



The Story of Marriage Interactive Book Answer Key

Chapter 1

1) According to Scripture...

God's Purposes

Men and women are created to *reflect God's image*

Men and women are meant to be *allies*

Be *fruitful*

Multiply each other's effectiveness

Fill the earth with godly seed (children)

Satan's Perverted Counterfeits

Satan wants *God's image perverted*, so he attacks gender

Satan wants men and women to be *enemies*

Be *barren* (fruitless)

Divide and conquer

Empty the earth of godly seed

2) This question requires personal response.

3) Answers to this question will vary.

A possible answer: Something that is *organic* is "alive, real, and not artificial; there are no additives or preservatives; it is natural and life-giving." A marriage that is organic is the real deal. It isn't faked or forced. It is life-giving to the couple and to those around them. In an organic union, there is open, honest communication and continual growth on all levels.

4) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: In marriage, *largeness* is when both husband and wife grow in their gifts and callings and living up to their God-ordained potential. Largeness is grown into. As husbands and wives abide in relationship with Christ and each other, they smooth each

other's rough edges just as iron sharpens iron (see Proverbs 27:17). Largeness can only be experienced as we humble ourselves and receive God's grace to live together as one (see James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

5) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Since God designed marriage with the purpose of making us more fruitful (productive and effective), as well as to enlarge our lives, I want to press through the tough times and fight for my marriage. I do this so that together my spouse and I can experience a largeness of life we would never experience on our own.

6) Answers may vary.

A possible answer: An "I'm stuck" outlook will limit what God can do in and through your marriage. If you see your marriage as a hopeless mess that will never change, that is what it will be. Your natural circumstances will ultimately be determined by your spiritual vision. What we think and believe in our hearts becomes the reality in our lives (see Proverbs 23:7).

Knowing that we are in a spiritual war and that our fight is not against our spouse should help us direct our efforts in the right direction. We fight *for* our spouses and *against* our enemy. He is the one trying to steal, kill, and destroy the oneness God desires for us.

7) This question requires personal response.

Chapter 2

1) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Your marriage is about more than you and your spouse managing to stay together until you die. It's about more than simply making it. To God, your marriage is about reflecting the image and love of Christ to those around you. God's desire is that your marriage will produce children of God (see Malachi 2:15). This includes raising godly children if you choose to have them. But it also means that through marriage, you and your spouse mature into accurate reflections of your Father's nature. He wants to bring heaven to earth through the legacy of your lives.

2) Answers may vary.

A suggested answer:

- Keep your eyes on Jesus—not on yourself, your mate, or the problem.
- Study God's Word to learn how Jesus dealt with difficulties.
- As you go through hardships, meditate on the extreme hardships Jesus endured and overcame. God's Spirit will empower you just like He empowered Jesus!
- Know where you're headed. What are the goals of your marriage? Keep this vision before you. It will help you push through difficulties.

3) This question requires personal response.

4) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: In all areas of marriage, we need a vision, a plan to achieve that vision, and a commitment to the vision. Specific examples of areas that benefit from well-defined vision include finances, parenting, spiritual growth, physical health, sexual intimacy, education, ministry opportunities, everyday goals, and dreams for the future.

A clearly defined vision is one that is both discussed and recorded for future reference. Without having such a vision for each area of marriage, we will likely experience division, which means "two visions." But with a clearly defined vision (and plenty of grace!), we can live in the largeness of marriage as God intended.

Because we go through different seasons in marriage, our visions will need periodic revision. As priorities change and goals are met, new priorities and goals need to be established. God is always doing new things in our lives; our part is to willingly adjust to His plan.

5) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Perfectionism is a perverted form of excellence. When we feel we must do marriage perfectly, we are likely to be paralyzed by the fear of failure. We are also less likely to respond with humility and repentance when we are wrong, because doing so means admitting that we have fallen short of our standard of perfection. Finally, an expectation of perfection sets us up for frustration and disappointment with ourselves, our spouses, and God.

