

Quick
SCRIPTURE
REFERENCE
for
Counseling
Couples

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PATRICIA A. MILLER



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To all our students at Calvary Bible College.
You have impacted our lives more
than you will ever know.

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Acknowledgments

A special thank you to Baker Publishing Group and especially Chad Allen for the honor of requesting that we proceed with this fourth book in our Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling series.

Our great desire is that God's Word will do its saving and healing work for all who use this book.

To God be the glory!

Introduction

The Purpose of This Book

This book is grounded on the sufficiency of the Word of God for faith and practice, for living the life that God desires, and for direction and counseling. It is written for men and women who are anticipating marriage or who are married and dealing with the issues of life together and for counselors and pastors who minister to couples. Topics have been chosen that are specific to those needs.

Context and Principles

We have made every effort to be true to context. For those texts for which the context does not totally fit, we believe the principles (timeless, universal truths) do apply to the topic being discussed. Many of the Old Testament passages refer, in context, to Israel. Yet the principles reflecting God's care for his people and interest in their welfare can clearly be seen.

The use of passages from the Mosaic Law reflects our conviction that the traditional moral, civil, and ceremonial distinctions for that code are correct. God's moral law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, is applicable for all people, for all time. Though the civil and ceremonial laws are not our rule of life in this age of grace, they do reflect the mind of God on issues of right and wrong, good and bad. Thus principles are drawn from them for the topics.

What to Look For

- There are two divisions: Part One—Preparing for Marriage is for couples who are engaged (or considering the commitment). Part Two—Living in Marriage is for those who have already entered into marriage and need to understand biblical truth regarding the ongoing events of the relationship.
- There are two avenues for locating desired topics: 1) a “Contents” section, with headings and topics grouped beneath, and 2) a separate “Subject Guide,” with all topics listed alphabetically.
- The gospel is the first topic. It is necessary for everyone to be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and committed to him as Lord of their lives. It is essential to evaluate this issue before any counseling problems are addressed. God’s Word is useful in anyone’s life, but when believers use the Word, the Holy Spirit has power in their lives to help them truly understand Scripture and make necessary changes. Biblical counseling can then be effective.
- The “See also” heading at the beginning of each topic points to related helpful topics.
- Many of the topics begin with a paragraph of introduction that defines key words and concepts, setting the stage for what follows in the body of statements and supporting Scripture.
- The section “Practical Steps” provides homework growth projects or action ideas. Use them as a starting point to stimulate your own creativity for additional steps.
- The “Resources” section at the end of each topic is a guide to books and booklets helpful for further research and understanding. There is a wide range of authors and publishers, and each resource was chosen with care, but we would not necessarily agree with every statement contained in each book.
- To avoid constant repetition of biblical texts, some of the topics provide cross-references to other related topics.
- Because of space and copyright limitations, some of the verses are not printed, with many additional references listed for further study and application.

Who Might Benefit

- First and foremost this book is designed to assist counselors, pastors, and anyone who desires to help men and women in the struggles, issues, and joys of married life.
- Men and women who desire to live their lives together under the authority and blessing of God's Word can use this book for personal study and application of the various topics.
- This book can be used as a devotional. These topics could be a tool used each day for a man or woman's time alone with the Lord. Taking two days for reading and study of each topic would provide over six months of concerted involvement in Scripture. The couple could discuss the topics together.
- Those who teach in the local church concerning marriage could use the various topics as teaching or supporting material. Similar topics could be grouped together to cover a thirteen-week quarter.
- Bible studies for groups, men, women, or couples could also find helpful material in this book.

The Gospel

The gospel is the place where our relationship with God begins.

A counselor's first task is to determine if the person or couple has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Help can still be provided for the problems and struggles they face, but it is only when someone understands and applies the gospel personally that Scripture will make sense.

When a person has trusted Jesus Christ and him alone for salvation, Scripture, with the power of the Holy Spirit, will then truly be able to do its work.

Steps in Guiding an Individual to Christ

If possible, have counselees read the passages from a Bible.

