



**STRATEGIC
IMPACT**
INTERNATIONAL

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST.®

“MARRIAGE”

INSTRUCTOR MANUAL

v1.1 (2017)



STRATEGIC IMPACT

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WELCOME!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to the *STRATEGIC IMPACT ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST!* We are delighted that you have returned for further training after your initial *BASIC LEADERSHIP THRUST* experience! We trust that you have continued to faithfully progress through the *SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING CHURCH PLANTERS*, including continuing to make multiplying disciples through personal evangelism.

The focus of this *ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST* is “Marriage.” We recognize that some of you are single at this time. We believe you will also benefit from these sessions, and we have prepared follow up exercises specifically for singles. The Marriage relationship is the closest “neighbor” relationship in the Great Commandment of “Love God and Love Neighbor”. Because this relationship is so foundational, the health of one’s marriage will have a significant effect on all other relationships. In fact, we believe that your family is your first ministry, and that a strong, healthy Christian family will result in a great impact for Christ and His Great Commission.

If you are married, it is imperative that you maintain a healthy marital relationship. If you are single and seeking to be married, it is imperative that you form true, Biblical ideals about marriage.

In this time together, we will focus on topics that directly contribute to the health, purpose, fulfillment, and joy of your marriage and how the Lord wants to work in and through your family for His purposes in the world.

May the Lord deepen your love for Him and for your spouse in the coming days.

Thank you again for joining with us! It is our honor to be with you!

Sincerely,

The Strategic Impact Team



Strategic Impact Multiplies

Leaders ✦ Disciples ✦ Churches ✦ Movements

IDENTITY:

We are a movement of like-minded leaders, passionately committed to Jesus Christ and to each other for the fulfillment of His Great Commission.

VISION:

We exist to offer every person the only hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20

MISSION:

We prayerfully identify and train Leaders to multiply Disciples who ignite Church Planting Movements everywhere.

"...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." - 2 Timothy 2:2

STRATEGY:

We establish Leadership Teams in Strategic Cities of the world to multiply Church Planting Movements among every people group.

"(Paul) took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." - Acts 19:9-10

PROCESS:

VISION SEMINAR (VS)
"SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-day introduction to Strategic Impact.

LEADERSHIP THRUST (LT)
"EXPERIENCE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A three-day intensive experience in personal growth, leadership, and church planting.

SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING CHURCH PLANTERS (SMCP)
"LEARN AND LIVE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-year team experience growing in Christ and multiplying church planters and churches.

SCHOOL OF MULTIPLYING LEADERS (SML)
"LEAD AND LAUNCH THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-year team experience multiplying leaders and church planting movements.

FAN-THE-FLAME SUMMIT (FTFS)
"MULTIPLY THE GREAT COMMISSION."
An annual three-day gathering for Staff, Leaders, and Multipliers to equip, encourage, and strategize in each major region of the world.

**STEP 1: CHANGE YOUR THINKING**

*CHANGE your THINKING from the goal of "building my church" to "reaching my lost community → country → world."
(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 20:24)*

**STEP 2: PRAY**

PRAY for laborers for the Harvest! (Luke 10:2; Acts 13:1-3)

**STEP 3: CAST THE VISION**

*Cast God's VISION to His people for saturating your area with the Gospel.
(Acts 1:8; 13:1-3)*

**STEP 4: GATHER AND EQUIP A TEAM**

Identify, select, GATHER AND EQUIP a team of at least two multiplying church planters each year.

(Acts 14:21-28; 19:9-10; Colossians 1:7; 2 Timothy 2:2)

**STEP 5: SELECT A SITE**

PRAYERFULLY SELECT A SITE or a group of people God is leading you to reach with the Gospel. (Acts 16:6-40)

- A. *DISCERN* where the Holy Spirit is leading you to start a new cell church.
- B. *INVESTIGATE* needs, strongholds, and activities in the area that would affect the new cell church.

**STEP 6: EVANGELIZE**

EVANGELIZE the people in the area. (Acts 5:42; 14:21,25; 20:20)

**STEP 7: DISCIPLE THE NEW BELIEVERS**

DISCIPLE the new believers where they are. (Acts 14:22; 20:20)

**STEP 8: GATHER THE NEW BELIEVERS**

GATHER the new believers together for:

- A. *Welcome & Fellowship,*
- B. *Worship & Prayer,*
- C. *Study of the Word,*
- D. *Work & Witness.*

(Acts 2:42,46; 12:12; 16:40; Romans 16:15; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15)

**STEP 9: MULTIPLY THE DISCIPLES**

*MULTIPLY the disciples in the new church by repeating the first 8 steps.
(1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)*

**STEP 10: LOCK ARMS TO LAUNCH A MOVEMENT**

LOCK ARMS with other Leaders to launch a movement of multiplying disciples to fulfill the Great Commission.



