



A Marriage Preparation Supplement designed
to help couples understand and embrace...

GOD'S PLAN FOR
A JOY-FILLED

Marriage



THEOLOGY
OF THE
BODY

*A Marriage Preparation Supplement designed to
help couples understand and embrace...*

GOD'S PLAN FOR
A JOY-FILLED

Marriage

Instructor's Edition

*based on John Paul II's Theology of the Body
and the book Good News About Sex & Marriage*

By Christopher West

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“True love” is possible.
That’s the promise the church holds
out to us in her teachings on sex
and marriage. This is good news.
This is great news!

GN, p. 18

Part I:

Catholic

Faith
& Your Marriage

Purpose of this talk:

- to provide an overview of God's original plan for marriage as described in the Book of Genesis;
- to help couples understand the effects of original sin on man and woman's relationship;
- to help couples understand the effects of original sin in their own relationship;
- to help couples understand their need for redemption in Christ.

Logistics: Explain the "fill-in-the-blank" approach as a technique to facilitate learning. This talk should last approximately 40 minutes.

Throughout the Old Testament, God's love for his people is described as the love of a husband for his bride. In the New Testament, Christ *embodies* this love.

GN, pp. 18-19

God's Plan for Marriage "In the Beginning":

Male & Female He Created Them

1. The Bible & Marriage

We might not think the Bible has much to say about marriage. Yet, in a certain sense, the Bible from beginning to end is a story about (1) marriage. 18

- The Bible begins and ends with marriages – Adam-Eve and Christ-Church.
- We can look to these marital “book ends” of Genesis and Revelation as a key for interpreting what lies between.
- Applying this analogy we learn that God’s eternal plan is to “marry” us (see Hos 2:19). 19
- God wanted this eternal “marital plan” to be so obvious to us that he stamped an image of it in our very being by creating us as male and female and calling us to marriage.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church” (Eph 5:21-32). 21

- In this way marriage becomes a “sacrament” or physical sign of God’s love in the world.
- The human body and sex, then, are not only biological realities, but theological realities.*

1a. “The Church cannot therefore be understood ...unless we keep in mind the ‘great mystery’ involved in the creation of man as male and female and the vocation of both to conjugal love, to fatherhood and to motherhood” (LF, n. 19). 18

* This workshop is based largely on a collection of 129 short talks by Pope John Paul II known as the *Theology of the Body*. The beautiful vision of the human body, marital love, and sexual union outlined in these talks has already begun a sexual “counter-revolution.” To learn more, visit TheologyOfTheBody.com

DVD
SEGMENT 1: 6:00
God's Eternal
Plan for Marriage

DVD
SEGMENT 2: 4:45
The Body Proclaims
a Great Mystery



Note: It's important to stress, with the help of this quote, the nature of marriage and sexual love as an analogy of God's love. God is not sexual. Nor is Christ's love for the Church "sexual," as we typically understand that term. Without these important clarifications there remains the possibility of serious misunderstanding. God's love and mystery always remain far beyond any human image or concept.

Suggestion: See the "flat tire" analogy on the video as an example of how to explain the importance of Christ's words here.

Suggestion: Since many people believe science has made the creation stories of Genesis irrelevant, it's important to address objections up-front. See the "optometrist" example on the video.

Suggestion: The fact that God refers to himself in the plural (Let us...) provides an opportunity to clarify our belief in the Trinity. Clarity of thinking about this most fundamental doctrine (one God in three Persons, that Jesus as Son of God is truly divine, etc.) shouldn't be assumed.

1b. "It is obvious that the analogy of earthly ...spousal love cannot provide an adequate and complete understanding of ...the divine mystery." God's "mystery remains transcendent in regard to this analogy as in regard to any other analogy, whereby we seek to express it in human language" (TB, 330).

2. Christ Provides the Key to a Joy-Filled Marriage

"For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Mt 19:8).

22-25

- Jesus is trying to help us realize that something deep in the human heart has disturbed God's original plan for marriage.
- What was it? If we answer this question we will discover the root cause of all marital problems ...*and* pave the way for a solution to those problems.

