Course Description:
This course examines Bible passages in the Old and New Testament that serve as foundations for marriage. Attention will be given to the theological issues involved, as illustrated with contemporary, as well as ancient, examples.

Course objectives
1. To strengthen marriages by presenting biblical, theological and practical foundations for Christian marriages.
2. To increase an understanding of the biblical teachings on marriage, as bases for application.
3. To increase an awareness of the secondary literature on marriage.
4. To encourage careful, original, creative scholarship which employs primary source materials, allowing conclusions to flow from the text.

This course addresses the Gordon-Conwell Mission statement by:
1. encouraging students to become more knowledgeable of Bible passages in the Old and New Testament that serve as foundations for marriage and to apply them to several specific contemporary situations (mission goal 1);
2. introducing students to the Christian scholarship issues related to the topic of the Bible and marriage (2);
3. helping students mature in their character, outlook, conduct, relationships, and involvement in society by the teachers’ models, class dialogues, mentoring opportunities, and prayer (4);
4. providing resources and strategies that will lead to effective local and global ministry, missions, evangelism, and discipleship pertaining to biblical and theological perspectives on marriage (3,5,6).

Course Requirements—Students will:
1. Read all assigned readings. Do a book review of each of three required books.
2. Attend and participate in all class sessions.
3. Write two biblical/theological assignments and one application. Papers may be redone for a higher grade (only up to date allowed) if original draft and cover sheet are included. All papers are due by the original due date.

Required Textbooks:
Bible.
Aída Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer, Steven Tracy, & Celestia Tracy, Marriage at the Crossroads
Kari Torjesen Malcolm, Building Your Family to Last OR a substitute book from the “General Biblical-Theological” category I or “Ministry and Marriage” category III.
Mary Stewart van Leeuwen, Gender & Grace,
OR Stanley Grenz, Welcoming but Not Affirming, OR Wayne House, ed.,
Divorce and Remarriage
OR substitute from bibliography from Category II: “Marriage and Contemporary Issues.”

Grading:
30% Assignment #1
50% Assignment #2
10% Assignment #3
10% Assignment #4 Completion of reading assignments, including a one page review/brief summary and extended analysis of three books. Th.M. elevated students will do an additional book review from the bibliography (categories I-V). No assignments by electronic mail.

Class 1 (Friday, Sept. 23) 6:30-10 p.m.
Goal: To present biblical and theological foundations for Christian marriage which all parties agree are key factors for a strengthened marriage.

Topics:
I. Why there is hope for marriage (Gen 2:22-25; Eccles. 4:9-12) ABS
II. The different types of love in the Song of Solomon
III. Introduction to course, explanation of syllabus and assignments.
   Brief summary of process from exegesis to theology to application.
IV. Brief Reflections: Theological principles and applications WDS

Class 2 (Saturday, Sept. 24) 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Topics:
I. The human dimension of marriage
   A. Marriage as unity: One flesh (Gen 2:15-24)
   B. The importance of perseverance/life long commitment in marriage (vs. reasons for divorce)
      (Mark 10:2-12; Matt 19:1-12; 5:31-32; (Luke 16:18); Deut 24:1-5; Rom 7:1-3; 1 Cor 7:1-39; Mal 2:10-17)
II. The divine dimensions of marriage—the importance of faithfulness
   (Isa 61:10; Deut 6:4; Gen 1:26-28)
   (See also 1 Cor 5; 6:9-20; 10:6-8; 1 Tim 3:2, 12; Heb 13:4; 1 Thess 4:3-7; John 4:17-18;
    Eccles 9:9; Ezek 16:8, 32; 23; Jer 2:20-33; 3:1-23; 4:30; 5:7-11; 7:9; 13:27; Mishnah Gittin) Biblical Definition of Marriage
   II. Brief Reflections: theological principles and application ABS
   III. (afternoon session; how to use a concordance. How to do a word study)

Required Reading:
   Song of Solomon; one gospel (take note of references to marriage); Ephesians, 1 Peter Malcolm, Building Your Family to Last or another book from I “General
Required Writing Assignment #1 5-8 pp. double spaced due Oct. 7 (deliver to professor or postmark) Grace: receive at home by Oct. 10, 9 a.m.

A Study of Two Couples in the Bible.
Choose two couples of the Bible to research (see list), one from each column. Find all biblical references to the couples. Read the context of each reference. If you know Greek and/or Hebrew, translate the pertinent verses (if not, compare several translations). Answer the following questions as fully as possible:

- What is the place of God’s sovereignty and of human effort in the relationship?
- What type of relationship does the couple have?
- What background information can enlighten marriage in your passage?
- What is the significance of this marriage in the Bible and today?