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SESSION OUTLINES.®

STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 1 - "GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR MARRIAGE"

OVERVIEW:

Know: Participants will understand that God is the author of marriage and following His plan for marriage is the best way for a good and happy marriage.

Feel: Participants will feel confident that if I follow God's plan I can have a good marriage.

Do: Participants will discuss with your spouse how you are doing in fulfilling God's purpose for your marriage. Commit to never divorce. If single, assess if your goals for marriage line up with God's.

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- Marriage is God's **creation**, not man's (Genesis 2:18-25).
- It is a divine institution that God created between a man and a woman, and is therefore, sacred.
- When people re-define marriage through homosexuality, or treat it as insignificant through divorce, they are twisting God's plan from the beginning (Matt. 19:1-12).
- Marriage is seen as a "GRACIOUS GIFT OF LIFE" (1 Peter 3:7) that God has given to humanity in general and Christians in particular. It will be dissolved in the next life (Matt. 22:30).
- No couple stands at the altar and says, "I want to be miserable in this relationship and in a few years get a divorce."
- If you follow God's blueprint for marriage, then you have the greatest chance for success

WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE?

A. To **Glorify** God

1. Man's chief end is to glorify God, which means to put him on display (1 Corinthians 10:31). Marriage is one avenue couples can glorify or honor God.

B. To **Picture** Christ's Relationship with the Church

1. As Christians we are the bride of Christ and Christ is the bride groom (Ephesians 5:22-32). As Christ loved his bride, the church, he gave himself for her; likewise, husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25-29)
2. As the bride of Christ, we are called to submit our bridegroom, Christ. Likewise, wives are to submit to their husbands, as unto Christ (Ephesians 5:24)

3. This is why a godly marriage has great potential for bringing honor to God and helping to fulfill the GC. Why also Satan is attacking marriage and seeking to destroy it.

C. To **Become** One Flesh

1. When we unite with our partner in marriage, we become one flesh and spirit with them (1 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 5:31; Malachi 2:15).
2. So, sexual unfaithfulness and divorce negates God's plan and purpose for marriage (Matthew 19:3-6)

D. To **Produce** Godly Children

1. Although not all couples can have children, for those who can, God desires that they produce godly children who will reflect the image of God and advance the gospel (Malachi 2:15)

E. To Meet Each Other's **Needs / Desires**

1. "It is not good for man to be alone!" Genesis 2:18. Although no marriage partner can meet all of your needs perfectly, God has designed that marriage meets one's physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs (Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Proverbs 5:15-19)

F. To Produce **Christlikeness** in Each Other

1. God uses the joys and difficulties of marriage to make us more like Christ (Romans 8:29). It provides the context for us to grow in and exhibit the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Proverbs 27:15)
2. "God has not given you your mate so much to make you happy, but to make you holy." To change you and form you more into a loving, sacrificial, serving person like Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- God has give to us the wonderful gift of marriage to bring honor and glory to Him, to bless each of us and the world.
- If you want the best marriage possible, you must follow the plan and purpose of God for your marriage.

Session 1 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. Did we marry for the purpose of glorifying God? How can our marriage better reflect the glory of God and Christ's relationship to His church?
2. Are we raising our children in a godly way to know and follow Christ? How can we improve our parenting according to God's ways?
3. Tell each other what needs he/she fulfills in your life. Ask your marriage partner, "What needs do you have that I could better fulfill at this time?"
4. Tell your husband/wife how he/she has helped you become more like Christ. Tell each other how your partner could help you grow to be more like Christ.

5. Discuss the following marriage commitment:

"Because God has called us together in marriage to glorify Himself, magnify Christ, raise godly children, become one flesh and meet other's needs, I commit myself to be completely faithful to you, to strive to make our marriage all that God wants it to be, and to let nothing but death ever part us."

How would you express this commitment in your own words to your spouse?

If you are sincere and willing to fulfill this commitment, please sign below:

Husband: _____ Date: _____

Wife: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: If you have difficulty making this commitment as an individual or as a couple, please make an appointment with a Godly mentor or pastor and discuss the marriage issues which you need to work through together.

Session 1 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. How does God's purpose and plan for marriage differ from your own or your culture's ideas of what marriage should be?
2. Which of the six purposes of God for marriage is the newest idea for you? Which one excites you most as you think about your possible future marriage, and why?
3. Someone has said, "The best way to prepare for marriage is not to try to find the right mate, but to become the right person." How can you best become the person that would be a good husband/wife for another?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-35. How can you use this time in your life as a single person to best know, follow and serve Christ?
5. If God calls you to marriage in the future, what pressures or temptations as a single do you face that most threaten fulfilling God's purpose for your future marriage? What can you do to strengthen yourself to withstand these pressures or temptations?
6. Consider the following commitment:
"I realize that God's purpose for marriage is to bring glory to Himself and Christ, to raise godly children, to become one flesh and meet my partner's needs. In light of this, I pledge to concentrate on being a good and godly follower of Christ now and to only marry a Christian in order to fulfill God's plans for marriage. If God leads me to marry, I trust the Lord to bring the right person at the right time into my life. In the meantime I will live faithfully for the Lord (and my future spouse)."

