

# 62 Gospel-Centered Books on Marriage, Marriage Counseling, and Pre-Marital Counseling

Compiled and Annotated by Bob Kellemen, Th.M., Ph.D.

[www.rpmministries.org](http://www.rpmministries.org)



The following list is divided into five categories:

- **12 Gospel-Centered Books on Marriage and Marriage Counseling**

These books provide a foundational biblical overview of God's plan and purposes for a Christ-centered marriage.

- **15 Gospel-Centered Books on Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Forgiveness in Marriage**

These books provide practical biblical principles and teaching on communication, conflict resolution, and forgiveness. They also help us to think through biblical principles of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

- **18 Gospel-Centered Books on Common Issues and Struggles in Marriage**

These books provide practical biblical principles for dealing with specific issues and common struggles in marriage.

- **13 Gospel-Centered Books on Pre-Marital Counseling**

Preventative counseling and marital preparation are foundational to any healthy marriage. These books are the best of the best in pre-marital books and manuals.

- **Addendum: 4 Additional Gospel-Centered Books on Marriage, Marriage Counseling, and Pre-Marital Counseling**

These books were added based upon the recommendation of readers of the blog series.

## 12 Gospel-Centered Books on Marriage and Marriage Counseling

God created marriage as a picture of the gospel in action (Ephesians 5:22-33). The following books explain this bigger-than-life, bigger-than-us purpose for marriage.

[\*This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence\*](#), by John Piper

The chasm between the biblical vision of marriage and the common human conception is—and has always been—gargantuan. Reflecting on over forty years of matrimony, John Piper exalts the biblical meaning of marriage over its emotion, exhorting couples to keep their covenant as a display of Christ's covenant-keeping love for the church. He aims to lift the church's low view of marriage to something infinitely greater, namely, a vision of Jesus's unswerving allegiance to and affection for His bride. *This Momentary Marriage* unpacks the biblical vision, its unexpected contours, and its weighty implications for married, single, divorced, and remarried alike.

[\*What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage\*](#), by Paul Tripp

Everyone's marriage morphs into something we didn't intend it to be. At some point we need something sturdier than romance. We need something deeper than shared interests and mutual attraction. We need changed expectations, we need radical commitments, and, most importantly, we need grace. Paul Tripp reminds his readers that marriage is essentially about worship. We are either seeking to build our own self-centered kingdoms or building the kingdom of God. Tripp encourages couples to align their individual agendas for marriage with Christ's Kingdom agenda through six commitments: a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness, making growth and change their daily agenda, working to build a sturdy bond of trust, building a relationship of love, dealing with differences with appreciation and grace, and working to protect the marriage.

[\*The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God\*](#), by Tim Keller with Kathy Keller

This book shows everyone—Christians, skeptics, singles, longtime married couples, and those about to be engaged—the vision of what marriage should be according to the Bible. Modern culture would have us believe that everyone has a soul mate; that romance is the most important part of a successful marriage; that your spouse is there to help you realize your potential; that marriage does not mean forever, but merely for now; and that starting over after a divorce is the best solution to seemingly intractable marriage issues. But these modern-day assumptions are wrong. Tim and Kathy Keller show marriage to be a glorious relationship that is also misunderstood and mysterious.

[\*Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change through Ordinary Moments\*](#), by Winston Smith

He snapped at her at breakfast. She brought up a past mistake. He walked out angry. She left without saying good-bye. Just one day in an ordinary marriage. But what if things could

be different? What if the ordinary moments of annoyance, conflict, pain, or cold indifference could become moments to understand God's incredible agenda for love and begin something new? This book offers a simple, yet powerful prescription for changing marriages one ordinary moment at a time. Change begins with understanding how and why small disagreements evolve into major problems, taking practical steps to love one another more effectively, and learning how to take those same steps over and over again. Interactions that used to devolve into pointless annoyances and fights can become opportunities for God's love to become increasingly evident and powerful. Winston Smith takes abstract, biblical principles and applies them to the concrete details of life so that ordinary marriages can become extraordinary.

