

Before class: Read chapter 9 in “Things I Wish I’d Known Before We Got Married” by Gary Chapman and finish assignments from previous week.

GOD’S PROTECTION FOR MARRIAGE

Speaker Notes

Small Group Discussion

- Share something you learned after completing last week's homework.
- Discuss the godly insights that you, personally, gained from this session. Include verses that you heard or read and share examples that impressed you, along with things you really did not know until hearing them today.
- Discuss things you feel comfortable with that were presented today.
- Why is it necessary to stay sexually pure until marriage? Do you agree with the scriptures? Are both of you in total agreement?
- Take turns so that each person in the group shares what protective steps and/or boundaries you learned today, in reading, or just along the way, that would help protect your relationship now... and in your marriage.
- What boundaries would you personally like to commit to in order to safeguard your marriage (i.e. giving up close relationship with opposite sex, keep from allowing others/things from consuming your time: computers, cable channel, suggestive magazines/books)

Couple Devotional

There will be many things that you both need to be protected from in your marriage - commitment to your vows, conflict, crisis, sexual temptations, and _____. (You know how to fill in the blank for your circumstances). Let us look at how Paul gives us a guide for protecting our marriage and all areas of life.

Read Together Ephesians 6: 10-20

Answer separately and then discuss together

- What confidence do you receive from reading vs. 10?
- Referring back to vs. 12, what are some of the evil forces you see at work in the world today?
- What areas in your personal life do you feel pulled into by “this evil force”?
- What are potential areas in your marriage where you might need God’s extra protection from these evil forces? (money, questionable relationships, poor attitude, etc.)

Identify the pieces of the armor and what they represent:

<u>Armor Piece</u>	<u>Represents</u>
Example: Belt	Truth

Pray Together

Each of you pray the “Armor of God” over your partner. There are people who pray this daily for their spouse.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, (partner’s name) may be able to stand his/her ground, and after (partner’s name) has done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around (partner’s name) waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with (partner’s name) feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which (partner’s name) can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. In Jesus name, Amen.

Couple Exercise

Answer questions separately and then discuss together.

- Compare the worldly perceptions of physical intimacy with what you now understand from God's point of view.
- List some ways in which you would like to see your relationship change in view of the talk today. If you need help in this area, speak with your leaders or anyone in this ministry. Ask your leaders to pray with you and for you as a couple.
- Who are the people in your life who have influenced your thinking the most regarding sexual intimacy?
- If Jesus changes areas of our lives as we surrender them to Him, then what areas would you like to see changed in yourself, and changed in this relationship?
- Discuss areas that may become a problem after you marry. (I.e. physical, spiritual, emotional, mental).
- What do you think about pornography? What degree has it ever played a part in your life, and how recently?
- How do you perceive your marriage fulfilling your physical or emotional needs? Explain.
- What married couple(s) come to mind when you think of those who have safeguarded their marriage?
- Who/What has influenced you the most regarding marriage (friends, family, reading, movies)?
- How would you want to refresh your marriage, eventually (e.g., participate together in small group of couples, seminars, read books, discuss with other family members)?
- What areas do you see in your life that lack self-control?
- Regarding physical intimacy, and the things you have heard, do you wish you knew more/less? Why?

For Previously Marrieds

- How has your previous marriage affected your sexual desire for your future spouse? Be sure to interact with an attitude of understanding and forgiveness.
 - Depending on the ages of children/stepchildren you are bringing into the marriage, how will you arrange time to form your own bond of oneness? What fears or concerns do you have about the common struggle for privacy?

Reminder: Read assigned chapter for next lesson.