If you are sincere and willing to make this commitment, please sign below:

Name: _____ Date: _____

**STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 2 - "GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR SEX IN MARRIAGE"**

OVERVIEW:

Know: Participants will understand that sex is God's gift to married couples for their pleasure, unity and having children.

Feel: Participants will feel grateful to God and to one's spouse for the gift and responsibility of sex.

Do: Participants will seek to fulfill the sexual needs of one's spouse within the confines of marriage.

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- Today we are speaking about one of the most misunderstood and abused gifts that God has given to people: sex.
- What God intended for good for His people, Satan and the world has distorted with the result that it has harmed many people
- We want to understand and practice this marvelous gift from God in the way that He planned it for our greatest fulfillment and His greatest glory!

I. God's Provided Sex as a Good Gift for His People

- A. Sex was **created** by God, and is therefore, His gift to humanity (1 Timothy 4:4; Genesis 1:28-29; Proverbs 5:15-19). It is not inherently dirty or ungodly (Song of Solomon; Hebrews 13:4).
- B. Prior to marriage we are to **abstain** for any form of sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:4).
- C. Sex is to be enjoyed by one man and one woman within **marriage**.
- D. Sex outside of marriage - **adultery** or **fornication** - is never God's plan.
- E. When a society disregards God's commands to reserve sex for marriage, he allows a society to be **overtaken** by this sin (Romans 1:24-27).

II. God's Purpose for Sex within Marriage

- A. Sex is a **Picture** of oneness and unity.
 - 1. Sex is a picture of the oneness and intimacy that the Trinity possesses, and the oneness Christians possess with God (1 Corinthians 6:16-17)

- B. Sex is for the **Pleasure** of His people.
1. Sex is designed for recreation and pleasure. God wants married couples to enjoy foreplay and the act of intercourse itself (Song of Solomon; Proverbs 5:15-19)
- C. Sex is meant to also **Produce** children.
1. Sex is the means by which God propagates the human race and is an opportunity for Christians to raise Godly children who will repeat the process (Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15)
- D. Sex was given to help meet our **Personal** needs
1. Sex is designed to also meet your physical, emotional and psychological needs.
 2. The goal is to meet the sexual needs of your partner (I Corinthians 7:1-5). Your first concern is to meet your married partner's sexual needs, not your own. As each does this, both will have their needs met.

III. God Designed Sex to be a **Priority** in Your Marriage.

- A. Married couples are not to deprive each other, unless they agree to abstain for spiritual purposes (I Corinthians 7:3-5.) The frequency will be determined by each couple. Married couples are not to use sex as a manipulative tool.

IV. God Designed Certain **Boundaries** for Sex within Marriage.

- A. God allows great freedom to take place between married couples. All Christian couples will need to discuss what those boundaries are for their marriage. The Biblical description of love should be your guide, *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful...”* - 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- B. However, any forms of perversion, pornography or adultery are outside the parameters of scripture, and are not permissible within marriage. (Hebrews 13:4)

Conclusion:

- God gave sex as a great gift to a married man and woman.
- If you are in any type of sexual/emotional relationship with someone other than your spouse, you must repent and forsake this sin.
- All of us want to enjoy God's gift of sex to its fullest. In order to best enjoy this gift, we must follow His plans and purposes for sex.
- Make it your priority to receive and develop this marvelous gift with your spouse.

Session 2 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. What faulty ideas about sex from the world or your experience did you bring into marriage? Do we fully embrace sex a good gift from God to be enjoyed with each other?
2. Ask your spouse, “Are you satisfied with the frequency of sex that we have?”
3. Ask your spouse, “What could I do in our sexual relationship that would bring your more fulfillment and pleasure?”
4. Ask your spouse, “Is there anything in our sexual relationship that you feel uncomfortable with, or that you think is outside of God’s plan and purpose for sex?”
5. Do we feel that we have the number of children that God desires for us to have?

NOTE: If you have significant disagreement about the practice of sex in your marriage, please seek a godly and mature Christian counselor to help you work through these issues together.

Session 2 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles - men with men, women with women - to discuss these questions:

1. What is the most important thing you learned from this session about God's purpose for sex?

Control over your sexual desires before marriage is very important in preparation to have the best possible sexual relationship in your marriage. Read together 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 and discuss the following questions:

2. What do you most like about these verses?
3. What do you find confusing about these verses?
4. What do you learn about God and his purpose for sex in these verses?
5. What do you learn about people and how they are to handle their sexual desires.
6. In light of these verses, is there any action or relationship that you need to change?
7. How would you finish this statement, "*Before I am married, God wants me to control my sexual desires by...*"

STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 3 - "GOD'S ROLE FOR YOU IN YOUR FAMILY"

OVERVIEW:

Know: Participants will understand how to cultivate healthy relationships through their particular role in their family.

