

Lesson 1 – Course Introduction & Definition of Godliness

A. Course overview

Lesson	Title	Content	Teacher	Date
1	Introduction & Overview	Introduction, plus “Godliness”	Marty	Sun, 9/2
2	Selflessness & Sacrifice	Selflessness, Humility , Meekness	Russ	Wed, 9/5
3	Forbearing & forgiving	Forbearance & Forgiveness	Marty	Sun, 9/9
4	Contentment & Kindness	Contentment & Kindness	Russ	Wed, 9/12
5	Husbands & headship	Husbands: Sacrificial leadership	Marty	Sun, 9/16
6	Wives & submission	Wives: Submission & Responsibility	Marty	Wed, 9/19
7	Personal Relationships	Personal Relationship (Romance)	Russ	Sun, 9/23
8	Case Studies 1	Self-centeredness; separate lives	Russ	Wed, 9/26
9	Case Studies 2	Annoyances & Unmet expectations	Marty	Sun 9/30
10	Case Studies 3	Spiritual leadership & Priorities	Marty	Wed, 10/3
11	Case Studies 4	Maintaining roles (& role reversals)	Russ	Sun, 10/7
12	Case Studies 5	Unfaithfulness & forgiveness	Russ	Wed, 10/10
13	Case Studies 6	Tragedy, Crisis, Discouragement	Russ	Sun, 10/14

Preparation for Class

- B. Rick was a close friend in college, during which time you attended the same church. He married Rosa, whom he had dated since high school, after his Junior year of college, finished an engineering degree, and then moved away to start his career. Five years and two kids later, you have just heard from mutual friends that he has moved out and is planning to divorce Rosa. Even though you haven’t been in contact, you feel an obligation to call Rick to find out more and encourage him to do the right thing—whatever that is. You naturally dread the call and want to be prepared with your questions and possible responses. ***Come to class prepared to make this call (make notes).***
- C. List some of the reasons that people choose to marry, and reasons they choose particular mates.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- D. Godliness defined
1. Greek *eusebia* – literally, "to worship well", "to be very devout"
 2. Vine: "A piety ... characterized by a God-ward attitude; does that which is well-pleasing to Him"
 3. ISBE: "character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart"
 4. God-centered living: learning, obeying, with all decisions & actions informed by accountability to God and desire to please Him.
- E. Godliness expressed and developed
1. For what kind of things it godliness useful (I Tim 4:8)?
 2. Is it commanded of both men & women? How is it expressed (I Tim 2:2, 10)?
 3. What kind of living is associated with “godliness” (II Pet 3:11)?

- F. Opposite of godliness: earth centered, or self-centered
 - 1. Ps 1:1-5 – vs 1, also translated “wicked” [ESV]
 - 2. For whom is law needed? Why? (I Tim 1:9)
 - 3. What is the fate of the ungodly in judgment (I Pet 4:18; II Pet 2:6; 3:7; Jude 4,15,18)?
- G. With a God-centered view, what is the purpose of family relationships?
 - 1. I Cor 7:13,16
 - 2. I Pet 3:1
 - 3. Eph 6:4; Prov 23:13,14; III John 3,4

In Class Discussion Questions

- H. Godliness expressed and developed. How is godliness related to:
 - 1. Identity and Self-image
 - 2. Purpose & motive for decisions & actions
 - 3. Wisdom & interpretation of life events
 - 4. Personal strength & security (endurance)
 - 5. Repentance & restoration
- I. Application Questions
 - 1. List some practical ways to measure/assess godliness in ourselves...
 - 2. To what extent is it possible, necessary, or advisable to assess the godliness of your spouse?
 - 3. Read I Corinthians 7: 10-16.
 - a. What question or questions (see 7:1) about marriage do you think the Corinthians had written to Paul?
 - b. What Old Testament pattern might they have been thinking of? (see Deut 7:3-6)
 - c. Does Paul’s advice imply that a difference in religion could be the cause of marriage problems?
 - 4. What does I Pet 3:1-7 (in the context of 2:13-25 and 3:13-17) suggest about the approach a Christian must take when religious differences exist?

Godly Marriages

Selflessness and Sacrifice

Lesson 2

Overall Goals of the 13 Lesson Study

During our study, we will establish a number of individual goals – spiritual improvement that each one of us should desire to accomplish. Please make some suggestions for potential goals for the class:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Introduction

Our study began with an examination of the role of Godliness, not only in our marriages, but in our lives in general. We will continue to look at spiritual qualities that God expects of all of us, but ones that we will see have an especially important role in building Godly marriages.