[\*Relationships: A Mess Worth Making\*](#), by Paul Tripp and Tim Lane

Though not written only for marriage relationships, this book has great gospel wisdom for the husband-wife relationship. Your spouse can't stop complaining about your bad habits. Your teen refuses to talk to you. Your best friend is suddenly cool and distant. What are you supposed to do? Plans A, B, and C might be to shut down, lash out, or get out. But consider Plan D: *Recognize that God has the last word on those messy, conflict-ridden relationships*. He can use them to make you into someone who can give and receive love with God and others. Impossible? Idealistic? Not really. In *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*, Tim Lane and Paul Tripp show you how God does it, and how it can happen for you. They help you tackle the stubborn problems that plague many close relationships. They show you the deeper issues that drive our reactions, choices, and behaviors. And they show you how God steps in to help you build relationships that are all He intended them to be.

[\*The Mingling of Souls: God's Design for Love, Marriage, Sex, and Redemption\*](#), by Matt Chandler

The Song of Solomon offers strikingly candid—and timeless—insights on romance, dating, marriage, and sex. We need it. We are inundated with songs, movies, and advice that contradict God's design for love and intimacy. Matt Chandler helps navigate these issues for both singles and marrieds by revealing the process Solomon himself followed. *The Mingling of Souls* will forever change how you view and approach love.

[\*Strengthening Your Marriage\*](#), by Wayne Mack

For better or for worse? Whichever term describes your marriage, there are ways to make it (even) better. That's because God has designed marriage to be a relationship of deep unity and strength. Despite the challenges that couples face today, marital harmony need not be considered an impossible ideal. Wayne Mack recognizes the challenges before us, and shows us how to meet those challenges with growing success. In this book, he has gathered a wealth of biblical insight and practical information on marital roles, communication, finances, sex, child rearing, and family worship. Both as a counseling aid and as a guide for husbands and wives to study together, this book offers true hope and help where couples need it most.

[\*Sweethearts for a Lifetime: Making the Most of Your Marriage\*](#), by Wayne Mack and Carol Mack

This biblical, practical book will help couples restore warmth and vitality to their marriages. Written both for newlyweds and for those who have long been married, *Sweethearts for a Lifetime* is a scriptural guide for lasting love.

[\*Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?\*](#) by Gary Thomas

Your marriage is more than a sacred covenant with another person. It is a spiritual discipline designed to help you know God better, trust Him more fully, and love Him more deeply. What if God's primary intent for your marriage isn't to make you happy . . . but holy? *Sacred Marriage* doesn't just offer techniques to make a marriage happier. It does contain practical tools, but what married Christians most need is help in becoming holier husbands and wives. *Sacred Marriage* offers that help with insights from Scripture, church history, time-tested wisdom from Christian classics, and examples from today's marriages.

[\*When Sinners Say "I Do": Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage\*](#), by Dave Harvey

Marriage is the union of two people who arrive at the altar toting some surprisingly large luggage. Often it gets opened right there on the honeymoon, sometimes it waits for the week after. The Bible calls it sin. Understanding its influence can make all the difference for a man and woman who are building a life together. *When Sinners Say "I Do"* is about encountering the life-transforming power of the gospel in the unpredictable journey of marriage.

[\*You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity\*](#), by Francis Chan and Lisa Chan

Marriage is great, but it's not forever. It's until death do us part. Then comes eternal rewards or regrets depending on how we spend our lives. Francis Chan joins together with his wife Lisa to address the question many couples wonder at the altar: "How do I have a great marriage?" Setting aside typical topics on marriage, Francis and Lisa dive into Scripture to understand what it means to have a relationship that satisfies the deepest parts of our souls.

[\*God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation\*](#), by Andreas Kostenberger

God's gracious plan to make His character and glory known through the institutions of marriage and family is under cultural attack like never before. Pastors' and biblical counselors' offices are filled daily with families struggling to find their way. Kostenberger's first edition of *God, Marriage and Family* was the most extensive work to date on the biblical and theological framework for understanding God's intent for the family: marriage, parenting, singleness, divorce and remarriage, same-sex attraction, etc. His second edition provides significant updates in every area, plus completely new sections on the theology of sex and on parenting teens. This book also contains an exhaustive bibliography on issues of marriage, parenting, and family.