Feel: Participants will feel motivated to fulfill their family role.

Do: Participants will commit to fulfilling their family role as their first ministry priority.

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- Family relationships shape life, perhaps more than anything else.
 - One of God's greatest qualifications for spiritual leadership is how a leader functions within his family. (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6)
- I. How one fulfills God's role for them in the family is the **proving** ground for his/her ministry. (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
- II. Nothing is more **satisfying** than close family relationships who relate to one another in the roles that God designed. (Psalm 128)
- III. Your first ministry priority is to fulfill your **role** in your family.
- A. **Wives:** To your husband: respect and love. (Ephesians 5:22-24; Titus 2:4)
 - B. **Husbands:** To your wife: love and honor. (Ephesians 5:25-30; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7)
 - 1. A husband is responsible to provide for the material needs of the family. (1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10)
 - 2. A pastor/leader must be a 'one woman' man. (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
 - 3. A husband is to be devoted to love, honor and understand his wife. (1 Peter 3:7)
 - C. **Parents:** To your children: instruct, disciple, model, but do not exasperate. (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21)
 - D. **Children:** To your parents: honor and provide for. (Ephesians 6:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:3-8)

Conclusion:

- God designed the family and best knows how it should function.
- As you fulfill your unique role in the family there will be harmony and happiness all for the glory of Christ!.

Session 3 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following questions:

1. From this session, describe to one another what God's role is for you in your family.
2. Complete this statement to your spouse: "I really appreciate these ways that you fulfill God's role in our family..."
3. Complete this statement to your spouse: "You could help me better fulfill my role in our family by..."
4. Wife: Lovingly and gently suggest to your husband how he might show you greater love and understanding.
5. Husband: Lovingly and gently suggest to your wife how she might show you greater respect and love.
6. Husband and wife: Discuss together how you could improve instructing and training your children to know and follow Christ.
7. Husband and wife: Discuss together any responsibilities to your parents that you need to take care of at this time in their lives.
8. Each of you separately write down your answer to this statement: *"In light of this session, I will trust the Lord to enable me to better fulfill my role in our family by..."*

Session 3 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. From this session, describe to one another what God's role is for you in your family at this time.
2. As you consider future marriage, how would you describe the husband's role in the family? The wife's role?
3. What effect on the family have you seen when a husband or wife does not fulfill the role God has called them to?
4. Do you agree or disagree that a wife should have a job outside the home? What are the dangers? What are the benefits?
5. Read Ephesians 6:1-2 and 1 Timothy 5:3-8 again. Describe God's life-long responsibility for you toward your parents

**STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 4 - "GOD'S PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION IN YOUR FAMILY"**

OVERVIEW:

Know: Participants will understand that communication is a vital component in healthy family relationships.

Feel: Participants will feel encouraged by receiving some helpful tools to better communicate.

Do: Participants will commit to communicate in a way that builds relationships and resolves conflicts with others in the family.

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- There is one very important factor necessary to a healthy and growing marriage and family: clear, loving and encouraging communication.
- We need to say words that build our spouse and family members.
- We also need to have skills to resolve conflicts and disagreements, which are inevitable in marriage and family relationships.

I. What is healthy communication?

A. Good communication is the healthy exchange of **thoughts**, messages, or information.

1. We are always communicating through words, the tone of our voice and our body language.
2. The question is, Are we communicating in a way that builds our relationships?

B. Healthy communication is a learned **skill** which is the glue to hold our marriage and family together.

II. How do we learn healthy communication?

A. **Commit** to communicate well with others in your family. (Ephesians 4:29-32)

1. Commit to the **Lord**.
 - a) He desires for you to communicate well to your family.
 - b) He listens to and will judge what you say to others. (Matthew 12:36)
 - c) The Holy Spirit is the master communicator who wants to enable you to communicate well with others. (Matthew 12:34b)

2. Commit to **communicate** well with each other.
 - a) You must commit to communicate, not just exist together.
 - b) You can only grow in your relationship as you make the effort to communicate.
 - c) There will be differences and conflicts in your family relationship and you must choose to resolve these conflicts.