A. Exercise – Role of Selflessness

1. List things you believe cause relationships to end (friendships, partnerships, roommates, marriages, etc.):

2. Note which of the items in your list are attributable, at least in part, to selfishness or self-centeredness:

B. Selflessness Defined

1. List scriptural qualities that are reflected in the attitude of selflessness (e.g. mercy, meekness)

2. Who are characters in the Bible who were known for their selflessness:

C. Scriptural Basis

1. Read Mark 8:34-37
 - a. What did Jesus predict immediately prior to this statement?

 - b. What three things does Jesus require of anyone who would come after him?

2. Read Philippians 2:1-5
 - a. The discussion here follows a call to have a manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27).

- b. What does Paul ask them to do or have in vs. 2?

 - c. In both vs. 3 and vs. 4, Paul describes something to do and something not to do. What are they?

 - d. Who is the ultimate example of sacrifice? Why?
3. Read I Corinthians 13:4-7
- a. Which descriptions of love in vs. 4-7 reflect an attitude of unselfishness?

 - b. Which ones reflect a willingness to make a sacrifice?
4. Read James 3:13-18
- a. What kind of wisdom is mentioned in vs. 13?

 - b. What two negative qualities are mentioned in vs. 14 and in vs. 16? What is the result?

 - c. What quality in vs. 17 speaks to unselfishness?
5. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. We will study this passage in much more detail later in this study. For now, identify one statement that indicates a husband should be selfless and one that indicates a wife should also be selfless.

D. Application Questions

- 1. Why is unselfishness a difficult quality to maintain in a marriage?

- 2. What other sins tend to be produced by selfishness or an unwillingness to sacrifice for others?

Lesson 3 – Forbearing and Forgiving

- A. **Key Text:** *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Col 3:12-13)*
- B. **Forbearance** (bearing with one another) **defined.**
1. Greek, *anechomai* – lit. to hold oneself up against, that is, (figuratively) put up with; bear with endure, forbear, suffer.
 2. Describe situations when forbearance is required:
 - a. Rom 15:1
 - b. Gal 6:2
 - c. II Cor 6:3-6 (see v 6)
 - d. Eph 4:1-3
- C. **Forgiveness defined.**
1. Greek, *charizomai* – to grant as a favor, that is, gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue; deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant.
 2. Other Bible teaching about forgiveness
 - a. What (who) is our pattern? (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32)? How does this motivate us?
 - b. What depends upon it? (Matt 18:35; Matt 6:12, 14-16; Mark 11:25-26)
 - c. How often must we do it? (Matt 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)
 3. Bible examples:
 - a. Matt 18:23-34 – The Unforgiving Servant
 - What did the master require of the servant in order to forgive him?
 - What motivated the master to forgive the enormous debt?
 - Was the servant required to demonstrate a “change of character” first?
 - b. Luke 16:11-32 – The Prodigal Son
 - What was the father’s attitude (willingness to forgive) toward his son during his rebellion?
 - What was required of the son by his father for him to obtain forgiveness?
 - What was the emotional reaction of the father to his son’s repentance?
 - What additional penalties did the father impose?
 - c. Luke 7:36-48 – The Sinful Woman at Simon’s house
 - What sins was the woman probably guilty of?
 - What conditions did Jesus place on her forgiveness?
 - What did Jesus say the forgiveness would produce in the debtor (&woman)?

D. Prerequisites. Explain how the qualities listed in Col 3:12 enable forbearing and forgiving.

1. tender mercies (pity, sympathy, inward affection)
2. kindness (usefulness, excellence in demeanor, gentleness, goodness)
3. humility (“humiliation of mind,” modesty, lowliness of mind)
4. meekness (gentleness, humbleness)
5. longsuffering (“long-tempered,” fortitude, patience, not retaliatory)

E. Opposites

1. What opposite characteristics are listed in Eph 4:31?
2. What opposite behavior are we tempted to pursue (Rom 12:17-21)?

F. Applications

1. How would you distinguish between forbearing and forgiving? When is each required? For the list below, choose which is required. Your spouse...
 - a. Is too short and that inconveniences you
 - b. lies to you over a minor matter
 - c. has a habit that annoys you
 - d. continues an annoying habit after you ask them to stop
 - e. accidentally loses a large amount of money
 - f. disagrees with you that he/she has done anything wrong
2. Why is it so difficult to have the proper emotions (joy) when someone repents of a wrong done to us and asks forgiveness?

