

Marriage

6 GOSPEL COMMITMENTS EVERY COUPLE NEEDS TO MAKE

Marriage – Gospel Commitments – Lesson 05

Gospel Foundations

1. The gospel shapes my expectations for marriage (Ch. 1).
2. The gospel gives me reason to continue (Ch. 2).
3. The gospel teaches me about true love (Ch. 3).
4. The gospel compels me to live for the One who died for me, in all the little moments of life (Ch. 4).

Gospel Commitments

1. We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness (Ch. 5-6).
2. We will make growth and change our agenda (Ch. 7-8).
3. We will work together to build a sturdy bond of trust (Ch. 9-10).
4. We will commit to building a relationship of love (Ch. 11-12).
5. We will deal with our differences with appreciation and grace (Ch. 13-14).
6. We will work to protect our marriage (Ch. 15-17).

Chapter 6 – Canceling Debts

- I. **The _____ of Unforgiveness (p. 96).**
 1. Immaturity and _____.
 2. Falling into _____ Patterns.
 3. Establishing _____.
 4. Nurturing _____.
 5. Becoming _____.
 6. _____ of Other Couples.

7. Fantasies of _____.

II. Dark “_____” of Unforgiveness (p. 99).

1. Debt is _____.

2. Debt is _____.

3. Debt is _____.

4. Debt is _____.

5. Deb puts us in God’s _____.

III. What Is Forgiveness? (p. 101).

1. A _____ commitment (Eph. 4:32).

2. A _____ transaction.

i. The person promises not to _____ on it.

ii. The person promises not to _____ the incident to the detriment of the other person.

iii. The person promises not to _____ about it with others.

iv. The person promises not to let it _____ the relationship.

IV. When is Forgiveness Needed? (p. 103).

1. Only in instances when one spouse has done something to the other that the Bible calls sin.

2. Not necessarily because of human _____.

3. Not necessarily over _____ in personality or perspective.

4. Not necessarily for attempting something and _____.

V. What Forgiveness Requires (p. 104).

1. Forgiveness requires _____.

2. Forgiveness requires _____.

3. Forgiveness requires _____.

4. Forgiveness requires _____ - _____.

5. Forgiveness requires _____.

6. Forgiveness requires _____.

VI. What Forgiveness Harvests (p. 107).

1. Forgiveness stimulates _____ and _____.

2. Forgiveness produces _____.

3. Forgiveness is the fertile soil in which _____ in marriage grows.

Next Week – Chapter 7

Confession & Forgiveness Case Study:

Introduction: Al and Wendy are in their late forties. They have 3 children, one in college, and two in high school: a senior, and a sophomore. While Al has a good job, the mortgage on their home, two car payments, and a child in college have left their finances very tight– and they'll have *two* in college next year! As a result, Al and Wendy have developed a budget and have agreed to a careful spending plan.

The Tension: After six months on the spending plan, they still aren't quite making ends meet. They have some debt building up on one of their credit cards, and they are just six months away from their middle child starting college. To top it off, their marriage is in shambles. They have been arguing about their finances consistently. Even with the tight budget, Al continues to spend money on golfing even though they had agreed they didn't have room for it in their budget. To top it off, he's been hiding it from her. She has found a few receipts in his pants when she does the laundry. Frustrated, Wendy decided to buy a piece of art for the living room she's been eyeing. She's been holding off because of their finances, but if Al's going to spend this freely, then she should be able to also. Wendy makes the purchase.

The Explosion: Wendy walks in the door carrying the expensive piece of art. Al is in the armchair watching TV. "What's that?" He says. "It's something for our home. It's for the empty space in our living room. We've needed some color to fill that space for years and I finally found something," Wendy replies. "How much was it?" Al says, with audible frustration in his voice. "\$235, but it was 30% reduced from its original price!" she returns. "\$235 – we don't have that kind of money right now! Get in the car and take it back!" Al responds in a loud voice. "I should be able to make purchases for our home – especially since you keep wasting our money on golf – and lying to me about it!" "This isn't about the golf – it's my money anyway – I earned it – I can spend it how I want. Take it back!" Al shouts as he leaves the house, slamming the door on his way out.

The Aftermath: Al and Wendy are both believers. They love the Lord, and they are committed to working out this problem. Let's help them walk through the process of reconciliation.

1. Take responsibility for your part of the problem (Matt. 7:3-5)
 - Before you judge someone, realize that you have a log-sized problem.
 - If you have a log, you aren't in a position to address specks in someone else.
 - Only when your logs have been removed are you able to discuss specks.

Which of the following options represents the best action for Al? In what ways do the others fall short?

1. Al decides he won't address the situation until Wendy apologizes for spending the money without talking to him.
2. Al decides to apologize to Wendy for yelling, to let her keep the picture, and to get her some flowers.
3. Al spends some time in prayer asking God to help him see his faults in this problem. He begins to realize that his golf spending has been deceptive, is therefore dishonoring to God. Furthermore, it has really hurt Wendy. On top of that, his anger in their conversation was sinful and hurtful. He spends a few moments confessing these sins to God and thanking Him for forgiveness. He asks for grace to seek forgiveness from Wendy.

Which of the following responses represents the best actions for Wendy? In what ways do the others fall short?

