

MARRIAGE RESTART

Life Group Leaders Guide

Directions

This packet contains the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group during our *Marriage Restart* series. Everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose* and *Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get background information and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group. The curriculum was designed with your freedom in mind. Read through the curriculum and decide what will work best for your group. SOAP the passages with the group, use only certain questions, write your own questions, or use the curriculum verbatim. As the leader, you know what will point your people to Jesus.

Series Overview

Whether you're looking to get married, been married for fifty years, or five months, your marriage can get great but it takes work. It takes regular seasons of reevaluation and refreshment. Marriage Restart is a time to lay a fresh foundation to revitalize and strengthen your marriage. For people that are not yet married this a golden opportunity to learn the principles of how to build a strong foundation for marriage. To help all of our people to restart well, there will be a marriage conference and parents night out during the series to give couples the opportunity to put what they are learning into practice.

Life Group Overview

During the *Marriage Restart* series our life group curriculum will generally cover the same topic that was covered from stage but using a different passage or set of passages. Each curriculum will begin with an unpacking of the previous Sunday's service to help the leader open up the topic for the study and also see how people responded to the Sunday teaching.

Marriage Restart Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon	Topic of life group
Week 1	2/4	New Language - Philippians 2:3-5	Authentic Communication - Various verses
Week 2	2/11	New Expectation - Ephesians 5:25-27	Forgiveness/Reconciliation - Ephesians 4:26-32
Week 3	2/18	New Habits - Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	Oneness - Genesis 2:18-25
Week 4	2/25	New Commitment - Matthew 19:1-10	New Kind of Love - 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Marriage Restart - Week 1 - Authentic Communication

Purpose of Study

Communication is important for any relationship and especially within a marriage. Taking the time to listen to understand your spouse and to speak honestly so your spouse understands you can heal the secret hurts of your marriage and avoid little hurts from becoming big ones. One of the most beautiful aspects of marriage is the opportunity to know someone deeply and to be known deeply by them. This doesn't happen without authentic communication. Learning to communicate with our spouse can also help us to have more authentic communication with God. This study explores a series of short verses with the goal of improving our ability to communicate.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO THE LEADER

This sermon series and life group curriculum were designed to unpack important characteristics of marriage. That topic can feel isolating to someone who is single (whether they plan on being single for life or are in a season of singleness). For a person hoping to get married, there is no better time to learn these truths than before marriage. For a person who feels called to singleness, our hope is that these passages will illuminate the beauty of their relationship with Jesus. While we cannot write curriculum to perfectly fit the demographic of every life group, we want to remind you to alter these studies on marriage to best benefit the demographic of your life group.

Flow of Study

Move #1: Since the sermon series and life groups are covering mostly the same topics, it might be a good idea (both for content and time) to begin the discussion with some unpacking questions from this Sunday's sermon. It will also be helpful to review the 5 love languages that were mentioned from stage. A table with information about these 5 Love Languages from *fiercemarriage.com* can be seen below for your help.

HOW TO SPEAK YOUR SPOUSE'S LOVE LANGUAGE

WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
 WORDS OF AFFIRMATION	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
 PHYSICAL TOUCH	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
 RECEIVING GIFTS	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
 QUALITY TIME	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
 ACTS OF SERVICE	Use action phrases like "I'll help...". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.

GRAPHIC BY **FIERCEMARRIAGE.COM**

BASED ON "THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES", A BOOK BY DR. GARY CHAPMAN

Icebreaker: What are your top 2 love languages from the 5 love languages we shared?

1. Did anything stand out to you from the message this weekend?
2. Is there anything from the message this weekend that you want to apply?
3. Why is knowing your spouse's love language more important than knowing your own?

4. Our key passage from this weekend was Philippians 2:3-5 (posted below). Why do you think this verse is such an important verse for relationships?

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus

Move #2: The first two verses we'll read are directed specifically at husbands and give clear instructions for how to treat their wives. These are not just good advice, they are written as commands. Ladies, as we discuss the guys responsibilities in these first two verses, consider ways you can help your husbands (or the husbands in your life) to grow in these areas and to help hold them accountable.

Read Colossians 3:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

1. What stands out to you from this verse?
2. Guys, what are ways we can be harsh with our wives?
3. How can we extend grace and love to our wives to avoid harsh treatment?
4. Ladies, what are ways husbands can be harsh and do you think they realize how it affects you?
5. Notice how this verse is not just a good idea for a healthy marriage, it is commanded of ALL husbands. How does that change how husbands and wives should read this verse?