Is it always difficult? When is it not?

3. What are some “counterfeits” of forgiveness? (see for example James 3:14,17)
4. In practical terms, what should be different about our behavior (kindness, tolerance, selflessness) toward someone who has wronged us before and after they repent?
5. What is to be the treatment of those who take advantage of us (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:35-36)? Would this responsibility intensify if they are closely related and/or we have a special opportunity to use that relationship to influence them for good?
6. What qualities and exercises can help us develop our ability to forgive as God does?

Godly Marriages

Contentment and Kindness Lesson 4

Introduction

Our first three lessons have focused on establishing the foundation of character needed by husbands and wives who desire to have Godly marriages. The most important trait is that of Godliness, for Godliness will serve to produce other important traits even in the midst of hardship and disappointment. It is the basis on which we build the right character. We have looked at selflessness and sacrifice as well as forbearance and forgiveness. In this lesson, we will look at contentment and kindness. While these two traits are not related to each other as was true of our last two lessons, they are, nevertheless, essential qualities for the kind of peace and harmony that God seeks in marriage.

A. Contentment Defined

1. Greek: *autarkeia* – satisfaction with what one has
2. Thayers: Sufficient for one's self, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support, independent of external circumstances

B. Scriptural Basis

1. Read I Timothy 6:6-10
 - a. What is contentment coupled with in vs. 6?
 - b. What does Paul say should be enough to bring us contentment? What is his reasoning?
 - c. What is the problem with simply desiring to be rich? List the potential consequences:
2. Read Philippians 4:10-13
 - a. What does Paul say he has learned? Does he offer any limitation to this lesson? Given his life's circumstances, is this a powerful message?
 - b. What else does Paul say that he is capable of (vs. 13)?
 - c. Look back at Philippians 4:4-9. Note the spirit of peace and contentment that seems to prevail in this passage. What does Paul say to do or not do in order to have this spirit? Does this also sound like the exercise of godliness?

C. Application Questions

1. What are stressful circumstances faced in many marriages where the level of contentment by one or both spouses will have a profound effect on whether the trying circumstance is handled in a godly manner? List as many as you can.

2. What factors in an individual's background prior to marriage tend to have a significant influence on his or her attitude toward material things?

D. Kindness Defined

1. Greek: chrestotes – goodness of heart, gracious

E. Scriptural Basis

1. Read Colossians 3:12-14 and Ephesians 4:31-32
 - a. Note in both passages the relationship of kindness and forbearance or forgiveness.
 - b. What words or qualities are associated with kindness in these two passages?
2. Read Matthew 7:12. Would the Golden Rule serve as useful standard for kindness in our marriages? Why or why not?
3. Read Romans 2:4, 11:22, Ephesians 2:7 and Titus 3:4.
 - a. Who is said to be kind toward us?
 - b. How has he shown this?

F. Application Questions

1. What role does the tongue play in exercising kindness?
2. What makes it difficult for us to maintain kindness in a relationship?
3. List expressions of kindness that you have received from your spouse:

Lesson 5: Husbands and Headship

A. What are some of the spiritual principles about our relationship to God that marriage is used to illustrate?

1. Eph 5:27; II Cor. 11:1-3
2. Eph 5:23,25,26
3. Eph 5:28b-31; Rom 7:3,4
4. Eph 5:24; I Cor. 11:3
5. Rev 21:2

B. Male Character: the Basis of Leadership.

1. List the activities, reputation, disposition, and inner character commanded of men (I Tim 2:8; Tit. 2:2, 6-8).
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
2. How is this character expressed in family roles?
 - Eph 5:28
 - Col 3:19
 - I Pet 3:7
 - Col 3:21
 - Eph 6:4
 - I Tim 3:4,5
3. Is this the ideal “manly” character in our culture? List qualities of the worldly male stereotype.

C. Headship is Defined by Christ’s Example (Eph 5:22-33)

1. What is the character & motivation of earthly (“gentile”) leaders (Matt 20:25-28)?

How is the husband’s headship enforced? (Eph 5:22-33)

- 22, 24

I Timothy 2:8 – Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting

Titus 2:2, 6-8 – ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience...