B. Be Careful to **speak**

1. Because words are **powerful**. (Psalm 141:3)
 - a) They can destroy. (James 3:5-10)
 - b) They can encourage. (Isaiah 50:4)
2. Because words impact the **emotional** atmosphere in your relationship. (Proverbs 15:1)
3. Because grace and truth always **benefit** others. (Proverbs 15:4)

C. Be Careful to **listen**

1. Listening is more **important** for communication than speaking. (James 1:19)
2. Listen to fully **understand** what the other says. (Proverbs 11:12)
3. Listen **before** you respond. (Proverbs 29:20)

III. Suggestions to help you communicate well.

- A. Make time to really talk beyond just superficial matters.
- B. Communicate to understand the other and not to defend yourself.
- C. Do not interrupt the other when they are talking
- D. Don't dominate the conversation but give the other an opportunity to talk
- E. Pray together!
- F. Use "I" statements about how you feel, and do not use "you" statements that accuses the other.
- G. Do not bring up past hurts. (Ephesians 4:32)

- H. Commit to resolving conflicts. (Ephesians 4:26)
- I. Do not disrespect the concerns or opinions of the other person.
- J. Take a break if the conversation gets too intense or emotional.
- K. No matter how intense your conflict, tell the other person that you are fully committed to them and the relationship.
- L. Never say “you always” or “you never.”
- M. Say, “I love you” every day.

Conclusion:

- Committing to love another with God’s love is the foundation for good communication. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
- Communication is a skill that takes practice and patience with each other and yourself
- The better we communicate the more healthy and loving our family relationship will be.

Session 4 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following:

In your relationship with one another, there are...

1. ...things that you always agree about
(*For example, one couple agrees that attending church is important*).
2. ...things that you do not agree about, but you can discuss together
(*For example, one couple disagrees about how to discipline their children*).
3. ...things that you disagree about but you cannot discuss because it always turns into an unresolved argument. So you simply avoid it or agree to disagree.
(*For example, one couple always argues about how to spend money*).

Individually, write down 2 or 3 items in your relationship under each category.

Then, as a couple, choose one item from Number 2.

Discuss this issue using the following steps:

Step 1: For five minutes the wife shares how she feel about this issue without interruption by the husband.

Step 2: The husband communicates back to the wife what *she* said and how the *she* feels about it. The husband is only trying to understand the *wife's* view without defending or explaining his view. After the wife agrees that the husband understands how she feels, switch roles and repeat Step 1 and Step 2 regarding the same topic from Number 2 with the husband as the speaker and the wife as the listener.

Over the coming weeks, take time together to go through this process with another item from Number 2.

Session 4 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles to discuss these questions:

1. God gives great guidelines for you to learn in communicating with others. Please gather in groups of 3 or 4 with other singles and read Ephesians 4:25-32 and discuss the following questions:
2. What is one new insight you learn from these verses that will help you to better relate to others?
3. How does God want you to handle anger with another person? Is anger a sin?
4. How do you think the devil gains an opportunity through unresolved anger with others?
5. Give an example of what “corrupting” or “unwholesome” talk might be, verse 29.
6. Give an example of talk that “gives grace” to others.
7. How is the Holy Spirit affected by the way you speak to and treat others?
8. As a result of what you learn from these verses, what difference will it make in the way you speak to others this week?

**STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 5 - "GROWING TOGETHER IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD"**

OVERVIEW:

***Know:** Participants will know that an important part of God's plan for marriage is for husbands and wives to grow together in worshipful intimacy with Him.*

***Feel:** Participants will feel motivated to spend time together seeking to deepen their relationship with God as a couple.*

***Do:** Participants will develop a practical plan for their married and family devotional life.*

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- God created each marriage to have its own unique **spiritual identity** of "oneness." Two people become one unit that starts with a Covenant and a Blessing from God, their parents, and the church.
 - To fully experience God's greatest blessing as a Christian couple, we must make spiritual growth together the highest priority within our marriage.
- I. God designed a married couple to be united in spiritual oneness and unity in their relationship with Him.** (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:15-18)
- A. God's original model for marriage is for a couple to live in spiritual **harmony** with God.
 - B. They are to be **united** together in the Lord.
 - 1. As individuals they are to know, obey and follow Jesus.
 - 2. As a couple they are to grow in their worship and fellowship with Christ.
 - 3. This growth leads to greater oneness and spiritual harmony.
 - C. This spiritual unity in the Lord demonstrates to their children and the world the unity of **Christ and His church**. (Ephesians 5:31-33)
 - 1. A married couple living in loving relationship with each other in the Lord is a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride, the church.

II. As a married couple we must make it our priority to grow in our relationship and union with Christ in order to enjoy His best for our marriage and ministry.

Here are practical ways to grow together in your relationship with Christ:

- A. Resolve conflict and **forgive** one another. (Colossians 3:12-15)
 - 1. Don't let Satan drive you apart through conflict.
 - 2. Humbly love, support, forgive and love one another

- B. Pray, worship and share the **Word** together as a couple. (Colossians 3:16-17)
 - 1. Share what the Lord is teaching you with your spouse.
 - 2. Read and discuss the Bible together.
 - 3. Worship and pray together as a couple and as a family.

