

DYNAMICS OF A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE SYLLABUS FOR EML 5501

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION (NOTE CHANGE FROM CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION)

The Christian Home Course¹ is offered in three one-hour modules. Each module can be taken individually for one-hour credit. Module 1 examines both Old and New Testament passages which create the foundation for the Dynamics of a Christian Marriage. Module 2 offers exercises and experiences that strengthen communication and conflict resolution skills within the Christian marriage and home. Module 3 looks at issues and responsibilities that affect the Nurturing and Enriching of a Christian Family.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE FOR MODULE I

By the end of this module the student should be able to:

1. Understand and describe the biblical roles, responsibilities, & expectations of a husband and wife.
2. Analyze and synthesize the biblical, theological and practical implications of marriage and marriage vows.
3. Evaluate healthy and unhealthy attitudes toward marriage partners.
4. Write one objective for yourself or your marriage.

The Christian marriage and home provide a laboratory in which to validate the reality of Christian faith and a model by which to teach Christian theology. The creation of a distinctly Christian marriage and family requires informed and intentional action. In Christian ministry, the home is of pivotal importance. A Christian marriage can anticipate unique challenges when placed in the crucible of Christian ministry that call for upgraded coping skills.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

Gary Thomas. *Sacred Marriage*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. 2000.

B. Suggested

Allender, Dan and Temper Longman. *Intimate Allies*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995.

Cutrer, William and Sandra Glahn. *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998.

Hamner, Curt and John Trent, Rebekah J. Byrd, Eric L. Johnson, Erik. *Marriage: It's Foundation, Theology, and Mission in a Changing World*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018.

London, H.B. and Neil Wiseman. *Married to a Pastor*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999.

Mathews, Alice P. and M. Gay Hubbard. *Marriage Made in Eden*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004

Wheat, Ed and Gaye Wheat. *Intended for Pleasure*. Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell Co., 1977 or
Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1981.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

None

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS – MODULE I

A. Reading Assignments

Read required text, *Sacred Marriage*. **NOTE:** Those taking this course for two hours credit must read an additional book from the selected list (or as preapproved by the professor, write two 5 page papers: one detailing the changes made in the student's personal marriage (or if single, describing insights into marriage considered most helpful by the student) and one outlining the most important sections of the book for teaching to others. The second paper should explain why these sections were considered most important.

B. Written Assignments

1. The student must **choose three** from the list of assignments. While we recommend all the assignments be done as a couple or with another person, at least two **MUST** be done as a couple or with another person.

NOTE: Those taking this course **for two hours credit** must complete an additional three assignments. These can be selected from the following list or designed by the student with preapproval by the professor.

- **If married**, secure and review a copy of your marriage vows. If you wrote your own vows, did they describe feelings present at the time? If so, how have those feelings changed? Did your vows include specific promises? If so, in what ways have you attempted to keep those promises? Were the promises conditional or unconditional? Why? If you used a standard or somewhat personalized set of vows, what exactly did you promise? Who witnessed your promises? What differences do/should witnesses to promises make? Why is it important for the promises to be unconditional?
- **If single**, secure a copy of your pastor's marriage vows. Discuss with the pastor the importance of the various sections. Describe your own attitude toward these promises. Give a biblical rationale for the vows as well as your position.
- Watch "Sense & Sensibility" together or with another. A copy is available in the CE office for check out. Observe the different ways women perceive and respond to relationships with men. Men must document at least ten insights into the challenges women face when they are at the financial mercy of men. Women may edit or add to the list. Describe your emotions during a time when you felt helpless. Submit the final draft of the edited insights.
- Meet together as a couple for the next four weeks for one hour. The time and agenda for the meeting will be set by the student's spouse. The student will record a 1 paragraph synopsis of the meeting and a 1 paragraph description of insights gained into your mate's priorities, future dreams and concerns.
- Read 100 pages of *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage* by William Cutrer and Sandra Glahn or listen to Ed Wheat tapes together and review appropriate sections of *Intended for Pleasure*. Please get the editorial comment folder on the Ed Wheat book written by William Cutrer in the office. The tapes are available in the CE office and book is available in the library. The wife must certify that her husband has noted at least five places where she agrees or disagrees with Dr. Wheat or Dr. Cutrer. The husband must certify that his wife has noted at least five places where he agrees or disagrees with Dr. Wheat or Dr. Cutrer. No more reporting is necessary.
- Listen to Larry Burkett tapes as a couple or as a group. Tapes are available in the CE office. Document the five most important principles you learned and discuss these principles together. Formulate a strategy for acting on these principles. Your report will 1) list the principles; 2) review any insight gained from the discussion; 3) describe the strategy.