⁶ Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Ephesians 5:22-33 - Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

I Peter 3:7 - Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

- 33
2. What is the pattern of Christ's leadership?
 - 23
 - 25
 - 26
 - 27
 - 29
 3. What is the motivation/goal of family headship? (1 Pet 3:7)

D. Headship requires discipline and courage: is hard work.

1. Protector/provider—courage, skill, strength, foresight, perseverance, sacrifice
2. Visionary—spiritual vision: knowledge, faith & hope in trial, “discerning good & evil”
3. Problem solver: taking the initiative, first in confession & forgiveness, making sacrifices
4. Decision maker: making, and sticking to, and taking the blame for unpleasant decisions based on confidence in immutable values (but not knowing the future).
5. Nurturer—for growth & admonishing for improvement (Eph 6:4)
6. Example of personal discipline— personal, financial, spiritual self-discipline

E. Practical Exercise

1. Strategic *Planning*
 - Evaluate spiritual status of the family (knowledge, faith, influences...)
 - Evaluate habits, attitudes, and implicit values
 - Imagine 5 yrs, 10 yrs hence: Where will the family be in spiritual growth?
 - What is missing? What must be done?
2. Near-term *Initiatives* (Tactical)
 - Daily, Weekly, Monthly Practices (including, for example, worship attendance)
 - [Your Example] & Specific Guidance/Standards for: Entertainment, Language, Behavior, Associations, Financial Practices, Use of Time, Integrity,
 - Expressions of both affection and direction (more habits to start).

Godly Marriages

Wives and Submission Lesson 6

A. Submission is defined by the (ideal) Church in submission to Christ (Eph 5:32).

1. How is the Church related to Christ with respect to identity, survival, and purpose? (e.g. John 15:1-6).
2. Note agreement implied in “one flesh” (I Cor. 6:16, 17).
3. How are members of Christ’s body animated and directed? (Gal 2:20)
4. What does the “Helper”/“Companion” terms suggests about participation in common goals?
5. Is an inner confidence required for this voluntary submission? (I Pet 3:6b, and see vs. 13,14)
6. What attitudes/character are required? (Mark the scriptures on the following page.)

Practical:

7. What family organizational structures or practices will detract from this ideal?
8. What activities or habits of the wife will detract from this ideal?
9. Are there some *necessary* distractions and separating influences? If yes, give examples. How can they be overcome or their effects mitigated?
10. How would a worldly view of the purpose of life (pleasure/fulfillment) discourage the above?

B. Following a leader is not passive.

1. Is a leader’s role easier (and more likely successful) when those following contribute information and insight into the assessment and planning? How can a wife contribute in this way? Why?
2. Can she help by requesting and or clarifying goals, plans, and initiatives?

Practical:

3. How can information and insight be offered, or direction requested, without being threatening or sounding critical? Can positive feedback be helpful?

4. Give examples of active implementation of direction set by spiritual leadership.

C. *The ideal wife's attention is on her home (locus of the relationship) and family.*

1. Based on the roles described above, why do you think the home is mentioned as the center of the wife's work? (see I Tim 5:14, Titus 2:5; Prov 31) [and note I Tim 5:13: not the homes of others].
2. Does "ruling" and "managing" imply ownership, accountability, planning, and execution?
3. How does the emphasis on home help with the "hospitality" commanded of women, for example: elders and their wives (I Tim 3:2), care of widows indeed (I Tim 5:10, 15).

Practical:

4. What are the activities that Christian couples should engage in, that center around the home?
5. What are the difficult areas of home management? Is it easier now than 50-100 years ago? Are some things harder or more time consuming? How can affairs of home be kept under control?
6. Are the opportunities for hospitality and service enhanced because of the cultural changes of the last few years? How can opportunities be found and expanded?

D. *Helping/loving/honoring (Titus 2) fills needs unique to men.*

1. Providing honor to offset (or out-shine) the treatment in the world.
2. Compare Abigail's techniques (I Sam 25:23ff) to Michal's (II Sam 6:20ff)

Practical:

3. What are your husband's insecurities, known or felt weakness, struggles, defeats, doubts?
4. What are his victories, known strengths, accomplishments?

Lesson 7 - Romance & Personal Relationships

A. Bible Romances. Note how each of these marriages were arranged, how the relationship progressed, and how it fared over the long-term. List one lesson that can be learned from each.

1. Isaac & Rebekah (Gen 24:61-67; 26:7-9)
2. Jacob & Rachel (Gen 29: 6-11;16-20)
3. Samson & the Philistine Woman (Jud 14:1-3)
4. David & Michal (I Sam 18:16, 20; 19:11-17; II Sam 6:16-23)
5. Amnon & Tamar (II Sam 13:1,4,14,15)

B. Romantic Attraction is Real (Biblical), God-given, and Beneficial.

1. Do you think that romantic attraction existed before the fall (Gen 1:28; 2:24,25)?
2. Does God intend for marital love to be one of the blessings of the righteous (see Eccl 9:7-10)?
3. Does romance have to be present to validate a marriage commitment? Might it appear (or disappear) later in a marriage? What are some of the ways in which each could occur?
4. What is the connection of romantic attraction to:
 - a. physical appearance
 - b. reputation
 - c. sounds, smell
 - d. mood and imagination
5. Can it create a deep and lasting impact on memory? Is that a good thing or bad?
6. Read Proverbs 5:1-20 below, and Mark the references to *pleasure & danger*.