2a. "According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully [in the male-female relationship] does not stem from the nature of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from sin. As a break with God, the first sin had for its consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman" (CCC, n. 1607).

2b. "Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins" (CCC, n. 2336).

2c. The first man and the first woman must serve as the model for all men and women who enter marriage and unite in "one flesh" (see TB, 50).

DVD

SEGMENT 3: 3:30
Jesus and Our
Hardness of Heart

3. Created in God's Image

"Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' ...God created man in his own image; ...male and female he created them. And God blessed them and God said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply'" (Gen 1:26-27).

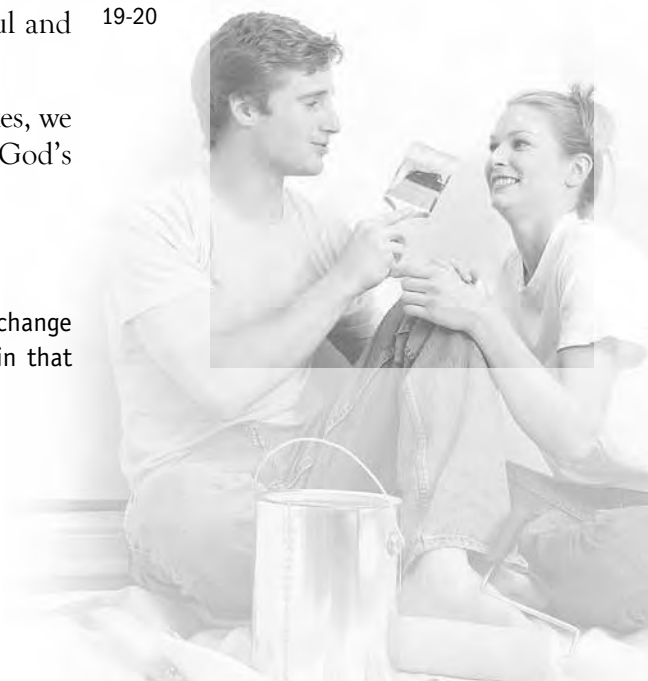
19-20

- This means that somehow, in the complementarity of the sexes, we *image* God. Somehow, as male and female, we make *visible* God's *invisible* mystery.
- What is God's invisible mystery?

3a. "God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange" (CCC, n. 221).

DVD

SEGMENT 4: 7:00
Imaging God
through Our Love



Suggestion: This is an excellent opportunity to comment on the link in all of our hearts to the Church's teaching. We are all looking for love – we know this to be true in our hearts. We also know our happiness depends on finding real love. Sadly, we are so starved for love, we are often willing to “eat out of a dumpster” to satisfy that hunger. Everything the Church teaches about sex and marriage serves this essential purpose: to help us distinguish between authentic love and its counterfeits.

Suggestion: It is helpful to give examples of these qualities of God's love. For instance: God didn't need to create us (free); Christ gives himself completely to us on the cross (total); God will never forsake us (faithful); and Christ came so that we might have life to the full (fruitful).

Suggestion: This is a great opportunity to dispel the notion that the Church is “down on sex.” Sex, in the eyes of the Church, is more beautiful and glorious than we could ever imagine. The problem with our culture is not that it over-values sex. Quite the contrary, our culture has no idea how valuable sex is!

3b. "Creating the human race in his own image, ...God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation ...of love and communion" (FC, n. 11).

3c. "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not ...experience it and make it his own" (RH, n. 10).

3d. The human person images God "not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the beginning.... On all this, right from the beginning, there descended the blessing of fertility" (TB, 46).

4. Loving as God Loves

19-20

DVDO
SEGMENT 5: 3:30
The Four Characteristics
of Marital Love

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

- There are numerous ways to describe God's love, but four qualities in particular stand out. God's love is (2) free, total, faithful, and fruitful.
- Another name for this kind of love is (3) marriage.
- This is precisely what bride and groom commit to at the altar and express with their whole selves (body and soul) by becoming "one flesh."
- God designed sexual intercourse so we could mirror his own eternal, life-giving love!

