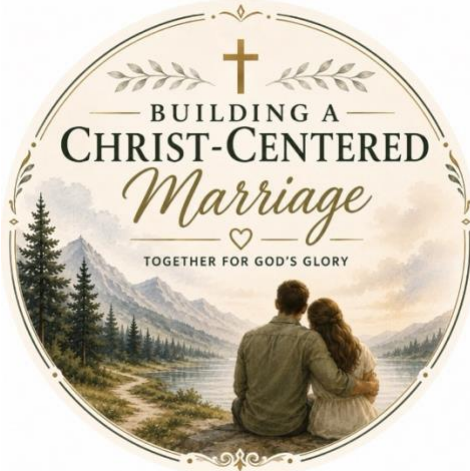




PROTECTING YOUR MARRIAGE

LESSON NINE

BUILDING A CHRIST CENTERED MARRIAGE

Ten Biblical Lessons for Growing Together in Love, Faith, and Unity

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. God's Design for Marriage (A, B, C) | 6. God's Gift of Physical Intimacy |
| 2. Love, Respect, and Biblical Leadership | 7. Making Decisions Together |
| 3. Communication That Builds Unity | 8. Money, Work, and Stewardship |
| 4. Healing from Past Hurts, Bitterness, and Unforgiveness | 9. Protecting Your Marriage |
| 5. Growing Spiritually Together | 10. Growing Old Together and Leaving a Godly Legacy |

Main Scripture Passage: Proverbs 4:23–27

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Main Truth: A strong marriage must be protected through a guarded heart, faithful choices, honest trust, wise boundaries, and godly help.

Lesson Purpose: To help couples recognize dangers, guard their faithfulness, build trust, set wise boundaries, and seek help when serious problems arise.

LESSON OVERVIEW

A good garden needs care and protection. Weeds must be pulled, animals must be kept out, and weak places in the fence must be repaired. Marriage also needs daily care and protection.

Some dangers begin outside the home. Other dangers begin in the heart. Temptation, pride, secrecy, bitterness, careless friendships, and harmful advice can slowly weaken trust.

Protecting a marriage does not mean living in fear or controlling a husband or wife. It means loving what God has given, watching for danger, speaking truth, and choosing faithfulness before trouble grows.

Serious sin must not be hidden. Violence, threats, sexual sin, addiction, and cruel control require wise and safe help. Protecting marriage includes protecting people from harm.

IN THIS LESSON, WE WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING TRUTHS:

1. Guard your heart and remain faithful.
2. Build trust with truth and wise boundaries.
3. Face problems early and seek wise help.

MAIN SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Proverbs 4:23–27

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

PART 1: GUARD YOUR HEART AND REMAIN FAITHFUL

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Matthew 5:28

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Job 31:1

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

1. Protection begins in the heart. Thoughts, desires, and secret choices will soon affect words and actions.
2. Temptation is not defeated by pretending it is harmless. Notice what draws your heart away from Christ and your spouse.

3. Guard your eyes and mind. Turn away from sinful pictures, stories, messages, and thoughts instead of feeding them.
4. Do not build a secret emotional or physical relationship with another person. Faithfulness includes the heart, not only the body.
5. Avoid places and situations that make sin easier. Wisdom leaves temptation instead of testing how close it can come.
6. Bring sin to Christ. Honest confession, repentance, prayer, and accountability can stop hidden sin from growing.

Practical Illustration: The Spark Near the Hay

A farmer saw a small spark fall near a pile of dry hay. The spark looked weak, but he did not leave it alone.

He stamped it out, moved the hot tool, and checked the floor before going home. A small action protected the barn, the animals, and his family from a great loss.

Temptation may also begin small. A wise husband or wife does not feed it or hide it. The safest time to stop a fire is before it spreads.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Does Christ control what you allow into your eyes, mind, and heart?
2. Is there a sinful thought, picture, or relationship you need to leave?
3. What wise boundary would make faithfulness easier for you?
4. How can you show faithful love to your husband or wife this week?