1. Wendy gets in the car and takes the picture back to the store. She does her best to keep her anger and frustration down and tries to get her mind on other things.
2. Wendy decides to talk to Al again, but more calmly. She will acknowledge that she shouldn't have purchased the picture but remind him that he must change his golfing habits! That's cost them far more than the picture!
3. Wendy spends some time in prayer. She realizes that even though Al's actions are a problem, she went against their spending agreement by purchasing this picture – and she did it in anger and frustration. She put her own desires before her love for Jesus. She asks for God's forgiveness, and for help in her upcoming conversation with Al, as she seeks his forgiveness.

2. Repent for your part of the problem (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

- To repent is to turn and to head in the other direction.
- It is important not only to repent of the action, but also to acknowledge that your heart wanted the wrong thing or the right thing too much.

The Seven "A"s of confession.

1. Address everyone involved.
2. Avoid *if, but, and maybe*.
3. Admit specifically.
4. Acknowledge the hurt.
5. Accept the consequences.
6. Alter your behavior.
7. Ask for forgiveness.

Al and Wendy make some time for a conversation. Which of their statements on the next page communicates the clearest repentance? Why do the others fall short?

Al's Responses:

1. Wendy, it's not good for us to fight like that. I'm sorry. I just get so nervous about our finances. We'll get through this, and I'll try to go golfing less. I love you.
2. Wendy, I shouldn't have yelled at you. I'm sorry. Finances just stress me out.
3. Wendy, I'm sorry I yelled at you. I'll try to do better about the golfing. With the stress of finances – and your budget demands on me – I just really need an outlet. Can you understand that?
4. Wendy, I am so sorry. I have been thinking about our argument. I sinned against you and against God. I think my heart wanted control and freedom more than it wanted to please the Lord. I was angry and deceptive. I know my actions hurt you deeply. I have confessed these things to God, and I'm asking for your forgiveness.

Wendy's Responses:

1. Al, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have purchased that picture without talking to you. It's just that you're always spending money on golf without talking to me. I thought one little purchase wouldn't be a big deal.
2. Al, I'm sorry I purchased that picture. I'll take it back if you'll stop spending money on golfing.
5. Al, I've been thinking about our argument. I need to ask for your forgiveness. I've been letting anger build up in my heart. Not only did I not talk to you about that purchase, but I did it out of frustration. I've confessed this to God, and now I'm asking for your forgiveness. I would be happy to take the picture back, and more importantly, I'll work on talking with you about things rather than just storing up frustrations against you. Would you forgive me?

3. Forgive one another (Matt. 18:21-35).

- Forgiveness is required all the time.
- Jesus points attention to God's forgiveness.

Promises of Forgiveness:

- The person promises not to dwell on it.
- The person promises not to bring up the incident to the detriment of the other person.
- The person promises not to talk about it with others.
- The person promises not to let it hinder the relationship.

Choose the response on the next page that represents biblical forgiveness. Why do the others fall short?

Al's Responses:

1. Wendy, I forgive you, just try not to let it happen again.
2. Yes, I forgive you Wendy! I love you! I'm thankful for God's forgiveness, and grace for these moments. We will probably need to return that picture, but maybe we can set a little cash aside each month and save up for it? Is there anything else in this scenario that I did to hurt you or sin against you?

Wendy's Responses:

1. Yes, Al, I forgive you, like all the other times you've spent money on golf.
2. Al, I forgive you. Thank you for showing humility like Jesus in this situation. I love you. I know God will bring us through this time of tight finances.

4. Move forward (Phil. 3:13-14).

Which scenarios show a healthy way forward? Where do you see signs of trouble?

In Al's Life:

1. Al drives by his favorite golf course. He wants to hit a few balls on the range, but quickly shuts that idea down. "What would Wendy say?" He thinks. He feels guilty for all the times he spent money on golf behind her back. Romans 8:1 comes to mind. He remembers that God has forgiven him, and so has Wendy. He doesn't need to dwell on that guilt anymore.
2. Some of Al's friends invite him to go golfing. Al really wants to but tells his friends, "Wendy would be so angry with me if I did, because there wouldn't be enough money for her décor. I'd be sleeping on the couch for sure!"
3. Wendy asks if Al will look at the finances with her. Al feels the stress welling up and says, "are you just checking up on my spending again? Do you just want to see if there's room for another piece of art?"

In Wendy's Life:

1. Wendy is out shopping with friends. They all find some cute wreaths for the upcoming fall season and decide to buy them. Only Wendy declines. They ask her why and she explains, "Al's gotta have enough to go golfing!"
2. Wendy finds herself wondering if Al's been continuing to spend money on golfing. She begins imagining all the different ways he could be sneaking it past her and decides to start going through his laundry to look for receipts.
3. Wendy is out shopping with friends. When asked why she didn't make a purchase, she explains: "Al and I are trying to make better spending choices. God is good, and is providing for all our needs, but we are working together to spend less." Later that afternoon, she finds herself doubting that Al's holding up his end of the bargain. She stops those thoughts and asks for God's help to love Al well. That evening, she talks with Al and says, "How are you doing, Al? Has it been going ok for you not golfing as much as you'd like?"