4a. "Every man and every woman fully realizes himself or herself through the sincere gift of self. For spouses, the moment of conjugal union constitutes a very particular expression of this. It is then that a man and a woman [are meant to] become a mutual gift to each other" (LF, n. 12).



POINTS TO PONDER

Is marriage the only vocation that reflects our creation as male and female in the image of God? If not, what other vocation(s) correspond to our call to love as God loves?

163-171

5. Nakedness Revealed God's Original Plan of Love

"And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25).

DVDO
SEGMENT 6: 5:00
Naked without Shame

Suggestion: The important point to emphasize here is that Christ's commandment to "love as he loves" is stamped right in our bodies, right in our sexuality. In other words, the call to marriage is revealed precisely by sexual difference. This is also a great opportunity to dispel the notion that the Church is "down on sex." According to John Paul II, if we live according to the truth of our sexuality we fulfill the very meaning of life (which is to love as God loves). But the opposite is also true. If we don't live according to the truth of our sexuality, we compromise the meaning of our existence and forfeit true happiness.

Suggestion: This is an excellent opportunity to dispel a common myth about Christian belief, namely, that the 'spirit is good' and the 'body is bad.' Holiness expressed through the body is an expression of the entire person: body, mind and spirit. Often our tendency is to think our spiritual lives in some disembodied way. However, the theology of the body is restating the Christian belief that our bodies were created for holiness and it is in and through our bodies that we offer the expression of our mind and spirit. It is through our bodies that our "whole" person offers a sincere gift of himself. This concept should be shared with the engaged couples.

Suggestion: As this Point to Ponder suggests, it's helpful to appeal to the way men and women experience sexual desire and contrast that with God's original plan. For example, when a woman in a bikini is trying to sell beer on a billboard, do men react with the desire to make a total gift of themselves in the image of God? Why not? This provides a helpful segue into the discussion of original sin.

Important Note: In the videos, Christopher uses the phrase "God is pro-choice" to illustrate a very important point—that God gives us the gift of free will, which is the capacity to choose between good and evil. He also uses this phrase in an attempt to reclaim a terribly abused word—"choice"—which has been co-opted to justify the greatest evil in our culture today—abortion. Christopher's use of the term "pro-choice" is in no way intended to imply that God is for the right to choose abortion. The words of Scripture and the constant teaching of the Church clearly show that God wants us to value life, regardless of the cost to us. Speaking of the invaluable gift of life, God says, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19; RSV).

- Pope John Paul II calls this the “key” for understanding God’s original plan for man and woman (see TB, 52).
- They experienced sexual desire only as the desire to love in God’s image. There was no shame (or fear) in love. “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 Jn 4:18).

5a. Nakedness reveals the **nuptial meaning of the body** which is the body’s “capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the person becomes a gift and — by means of this gift — fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence” (TB, 63).

5b. “Nakedness’ signifies the original good of God’s vision” (TB, 57). “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31).

5c. Their nakedness demonstrates that “holiness entered the visible world.” It is “in his body as male or female [that] man feels he is a subject of holiness.” Holiness is what “enables man to express himself deeply with his own body... precisely by means of the ‘sincere gift’ of himself” (TB, 76-77).



POINTS TO PONDER

If this is the way God created sexual desire, why isn’t this the way we experience it?


6. God Gave Us the Capacity to Choose (But Some Choices Are Always Wrong)

“And the Lord God commanded the man saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die’” (Gen 2: 16-17).

- Why was this commandment only given to “Adam” and not the animals? The human person is the only creature in the visible world with (4) freedom. This is why “there was not found a helper fit for him” (Gen 2:20) among the animals.
- Freedom is given as the capacity to (5) love, to do good and avoid evil. But how do we know what is good and what is evil? How do we know what is loving and what is not?
- As his *creatures*, we must trust in God’s providence and not seek to determine good and evil for ourselves. The moment we do, we cut ourselves off from the life and happiness God intends. We “die.”

