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Marriage Made in Heaven

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God united Adam and Eve to be together, fill the earth, and have dominion. But they sinned and things fell apart. Today the residue of that disobedience still haunts families across the world. How do we intervene to heal husbands and wives to return to God and start afresh?



The Bible says in Genesis 2:22-24, "And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 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." From creation, God instituted marriage for a man and a woman to become one flesh.



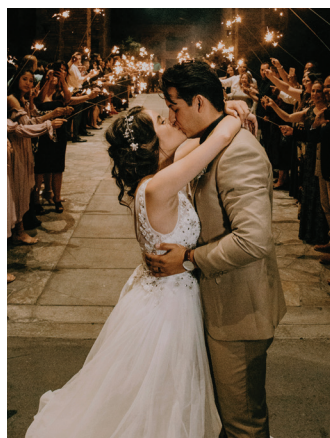
Throughout Scripture, we see a picture of marriage between Christ, the bridegroom, and the church, the bride of Christ. It is because of this correlation that Satan hates marriage

and attempts to destroy what God created. He comes against marriages because they are ordained by God and are a demonstration of love and the fruitful multiplication of man. Jesus taught us in John 15:12-14, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." God is love. He wants us to fulfill our glorious destinies.

Foundations in Christian Marriage Course

At iTEE Global, it became essential to help our students to improve their marriages. To display Christ's love to the world a very special course was created: Foundations in Christian Marriage (FCM). The goal is to strengthen marriages and encourage couples to have a solid foundation for effective ministry. This course is offered to ministry leaders at iTEE University. It explores the founding principles of marriage in Scripture as well as several of the bedrock issues that affect marriage, such as your understanding of yourself and your spouse. It is designed primarily for engaged and married people or for those who minister to them. It is also useful for those who want to improve their close relationships. There is practical and theological learning, and a weekly discussion or other project to do with a spouse, fiancé, family member, or close friend. The major goal of FCM is to improve marriages and our relationship with God and the church He so loves. This course was written by Debbie Wood who is a Global facilitator at iTEE Global.

Building Strong Marriages



Marriage is a spiritual and natural concept. Both believers and unbelievers get married. The spouses learn to bear one another's faults and work on their relationship. Generally, couples make these vows: "In the name of God, I, ____, take you, ____, to be my wife/ husband, to have and to hold from this day

forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,

in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until parted by death". There is joy in the companionship of marriage and the couple must commit to one another. But bad things can happen, even in Christian homes.

Ministry leaders are not immune to marital problems. Some of them suffer because of the expectations of people in the church. Oftentimes, they cannot admit that they are failing in their marriages. A pastor has to make hard choices between his own family and the congregation. He has to assist members during times of sudden loss, critical illness, and even, for birth, death, counseling, graduation, and other family changes. Ministry leaders often work on Sundays when children are out of school and may need attention. Pastors have to be available for their families but also in the church for services and other events. These things can strain marriages. Ministry leaders must properly balance the needs of the ministry and that of their spouses and children.



Satan wants to destroy marriages because he knows that a healthy marriage builds a healthy church and a strong community. Satan's goal is to put man and woman against one another. Several ministry leaders have taken the course and they testify how God changed their lives and built stronger bonds between them as husband and wife.

An Outpouring of Love into His Community

One ministry leader who took FCM had been a pastor for 20 years. Unfortunately, in his community, women are considered property, and a dowry is paid for them at the wedding. One of the exercises is for the student to list the Fruit of the Spirit they see in their spouse and then write down when they didn't demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit.

In this case, the course facilitator noticed this man didn't put anything for love and questioned him. He replied that he loved his children, but his wife was his property. The facilitator gave him a verse in



Ephesians 5:25, that says: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." The man said that God shone a light on this passage and love suddenly filled his heart. He went around his community, telling men to stop beating their wives and to love them. His heart toward his wife changed, and love outpoured for his community. He began to translate the materials into French and Swahili so others could learn. A proper understanding of marriage can affect a marriage and change a community.

Arranged Marriages



Arranged marriages are still common in India, China, Pakistan, Japan, Iran, Iran, Indonesia, Bangladesh, South Korea, and some parts of Africa. In any marriage, love is a choice. When people choose to love one another

as Christ loved the church, the marriage can be successful. One challenge faced in many arranged marriages is the continued interference by the parents after the couple is together. Genesis 2:24 reminds us, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Leaving and cleaving are two principles taught in the FCM course.

In India, the groom often brings the bride into his family home and expects her to live in harmony with his parents. However, many women report mistreatment and abuse from the husband's family. Facilitators help the couple restore the marriage to align with the Word of God while also respecting the parents. It is often a delicate balance. Facilitators teach students to practice how to be more like Jesus, walk according to the Spirit, and understand

the Fruit of the Spirit. This can help them break free of generational abuse and see improvements in their marriages.

The Plight of Polygamy

According to the World Population Review, polygamy is legal in several places worldwide. Many countries deal with this controversial marriage situation.



