

*Because the focus of this study is marriage, it is important to remember that not everyone in your small group is married. Be sensitive to this reality and adapt your discussion to include those who are single.*

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### **My marriage is being minimized.**

1. With rare exceptions, every marriage problem is a spiritual problem that can be corrected by improving your vertical relationship with God. How do the following spiritual problems affect marriage: idolatry; materialism; lust; pride; covetousness; bitterness; unbelief; slothfulness.
2. The Pharisees asked Jesus the wrong question for the wrong reason. Do you believe that our culture still cares about how Jesus answers questions about marriage? Why or why not?
3. Asking Jesus “Is it lawful . . .” reveals a fundamental flaw in thinking. The Pharisees thought of marriage as a performance-based relationship. How does a performance-based mindset make you a scorekeeper in marriage? How would a marriage change if a couple shifted from seeing it as a performance-based relationship to a grace-based relationship?
4. “Marriage is the union of two people who commit to romantically loving and caring for each other and sharing the burdens of domestic life. It is conditioned on the feelings the couple has for one another.” Point out the flaws in that definition of marriage. How would this definition change our culture if widely embraced?
5. To what degree has the current state of marriage in our culture made you cynical about the institution of marriage? How so? How can you fight against this?

### **My marriage has a Maker.**

6. Marriage is designed by God and defined by God. Look at Genesis 1:26-28. Do you believe the creation story as recorded in Genesis is literally true? (Jesus did.) How does a rejection of the creation story in favour of evolution theory erode the biblical definition of marriage?
7. Marriage is recognized and regulated by the laws of people who invite God’s blessing. Read Hebrews 13:4. Are the following attributes of God reflected in your marriage: love; forgiveness; pursuit; patience; sacrifice. Give some personal examples, both good and bad.

### **My marriage needs the right motivation.**

8. Which of the following superficial motivations for marriage have affected you: escaping a bad family of origin; intense emotional feelings; sexual attraction or involvement; cultural or family pressures. Explain.
9. How does a continual collision with theological truth keep you from being absorbed by the culture? What would eventually happen if you don’t intentionally expose your mind to truth?
10. Marriage is far too significant to give up on. What is your motivation for pursuing or remaining in marriage when it is difficult?

### **My marriage preaches a message.**

11. “Marriage is a holy covenant initiated by God conditioned on an irrevocable promise to pursue oneness with an imperfect person of the opposite sex for a lifetime for the glory of God.” Unpack this definition phrase by phrase. Based on this statement, what message is your marriage preaching? Are you happy with this message? If not, what do you need to work on? How could your small group help in this regard?