- C. Encourage one another and keep each other **accountable** in the Lord. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Conclusion:

- How would you evaluate your individual relationship with the Lord and together as a couple with Him?

- On a scale of 1 to 10 with "10" being the best of an intentional, ongoing, clear, and energized relationship with God - How would you rate your connection to God?

Husband: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Wife: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

As a Couple: (circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Commit to growing as an individual and as a couple in your relationship with God.

Session 5 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to do the following:

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-32
2. Pray for God to reveal to you what He wants to say to each of you through this passage. If there is a behavior that has been contrary to the teaching of the passage, repent now and pray to God together
3. Make a decision in writing to devote to live according to these instructions for the priority of connecting to God and building your relationship with Him - both as individuals and as a couple.
4. Develop a practical plan for Scripture reading and meditation. Pray and worship together as a couple.

Our Commitment to Grow Together in Our Relationship with God:

Example Devotional Connection Plan:

Step 1: Select a book of Scripture (Psalms, Philippians, etc...) Take a passage that is approximately 5 verses.

Step 2: Read this short passage out loud - Take turns reading each verse.

Step 3: Take a short time to think individually about the text you read. Pray silently that God will reveal to each of you what He wants to say to you from His word.

Step 4: Pray aloud as the Holy Spirit leads each of you.

Step 5: Expand your prayer to take into account your concerns as a couple and as a family. Pray for God to use His word to grow faith and for Him to be actively at work within your household.

NOTE: *It is essential that the Husband take the initiative and be intentional in developing what you hope to achieve together spiritually.*

Session 5 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather with other singles in groups of 3 or less for discussion.

1. Select a leader for your group.
2. Read aloud Ephesians 5:21-32.
3. Discuss each verse after it is read.
4. Discuss the ways a couple can grow together in their relationship with God.
5. If you think you may have a spiritual partner to help you grow in your relationship with God, make specific plans to start a journey of spiritual growth together.

Our Commitment to Grow Together in Our Relationship with God:

**STRATEGIC IMPACT - ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THRUST: MARRIAGE
SESSION 6 - "PARTNERS IN THE GREAT COMMISSION"**

OVERVIEW:

Know: Participants should understand that an important part of God's plan for marriage is to work together to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Feel: Participants should feel the need to find practical ways to serve God together as a couple in Christ's Great Commission.

Do: Participants should develop a life plan to get involved in a ministry that includes Making Multiplying Disciples.

OUTLINE:

Introduction:

- God is a team (the Trinity) and works out His plan for the world and universe as a Team.
- God designed marriage to also be a team to fulfill His purposes in the world.
- God's team includes 1. you, 2. your spouse and 3. the Holy Spirit. Together you are called to work with him to fulfill his purposes in your place at this time.
- In previous sessions we have seen the purpose and plan of God for marriage and the individual roles of each family member.
- The main theme of this session is the **supreme need** for for a married couple to work together to also fulfill the **supreme purpose** of God in the Great Commission of Jesus Christ for all mankind.
- When you work as a couple in harmony with God, your relationship with each other will be greatly enriched.

I. God created people to fulfill His divine purpose on the earth.

A. The crown of creation is a human being, designed to reflect God's **image** on earth.
(Genesis 1:26-27)

1. The first purpose for man was to rule over the creation and multiply the human race to the glory of God. (Genesis 1:28)
2. But people turned away from God and sinned against Him. (Genesis 3)

3. Now God has established another supreme purpose for His people: Now those who have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ are called to work together with Him to reconcile other the lost humans to God; to restore the intimate relationship with its creator. (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

B. God's design is for unified **teams** to carry out this great reconciling purpose.

1. God's plan and purpose has always been accomplished through **teams**
 - a) The Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is a team,
 - b) Jesus chose His 12 apostles to work as a team for His purposes.
 - c) Paul worked with teams of people to accomplish the Great Commission (2 Timothy 2:2)
2. Married couples are also a **team** for God's purpose
 - a) Priscilla and Aquila are a good example of how they worked together to evangelize, disciple and start house churches (Acts 18:2-3; 25-26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19).
 - b) A married couple passionately committed to Jesus Christ and to each other for His Great Commission is a power team in the world!
3. The team is effective only if they are passionately **committed** to each other and God's purpose of the Great Commission.

II. You, as a married team, are called to intimate unity in the Lord and to His calling for your family.

- A. God desires a passionate fellowship with you as a **person**.
- B. God desires a passionate fellowship with you as a **married couple**.
- C. God's purpose for your marriage is not only for the purpose of loving one another and raising godly children, but **also** to **fulfill** His Great Commission purposes.

III. How do you grow as a couple in intimate fellowship with God and to fulfill His purposes?
(If we evaluate growth stages in our spiritual life after meeting Christ, we can see distinct steps that mark each stage):

- A. **Holiness** occurs in us when we make the decision to fully devote ourselves to Jesus and His ways.