PART 2: BUILD TRUST WITH TRUTH AND WISE BOUNDARIES

Ephesians 4:25

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Proverbs 13:20

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

1. Trust grows when words and actions agree. Lies, half truths, and hidden choices make a spouse feel unsafe.

2. Protect private marriage matters, but do not use privacy to hide abuse or serious sin. Safe and wise help may be needed.
3. Set clear boundaries with other people. Do not give another person the private closeness, affection, or attention that belongs in marriage.
4. Talk together about phones, letters, messages, rides, work, visits, and travel. Agree on choices that protect both trust and a good testimony.
5. Choose wise friends and counsel. People who excuse sin, mock marriage, or stir anger can pull a couple away from God and each other.
6. Build what you want to protect. Make time to talk, pray, show affection, enjoy each other, and solve problems before distance grows.

Practical Illustration: The Fence Around the Garden

Daniel and Anna planted a garden beside their house. Daniel built a fence because cattle sometimes wandered near the road.

The fence was not built because the garden was bad. It was built because the garden was valuable. When one board came loose, they repaired it before an animal entered.

Wise boundaries serve marriage in the same way. They are not meant to create fear or control. They protect trust and help a husband and wife care for what God has given them.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Can your husband or wife trust your words and private choices?
2. Is there a boundary that the two of you need to discuss?
3. Do your closest friends help you honor Christ and your marriage?
4. What can you do together to strengthen trust this week?

PART 3: FACE PROBLEMS EARLY AND SEEK WISE HELP

Proverbs 27:12

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 11:14

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

James 5:16

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

1. Small problems often grow when they are ignored. Bitterness, secrecy, harsh speech, and long silence should be faced early.

2. Do not wait until trust is nearly gone. Speak calmly, listen carefully, and name the real problem without threats or blame.
3. Seek help from mature and trustworthy people who honor Scripture, protect privacy, tell the truth, and understand serious problems.
4. Wise counsel is different from gossip. The goal is not to gather people against a spouse. The goal is truth, safety, repentance, and healing.
5. Violence, sexual abuse, threats, dangerous control, addiction, and repeated unfaithfulness must not be hidden. Seek a safe place and proper help when danger is present.
6. True repentance includes confession, change, accountability, and a willingness to receive correction. Words alone do not rebuild trust.

Practical Illustration: Smoke in the Barn

Levi smelled smoke in the barn late one evening. He could not see a flame, and he felt foolish calling anyone over a small smell.

His wife urged him to check. Levi called two neighbors, and together they found a hot wire behind a wall. They shut off the power before the boards caught fire.

Asking for help did not destroy the barn. It helped save it. In the same way, wise help can protect people and a marriage when warning signs appear.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a warning sign in your marriage that should not be ignored?
2. Who are two trustworthy people you could ask for wise help?
3. Do you know where a person can find safety if violence or threats occur?
4. What problem do you need to bring honestly before Christ today?

A SIMPLE PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

1. Pray and ask God to show any weak place in your heart or marriage.
2. Share one thing that helps each of you feel loved, trusted, and safe.
3. Choose one wise boundary and one habit that will strengthen your marriage.
4. Write down the names of two trustworthy people who could help in a serious need.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help us value and protect the covenant we made before You.

Guard my heart, eyes, thoughts, and desires. Show me any secret sin or careless choice that could harm my walk with You or my marriage.

Help us speak truth and keep our promises. Give us wisdom to set boundaries that protect trust without using fear or control.

Teach us to make time for each other, pray together, show affection, and face problems before distance grows.

Give us humility to confess wrong, receive correction, forgive with wisdom, and seek help when we need it.

Protect every person who faces violence, threats, abuse, addiction, or cruel control. Lead them to safe and trustworthy help.

Keep Christ at the center of our home. Make our marriage faithful, honest, loving, and strong for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.