D. Romantic Attraction/Enjoyment Can be Developed/Enhanced

1. List the techniques of the harlot in Proverbs 7 which were used to attract the young man to her. (Mark the verses on the following page).
2. Read the "Wedding night" passage from Song of Sol 4,5, and list the ways in which the groom prepares his bride for intimacy.

E. Practical

1. How can romantic attraction be channeled to beneficial purposes (before & during marriage)?
2. List situations in a marriage in which romantic attraction might ebb?
3. What actions might help before, during, and after these times?
4. Discuss which of these "Love Languages" are most effective with you:
 - a. Words of Affirmation
 - b. Quality Time
 - c. Gifts
 - d. Acts of Service
 - e. Physical touch

Ecc1 9:7-10 [NIV] – Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. ⁸ Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹ Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

Prov 5:1-20 (Note the dangers and blessings of sexual relationships)

¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
listen well to my words of insight,
² that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.
³ For the lips of an adulteress drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
⁴ but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.
⁶ She gives no thought to the way of life;
her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.

⁷ Now then, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn aside from what I say.
⁸ Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,
⁹ lest you give your best strength to others
and your years to one who is cruel,
¹⁰ lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich another man's house.
¹¹ At the end of your life you will groan,

when your flesh and body are spent.
¹² You will say, "How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!
¹³ I would not obey my teachers
or listen to my instructors.
¹⁴ I have come to the brink of utter ruin
in the midst of the whole assembly."
¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
¹⁶ Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?
¹⁷ Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
¹⁸ May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.
¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be captivated by her love.
²⁰ Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?
Why embrace the bosom of another man's
wife?

Prov 7:8-22 (Mark the seductive tactics the harlot used)

¹⁰ Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.
¹¹ (She is loud and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
¹² now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)
¹³ She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:
¹⁴ "I have fellowship offerings ^[1] at home;
today I fulfilled my vows.

¹⁵ So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!

¹⁶ I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.

¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

¹⁸ Come, let's drink deep of love till morning;
let's enjoy ourselves with love

Godly Marriages

Case Studies Lesson 8

Consider the following case study:

Rob and Laura believe they have a good marriage – after all they have been married for ten years. Finding time together, though, has become more difficult in recent years; the children are getting older and the purchase of a house the year before has kept them both very busy. Rob’s job is relatively stable, but bonuses they were counting on to help pay for the house have been smaller than expected. They feel fortunate that Laura has been able to earn some additional income through a part-time job at a local Art Gallery. She learned about the job while helping as a volunteer in the art classes at her children’s school. Most weeks the hours are manageable, but she particularly loves the work because it keeps her connected with the passion she developed while majoring in art in college.

After a hectic weekend in which it seemed they barely saw or spoke to each other (Dave had played golf all day Saturday, Laura had been busy with the kids), on Monday morning, they both pledged to have a date night on Friday. Neither checked their schedule before making this plan.

Tuesday, Rob had to work late; he missed dinner and ate alone at the table while reading the newspaper. Laura was upstairs looking over details for an art showing scheduled the next day. They were both extra tired and went to bed with little conversation. On Wednesday, the rush to get ready for church was full of stress (lost shoes, last minute phone call, misplaced lesson sheets). On the way to church, Laura tried to tell a story of something that had happened to her that day, but was interrupted several times. At church, Laura went to one class (her favorite teacher was leading this class) and Rob went to another (he had always been interested in Old Testament history).

On Thursday night, Rob coached their daughter’s soccer team and kept an eye on their son at the same time so that Laura could have dinner with two of her friends from work. He had agreed to this but only if Laura would pay for the dinner out of her checking account. She had accepted, but felt it was a little unfair since his golf game had come from their joint entertainment budget. Besides, she really was trying to save up for a new kitchen sink and faucet that Rob had still not recognized they needed. Later that evening Laura was finally able to complete her story from the day before, but Rob didn’t comment; he was trying to hear the score of one his favorite teams. At 10:30, she asked Rob who was going to babysit the next night and where they were going on their date. Rob was a little irritated at the question. “You were supposed to find a sitter”, was his reply, “that’s always been your job, and you know I haven’t had time this week to even think about tomorrow”. Laura thought: I have no idea what your work schedule has been like this week, and responded, “My schedule hasn’t been any better.” This led to a near argument, but she agreed to try to find someone as long as Rob paid for it out of his account. They both went to bed frustrated with the other.