1. Each person is separated from God because of sin and sinful behavior.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (NKJV)

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (NKJV)

2. Sin must be punished—that punishment is separation from God, in hell.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NKJV)

3. There is nothing a person can do to gain status with God or to work for their salvation. We cannot earn forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (ESV)

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (ESV)

Isaiah 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (ESV)

4. God recognizes this dilemma. From creation he put a plan into action to give individuals the opportunity to have a personal relationship with him. This plan was based on the death of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NKJV)

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (NKJV)

Romans 10:9 Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (ESV)

5. Each person must repent of their sin and personally believe (i.e., trust) in Jesus Christ as the only way to receive God’s forgiveness and gain entrance into heaven.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (NASB)

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them. (NIV)

Luke 15:7, 10 In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over

ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away! . . . In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents. (NLT)

6. Salvation is then assured—not a “maybe” or “hope so”; it is God's gift.

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (ESV)

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (ESV)

7. Biblical examples/pictures of salvation:

Nicodemus, **John 3**

Serpent in the wilderness, **Numbers 21 with John 3:14**

Woman at the well, **John 4**

Ethiopian, **Acts 8**

Cornelius, **Acts 10**

Philippian jailor, **Acts 16**

Practical Steps

- For the best model/illustration of what the gospel looks like, do a comparison study of the serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:4–9) with John 3:14.
- Study carefully the Gospel of John. Note the multiple times “believe” is used.
- Write out your spiritual journey. Compare it to each area listed in this topic. Do you have an accurate picture according to Scripture?
- Question to ask: “If you were to die soon, why would you expect God to allow you to join him in heaven?”

Resources

- *Assurance* (booklet). Susan Heck. Focus.
- *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*. Francis Chan. David Cook.
- *A Gospel Primer for Christians*. Milton Vincent. Focus.
- *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Philip Yancey. Zondervan.
- *The Reason for God*. Timothy Keller. Dutton.
- *What's So Amazing About Grace?*. Philip Yancey. Zondervan.

Part One

Preparing for Marriage

You're engaged! You have chosen that one person out of all others with whom you want to spend the rest of your life. You believe that God has brought you together. Plans are being made. For the best planning of all, you need to know the basics from God's Word about understanding and preparing for your lives together!

Marriage in the Beginning

See also Cohabitation, Contentment, Roles in Marriage, Waiting for Sex

1. From the very beginning, marriage was a part of God's creative plan and design.

Genesis 2:18–24 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." . . . And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (NKJV)

Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4–6

2. Marriage is honorable and for life. God's design is for marriage to last.

Mark 10:7–9 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. (NKJV)

Malachi 2:14 You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. (NIV)

Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (ESV)

1 Corinthians 7:39

3. Sexual intimacy must be reserved for marriage.

Proverbs 5:15–18 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 7:2 But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. (NIV)

4. From the beginning, marriage was to be between only a man and a woman. There is no same-sex marriage in God's plan.

Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NASB)

Genesis 2:20–25 For Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (NASB)

Romans 1:24–27 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (NASB)

Leviticus 20:13 If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act. (NASB)

Galatians 5:19–21

Practical Steps

- Begin to pray with each other on a regular basis.
- As a couple, take time to write down your goals for how you want your coming wedding and marriage to honor God.
- Make sure you are working on communication. This aspect of your relationship won't get any easier once you are married. Don't allow conflicts to build.
- Take time to read to each other out loud. Use Scripture, and choose books on building your relationship. Begin with *The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim and Kathy Keller; discuss the material.

Resources

- *Designed for Joy: How the Gospel Impacts Men and Women, Identity and Practice.* Jonathan Parnell and Owen Strachan. Crossway.
- *God, Marriage and Family.* Andreas Kostenberger. Crossway.
- *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships.* Chip Ingram. Baker.
- *The Meaning of Marriage.* Timothy and Kathy Keller. Hodder & Stoughton.
- *Preparing for Marriage God's Way.* Wayne Mack. P&R.
- *What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage.* Paul Tripp. Crossway.