Read 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

6. Guys, what does it look like to be considerate with our wives?
7. Ladies, how might husbands be inconsiderate with their words or actions without realizing it?
8. Guys, what does it look like to give respect to our wives?
9. Ladies, how might husbands be disrespectful with their words or actions without realizing it?
10. How should considering your wife a co-heir in Christ or daughter of God change the way you behave towards her?
11. Guys, if we treat your wives poorly, how does that hinder our prayers?
 - a. **Possible Answers:** If you are angry, it distracts you from your prayer; sin can be a barrier for effective prayer.

12. The phrase “weaker partner” may be a stumbling block for some, but we must consider the context the verse was written in. It was common for men to lord their physical strength and status over women as a qualifier for harshness and mistreatment. Peter instructs husbands to treat their wives with respect and gentleness.
- a. **Note to Leader: 2 Corinthians 12:9** might be a good reference here: for Christ’s power is made perfect in weakness.

Move #3: The next two verses we’ll read are directed specifically at wives and give clear instructions for how to communicate with their husbands. These are not just good advice, they are God given wisdom. Guys, as we discuss how wives should communicate with husbands, consider ways you can help your wives to grow in these areas.

Read Proverbs 25:24 (NIV)

²⁴ Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

Read Proverbs 27:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.

1. What does these two verses compare a quarrelsome wife to?
2. What do these two passages imply that a quarrelsome wife does to her husband in marriage?
3. Ladies, what are some examples of what it might look like when a wife is “quarrelsome”?
4. What is an alternative to being “quarrelsome” when you are upset about a situation?

Move #4: The last verses we will look at are more general and could easily be applied to relationships outside of marriage. James and Proverbs provide guidance for authentic communication and striking the right balance between listening and speaking.

Read James 1:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

1. Are you quick to listen? Do you interrupt or ignore your spouse? How can we become better listeners?
2. In what situations is it harder to be “quick to listen and slow to speak?” What could help us become better in that area?
3. One way, is to stop talking and pay attention to the other person. Are you slow to speak? Do you listen to your spouse first or do you assume what they will say and immediately jump in to argue?

4. Do you wait until you have cooled off before you speak your mind or do you argue in the heat of the moment? Which strategy produces better results?
5. Do you have a quick temper? What things tend to make you angry? Which of those things are important to God? How do we learn to choose our “battles” wisely?
6. When we fail to listen to our spouse carefully, we often miss the point they’re trying to make. We might hear the words or even the tone, but miss the meaning behind them. How can we do better?
7. This verse highlights both sides of communication: we must listen to understand **AND** speak to be understood. Do you get upset with your spouse when they misunderstand you or don’t “guess” what you want? How can you hold each other accountable to speak clearly and honestly?
8. Verse 20 explains the outworkings of someone who is not quick to listen and slow to speak. It not only leads to poor communication but personally creates in you something that God does not desire. How does this raise the bar on the important of our communication being “quick to listen and slow to speak?”

Read Proverbs 10:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Sin is not ended by multiplying words,
but the prudent hold their tongues.

1. Sometimes, it is prudent to hold our tongues. Do you find yourself frequently complaining about trivial matters? What does this verse say about someone who has many words?
 - a. **Note to leader:** Another version of this verse makes the point even more clear. The CSB has Proverbs 10:19 as “When there are many words, sin is unavoidable . . .”
2. There’s a sweet spot somewhere between airing all of your grievances all of the time and internalizing all of your hurts without expressing them. Where do you fall on that spectrum?
3. Why do you think we are more likely to hold our tongue in relationships other than marriage?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. **Write Down and Memorize** one or more of the verses from today’s lesson. Meditate on it often, hold it close to your heart, and let it guide your communication.
2. **Discuss** (if married) today’s lesson in private with your spouse. Were there any issues raised that you need to work on? Consider making an action list for ways to improve your communication. Pray for God’s wisdom.
3. **Counseling** can be very helpful to identify the root causes of communication breakdowns and begin to address them. The Point Care Center now offers marriage counseling. **Contact** Jay Cook at jay@pointchurch.com for more information.