(Answer if possible the following:)
- What is the basis of the marriage?
- What is the reason for the marriage?
- What is the relationship with in laws?

As application, how well does each marriage implement positive biblical principles, what is not helpful, how is the marriage limited by its historical/cultural context, would this marriage be legal in the U.S. & acceptable in your church? What is transferable to our present situation in the United States?

Present your findings in essay form. Begin with an introductory paragraph and thesis. Support your conclusions with Bible references or explanations. Come to a conclusion and application. Quote and footnote any ideas by others.

Class 3 (Friday, Oct. 21) 6:30-10 p.m.

Topics

Goal: To discuss biblical and theological foundations for Christian marriage about which evangelicals differ.

II. Jesus as Lord of the home: ABS

Mutual submission in marriage and husband as head of wife
(Eph. 5:15-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Cor 11)

III. Brief Reflections: theological principles and application WDS

Class 4 (Saturday, Oct. 22) 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Topics
I. Jesus as slave who redeems (1 ½ hrs) ABS

(1 Pet 2:13-3:12; Gen 12:10-20)

II. God’s Ideal Man & Woman: 1 Thess 2 & Prov 31 (2 ½ hrs) WDS

III. Principles that can be learned from the study of couples in the Bible (optional) WDS

IV. Brief Reflections: theological principles and application ABS & WDS
V. Further discussion of second assignment
VI. (optional: afternoon—assistance with assignment #2)

**Required Reading:** for next class
Read one: Grenz, *Welcoming but Not Affirming,*
OR House, *Divorce and Remarriage,*
OR Van Leeuwen, *Gender & Grace,*
OR another book from the bibliography, category II. “Marriage and Contemporary Issues” (@ 200-300 pp.) Do 1 p. book review (see p.2, assign.4)
Complete assignments #2, 3, 4.

**Required Writing Assignment #2** Due next class: Nov. 4. Include self-addressed stamped envelope. Grace: Nov. 7 received at professor’s home (9 a.m.).
Choose one of the following assignments:

**Assignment 2A:**
Develop a theology of marriage by an exegetical study of one New Testament passage, using Greek if possible. Explain the meaning of the text using the immediate context. Study at least one important word in your passage using a concordance. Fit the text in the larger context of the book. Verify reliability of text. In the summary, draw out theological principles as basis for application.

OR

**Assignment 2B:**
Develop a theology of marriage by a theological study of at least 4 passages in the Old Testament and 4 passages in the New Testament, including a study of at least one key biblical word. In the summary, draw out theological principles as basis for application.

**AND**

**Assignment 3A**
Write an outline (1-2 pp.) of a sermon or a lesson plan, which flows from assignment 2. Use “Make the Application to Life” guidelines.

OR

**Assignment 3B**
Develop a manual of readings for use in premarital counseling. Include 1 page xeroxes from 15-25 references. Cite bibliographic reference for each page.

**First and second paper may be redone up to Dec. 2 (postmark or deliver).** Only papers handed in on time can be guaranteed redoing. **Book reviews due by Dec. 2.**

**Assignment # 2A – Possible Topics**
1. Pick one passage to study: John 13:1-17, 34-35; Col 3:1-17; Gal 5:22-23; 1 Cor 13:4-7. Focus on how might these positive qualities affect marriage.
2. God says a wife is analogous to the sanctuary (Ezek 24:15-27). Clarify metaphor. What is literal meaning? What is analogy? What does this mean in its context? Is there any similarity to Eph. 5:25-28? What relevance does the passage have for marriage relationships today?
3. Study 2 Cor 6:14 as it relates to marriage, in the light of such passages as Exod 34:16; 1 Kings 11; 2 Chron 21:6; Ezra 9:1-10:44; Neh 10:30; 13:23-27. (See also p. 2 syllabus.)
Class 5 (Friday, Nov. 4) 6:30-10 p.m.