## **15 Gospel-Centered Books on Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Forgiveness in Marriage**

### **Communication and Conflict Resolution**

[\*War of Words: Getting to the Heart of Your Communication Struggles\*](#), by Paul Tripp

“Talk” seems so normal, so ordinary, so harmless. Yet there are few things we do that are more important. And underneath the normality of it all is a great struggle, a war of words that we fight every day. Who hasn’t been hurt by the words of another? Who hasn’t regretted something they said? Who hasn’t had to referee an argument? Recognizing that words are powerful, Paul Tripp shows us how the gospel transforms the way we communicate. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word, is the only hope for our words. In our war of words, He is the one who gives us the victory. Tripp directs us to a renewed reliance on our heavenly Father’s abundant grace and a more Christ-honoring, people-benefiting life of talk.

[\*Help! I’m in Conflict\*](#), by Ernie Baker

How does the gospel impact relationships? How does our relationship with Christ intersect relationship tensions? What is the origin of conflict? What is going on in my heart that leads to my struggles with gentleness or lack of kindness or intolerance of others? These and many other matters are helpfully addressed in this mini-book by Dr. Ernie Baker.

[\*Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflict\*](#), by Robert Jones

We all have conflict in our life. We encounter it in our home, our workplace, our school, or even our church. All around us tensions exist and disputes persist. Robert Jones offers a step-by-step process for pursuing peace in all our relationships and a tool we can use to help others. This guide is biblical, Christ-centered, practical, and proven. Packed with wisdom and practical techniques, this book on reconciliation will send you on your way to pursuing peace while helping others to do the same.

[\*Happily Ever After: 30 Devotions for Couples\*](#), by Desiring God

Harder than you imagined. Better than a fairy tale. Marriage between sinners has its inevitable messes. If you’ve been married longer than a week or two, you know how the hard realities of life in a fallen age can come crashing in. Perhaps you had a season of “once upon a time,” but soon enough you realized that this marriage, in this world, is not yet your “happily ever after.” God designed marriage not as a trial to be endured, but as a pointer to and catalyst for your greatest joy. God didn’t design marriage to be your storybook ending, but a fresh beginning, to help get you ready for the true “happily ever after” when together we see our great Bridegroom face to face. The thirty devotional readings in *Happily Ever After* have been assembled to shape, challenge, and inspire you and your spouse’s (or fiancé’s) vision of marriage.

[\*Peacemaking for Families\*](#), by Ken Sande

Basic conflict-resolution skills found in Scripture can help you change your home from a battle zone to a love nest. Distinguishing between positive and negative conflict resolution, *Peacemaking for Families* introduces the reader to valuable principles such as “The Peacemaker’s Pledge,” the “Seven A’s of Forgiveness,” and the “PAUSE Principle of Negotiation.” Real-life stories and case studies help the reader to acquire the skills needed to create a true “peacemaking family.”

[\*Resolving Everyday Conflict\*](#), by Ken Sande and Kevin Johnson

Ken Sande, author of the bestselling classic *The Peacemaker*, has long been a trusted resource on the topic of conflict resolution. In *Resolving Everyday Conflict*, Sande distills his message to the essentials, quickly equipping readers with the tools they need to bring peace to their relationships. *Resolving Everyday Conflict* is a practical, biblical, concise guide to peacemaking in everyday life that can turn tumultuous relationships into peaceful ones.

[\*Communication and Conflict Resolution: A Biblical Perspective\*](#), by Stuart Scott

In this brief booklet, Stuart Scott powerfully outlines a heart-focused, biblical perspective on godly communication and loving conflict resolution.

## **Forgiveness**

[\*Putting Your Past in Its Place: Moving Forward in Peace and Forgiveness\*](#), by Steve Viars

Lives grind to a halt when people don’t know how to relate to their past. Some believe “the past is nothing” and attempt to suppress the brokenness again and again. Others miss out on renewal and change by making the past *more* important than their present and future. Neither approach moves people toward healing or hope. Pastor and biblical counselor, Steve Viars, introduces a third way to view one’s personal history—by exploring the role of the past as God intended. Using Scripture to lead readers forward, Viars provides practical measures to: understand the important place the past is given in Scripture, replace guilt and despair with forgiveness and hope, and turn failures into stepping stones for growth.

[\*The Truth About Forgiveness\*](#), by John MacArthur

“The greatest measuring rod of love in the life of a Christian may be forgiveness, because God showed His love to us in terms of forgiveness” (John MacArthur). Does anyone really want to forgive? Or admit that we need forgiveness? Whether we’re giving or receiving, forgiveness is hard. It seems unfair. It feels unnatural. Pastor John MacArthur demonstrates that forgiveness apart from Christ is unnatural. It is only as we understand our need, Christ’s power and example, and what it really means to love that we can embrace two of the most liberating acts of love: forgiving and being forgiven.