The next day Laura called Rob to say that no one was available to watch the kids. That evening after successfully getting the kids to bed early, Rob drove alone to pick up their take out dinner. After an unsuccessful attempt to find a movie On Demand that they both liked, they finally settled on a rerun of a show they had each seen before. Laura tried to read during the show but fell asleep, while Rob looked over the team roster for his daughter's soccer team.

Going to bed that night, Laura felt uneasy about the way the week had ended. Rob had not only forgotten the disappointment of the evening, he was in a pretty good mood; he had decided to try a new formation for the next day's soccer game that he remembered using when he played in college.

1. Do you agree with Rob's and Laura's assessment that theirs is a good marriage?
2. Do you see any signs of obvious sin on either of their part?
3. Be prepared to comment on their strength or weakness in terms of the character traits we have discussed: godliness, selfless and sacrifice, forbearance and forgiveness, kindness and contentment.
4. Are they beginning to drift away from one another? What would be the effect of such isolation on a marriage?
5. Do they appear to be concerned that they are not as close as they once were?

Lesson 9 - Case Study on Unmet Expectations

Leonard and Loni have been married for 5 years and have a three-year-old son and a nine-month-old baby girl. Leonard is an accountant: disciplined, on-time, a good planner, has a great career, has impressive Bible knowledge and speaking ability, teaches classes and fills in preaching on occasion, and was recently appointed a deacon. Loni is very pretty (which is why he noticed her), good-natured, and comes from a large and loving family. However, Loni was never a good student and just barely finished high school. After high school she began working in her father's store—where she met Leonard, while he was auditing the books for her Dad. She is not very good at keeping things organized. She is late for everything, especially now with the kids, and struggles to keep the house in order and cannot explain where the money goes. Leonard often gets frustrated, and has tried to impose order in the form of schedules, checklists, logbooks, filing systems, etc., but with little success.

With his increased duties, Leonard feels he just needs everything organized and on time. As head of the house, and for the good of the family, he has begun to leave her 'to-do' lists in the morning, call during the day to check on her progress and remind her to write down expenses, and quiz her at the end of the day on how all her time was spent. This approach has not improved the relationship. Loni is discouraged, wondering if she will ever live up to his expectations. Last Sunday, he mentioned to some of their friends at church how hard it was to get things under control at home, she got very upset and, unannounced, took the kids to her mom's house for the afternoon.

(Men please answer the questions below as if you were counseling Leonard only. Women please answer as if you were counseling Loni only.)

1. What Bible principles apply to Leonard and Loni's situation? List the Bible references.
2. What obvious sins are present? List Bible references.
3. What specific, immediate actions would you recommend that each of them take?
4. Given what you know, what additional advice would you give each of them?
5. What challenges or obstacles will there be in taking the above actions and advice? Why will it be difficult? What steps can be taken to overcome these obstacles?
 - Difficulty/steps to overcome:
 - Difficulty/steps to overcome:
 - Difficulty/steps to overcome:

Lesson 10 - Case Studies on Spiritual Leadership & Priorities

Rob & Ramona met at work in their early twenties and have been married for six years. They have two little girls, 3 and 5 years old. Rob had a denominational upbringing, is honest & pure, but is very weak in his knowledge of the Bible. He is outgoing & personable, a funny guy, and really enjoys spending time with the girls. He has changed jobs about every two years, takes chances in business ventures (some unsuccessful), but has always provided adequately for the family despite these frequent changes in plans. The great news is that he obeyed the gospel a few months ago. He was at first very excited about his new life in Christ and all his new brothers & sisters—who welcomed him into the local church.

Ramona stays home caring for the girls. She is a good organizer and likes to have a plan and follow it. She “grew up in the church” and knows the Bible well. She is generally satisfied with their standard of living, but often worries about the future: college for kids, emergency expenses, retirement, etc. After Rob’s conversion, Ramona’s expectations for stability and family spirituality soared. She imagined that they would begin lots of spiritual family activities, and has made several suggestions that they begin devotions, etc., to which Rob replies, “Sure, sure,” but doesn’t take any action. In desperation, Ramona has started to lead an evening Bible study (on great Bible characters) and lead prayers with the girls just before bedtime. Rob has not objected, but usually goes into another room and seems somewhat subdued afterward. Rob recently made the comment that it seems like his conversion has “hurt the relationship, rather than helped it.”

