



TRUTH IN LOVE BIBLICAL
TRAINING CENTER

CERTIFIED BIBLICAL COUNSELOR PROGRAM

MODULE 6

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
COUNSELING

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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELING

SYLLABUS

Course Description

- This 12-week Module seeks to equip students to approach Marriage & Family Counseling from a Biblical perspective in a Google-ized, sexualized society. Many family issues of today - disintegrated families, single-parent households, blended families, addiction, etc. - were almost unheard of a few decades ago. Now they are common place. The twelve lessons in this module help students develop a Biblical and historical-Christian understanding of marriage. The goal is to equip students to impact the Body of Christ to return to a healthy and solid approach to marriage from God's perspective.
- Application is made to most aspects of marriage and family counseling encountered by pastors and Biblical counselors.
- Underlying emphasis is on developing strategies and applying Scriptural principles to identify the nature and cause of troubled marriage and family situations and guide the parties involved to effect Biblical change.

Course Objectives

- To equip the student to understand marriage from a scriptural standpoint.
- To equip the student to be able to disciple others in understanding and living out God's model for marriage and family from a Christian worldview.
- To equip the students to properly identify and analyze underlying individual issues of those involved that have created and are helping maintain marriage and/or family troubles.
- To equip the student to effect Biblical change in the counseling relationship.
- To provide the student with the opportunity to effect Biblical change personally in their own family relationships during the module and beyond.
- To model a method of evaluating the progress of counselees and the effectiveness of the counseling relationship.
- To demonstrate how Biblical change impacts the individual, the family, the church, the community, and the nation.

Required Reading

Allender, Dan B. and Longman III, Tremper. *Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God's Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life* (2nd Ed.). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999.

Counselor Dan Allender and theologian Tremper Longman III merge their minds and skills to strip away cultural expectations and takes a fresh look at God's design for the marriage relationship. The authors focus on five foundations taken from Genesis 1-3 and include an extensive review of other biblical passages on marriage. Each section begins with a real-life story concerning an unresolved marriage issue and concludes with the same story built on the “foundation” of a godly marriage. With eloquence and wisdom, *Intimate Allies* will challenge readers to move their marriages out of the mundane and into the fulfilling and enriching experiences God intended.

Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995.

Written for parents with children of any age, this insightful book provides perspectives and procedures for shepherding your child's heart into the paths of life. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* gives fresh biblical approaches to child rearing, including how to focus on the heart and using different styles and types of communication, depending on the situation and heart of the child.

Recommended Reading (Books marked with ❖ are Honors reading)

❖ **Allender, Dan B. and Longman III, Tremper.** *The Intimate Mystery: Creating Strength and Beauty in Your Marriage (Intimate Marriage Series)*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Marriage is about spiritual growth. God wants to use your marriage to shape your character and to carry out his purposes in the world through you as a couple. The book of Genesis provides a matrix for understanding the intimate mystery of marriage in light of three commands--leave (your family of origin), weave (a life together) and cleave (through sexual intimacy). In this book, Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III explore and unpack the rich implications of this pattern.

❖ **Carder, David M.** *Close Calls: What Adulterers Want You to Know About Protecting Your Marriage*. Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 2008.

Dave Carder, counselor and author of the bestselling *Torn Asunder* (100,000 in print), is a sought-after expert on issues of adultery. Carder reveals what

adulterers learned the hard way, and what they want the rest of us to know. Includes charts and assessments.

Sells, James N. and Yarhouse, Mark A. *Counseling Couples in Conflict: A Relational Restoration Model*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000

Most therapeutic approaches, especially those of a cognitive orientation, are not very effective in dealing with high conflict relationships—couples are often heading toward divorce by the time they seek help. Utilizing a relational conflict and restoration model Mark Yarhouse and James Sells provide one clear way to help couples in crisis step outside the cycle of pain towards marital healing.

Smith, Winston T. *Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change Through Ordinary Moments*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010

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.

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

Thomas has written this book to describe, "how we can use the challenges, joys, struggles, and celebrations of marriage to draw closer to God and to grow in spiritual character." His endpoint is not a happier marriage per se, but the transformation of each spouse into the character of Christ (which, as he says, does often achieve a greater sense of satisfaction within the marriage).

❖ **Tracy, Celestia G. and Steven R. Tracy.** *Forever and Always: The Art of Intimacy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.

Excellent insights and Biblical instruction in moving toward intimacy in marriage. When both partners are willing to overcome the fear of change, no matter their age or level of discouragement in marriage, this book provides great help, both internally and externally, in deepening the marriage commitment and developing a vibrancy in relational intimacy. Recommended resource for couples.

Tripp, Paul David. *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens, Second Edition*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1997, 2001.

With compassion, wit, and wisdom, Tripp uncovers the heart issues affecting families during the often-chaotic adolescent years. Gain assurance of God's.