EML5501-Christian Home

- Write a definition of all the terms found in Philippians 4:8. Reflect on the definition of each word and write down three ways the term describes your mate. Pick one term for each day of one week (two terms needed for Sunday). Tell your mate the term you have selected for the day and the three ways they embody the term. Practice “thinking” about that term and the three ways your mate embodies that term each time your mate comes to mind that day. At the end of the week, write a one page journal describing the effects on yourself and or your relationship.
- Write a 2-3 page paper describing what a divorce between Christians says about God. Please document some reading on the subject of divorce. Discuss your conclusions with your mate or another person. Write up your conclusions from the discussion and describe why and how your personal attitudes have been impacted.
- Read the textbook and highlight with a marker each statement where you could say, “Yes, I’ve done that, said that, or thought that (or something very close to that).” Have your mate read the highlighted statements and mark an “x” beside it to note they now are aware of your thoughts. Discuss these statements. Turn in the double marked text book to evidence completion of the assignment.
- Write five paragraphs on how each of the following persons struggled with an awkward marital situation and what you learned that you can apply to your own life:
 - Esther
 - Abigail
 - Hosea
 - God
 - Anna
 - Joseph (Jesus’ step father)Be sure and document sources you consulted in addition to the Bible.
- Create a one year plan to nourish your marriage on a monthly basis. The plan must be mutually satisfying, agreed to by both parties and should include ways to gain insight as well as spend creative time together. The plan must contain clear objectives and details.
- Journal reflecting on your marriage at least several times a week for six weeks. Turn in your journal.

For single students only (Singles may choose from the list below as well as the general list to complete their four assignments.)

- Create ten questions you would like answered about marriage. Then interview two married couples, asking them these questions. Write a 2-3 page paper comparing and contrasting their responses. What did you learn that might help you if you marry? Turn in your questions but do not consider them in the page count.(Optional: Consider interviewing a Christian couple and a non-believing couple.)
- Observe marriages of family and friends over the next three weeks. Identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and helpful habits and strategies. Write a 2-3 page paper describing how these observations might help you if you marry in the future.
- During the weekend course, pay close attention to couples in the class. In what ways did you observe them illustrating the principles presented in the text and the lectures? Can you note examples of couples failing to act out these concepts? Document what you observed and discuss these ideas with another single student. (Do not identify the couples by name in your discussion or paper.) Write a 1-2 page assessment of this exercise.
- After digesting the text and lectures, list five personal strengths and five personal weaknesses that would influence your future relationship should you marry. Create and turn in a plan that will help you improve your weaknesses and further develop your strengths.

- Write out the benefits of marriage and singleness according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. Do you believe you could serve the Lord best as a married person or a single person? Why? Prayerfully consider your goals, dreams, temperament, and gifts. Share your conclusions with a wise friend or mentor who knows you well, asking if they agree or disagree. Turn in a statement signed by both of you, attesting to the conversation.
2. Table Summaries: Each table group will summarize the most significant lessons from the evening’s discussions. Instructions and supplies will be provided.

C. Quizzes and/or Exams

No quizzes or exams are scheduled.

V. COURSEPOLICIES

A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

Assignment	Percentage
Required Reading	10%
Three Chosen Assignments	25% each = 75%
Class Participation	15%
TOTAL	100%

NOTE: Those taking the course for two hours credit:

Required Reading =10%

Two Additional Papers= 30%

Three Additional assignments = 60%

Total 100%

GRADING RUBRIC	1	2	3	4	5	Possible
Spelling						10
Punctuation						10
Clarity						20
Economy						20
Thoughtful						20
Researched						20
Total						100

B. Class Participation

This module involves extensive participatory experiences. **Students who cannot attend ALL sessions are discouraged from registering for this module.**

C. Late Assignments

Since this course is offered in one-hour modules during a semester, all work will be due after the completion of the classroom portion as specified on Canvas. All late assignments will receive grade reduction.

D. Absences

The professor will follow the student handbook policy on attendance.

E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Due to the interactive nature of the course, if you are married, your spouse is encouraged to take this course with you, as our guest.

DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND SCHEDULE

Sessions

Session I- Introduction

Session II- Foundation for Marriage (Genesis 1-2)

Session III- The Model is Broken (Genesis 3)

Session IV- Sex as Blessing in Marriage (Song of Solomon)

Session V- Covenants and Vows (Malachi)

Session VI- The Trinity as a Model for Christian Marriage (John's Gospel)

Session VII- Marriage Roles Reflecting Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5)

Session VIII- Marks of a Healthy Marriage