that God will reignite the flame of each couple's "first love" for one another.
- ❖ Pray that God will lead them in remembering the good memories they have built over the years.
- ❖ Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide their hearts in what to express to their spouse, and give them the ability to do so openly and honestly.
- ❖ Pray that they will read their letters to each other with a new and fresh spirit of love and commitment.

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Session 4 - Love Interrupted

Main Teaching Truths:

1. Conflict is common to all marriages.
2. The goal is not to be conflict-free but to learn to handle conflict correctly when it occurs.
3. Healthy conflict resolution occurs when couples are willing to seek and grant forgiveness.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. (James 4:1-2)

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4:6-7 NIV)

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

- ❖ Pray for the couples to understand anger, and to recognize its power in their own lives.
- ❖ Pray that couples will release blame, judgment, and condemnation they may have for each other.
- ❖ Pray that couples have a heart to forgive and set each other free from the debt of offense and accusation.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

- ❖ Pray for couples to have the courage to individually walk through the process of resolving conflict, taking ownership for their own part in it.
- ❖ Pray that couples let go of any resentment and vengeance.

- ❖ Pray for improved communication skills on the content level (truth) and the relational level (love).

Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. (Psalm 34:13-14 NLT)

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. (Romans 12:3 NLT)

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? (Matthew 7:4)

- ❖ Pray that each spouse will see their part in marital conflicts and honestly admit them.
- ❖ Pray for couples to walk humbly through the process of resolving conflict, with the goal of attaining oneness.
- ❖ Pray for those that may encounter resistance from spouses as issues are exposed.
- ❖ Pray for the rebuilding of trust as grace is extended to each other.
- ❖ Pray that couples know Christ can give the hope they need to mend anything in the marriage relationship.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29 NASB)

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Galatians 6:1 NASB)

A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare. (Proverbs 15:1 NLT)

- ❖ Pray for the understanding and application of "loving confrontation."
- ❖ Pray that each spouse will increase their listening skills and truly hear each other.
- ❖ Pray that couples learn God-honoring principles and practical methods for resolving conflicts.
- ❖ Pray that each spouse will pursue peace by actively choosing to bless their mate.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against

another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12-14)

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. (1 Peter 3:8-12)

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:17)

- ❖ Pray that the couples will understand the power of extending kindness, compassion, and forgiveness to their spouses.
- ❖ Pray for the Lord to begin the process of rebuilding trust in hurting couples. Pray for individuals to put their trust in the Lord, and in His ability to “make all things new.”
- ❖ Pray for restored closeness and oneness in relationships.

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Project 3 – Working It Out

(Couples may be working on this project during lunch time.)

Topics Couples Will Work Through:

1. Individual Time: practice seeking and granting forgiveness (15 min)
 - a. Part 1: Couples will work through personal reflective questions in the guide.
 - b. Part 2: Couples will prepare their hearts by humbling themselves before God in prayer and reading through preparation points in the guide.
2. Time Together: verbally seek forgiveness from or grant it to your spouse (20-30 min)
 - a. Couples will walk through the interaction steps as they are written in the guide.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:6-7)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:15-17)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another; forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (Colossians 3:12-13)

- ❖ Pray that couples will verbally forgive and grant forgiveness to each other during this project.
- ❖ Pray for God to reveal unhealthy patterns of resolving conflict, especially those that have been carried over from a previous marriage.
- ❖ Pray for God to remove any defensiveness, and to give them a spirit of grace and mercy.
- ❖ Pray that couples will truly listen to each other and be slow to speak.
- ❖ As couples talk, pray that truth will be expressed in an attitude of love.

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Session 5 - Love Sizzles

Main Teaching Truths:

1. God created sex and has a wonderful design in mind.
2. A satisfying sex life is the result of a satisfying marriage relationship.
3. The ultimate purpose of sex is to bring glory to God by celebrating oneness.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:3-4 NLT)

Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:9 NASB)

- ❖ Pray that couples will place value on creating companionship, encouraging passion, and growing in spiritual intimacy.
- ❖ Pray for couples to understand to what extent physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual factors are affecting sexual intimacy. Pray also for direction from the Lord in combating those factors.
- ❖ Pray for couples to celebrate God's design for sexual intimacy, to celebrate their differences, and to have freedom in sexual expression.