Doing marriage well means that we seek wholeness, holiness, and humility in our standards, our attitudes, and our responses to failure. We are quick to repent and quick to forgive. We recognize that there is always more we can learn, and we are never ashamed to ask for help or support. Doing it well means we learn from our mistakes. We ask God for His grace, and we learn to let go of the past so that we can build well in the future.

Chapter 3

- 1) This question requires personal response.
- 2) This question requires personal response.
- 3) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: God's unconditional love and forgiveness release His grace into our lives. His grace holds the powers to change the way we think, speak, and act. When we humble ourselves before God and repent of our sins, He willingly releases His grace to us (see James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Then the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, works to reproduce Christ's nature in us (see Philippians 2:12-13). In addition, an awareness of how deeply God loves us and how willingly He forgives us will motivate us to live in a way that honors Him.

Regarding forgiveness, our attitude toward our spouses should be, "I believe you want to change, and I forgive you." By having this perspective, we respond to our spouses' wrongs the way Christ responds to our sins. That's powerful! We also serve as a carrier of God's grace to our mate so that God can empower them to be transformed.

- 4) Answers will vary.

Possible answers include:

Fears Husbands Face

Fear of abandonment
 Fear of losing a job (inability to provide)
 Fear of inability to protect family from harm
 Fear of failing/being unsuccessful
 Fear of inability to please his wife
 Fear of inability to perform sexually

Fears Wives Face

Fear of abandonment
 Fear of being a problem
 Fear of being replaced
 Fear of being diminished or overlooked
 Fear of being taken advantage of/abused
 Fear of being terminally ill

One way to overcome fear is to regularly share our fears with each other. We can identify what God's Word says about our fears and hold each other accountable to truth. Through open, honest communication, we become aware of what our spouses are dealing with, and we become able to help each other examine fearful thoughts in light of God's Word.

Another important way to deal with fear is through prayer. Psalm 34:4 says, "I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me; he freed me from all my fears" (GNT*). God doesn't want us to be anxious or worried about anything. He wants us to take all our anxieties, worries, and fears to

Him (see Philippians 4:6-7). We can also use prayer to take a stand against the enemy and declare God's Word over our lives, minds, and emotions.

5) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: The enemy uses unrealistic images of men, women, and relationships to create longings for things that are not real and can never be sustainably achieved. Movies and television offer us love without work, beauty without sacrifice, and trust without risk. They often highlight the romantic facets of relationship without portraying the messy, mundane, or difficult moments in life. Romance novels and pornography offer images of a "perfect" man or woman. In any form, these representations are airbrushed, fictionalized lies.

To guard our hearts and minds against unrealistic expectations of our mates and marriages, we must be careful about what we feed our souls and spirits. Everything we take in through our eyes and ears affects our thinking and behavior. By God's grace, we can learn to recognize and reject any ungodly influence. The Holy Spirit will teach us to feed our souls and spirits the truth of God's Word and to enjoy media and entertainment that cultivate the right desires and expectations.

6) This question requires personal response.

Chapter 4

1) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Since each of us is different, we should all become students of our spouses. What are their likes and dislikes? What do they least enjoy doing? What do they most enjoy us doing for them? We can purposefully make a point of doing these things. We can also “wash our spouses’ feet” by asking, “In this situation, what is the least desirable role or responsibility?” By seeking the position of a servant, we take on the nature of Jesus Himself.

2) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: A husband who does not view his wife as an equal partner in marriage is robbed of an intimate ally and valuable partner. He also loses one of his greatest opportunities for spiritual growth. Men become more Christ like when they sacrificially serve their spouses just as Jesus serves His Bride, the Church. 1 Peter 3:7 also says that the prayers of men who do not treat their wives as equals will be hindered.

A wife who withholds honor—acts of service and words of love—from her husband takes on a burden that was never hers to bear. What is a yoke to her would be a mantle of strength to her husband. According to Psalm 133:1, God commands His blessing where there is unity. By withholding honor from her husband, a wife can cut herself off from the measure of blessing that only comes when we are in unity.

The final part of this question requires personal response.