Topics: ABS
The place of gifts, roles, decision-making, and authority in marriage (Gen 3; 1Tim 5:14)
Each of the panelists will answer the following questions:
1. Biographical background-
   how the couple came to their view (egalitarian and complementarian)
2. Biblical basis-
   A. How do you understand Ephesians 5:21-33?
      What does “head” mean?
      What does “submission” mean?
      How do these work out in daily interaction with one another?
   B. In what way did Jesus speak to the marriage relationship
      and how does his teachings serve to guide your views of marriage?
   C. How, if at all, do you relate the Trinity to the relationships between husband
      and wife?
   D. What is your understanding of authority and how does it affect the marriage
      relationship?
3. Practical Considerations
   A. How do you make important decisions in your home?
      Do you ever feel the need to have someone make the final decision?
   B. Do you think male/female differences are proposed in the Bible?
      Do you think there are innate male/female differences?
      How does your answer affect your marriage?
   C. What are your roles and how do you determine your roles in the marriage?
      How do (did) you assume the tasks of child-rearing?
   D. How do you as a married couple relate to singles?
   E. How might your marriage advance God’s kingdom?

Class 6 (Saturday, Nov. 5) 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Goal: To apply biblical principles of marriage to contemporary issues in marriage:
I. Drama: “Romance in the Real World” WDS
   Discussion-making spiritual, relational, and professional choices with marriage in mind
II. What Makes a Marriage Work?
   The application of the course to life and marriage WDS & ABS
III. Evaluation & Dinner
Assignment #1
Pick a couple from each column:
A (generally positive examples)
Adam & Eve
Abra(ha)m & Sara(h) (Gen 11:29-23:20)
Isaac & Rebekah (Gen 24- 28)
Ruth & Boaz (Ruth; Matt 1:5)
Priscilla & Aquila (Acts 18; 1 Cor 16; Rom 16)
Shulammite & shepherd (Song of Sol.)
Zechariah & Elizabeth (Luke 1)

B (brief or generally negative examples)
Jacob & Rachel & Leah
(Mos 28:1-29;35:18-19; Hos 12:12; Ruth 4:11)
Moses & Zipporah (Ex 2:15ff)
Tamar & Judah (Gen 38; Ruth 4:12;1 Chr 2:4)
Dinah & Shechem (Gen 34:1-35:7)
Manoah & wife (Judg 13:2-14:20;16:31)
Samson & wives (Judg 14:1-16:31)
Levite & concubine (Judg 19:1-21:25)
Achsah & Othniel (Judg 1:12-15;Josh15:13-19)
Elkanah, Hannah & Peninnah (1 Sam 1:1-2:21)
David & Michal (1 Sam 18; 19:11-17; 25:39-44; 2 Sam 3:13-16; 6:16-22; 21:8; 1 Chron 15:29)
David & Abigail & Nabal (1 Sam 25; 27:3; 2 Sam 3:2-5; 5:13ff; 1 Kings 1)
David & Bathsheba (2 Sam 11-12; 1 Kings 1-2)
Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
Solomon and Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24; 11:1-8; 2 Chron 8:11)
Ahab & Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31; 18:4, 13, 19; 19:1-2; 21; 2 Kings 9)
The Shunammite & husband (2 Kings 4:8-37; 8:1-6)
Hosea and Gomer (Hosea 1:2-8; 3:1-5)
Capable wife & husband (Prov 31:10-31)
Rehoboam & wives (2 Chron 11:18-21)
Esther & Ahasuerus (Xerxes)
King Ahasuerus & Queen Vashti (Esther 1-2)
Haman & Zeresh (Esther 5:9-14; 6)
I. General Biblical/Theological Books on Marriage


Barton, Stephen C. *Discipleship and Family Ties in Mark and Matthew*. SNTS Monograph Series 80. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1944. BS2585.2.B38 Academic, following Jesus relativizes other ties. Helpful background references. Somewhat higher critical. (pp 261, text 225)


II. Marriage & Contemporary Issues

A. Divorce


B. Gender


C. Homosexuality

psychologically homosexuality is immaturity, not being able to love "the other."

(Cameron, Paul. The Gay 90s: What the Empirical Evidence Reveals about Homosexuality. Franklin: Adroit, 1993.) HQ 76.8U5 C36


(Satinover, Jeffrey. Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.) HQ76.3 U5S35

(sociological/psychological studies)

D. Violence


Kroeger, Catherine Clark, and Nancy Nason-Clark. No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. BV4438.5K76 (Bos)


E. Singleness


III. Ministry and Marriage


IV. Background References

Balch, David L. *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*. Atlanta: Scholars, 1981. (pp 196, text 121) BS2795.2 B34


Safrai, S., and M. Stern, eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography,*


V. Other Books

A. Sociological/Practical Aspects of Marriage

Journal of Marriage and the Family
Journal of Family Issues


B. Men/Women Specifically


C. Sexuality and Marriage


D. Work & Marriage