I am my beloveds and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us rise early and go to the vineyards ... there I will give you my love. (Song of Solomon 7:10-12 NASB)

- ❖ Pray that the biblical portrayals of romantic love in the bible will set godly examples of healthy passion. (Song of Solomon 7:1-9 and 5:10-16 in the manual on pages 102-103.)
- ❖ Pray that couples will enjoy intimacy to the full capacity, as God intended it.
- ❖ Pray that God will rekindle the romance in their marriage – even establishing regular date nights.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but

rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:8-14 NIV)

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil. (Psalm 119:133 NLT)

- ❖ Pray for individuals to turn away from sexual sin, and to run from all temptation.
- ❖ Pray that God will set every man and woman here free from any pornographic or lustful habits.
- ❖ Pray that couples will be able to communicate their expectations and boundaries in intimacy.

I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. (Psalm 34:4-5 NLT)

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame. (Psalm 25:1-3a NIV)

- ❖ Pray for release from any shame and fear related to sexual sin, or as the result of the sin of others.
- ❖ Pray for those that may encounter conflict today from past sexual issues that were exposed. Pray that healing and forgiveness can begin to replace hurt and anger.
- ❖ Pray for pure hearts to allow intimacy between spouses.

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8 NASB)

- ❖ Pray that husbands and wives will not deprive one another of sexual intimacy.
- ❖ Pray that this event will help couples learn how to strengthen romance and intimacy in their marriage.
- ❖ Pray that couples will clearly communicate their emotions and needs in a way that their spouse understands.

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Session 6 - Love Always

Main Teaching Truths:

1. To leave a godly legacy, we must think about the impact of our lives on future generations.
2. Our hope for leaving a lasting legacy is through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Leaving a godly legacy requires putting a stake in the ground.

Scripture with Prayer Directives:

Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. (Psalm 127:3-4 NASB)

A child left to himself brings shame to his mother. ... Discipline your son and he will give you rest; he will give you delight to your heart. (Proverbs 29:15b,17)

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly - not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. (1 Peter 5:2-4 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that couples will truly understand the impact of their marriage on future generations.
- ❖ Pray for a renewed and refreshed view of their children as gifts and blessings from the Lord.
- ❖ Pray that fathers will commit (or recommit) to leading their children and families.
- ❖ Pray for the mothers to teach, train, and love their children unconditionally.

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. (Proverbs 4:1-2 NASB)

And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NLT)

Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods of your forefathers worshiped beyond the river in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will

serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:14-15 NIV)

- ❖ Pray for parents to establish a commitment to reclaim their children and home for the glory of God.
- ❖ Pray that each parent will have a desire to instill godly principles in their children, and to uphold high standards at home.
- ❖ Pray that couples will commit to leave a godly legacy that will endure.

And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse. (Malachi 4:6 NASB)

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:16)

...for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (1 Timothy 2:2)

- ❖ Pray that husbands will understand their role as family leader, and that they will set the example of godly character for their children.
- ❖ Pray that wives will submit to their husbands, and that they will model to their children the relationship of Christ's bride (the church) to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Pray that God will give these couples strength to start a new legacy today, breaking down barriers and insecurities.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4 NIV)

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need.... (Colossians 1:9-11 NLT)

- ❖ Pray for a personal pursuit of growth in Christ for both individuals and couples.
- ❖ Pray that God will equip them with what they need to make their marriage succeed.

- ❖ Pray that each person recognizes their God given gifts and abilities, and that God will give them the desire to use them for His glory.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20 NASB)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8 ESB)

- ❖ Pray that couples will have a desire to reach out to the world.
- ❖ Pray that couples will lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with the challenges they will undoubtedly face.
- ❖ Pray that those who made a commitment to Christ will find a biblically-based church home.
- ❖ Pray that pre-married couples will lean on Christ as they make final decisions.
- ❖ Pray that remarried couples will also lean on Christ in dealing with blended family challenges.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8 NLT)

- ❖ Pray that all couples seek a godly vision and direction for life.
- ❖ Pray that couples will have boldness, courage, and resolve to implement decisions they made during this event.
- ❖ Pray that the Spirit blesses each couple with faithfulness and fidelity.

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CONCLUSION

After the event we encourage you to have a time of worship and rejoicing. Read through the guest evaluations and give thanks to the Lord for the ways in which He has transformed lives. Make sure to pray for those who have indicated they are continuing to struggle. Pray for couples' safety and protection as they return home and resume their lives.

Amen.