- B. **Spiritual Health** occurs in us when we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work in all the different areas of our life.
- C. **Calling** is produced in us when our understanding is clarified by the Word and we realize that we exist for His purpose. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- D. **Conviction** of being called is produced in us when we listen to God speak to us about serving Him and His Work.
- E. **Commitment** to the call is produced in us when we feel the call and then commit ourselves before God.
- F. **Consecration** occurs in us when we dedicate our lives completely for the purpose of God and in His infinite mercy to allow us to serve Him.
- G. **Destiny** is produced in us when we understand that the *only reason* for our existence is to glorify God in what we do, and now we live for the accomplishment of His purpose for our lives, in expectation that we will hear from his lips, "*Good and faithful servant ...*"

IV. Joy, fulfillment, unity and intimacy result when you, as a couple, dedicate yourselves to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

- A. We must be **serious** about God's call for us as a couple for His purposes on the earth.
- B. You can alleviate many problems in marriage when you are **unified** in Christ and His purpose.
- C. Joy and fulfillment results when you work **together** as a team to fulfill His Great Commission.

Conclusion:

- Will you dedicate yourselves as a couple today to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission?

Session 6 Exercise for Married Couples:

If you are married, take time to discuss the following:

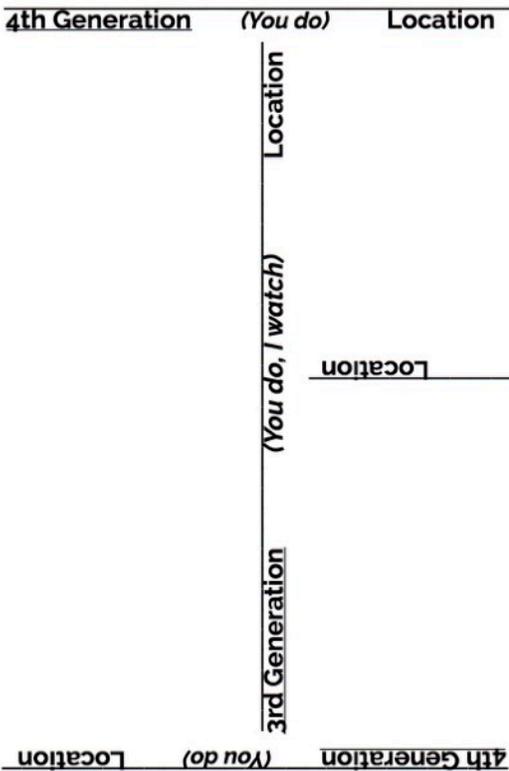
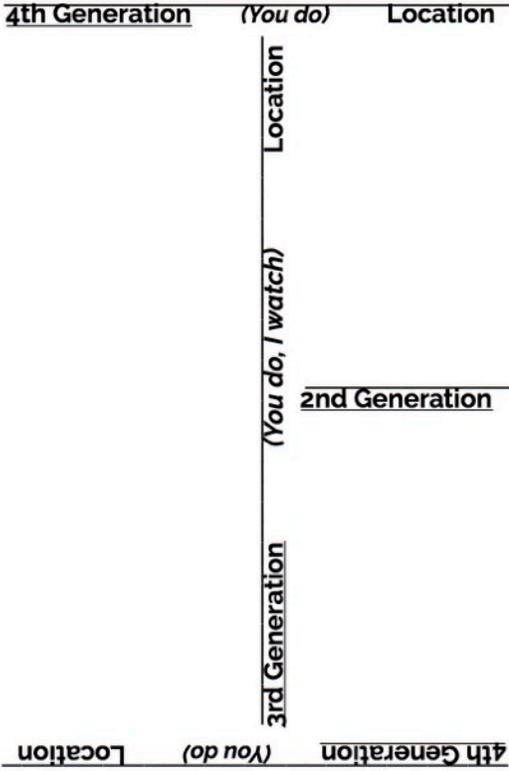
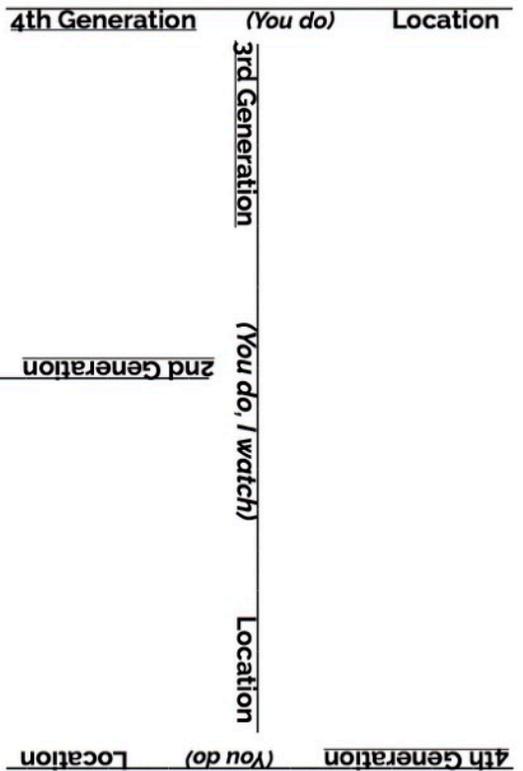
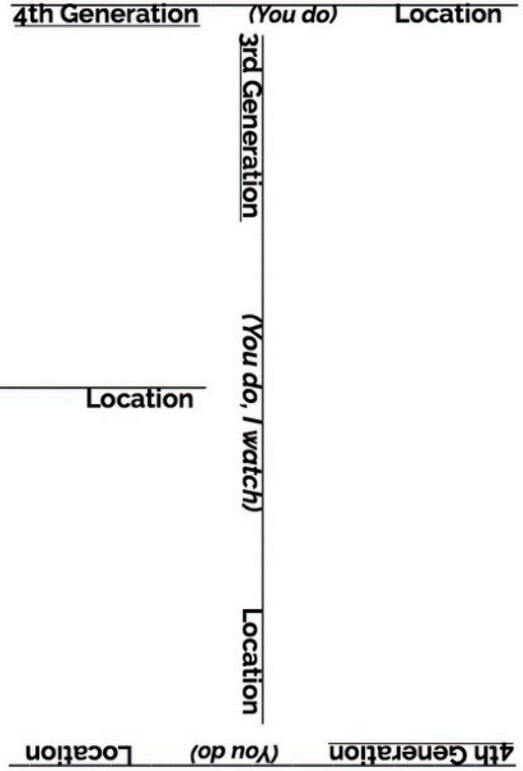
1. As a couple, reflect on and evaluate how you are involved in God's purpose of the Great Commission:
Write your conclusion here:
2. Pray together to God together and ask Him to clarify how you can work as a team to reach a lost world.
3. Pray to God and evaluate how you are doing as a couple in the seven steps of spiritual growth.
 - A. Holiness
 - B. Spiritual Health
 - C. Calling
 - D. Conviction of being called
 - E. Commitment to the call
 - F. Consecration
 - G. Destiny
4. Discuss together what stage best describes you as a couple and what the "next step" would be to advance in your spiritual growth.
5. If you have a specific call, discuss with your wife/husband details of this call. What specific group of people. What place?, etc..
6. Develop a plan together to start or improve the work of making disciples that multiply along with others who are part of that calling. (Use the 10 Steps to reach your nation for Christ as a guideline)
7. Present your plan before God with dates and responsibilities of each one and dedicate your life to this purpose