3) Answers may vary.

A possible answer: The husband represents the role of Jesus. His part in revealing the love of Christ is to lay down his life for his wife and to empower her to flourish. While a husband may never be called on to physically die for his wife, he is called to live sacrificially and submit himself to her best interests.

The wife represents Christ’s beloved Bride, the Church. Her part in revealing the love of Christ is to support her husband just as the Church supports Jesus. She is to support his leadership and treat him the same way she would treat Jesus.

By sacrificially loving, empowering, and laying down his life for his wife, a husband shows the world the way Jesus loves and leads us. A wife’s honor, love, and respect for her husband show what it’s like to be in relationship with Jesus. She demonstrates the goodness that is found in submitting to Him.

We carry out our assignments of love and service by being continually filled with the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ who by grace empowers us to live like Jesus lived (see Acts 1:8, James 4:6; Philippians 4:13). Only by the empowering presence of the Spirit can we live as God intends and reflect the love of Christ (see Zechariah 4:6).

4) This answer requires personal response.

5) Answers may vary.

Consider: Knowing your responsibilities and faithfully fulfilling them is an essential part of serving your spouse. As you steward your role well, you provide your mate with time and peace of mind.

Also, when you know what your spouse is responsible to do, you know in what areas you can look for opportunities to go above and beyond in serving them. Knowing your agreed-upon responsibilities also reduces conflicts and serves to create a team mentality.

Chapter 5

- 1) This question requires a mostly personal response.

Consider: After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, fear and shame entered the world. The beauty of their anatomical, sexual differences was perverted and no longer seen with the innocent, pure eyes God had originally given them.

- 2) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Guilt and condemnation are closely associated with sexual sin, and the enemy uses these feelings to his advantage. As long as we hold onto feelings of guilt and condemnation, we cannot enjoy the forgiveness and grace available to us through the finished work of Jesus.

To encourage a person struggling with sexual sin, we can point them to God's Word, specifically to Romans 5:8; John 3:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Romans 8:1-2. These verses tell us that while we were still sinners—not after we were behaving right—Christ died for us; that God did not send His Son, Jesus, into our lives to condemn us, but to save us through our faith in Him; and that in Christ, we are God's righteousness and are not condemned. We can then pray for the person to encounter God's amazing love and grace, to receive the revelation of their redemption by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and to be free from the chains of shame or condemnation that would tether them to the past.

- 3) Answers will vary.

A suggested answer: When we are single, dating, or engaged, we honor our marriage beds by remaining pure and reserved for our future mates. We honor the marriage bed after the wedding day by never allowing others into it (committing adultery) and by not allowing anything else to detract from the beauty of sexual intimacy with our mate (pornography, perversion, or impurity). We also honor our beds by seeing them as places in which to we can serve our spouses' best interests.

The opposite behavior dishonors the marriage bed. Dishonoring actions include committing adultery (physically as well as mentally or emotionally), viewing or reading pornographic materials, and indulging any other perversion or impurity. We dishonor the marriage bed by using it for self-serving gratification. We dishonor it by requiring our mates to do things they are uncomfortable with or things that cause them emotional, mental, or physical pain. Ungodly sexual behavior defiles the marriage bed and keeps us from enjoying true intimacy.

- 4) Suggested answer:

Worldly Sorrow

Leads to condemnation and no change.
Is self-focused and produces self-loathing.
Is fueled by pride and marked by despair.
Reinforces bondage.

Godly Sorrow

Leads to repentance and transformation.
Is God-focused and God-centered.
Is fueled by humility.
Brings deliverance from bondage.

Also consider: Worldly sorrow only sees the solutions possible within human ability. It is blind to the hope found in the knowledge of God's power and will, and it inevitably leads to spiritual death. On the other hand, godly sorrow carries hope for the future. Its strength is in God's ability to sanctify, empower, and redeem. Godly sorrow brings temporary pain but is soon followed by joy and life.

5) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: If we were able to experience lasting freedom and deliverance from sin in our own ability, we would become more and more self-focused and prideful. In essence, we would be our own saviors. We would likely begin to think that we didn't need Jesus, and we would drift toward independence from God rather than acknowledging our dependence on Him. No other relationship, not even a relationship with a spouse, would rise above our increasingly self-centered perspective. Our pride and selfishness would cause pain and loss for ourselves and those around us.

6) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Develop a habit of immediately turning off any ungodly, immoral entertainment (movies, television, web content, etc.). If the content is something that is seen or read, immediately turn away.

If you are in a public or group setting, use discernment to determine whether you should address the situation directly or instead excuse yourself from it. If the situation allows you to suggest alternate forms of entertainment, you may choose to do so.

In private, stay in such close fellowship with the Holy Spirit that you learn to sense His promptings not to rent, buy, watch, or read something that would draw you away from Him and toward ungodliness. When we are full of God's Spirit, we will not be hungry for the cheap counterfeits the enemy and the world offer.

7) This question requires personal response.

Chapter 6

1) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: The people were one in language, purpose, and labor. They spoke the same, thought the same, and had the same goal. They operated in unity and were therefore positioned to do the impossible. As heirs of God's grace, we can expect God's abundant blessings as we seek to be one with our spouses in all areas. God was against the work of those in Babel, but He is for us and wants to bless our efforts!

2) Answers may vary.

A possible answer: According to **Psalm 133**, unity (oneness) releases an anointing of God's Spirit that touches every area of our lives. It brings regular refreshing like the morning dew and also draws God's blessings onto our lives. Jesus tells us in **Matthew 18:19-20** that when we come together in agreement (unity, oneness), He promises to not only be with us, but also to answer our prayers. In **John 17:21, 23**, we learn that our oneness allows unbelievers to see and know that God is real and that He sent Jesus because He loves them. In **2 Corinthians 13:11**, we learn that oneness draws the loving, peaceful presence of God into our marriages.

3) This question requires personal response.

4) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: By continuously investing in our individual, intimate relationships with the Lord, we can establish the foundation for experiencing newness. Then, when we are sensitive to His leading, God's Spirit will prompt us to do things for our mates that will express love in the languages they best understand.

Another important thing we can do is to become lifetime students of our spouses. There is always something new to learn about them, and there are always new ways we can learn to love, celebrate, and serve them.

Doing the things we did for our spouses when we were dating—like making an effort to look our best for them, going on dates, and giving them our undivided time and attention—adds freshness to our relationships.

Lastly, investing in our relationships by reading marriage-related books, going to marriage events, and enjoying other resources about marriage can refresh the sense of love, vision, and purpose in our hearts.

5) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: A wise woman builds her house by speaking words of life to the gifts and talents in everyone she is in relationship with. In marriage, this specifically means encouraging and empowering her husband and children. The wise woman understands and utilizes her strength of nurturing to identify and cultivate the best in her spouse and kids. Instead of criticizing and focusing on weaknesses, she praises and focuses on strengths.

Through his words and actions, a wise man creates a safe place for his wife and children to flourish and grow in their gifts and talents. He uses any strength and influence he possesses to position his wife for strength and influence, rather than limiting or dominating her. Like our heavenly Father, a wise man does not withhold any good thing from those he loves.

6) Answers will vary.

A possible answer: Even if spouses do not share the same careers, they can support and show interest in each other's callings. They can both make choices that enable the other person to grow, develop their skills, establish influence, and succeed. A husband or wife can prioritize their spouse's calling as having equal importance to their own.

Husbands and wives can also stay connected by looking for things they can do together outside of work or ministry. Every shared activity is an opportunity to grow closer and deepen their relationship. Common hobbies are a great place to start, and if there are no shared interests presently, couples can step out and experiment with finding something new to enjoy together.

Serving together in ministry or the community is a great way to bond couples and families. These kinds of activities also create an environment for developing common friendships.

The best and deepest way for husbands and wives to connect is spiritually. Regularly praying together, reading God's Word together, and/or going through a devotional book together intimately fuses couples in the presence of God.