(Men please answer the questions below as if you were counseling Rob only. Women please answer as if you were counseling Ramona only.)

1. What Bible principles apply to Rob and Ramona’s situation? List the Bible references.
2. What obvious sins are present? List Bible references.
3. What specific, immediate actions would you recommend that each of them take?
4. Given what you know, what additional advice would you give each of them?
5. What challenges or obstacles will there be in taking the above actions and advice? Why will it be difficult? What steps can be taken to overcome these obstacles?
 - Difficulty/steps to overcome:

 - Difficulty/steps to overcome:

Godly Marriages

Case Studies

Lesson 11

Consider the following case study:

John and Jackie have been married for five years. They attend a congregation of about 60 members in the suburbs of a large metropolitan area, where there are few other churches. John has a steady job as an assembler/technician with a small manufacturing firm, and could grow to become a supervisor in a few years, but because of his education (only one unsuccessful year of college) will not grow much beyond that. John's health care coverage is not great, and John & Jackie have incurred some debt because of the house, some car trouble, and the baby. Jackie worked until their only child (Annie) was born, about 2 years ago. Jackie has an aptitude for computers and since quitting her job as an administrative assistant (where she learned many of the advanced computer skills), has created a surprisingly good income doing web design at home. Her work is much in demand (by referrals) from several small companies all over the United States. One of these companies has grown such that they require a full-time web-design lead, and have offered to pay Jackie about twice what John makes to come and work full time. The job offer also will cover all relocation expenses, including buying their current house, so that they can move to another state. The company offers free child-care as a part of a great benefits package. There are two or three companies similar to the manufacturing firm where John works in the city where Jackie's new job would be. They are struggling with the decision whether or not to take the offer.

1. What Bible principles (with references, if possible) might apply to this decision?
2. Do you see any signs of obvious sin on either of their part?
3. Be prepared to comment on the importance of the character traits we have discussed – godliness, selfless and sacrifice, forbearance and forgiveness, kindness and contentment – in making this decision.
4. What additional information would you ask of John and Jackie to further understand their choices? (this additional information will be made available if you ask in class)

5. What other decisions are they likely considering or will have to make if:
 - a. They decide to stay?

 - b. They decide to go?

6. Based on what you know, what would you advise about the job offer, and any other things in their lives?

Godly Marriages

Case Studies

Lesson 12

Remember in Lesson 9, we took a look at Leonard and Loni. As a reminder, this was their situation at that time:

Leonard and Loni have been married for 5 years and have a three-year-old son and a nine-month-old baby girl. Leonard is an accountant: disciplined, on-time, a good planner, has a great career, has impressive Bible knowledge and speaking ability, usually teaches classes and fills in preaching on occasion, and was recently appointed a deacon in the church. Loni is very pretty (which is why he noticed her), good-natured, and comes from a large and loving family. However, Loni was never very good at school and just barely finished high school. After high school she began working in her father's store--where she met Leonard while he was auditing the books for her Dad. She is not very good at keeping things organized. She is late for everything, especially now with the kids, and struggles to keep the house in order and cannot explain where the money goes. Leonard often gets frustrated, and has tried to impose order in the form of schedules, checklists, logbooks, filing systems, etc., with little success.

With his increased duties, Leonard feels he just needs everything organized and on time. As head of the house, and for the good of the family, he has begun to leave her 'to-do' lists in the morning, call during the day to check on her progress and remind her to write down expenses, and quiz her at the end of the day on how all her time was spent. This approach has not improved the relationship. Loni is discouraged, wondering if she will ever live up to his expectations. Lately, after he mentioned to some of their friends at church about all his efforts to get things under control, she got very upset and, unannounced, took the kids to her mom's house for the afternoon.

In this class, we consider their situation again:

A little over five years have passed. Their son is eight years old, their daughter is six, and they have been blessed with another daughter who is three. On the surface, they dealt with their issue in the previous case: Leonard apologized for mentioning his frustrations to friends at church and has not spoken of them again to others. Other than the one incident, Loni has not left the house unannounced. Beyond their family, and especially among church friends, they appear to have a good marriage. But the important issues were never really faced.