[\*Forgiving Others: Joining Wisdom and Love\*](#), by Tim Lane

Forgiving someone who has hurt you is one of the most difficult tasks anyone ever faces. In fact, it is so hard that most people avoid it at all costs. But when we don't forgive, we pay the price of bitterness that affects all of our relationships. Is it possible to forgive a great wrong and treat others with compassion despite the way they have treated us? In *Forgiving Others*, Tim Lane draws on his personal, pastoral, and counseling experience to explain that only when you understand God's love and forgiveness for you, will you be able to forgive those who have deeply hurt you. He applies that truth by explaining what forgiveness looks like in different situations and how to wisely practice forgiveness in the midst of difficult circumstances.

[\*Help! I Can't Forgive\*](#), by Jim Newcomer

What is one of the most common refrains heard in homes, relationships, churches, and even our culture at large? "I can't forgive!" The struggle to forgive someone who has wronged us is universal. What is the answer? A fresh look at the gospel! Jim Newcomer takes you through a five-stop journey toward biblical forgiveness.

[\*Help! My Spouse Has Been Unfaithful\*](#), by Mike Summers

This is a mini-book intended for the "innocent" party in a marriage where there has been adultery. You never dreamed this would happen, but you are reeling from the news that your spouse has been unfaithful. You don't know what to do. The emotions you are feeling are intense. Betrayal, rejection, bitterness, despair—these turn your life into a lonely journey. You stand at a crossroads: the decisions you make now will impact the rest of your life. Where can you turn? This little book can assist you as you navigate your way through this painful time. The perspective and hope offered here come from God's Word. What God has to say to you in your crisis is powerful and practical.

## **Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**

[\*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: Critical Questions and Answers\*](#), by Jim Newheiser

Drawing on decades of counseling experience, Jim Newheiser explores forty crucial questions relating to the complexities of marriage, divorce, and remarriage—unpacking the answers given in God's Word. This useful reference work for pastors, counselors, and personal study can also be read straight through for a scriptural overview of the topic or assigned in small sections to counselees.

[\*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible\*](#), by Jay Adams

If the church is going to use the Bible to decide whether divorce is legitimate in certain cases and whether divorced couples have the right to remarry with the approval and blessing of God's people, then the Bible must be studied without prejudice toward a particular answer. The author examines the relevant passages in both the Old and New

Testaments so that his readers can consider the many issues and interpretations that arise in trying to establish a consistently biblical position. As a result, readers can see more clearly and accept more firmly the truth of Scripture.

## **Church Discipline**

[\*God Redeeming His Bride: A Handbook for Church Discipline\*](#), by Robert Cheong

When there is a lack of forgiveness in marriage, a lack of repentance in marriage, or movement toward an unbiblical divorce, then church leaders must explore church discipline. Church discipline is a term that is fraught with problems for the church today. However from the biblical witness it is clear that it is an essential component of a healthy, God-honoring church—a church where Christians grow and mature in grace and develop solid foundations with which they can, with the help of the Spirit, withstand the storms of life.



## 18 Gospel-Centered Books on Common Issues and Struggles in Marriage

### Roles in Marriage, Men's Issues, and Women's Issues

[\*Helper by Design: God's Perfect Plan for Women in Marriage\*](#), by Elyse Fitzpatrick

There are few more contentious and heart-rending topics among women in the church than submission and what it means to be her husband's helper. Elyse Fitzpatrick believes that understanding this topic can bring about great freedom and a more meaningful relationship with Christ and your husband. In *Helper By Design*, she takes an in-depth theological look at what it means to be made in God's image to be a helper. This book will set in motion great heart changes as you grow toward becoming the woman God has called you to be.

[\*The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective\*](#), by Stuart Scott

This book provides a biblical blueprint for the mandate God has given to husbands to love their wives, even as Christ loved the church. It is suitable for individual study, for marriage counseling, for men's small group Bible studies, or for couples prayerfully seeking God's very best in marriage.

[\*The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective\*](#), by Martha Peace

Martha Peace not only explains what God requires of a Christian wife, but also describes how to obey God's commandments in order to become that wife. This book is scripturally-based, systematic, and practical. Within its pages is a detailed portrait of a godly wife. Not only is the standard high and godly, but Martha demonstrates that by God's grace, it is attainable.