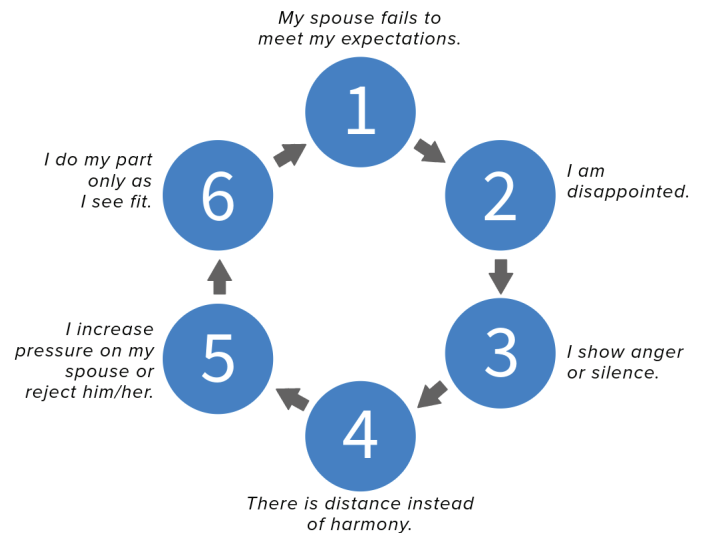
In countries where we work - India, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda - iTEE Global is training on the importance of becoming one flesh and remaining faithful to one another in marriage. Many of our students have grown up in polygamist homes. They report that polygamy breaks up families and causes children to live in a home where a father is absent. These families are poor. Women cannot find jobs but have to take care of their children, sometimes alone with little from their husbands. Students find it difficult to be a good spouse, or parent, or a good role model to their children when they did not have that experience. They say that polygamy creates jealousy and competition between children and between the mothers; in the end, they all suffer from low self-esteem and lack of confidence. The FCM course helps students develop a healthy self-image and assist them to see themselves as God does.

The church must be proactive in teaching young people the problems created by polygamy to eliminate certain issues. Pastors in polygamist communities have the challenge of making disciples of new converts who are polygamists. Sometimes they bring the whole family to church. Only the grace of God and applying wisdom can bring solutions in these situations.

Everyone Has Expectations

Expectations, particularly unmet ones, are a common problem in marriage. This diagram from the FCM course demonstrates why expectations are such a problem.

The Expectation and Performance Cycle



Source: Weekend to Remember Seminar and adapted by Debbie Wood.

Helping pastoral leaders recognize the expectation cycle and what to do about it is critical to helping couples thrive in their marriage. Sometimes, we treat God in the same way; we expect Him to act according to our will instead of His plans for our lives. Learning about these marriage principles can also help our relationship with Christ.

Taking Scripture Out of Context

Around the world, many people take Scripture out of context or manipulate Scripture to raise men above women. Recently a male student posted this in a discussion post: "Most of the time, I don't feel comfortable cleaning the house, like mopping, sweeping, and washing clothes. It's not often that I like doing these chores. But when I went through this course, I learned that when doing things, I should consider my spouse. How am I serving her? I will be accountable to God. My spouse is not my slave but my companion, which God blessed me with". "Our character and attitude show who we are, whether at home or church. We should be an example of following Christ and become a true disciple willing to serve his spouse and others. God has revealed to me how to be a better husband, change, and show genuine love to my spouse, not just for certain things but in all that we do. I realized that I usually like cooking food but neglect to help her clean the house and wash clothes. I need to change my mind set to a biblical standpoint."

Facilitator Profile: Beverly and Gerald DeWit



Beverly Dewit has been the facilitator of the Foundations in Christian Marriage course since February 2022. Her husband Gerald has been a co-facilitator since May 2023. They have seen a direct correlation between the effort students have put into the course and the improvement they see in their marriage.

Most of the students who are reluctant to engage in the course have problems in their marriage. Often, this is because there are hidden secrets. These are sometimes uncovered: secrets of rape, emotional and physical abuse, and false teachings that have instilled fear. Sometimes, students have been traumatized by experiences in their lives or from the knowledge of a parent having an affair. Some students in their youth were traumatized by the death of their parents.

As a facilitator, Beverly can identify the problems in three ways. First, a student may write it down in their life notebook. Second, the Holy Spirit may give a word of knowledge and what to say to a student. Third, a student suddenly becomes reluctant to engage in the course. In one case, a good student suddenly stopped participating in the course. After several weeks of silence, the student revealed a

Prayer Points

Pray for ministry leaders to have healthy relationships.

Pray that the Lord would lead people struggling in their marriages towards Godly counsel.

Pray for the students who have taken the Foundations in Christian Marriage course that they may shine as bright lights in their community.

Pray that ministry leaders would make their family the next highest priority after their relationship with God.

Pray that Christian marriages would act as a testimony to unbelievers around the world.

Send your personal prayer requests to pray@iteeg.org

horrific experience but they never shared it with anyone. After that confession, it was an open and honest dialogue. Beverly provided the needed resources and supplemental course material and recommended local assistance to help in the recovery process.

Another student was engaged to be married. Her parents disapproved of her fiancé. After a while, she realized that he did not have the Fruit of the Spirit. She called off the engagement.

A widow was taking the course. She was told that if she remarries, she will be regarded as promiscuous. In time, she renounced this lie and found love with a man. They made plans to marry, building their foundations from course materials and Scripture. The FCM course is a wonderful way to help couples create a solid foundation in their marriage.

For more information and to register to take the Foundations in Christian Marriage course, go to itee.university.

Ministry Opportunities

Course Publisher/Migrator

Online leadership training in English is an innovative step that allows us to train the top-tier of available English-speaking leaders in almost any country. However, our goal of “multiplying disciple-makers” requires us to make discipleship material available in heart languages. It also requires that we move these materials to a print format since internet access and unlimited data are not universally available.

The Curriculum Department invites detail-oriented folks with some computer experience to join us. We are exploring new processes to take online content and make it ready for printed workbooks. The reward for such tedious work is watching God use your handiwork to expand His kingdom to countries you may never visit.

If you are a little hesitant but would like to know more about the need, please **contact HRinfo@iteeg.org**

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