Leonard continues to need everything organized and on time, but he no longer tries new methods to help Loni accomplish more, instead he simply criticizes her when things fail to get done on time, or when an error or surprise is found in their finances. He has even made disparaging remarks about her failures within the hearing of their son. Loni no longer wonders whether she will ever live up to his expectations; she now believes it will be impossible. She resents Leonard for that, but she has also "kept it in the family", speaking only to her mom and her sister who live in the same town and worship at the same congregation.

Last night in a moment of guilt and emotion she confessed to Leonard she had committed adultery with a co-worker of his. She was attracted in part by how different and understanding the man was. They were only intimate twice (it being nearly impossible for them to be alone). She is literally sick with guilt, has asked to be forgiven, but fully expects Leonard to want a divorce. She wonders what will happen to her children. She almost wishes she could take back the confession in order to avoid the consequences, but she fears condemnation by God. Along with that fear however, is also a sense she will never live up to God's expectations and will be condemned anyway.

1. What Bible principles (with references, if possible) might apply to this situation?

2. What should Leonard do? What should guide his decision?

3. What advice would you give Loni?

4. Be prepared to comment on the importance the character traits we have discussed (or the lack of those traits) – godliness, selfless and sacrifice, forbearance and forgiveness, kindness and contentment – have played in leading to this situation. Think also on the crucial role they will play if Loni and Leonard are to restore their relationship.

5. Comment on the difficulty of reestablishing trust.

6. Keeping in mind that we can only control our own actions:
 - a. What does Leonard control?

 - b. What does Loni control

For the Teacher - additional information to be provided during class discussion:

- They each have family where they live but none in the city where they might move.
- The “some debt” they have is very manageable especially with the income earned at home by Jackie.
- They are very active in the church where they are – Jackie constantly teaching, John already being discussed as a possible deacon
- There are many sound churches of different sizes in the city where they might move
- They know no one in the prospective city
- They definitely want to have more children (at least two), ideally one within the next 12-15 months.
- Jackie will have to supervise someone in her new role. She will hire the individual.

Godly Marriages

Case Studies

Lesson 13

Consider the following case:

Walt and Kathy have been married for 21 years. They were married before either turned twenty, and struggled financially early on. Walt briefly helped with his father's homebuilding business, but was soon able to fulfill a desire to preach the gospel fulltime. A small church in the Carolinas hired him and they stayed for four years, but with three small children, financial pressures forced them to return to their hometown where Walt took over much of his father's business. He was very successful at this endeavor making more money in one year than in the first five years of their marriage, but his conscience bothered him because he was not preaching. After much discussion, he and Kathy agreed to move to a Northeastern city where Walt would preach for a congregation of 70 members. Not long after, Walt began to build a few homes while preaching. Three years ago he stopped preaching altogether and concentrated on a homebuilding business. During the years Walt preached, he and Kathy spent a great deal of time together, but that has not been true while he has concentrated on the business. The family was also much more involved in church activities and home Bible studies when Walt preached, but that has diminished dramatically since.

Nine months ago, they were awakened at 1:00 a.m. with a call from the local hospital. A drunken driver had hit the car their oldest son, Ryland aged 21, was driving. Initially, Ryland was not expected to survive, but the doctors were able to save his life, though he is paralyzed from the neck down. The accident has had a dramatic effect on their lives. Prior to the accident, they were financially more secure than they had been at any point in their marriage. Now, they have drained all of their savings and still have significant costs ahead. Kathy has spent almost every waking moment with Ryland since the accident occurred. Walt has begun to question the goodness of God and the sincerity of other Christians; he also finds himself resenting Kathy's exclusive attention to Ryland. In the last week, they have argued every day about a number of topics, and the arguments have begun to trouble their already discouraged other children – a son aged 17 and two daughters aged 15 and 12.

1. What Bible principles (with references, if possible) might apply to this situation?
2. What words were likely in Walt and Kathy's wedding vows that should have even greater meaning now? Did you make a similar vow to your spouse?
3. Be prepared to comment on the importance of the character traits we have discussed – godliness, selfless and sacrifice, forbearance and forgiveness, kindness and contentment – in

addressing the crisis Walt and Kathy face. What is your assessment of the extent to which each of them possessed these qualities prior to the accident?

4. What does Walt need to do for the family (each member) in order to prevent this crisis from damaging their souls? What should guide his decisions? What does he need to do for himself?
5. What advice would you give Kathy? What can she do to avoid further damage to their marriage?
6. Comment on the stress and worries being felt by the other three children.
7. Keeping in mind that we can only control our own actions:
 - a. What does Kathy control?
 - b. What does Walt control?