- ❖ _____ . *War of Words: Getting to the Heart of Your Communication Struggles*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2000

An important and biblical book about our words and our God. Few of us really think about the power, the blessing, the gift, the effect, and the danger of our words. This book will make you think before you speak. Until our hearts are completely purified by God in heaven, we must set strong guards at the gates of our mouths and fight daily battles to restrain the overflow of our sinful desires. Helpful insights and practical tools for this battle.

- ❖ **Tripp, Tedd and Margy Tripp**. *Instructing a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2008.

Instructing a Child's Heart is an essential companion resource to *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. The instruction that you provide for them not only informs their mind; it is directed to persuading their hearts of the wisdom and truthfulness of God's ways; to impress truth on the hearts of children, not to control or manage them; to point them to the greatest joy and happiness that they can experience delighting in God and the goodness of his ways.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Summary of Requirements

- Attend lectures
- Participate in weekly Discussion and Role Play activities
- Reading synopses
- Course application paper

Course Application Paper – Spiritual Genogram (50%)

The genogram is an effective tool for mapping out relationship patterns and traits that might otherwise be missed in data gathering. Begin by mapping your family structure by drawing a three-generational genogram, including as much information as possible about family members. *Appendix 1* contains the information needed to complete this project.

Weekly Discussion Activities (25%)

Each week, one or more Discussion Questions and/or Role Plays will be posited to the class. The goal is to elicit group interaction with the material.

Reading Synopses (25%)

A one- to two-page synopsis of both books on the Required Reading list, with a final personal assessment of the work as the conclusion of each synopsis.

Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted via Google Doc with an invitation to comment for the professor. For those who find writing and typing to be overburdensome, the professor may grant permission to submit assignments in video format instead of Google Docs. Extensions must be pre-approved prior to the relevant due date.

Honors

Honors Reading: Read any Recommended Reading list item marked ❖. Submit a three- to five-page summary/analyses of the work.

Honors Project: Submit an original research paper on any approved topic. Topic must be taken from the lectures, the required reading, or the recommended reading.

Final Course-Grade Meanings

A with Honors = You far exceeded expectations and completed an Honors Project or Reading.

- A = There were dimensions to your work that went above the requirements.
- B = At VBI, a “B” means that you successfully fulfilled the requirements.
- C = You missed some important facets of the material or the assignment.

Contact Information

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COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1

- ✓ Introduction and Syllabus
- ✓ Nature and Purpose of the Family

Session 2

- ✓ Biblical Foundations for Marriage
- ✓ Gender Matters

Session 3

- ✓ Communication and Intimacy

Session 4

- ✓ Dealing With Our History of Hurts

Session 5

- ✓ Sexuality and Sexual Brokenness in Marriage

Session 6

- ✓ Biblical Economics

Session 7

- ✓ When Children Join the Family

Session 8

- ✓ Blended Families

Session 9

- ✓ Infertility, Traumatic Loss, and Disabilities

Session 10

- ✓ Single-Parent Households

Session 11

- ✓ Raising Troubled Children

Session 12

- ✓ Premarital Counseling

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

LESSON	READING & ASSIGNMENTS	DUE
LESSON 1	A/L; Part 1, to end of Chapter 4.	WEEK 2
LESSON 2	A/L; Part 2 to end of Chapter 6 Tripp; to end of Chapter 2	WEEK 3
LESSON 3	A/L; Part 2, to end of Chapter 8 Tripp; to end of Chapter 4	WEEK 4
LESSON 4	A/L; Part 3, to end of Chapter 10 Tripp; to end of Chapter 6	WEEK 5
LESSON 5	A/L; Part 3 to end of Chapter 12 Tripp; to end of Chapter 8	WEEK 6
LESSON 6	A/L; Part 4 to end of Chapter 14 Tripp; to end of Chapter 10	WEEK 7
LESSON 7	A/L; Part 4 to end of Chapter 16 Tripp; to end of Chapter 11	WEEK 8
LESSON 8	A/L; Part 5 to end of Chapter 18 Tripp; to end of Chapter 12	WEEK 9
LESSON 9	A/L; Part 5 to end of Chapter 20 Tripp; to end of Chapter 13	WEEK 10
LESSON 10	A/L; Epilogue Tripp; to end of Chapter 14	WEEK 11
LESSON 11	Review and evaluate Appendix 2, <i>Pre-Marriage Interview and Cover Letter</i>	WEEK 12
LESSON 12	ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE	ALL READING COMPLETED

A/L = Allender/Longman, *Intimate Allies* Tripp = *Shepherding a Child's Heart*.

Appendix 1 = Spiritual Genogram Appendix 2 = Pre-Marriage Interview and Cover Letter

Assigned reading can be done at your own pace, but be prepared to work reading assignment information into the class discussion during the next week's Lesson following the week listed.