Prayer: End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

- **On Colossians 3:19:** Husbands are presented with a much more demanding task (than what the wives receive in verse 18). They are told to love their wives. This command reveals that Paul is not writing to prop up the authority and rights of husbands, which everyone took for granted. Instead, he reminds husbands of their obligations “in the Lord.” Most in the ancient world did not expect a marriage to be grounded in love. It was considered to be an accord, albeit an unequal one, between a man and a woman to produce legitimate heirs. Soranus contended, “Since women are married for the sake of bearing children and heirs, and not for pleasure and enjoyment, it is totally absurd to inquire about the quality or rank of the family line or about the abundance of their wealth, but not to inquire about their ability to conceive children.” Veyne observes that “love in marriage was a stroke of good fortune; it was not the basis of the institution.” The many epitaphs recording the husband’s affection for his “very dear wife” attest that loving relationships developed, but just as many others simply say that the wife “never gave me any reason to complain.” (Garland)
- **On Colossians 3:19:** In a Christian marriage, the husband knows himself to be dearly loved by God (3:12) and is commanded to love his wife in the same way. He is not to exercise his rights over his wife but his love, which means he never thinks in terms of rights and is always willing to forego them. Caird states it well: “If a wife is asked to submit, it is to the husband’s love, not to his tyranny.” Love in the New Testament context means more than having affection or romantic feelings for a wife (see the fuller explanation in Eph. 5:25–33, where Christ is the model). (Garland)
- **On Colossians 3:19:** The NIV translates the next command that husbands are not to “be harsh with [their wives].” If this is the correct rendering, it rules out any overbearing, tyrannical, or intimidating behavior toward the wife. But the verb *pikrainestheis* in the passive voice and may be translated, “Do not become embittered [or resentful] toward her.” Anyone can refrain from harsh treatment of others; Christians must do more, however. They must refrain from becoming flushed with rage or petulant when others treat them or respond to them in ways that irritate them. This directive addresses the eventuality that the wife might not always be properly submissive, which in turn would likely trigger bitterness in her husband.
- **On 1 Peter 3:7:** Having addressed the wives of unbelieving husbands, Peter now addresses Christian husbands. He assumes that their wives are Christians too, so his exhortation to them moves in a different direction. Inasmuch as his exhortation to them to “be considerate” borrows its force from the verb of 2:13, it is best to see here a specific kind of “living under the order” for husbands, a kind of submission, yet distinct from it. The order for Christian husbands is one of being considerate—literally, of “living with one’s wife knowledgeably.” The verb *synoikeyo* (“living together”) was especially used for sexual relations between husband and wife (Deut. 22:13; 24:1; 25:5), and that is no doubt the intended meaning here, though obviously not limited to that. The Christian man, Peter says, is neither demanding nor selfish in his sexual and marital relations; he is instead considerate, sensitive, and serving. (McKnight)

- **On 1 Peter 3:7:** The reason the Christian husband must be especially considerate in these relations is because his wife is “the weaker partner.” This expression has given rise to two major interpretations: physical weakness, and spiritual weakness. Inasmuch as the preponderance of evidence in the ancient world uses identical or similar language when describing a woman’s physical condition, it is almost certain that Peter has in mind a wife’s physical capacities. (McKnight)

- **On 1 Peter 3:7:** Peter largely repeats himself in the second clause of 3:7: Christian men are to “treat [your wives] with respect,” inasmuch as they are “heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.” Here again Peter participates in the early Christian tendency to elevate the position of women in society; they are seen as fellow heirs. Twice in this verse he forms a compound verb in his incorporation of women into the lives of husbands: “living together” and “fellow heirs.” In respecting their wives, these men and their wives will gain a hearing with God, and their prayers will be answered (cf. Matt. 5:21–26; 6:12, 14–15; 18:19–35; 1 Cor. 11:17–34; James 4:3). (McKnight)

- **On James 1:19-20:** From the word of God (1:18) James turns his attention to human words, and in so doing presages chapter 3, wherein he will argue that the gift of God’s wisdom influences how Christians speak. Believers should concentrate on listening with humility and meekness, rather than speaking in anger. (Nystrom)

- **On James 1:19-20:** James then turns his attention to two examples that illustrate his point: human anger and the righteous life that God desires. In verse 20 James seems to confirm our suspicion that in the background is to be found a concern with the character of Christian community, for he says that human anger does not produce the righteousness of God; therefore, we should be slow to anger. In choosing this rendering the NIV has, perhaps, placed too soft a garment on the phrase. James uses the word *ergazetai*, and so the phrase should be translated “for the practice of human anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” James seems to have no particular type of anger in view, but puts before us the proposition that anger is deleterious to the righteousness God desires of us. (Nystrom)