[\*Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood\*](#), by John Piper, Editor

A controversy of major proportions has spread throughout the church. Now more than ever before, gender roles are openly questioned. In this redesigned edition of an influential and award-winning bestseller, more than 20 influential scholars such as John Piper, Wayne Grudem, and D. A. Carson have committed their talents to produce the most thorough response to date. Combining systematic argumentation with popular application, this volume deals with all of the main passages of Scripture brought forward in this controversy regarding gender-based role differences. Anyone concerned with the fundamental question of the proper relationship between men and women will want to read this book.

[\*Men Counseling Men: A Biblical Guide to the Major Issues Men Face\*](#), by John Street, Editor

*Men Counseling Men* is an exciting new resource on how to counsel men about the difficulties they face. It is an accessible, practical volume that will equip both trained professionals and lay people to provide solidly biblical help for men who are struggling with a variety of major life issues. Readers will learn how they can offer hope and

encouragement in relation to: depression, parenting, anger, conflict resolution, physical affliction, sexual purity, marital relationships, rebuilding a marriage after adultery, and much more.

[\*The Biblical Counseling Guide for Women\*](#), by John Street and Janine Street

The guidance every woman needs for any difficulty can be found in the pages of Scripture. Join John and Janie Street as they delve into some of the most common physical, mental, and emotional struggles faced by women today, including: anxiety, chemical abuse, depression, eating disorders, marital unfaithfulness, and much more. Equally valuable for both the individual woman searching for solutions and those who help hurting women—including counselors, pastors, and teachers—this accessible resource offers genuine hope based on the everlasting truth of God’s Word.

[\*Women Counseling Women: Biblical Answers to Life’s Difficult Problems\*](#), by Elyse Fitzpatrick, Editor

Multitudes of women struggle daily with negative habits and addictions, emotions such as anger and depression, various kinds of loneliness, and other difficulties experienced by mothers, wives, or singles. Here is a rich counseling resource that looks to the Bible alone as being sufficient to address our every need. Among the topics are: emotions, worry, and depression, eating disorders and habitual struggles and sins, verbal abuse and pornography, singleness, marriage, and parenting, grief and caregiving, and much more.

## **Sexual Purity**

[\*The Mingling of Souls: God’s Design for Love, Marriage, Sex, and Redemption\*](#), by Matt Chandler

The Song of Solomon offers strikingly candid—and timeless—insights on romance, dating, marriage, and sex. We need it. We are inundated with songs, movies, and advice that contradict God’s design for love and intimacy. Matt Chandler helps navigate these issues for both singles and marrieds by revealing the process Solomon himself followed. *The Mingling of Souls* will forever change how you view and approach love.

[\*Sex and the Supremacy of Christ\*](#), by John Piper, Editor

The Bible has a way of shocking us. If Americans could still blush, we might blush at the words, “Rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love” (Proverbs 5:18-19). But, of course, sin always tries to trash God’s gifts. So we can’t just celebrate sex for what God made it to be; we have to fight what sin turned it into. The contributors to this unique volume encourage you to do both: celebrate and struggle. This book has something for all—men and women, from contributors like John Piper, C. J. and Carolyn Mahaney, Mark Dever, Al Mohler, Carolyn McCulley, and others.

[\*Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken\*](#), by David Powlison

Sexuality was a part of God's good creation from the beginning. But with sin came a world filled with sexual brokenness. Thankfully, God is always in the business of restoration. This book offers hope for both the sexually immoral and the sexually victimized, pointing us all to the grace of Jesus Christ, who mercifully intervenes each moment in our lifelong journey toward renewal. Author David Powlison casts a vision for the key to deep transformation, better than anything the world has to offer—not just fresh resolve, not just flimsy forgiveness, not just simple formulas, but true, lasting mercy from God, who is making all things new.

[\*Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace\*](#), by Heath Lambert

In *Finally Free*, Dr. Heath Lambert, a leader in the biblical counseling movement, lays out eight gospel-centered strategies for overcoming the deceitful lure of pornography. Each chapter clearly demonstrates how the gospel applies to this particular battle and how Jesus can move readers from a life of struggle to a life of purity.