23-26

DVD
SEGMENT 7: 5:00
The Effect of Original
Sin and the Gift of
Free Will



Suggestion: Remind the couples once again that the goal here is to try to get to the root of all marital problems and difficulties. That root is what Christians call “sin.” It is a basic “self-focus” rather than a focus on God and others. It stems from a deep sense of distrust of God and others. This story uses symbolic language to help us understand why we have this rebellion in our hearts towards God. Only if we overcome this distrust and place faith in God and his plan for marriage will we ever experience the joy and happiness we’re looking for.

6a. *The “power to decide what is good and what is evil does not belong to man, but to God alone.”* Man “possesses an extremely far reaching freedom, since he can eat ‘of every tree of the garden.’ But his freedom is not unlimited: it must halt before the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil,’ for it is called to accept the moral law given by God” (VS, n. 35).

6b. “The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to ...the moral norms that govern the use of freedom” (CCC, n. 396).

7. A Snake in the Marital Garden

25

The Serpent said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’ ...You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:1-5).

- The implication: God doesn’t want you to be like him; God is withholding something from you; God doesn’t (6) love you. His commands aren’t for your happiness. If you really want to be happy, don’t listen to God. Do your own thing.
- Because of this insidious deception, men and women throughout history have bought into the lie that God is not our loving Father, but our enemy.
- There has been a constant pressure on us to reject God, even to the point of hating him. Following his will comes to be seen not as the sure road to happiness that it is, but as a threat to our happiness.

8. The Entrance of Shame

25-26

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons” (Gen 3:7).

- When they disobeyed God, what “died” was the love of God in their hearts. Void of God’s inspiration, sexual desire became inverted, self-seeking.
- Lust, therefore, is sexual desire void of God’s love. It is a “reduction” of God’s original plan. It doesn’t offer more, but less.



Suggestion: Close by reminding the couples that recognizing lust, selfishness, and sin in our lives and in our relationships should not be cause for despair – welcome to the human race! Instead, it should spur us on to accept with great joy the “good news”: there is a solution. This is why the story about Jesus Christ is called the “Gospel,” the “good news.” Christ came into the world to restore the original plan of love deep in men and women’s hearts. If we open to that gift and live in it every day, we have the necessary means for overcoming our difficulties day-by-day and living a joy-filled marriage.

- We cover our bodies in a fallen world not because they are bad, but because they are “very good” and we want to protect their goodness from the degradation of lust.

DVD
SEGMENT 8: 6:30
The Entrance of Shame
and the Battle Between
Love and Lust

8a. “Man is ashamed of his body because of lust. In fact, he is ashamed not so much of his body as precisely of lust” (TB, 116).

8b. Shame also has a positive meaning as “a natural form of self-defense for the person against the danger of descending or being pushed into the position of an object for sexual use” (LR, 182).

8c. “The ‘heart’ has become a battlefield between love and lust. The more lust dominates the heart, the less the [heart] experiences the nuptial meaning of the body” (TB, 126).



POINTS TO PONDER

How is lust (disordered sexual desire) manifested differently in men and women? Why is pornography viewed primarily by men? Why are romance novels read primarily by women? Do these offer a realistic portrayal of man and woman’s relationship? Are they an aid to teaching us the meaning of self-giving love?

84-86

175

Summary:

What’s It Mean for Our Marriage?

- God created us male and female and calls us to “be fruitful and multiply” in order to reveal his own mystery of love and enable us to participate in it.
- This means that marriage can only satisfy our deep longing for love and union to the degree that it images God’s love.
- The sin of our first parents disoriented man and woman’s desire for each other. Men and women must now resist the self-ish sting of lust and the tendency to use each other if they are to experience the happiness for which they long.

Purpose of this talk:

- to provide an overview of Christ's redemptive work in restoring man and woman's relationship according to God's original plan;
- to help couples understand that there is real power in Christ to live according to their deepest desires for love and intimacy in marriage;
- to call couples to conversion in Christ, encouraging them to dedicate their lives and their marriage to him as the sure means to happiness in marriage;
- to witness personally to the power of Christ in your own life (and your own marriage, if married).

Logistics: This talk should last 40 minutes.