Session 6 Exercise for Single People:

If you are single, gather into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss these questions:

1. Discuss with each where you think you are at this point in your life in the 7 stages of spiritual growth.
2. Do you have a specific call from God to reach a certain group of people in your city or region? Pray together for that call.
3. Take into account your current relationship with a member of the opposite sex, if you have one. Discuss openly if you feel that person has the same call to serve Christ that you have. Why do you think it is important to have the same calling from God before you marry?
4. For those who have no present relationship with another, pray that God will lead you to the right person who has the same call.
5. Review and discuss what it would mean for you to develop a plan for carrying out the call that comes from God

MINISTRY MAP



STATEMENT OF FAITH

GOD

Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24, 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14

We believe that there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 20:28; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 John 2:2

Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for (made a payment for) the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation and eternal life for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT and THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

John 15:26, 16:8-11

The natural accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them (gives them new life). At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the body. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are applied by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christlike character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that the Scripture in its entirety originated with God, and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus one and at the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and without error in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

SALVATION

Romans 3:23; 5:8; Ephesians 2:1, 8-9

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, man defied God, choosing to go his independent way, and was thus alienated from God and suffered the corruption of his nature, rendering him unable to please God. The fall of man took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are thus in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of mankind is, then, wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part of human works or goodness, and must be received by faith on an individual basis. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He gives assurance in His Word that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation.

HUMAN DESTINY

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Hebrews 9:27

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world, and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. There is an eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and an eternal state of blessing for the saved. Those who have trusted Christ will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in life.

THE CHURCH

Acts 2:42; Romans 12:1-6

The result of union with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His body, the church. There is one true church universal, comprised of all those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of baptism and communion as the ordinances established by Jesus Christ, fellowship, service to the body through development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world. Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. Under the watch care of elders and other supportive leadership, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent upon the ultimate purpose of exalting Christ for the glory of God and the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

FAITH and PRACTICE

1 Corinthians 10:24, 31; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. We recognize that it cannot bind the conscience of individuals in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.



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