[\*Undefined: Redemption from Sexual Sin, Restoration for Broken Relationships\*](#), by Harry Schaumburg

One of the better resources on the topic of sexual sin and how it damages relationships. Dr. Schaumburg heads a ministry that deals specifically with those enslaved with sexual sin: Stone Gate Ministries.

[\*Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free\*](#), by Tim Chester

Tim Chester's offering on the topic of living porn free is a much-needed resource that balances the principles of God's grace and the gospel with other resources that stress external precautions related to pornography. Chester does an excellent work at connecting our motivation to be porn-free with the greater themes of God's glory and beauty.

[\*Sexual Detox: A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn\*](#), by Tim Challies

A huge percentage of men need a porn detox—a moral and psychological reset. Pornography corrupts our thinking, weakens our conscience, warps our sense of right and wrong, and twists our understanding and expectations of sexuality. We need a reset by the One who created sex. In this book, Challies seeks to help men reorient their understanding of sex, both in the big picture and in the act itself, according to God's plan for this great gift.

[\*CCEF Mini-books\*](#), by CCEF

CCEF has several excellent mini-books ranging from the topics of *Sexual Addiction: Freedom from Compulsive Behavior* (David Powlison) to *It's All About Me: The Problem with Masturbation* (Winston T. Smith). These small booklets are an invaluable resource for any counselor. Other helpful titles include: *What's Wrong with a Little Porn When You're*

*Married* (Nicholas Black); *What's Wrong with a Little Porn When You're Single* (Nicholas Black).

[Day One Living in a Fallen World Series](#), by Day One

This series of booklets, similar to CCEF's mini-books, is another helpful tool in the counselor's toolbox of go-to helps on a variety of topics. Titles include, *Help! He's Struggling With Pornography* (Brian Croft); *Help! She's Struggling With Pornography* (Rachel Coyle); *Help! My Spouse Has Been Unfaithful* (Mike Summers).

### **General Marital Issues/Marriage Counseling Homework**

[A Homework Manual for Biblical Living: Family and Marital Problems](#), by Wayne Mack

Wayne Mack designed this homework manual for counselors seeking assignments to give counselees, or for individuals seeking practical help in their own struggles. In this volume, Dr. Mack sheds biblical light on family and marital problems. He offers assignments for husbands and wives and for parents and children on topics such as communication, developing common interests, marriage evaluation, child rearing, and family religion.

[Solving Marriage Problems](#), by Jay Adams

"Counselors unanimously find that marriage and family problems outnumber all other counseling problems combined. For that reason alone, counselors should want to learn all they can about marriage counseling" (Jay Adams). This book will help counselors understand and deal with the typical problems that arise in a marriage. Unless one understands what a biblical marriage is supposed to be, it is difficult to solve marriage problems. For that reason, Dr. Adams spends the first few chapters developing a biblical model. Then he treats many of the specific kinds of problems that typically arise: life patterns, priorities, children, sex roles, in-laws, and more.

## 13 Gospel-Centered Books on Pre-Marital Counseling

[\*Tying the Knot: A Pre-Marital Guide to a Strong and Lasting Marriage\*](#), by Rob Green

This is my number one recommendation for pre-marital counseling. *Tying the Knot* offers soon-to-be-married couples a practical vision of Christ-centered marriage that is realistic, hopeful, and actionable. This nine-session study leads couples through issues like conflict, expectations, communication, finances, and intimacy—showing how each can be resolved successfully with Christ at the center of the marriage.

[\*Marry Wisely, Marry Well: A Blueprint for Personal Preparation\*](#), by Ernie Baker

Does marriage matter anymore? If so, is it even possible to have a stable marriage? How do you choose the right one? Is there anything to work on now, even before being in a relationship? *Marry Wisely, Marry Well* teaches you how to start building your future marriage house even before you begin a relationship. Learn to make a wise choice of a spouse, and how to start preparing yourself for a future relationship that is truly built on Christ.

[\*Preparing for Marriage God's Way: A Step-by-Step Guide for Marriage Success Before and After the Wedding\*](#), 2nd Edition, by Wayne Mack

*Preparing for Marriage God's Way* is a marriage counseling resource that uses thoughtful self-examination to reveal the personalities, background, and expectations that you and your partner are bringing to your union. Through rigorous Bible study, you will learn about God's expectations for marriage and be equipped with His solutions for dealing with typical marriage conflicts. Three follow-up lessons after your marriage help you to reflect on all that's happened after you said, "I do."

