

Marriage Enrichment: The Maker's Instruction

1. The Purpose of Marriage

Genesis 1:27

Genesis 2:18

Genesis 2:24–25

Reflection:

Public – in what concrete ways are you demonstrating your public commitment to each other?

Permanent – are there any relationships or practices that cause you to be concerned about your partner's permanent and exclusive commitment to you?

Physical – is there any aspect of your sex life that you want to talk about?

2. The Problem with Marriage

Genesis 3:1–5

Genesis 3:6

Genesis 3:7–13

Genesis 3:16

Reflection:

'they sewed fig leaves...hid...the woman you gave me' – what things have you been unable to communicate to your partner...what prevents this?

'Your desire shall be for your husband' – Women: in what ways do you find yourself seeking to subvert your husband's leadership in the marriage?

'he shall rule over you' – Men: in what ways do you find yourself to be inappropriately domineering?

'pain in child-bearing' – Both: how has having/not having children exacerbated these?

3. The Secret of Marriage

Ephesians 5:22–33

Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church

Sacrificial – His death in the past

Purposeful – holy and without blemish

Nurturing – nourishing and cherishing

- Beware an over/under-spiritualisation

- Note the life-long project

Wives submit to your own husband as to the Lord

Submit

As to the Lord

Reflection:

Men: *in what areas can I be more sacrificial and how can I demonstrate this tangibly?*

How can I be as proactive and thoughtful in future planning for my marriage as I am in other things I care about?

In what ways can I nurture and cherish my wife more? (make sure you include both spiritual and temporal...prayer, Bible study, her needs and desires)

In what ways do you make it more difficult for your wife to fulfil her role?

Women: *Identify one area where you find it hard to submit. Why does it matter?*

Are there any expectations/demands you make (eg standard of living, children's education, housing) that make it more difficult for your husband to fulfil his role?

4. The Future of Marriage

Revelation 21

Reflection:

How does what John is shown encourage and excite you both about the marriage that God has given you?

What will you do to keep this aspect of your marriage 'project' more clearly in sight?