[\*Catching Foxes: A Gospel-Guided Journey to Marriage\*](#), by John Henderson

*Catching Foxes* has been written to help engaged couples prepare for marriage. Written in semi-interactive workbook format, it guides couples toward a Christ-centered and Christ-exalting paradigm for marriage. It lays a biblical foundation for marriage and helps couples better understand what God desires for them and from them in marriage. If you are a pastor or church leader charged with helping couples prepare for marriage, or if you are an engaged couple desiring to identify and catch the "little foxes" before they ruin the vineyard of your marriage (Song of Solomon 2:15), you will find this book very helpful.

[\*Preparing for Marriage: Help for Christian Couples\*](#), by John Piper

Getting to know that special someone includes learning about family and friends and schooling and athletics, favorite pastimes, books, movies, life's best moments and worst, the brightest places in our background and the darkest. But what about theology? Ever think to ask about that? And then there are the questions about worship and devotion, and

the roles of husband and wife—questions that far too many couples don't think to ask. When preparing for marriage, or even in just beginning to consider it, it is of immense help to have the perspective not only of a seasoned husband of over forty years, but also a seasoned pastor and theologian.

[\*Pre-Engagement: Five Questions to Ask Yourself\*](#), by David Powlison and John Yenchko

How do you know if you're ready to marry? What are the signs that a man and a woman are heading in the same direction and are right for each other? In this booklet, a biblical counselor and a pastor team up to offer five pertinent questions that will help couples decide whether to commit themselves to each other for life. These questions bring to light basic convictions, assumptions, expectations, priorities, and more. As couples think through and discuss them, they will get to know themselves and each other better—a wise investment toward building a marriage on a solid foundation, with Christ at the center.

[\*Letters to a Romantic: On Dating\*](#), by Sean Perron and Spencer Harmon

Whether or not you're currently dating someone, if you're a young person thinking about romance, you probably have a lot of questions. Who should you date? How do you turn down an unwanted date, navigate a first date, or break up with someone? Is marriage really for you? The Bible is sufficient to help you to think through the concerns of singleness and dating, and it has crucial things to say about the thoughts, attitudes, actions, and situations that commonly arise in this exciting stage of life. In friendly, practical letters, Sean and Spencer (and sometimes their wives, Jenny and Taylor) explore God's Word for answers on singleness, the start of a relationship, and tough dating situations, from breakups to broken boundaries. Their biblical insights will help you to make informed decisions on the road ahead.

[\*Letters to a Romantic: On Engagement\*](#), by Sean Perron and Spencer Harmon

If you're engaged, you already know a thing or two about navigating a relationship—but you're probably finding that this in-between period raises new questions. Turning to God's Word for answers, Sean and Spencer have written you short letters full of biblical, practical wisdom. Direct and to the point, they cover topics ranging from the details of wedding planning to the big picture of your future lifelong relationship. Find clarity amid engagement and come to your marriage prepared!

[\*Not Yet Married: The Pursuit of Joy in Singleness and Dating\*](#), by Marshall Segal

Many of you grew up assuming that marriage would meet all of your needs and unlock God's purposes for you. But God has far more planned for you than your future marriage. *Not Yet Married* is not about waiting quietly in the corner of the world for God to bring you "the one," but about inspiring you to live and date for more *now*. If you follow Jesus, the search for a spouse is no longer a pursuit of the perfect person, but a pursuit of more of God. He will likely write a love story for you different than the one you would write for yourself, but that's because he loves you and knows how to write a better story. This

book was written to help you find real hope, happiness, and purpose in your not-yet-married life.

[\*She's Got the Wrong Guy: Why Smart Women Settle\*](#), by Deepak Reju

Why do the nicest women pick guys who let them down for one reason or another? The answers are not always straightforward. For some women, the issue is as simple as not really thinking through what they're looking for or should be looking for in a man. Others feel they'd rather be with someone (and pretty much anyone will do) than be alone, while still others are unconsciously replicating patterns of bad relationships they learned in childhood or from traumatic experiences and don't know how to stop the cycle. Deepak Reju, writing from his years of experience as a pastor and a counselor, shares his perspective on how to assess a relationship's strengths from the beginning, how to identify possible pitfalls, and how to have the courage to not just settle but to wait for a relationship that will be a blessing to both of you.

[\*Danger Signs of an Unhealthy Dating Relationship\*](#), by Lou Priolo

I know that the one I am thinking of spending the rest of my life with is a sinner. I am one too. I know that no two people are totally compatible, and in a marriage of two sinners, there will be difficulties. But sometimes I wonder if we will make it. There are issues over which we keep on stumbling. Am I being oversensitive? Am I worrying about nothing? Or, are my concerns about our compatibility valid? If thoughts and questions like this trouble you, this book will help. Here's an inventory to help you decide if the light on the road before you is green, yellow, or red. It is designed to identify problem areas before you move forward with marriage plans—to serve as a useful tool as you seek godly advice from those who counsel you.

[\*The Sacred Search: What If It's Not about Who You Marry, But Why?\*](#) by Gary Thomas

What if you stopped looking for a “soul mate” and started looking for a “sole mate”—someone who will live out with you the great purpose of God? What if dating isn't about finding “the one,” but making a wise choice so you can better serve the One who loves you most? What if God didn't design relationships to make you happy, but to make you holy? In *The Sacred Search*, Gary Thomas transforms the way you look at romantic relationships. Whether you are single, dating, or engaged, Gary's unique perspective on dating will prepare you for a satisfying, spiritually enriching marriage even before you walk down the aisle. As Gary reminds us, a good marriage is not something you find—it's something you make.

[\*A Christ-Centered Wedding: Rejoicing in the Gospel on Your Big Day\*](#), by Catherine Parks

Wedding planning has spawned a major industry. The average cost of the occasion now exceeds \$25,000, and societal pressure to create the “perfect day” is so strong that even Christian couples forget what God originally intended for the sacred marriage ceremony. While paying attention to the good fun that follows that special proposal (the dress, the



flowers, the cake, the gatherings, etc.), *A Christ-Centered Wedding* first serves as a guide to believers who want their wedding to portray the relationship of Christ with the church and to reflect the gospel to all in attendance. From the start, this thoughtful book looks to the Creator of weddings for guidance in planning by emphasizing the sacrificial love of the Savior more than the modern world's idealistic view of romantic love. There are chapters filled with practical information about everything from pre-marital counseling and choosing a wedding location to other resources like a planning checklist and timeline, music suggestions, guidance on potential issues of conflict, a listing of traditional financial responsibilities, sample vows, and other great ideas from couples who have successfully put together a Christ-centered wedding.

## Addendum:

### 4 Additional Gospel-Centered Books on Marriage, Marriage Counseling, and Pre-Marital Counseling

- **Note:** These books were added based upon the recommendations of readers of this blog series.

[\*Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel\*](#), by Ray Ortlund

Marriage reveals something of eternal significance. From the beginning, God designed marriage to convey a greater reality—the passionate, unfailing, redeeming love of God for sinners, the eternal romance between Christ and His bride. In this volume, Ray Ortlund traces marriage throughout Scripture—from the first marriage in the garden of Eden to the ultimate marriage in the book of Revelation—laying out a transcendent vision of marriage that dignifies our own imperfect unions as a display of the gospel.

[\*Love That Lasts: When Marriage Meets Grace\*](#), by Gary Ricucci and Betsy Ricucci

Marriage is a profound and marvelous mystery established by God for His glory and our good. So many marital relationships never reach their greatest potential because they have the fatal limitation of being focused only on one another. When our primary focus is on Christ, our marriages have the potential to *thrive* and not merely *survive*.

[\*Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God: What Every Christian Husband Needs to Know\*](#), by C;J. Maheney and Carolyn Maheney

Most of us might read a title like this and think we'll find a few easy tips for spicing up our sexual relationship in marriage. Look elsewhere for that. In *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*, the Maheneys invite their readers to revolutionize their understanding of marital intimacy and romantic relationship.

[\*Married for God Making Your Marriage the Best It Can Be\*](#), by Christopher Ash

It is our natural tendency to seek personal happiness and satisfaction in marriage. We often give our own needs, wants, and goals first priority. But what is God's design for our marriages? With clarity and conviction, Christopher Ash turns us away from marriage for ourselves and toward marriage in the service of God. With practical applications for everyday life, Ash shows us God's purposes and patterns for every part of the marriage relationship.