Note: The miracle at Cana is extremely rich in meaning. Lacking time for a thorough exegesis of the passage, the main point is to demonstrate to the couples that if they would but invite Christ to their marriage (as did the couple at Cana), he would work a miracle in their lives as well. Every couple has "run out of wine" (God's love in their hearts) because of original sin. True joy in marriage comes from loving as Christ loves, but this can only happen if we allow Christ to purify our hearts. It can only happen if we drink deeply from the "new wine" that Christ gives us.

Christ Restores God's Plan for Marriage:

Male & Female He Redeemed Them

1. Christ's First Miracle

It is of utmost significance that Christ performed his first public miracle at a (1) wedding.

On the third day, there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus was also invited to the marriage, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast. ...The water [had] now become wine (Jn 2:1-9).

Wine is a symbol of God's (2) love. "Running out of wine" seems to indicate that...

1a. "Without [Christ's] help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them 'in the beginning'" (CCC, n. 1608).

While we might sense a deep longing in our hearts for the original harmony of the sexes, God's original plan for marriage often seems like pie-in-the-sky idealism. Is it possible to live it?

- Christ came into the world for this specific reason: to restore the "wine" of God's love in superabundance. This is why the Gospel is *good news*.
- Because of the distortions of sin in our hearts, loving rightly is a difficult struggle. But if we drink deeply from the "new wine" that Christ gives us, we have a sure path to a "joy-filled" marriage.

27-28

DVDO
SEGMENT 1: 2:30
Review of Talk One

DVDO
SEGMENT 2: 3:15
Christ Restores God's
Plan for Marriage



Suggestion: It's always helpful to appeal to couple's experience in making these points. Men and women know that they're not meant to be used. Women, in particular, know the feeling of being violated by another man's lustful "look." The tragic thing is that we often call lust "love" because it is all we've known. The heart knows better, and we must not settle for counterfeit versions of love.

Note: This is a delicate point that needs careful explanation so that couples don't think that sexual attraction itself is somehow inappropriate. What is wrong is lustful attraction – the impulse to use one's spouse merely as a means of selfish pleasure. Authentic sexual attraction desires to uphold the other's true beauty and dignity as a person made in God's image. Weeding out lust does not diminish sexual attraction, but enhances and enriches it.

Note: This is precisely the key to a thoroughly Christian view of marriage – marital love and the attraction of the sexes have been redeemed in Christ! If this is not the central point that we are seeking to convey to engaged couples and inviting them to embrace, all we can offer them are various coping mechanisms for the "hardness of heart" that makes marriage so difficult. We must be able to witness to the authentic liberation that comes from allowing Christ to transform our hearts. See video for suggestions.

1b. "By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, [Christ] himself gives the strength and grace to... 'receive' the original meaning of marriage and live it" (CCC, n. 1615).

2. Christ Takes Us to the Heart of the Matter

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:27-28).

27

DVD

SEGMENT 3: 6:15
Christ Takes Us to
the Heart of the
Matter: Love vs. Lust

103-104

- Marriage *does not justify lust*. Lust, in fact, is the main enemy of true married love, the root cause in a sense of all marital disharmony.
- The opposite of love is not hatred. The opposite of love is to *use* someone as a means to my own selfish end. The opposite of love is *lust*.
- Therefore, if spouses are to experience true, lasting joy in their marriage, they must work diligently with God's help to overcome the selfish "sting" of lust.

74-76

2a. Liberation from lust "is the condition of all life together in the truth" (TB, 158-159).

2b. "Adultery in the heart is committed not only because man 'looks' in this way at a woman who is not his wife.... Even if he looked in this way at his wife, he could likewise commit adultery 'in his heart'" (TB, 157).

2c. Are we to fear the severity of these words, or rather have confidence in their power to save us (see TB, 159)?

2d. Christ calls us to experience "a real and deep victory" over the distortion of lust (see TB, 164). Christ wants to in-spire sexual desire "with everything that is noble and beautiful," with "the supreme value which is love" (see TB, 168).

Through ongoing conversion of our hearts to Christ, we come gradually to experience sexual desire as the desire to love as God loves: freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully. This means we can experience the (3) redemption of our sexual desires.

82-84

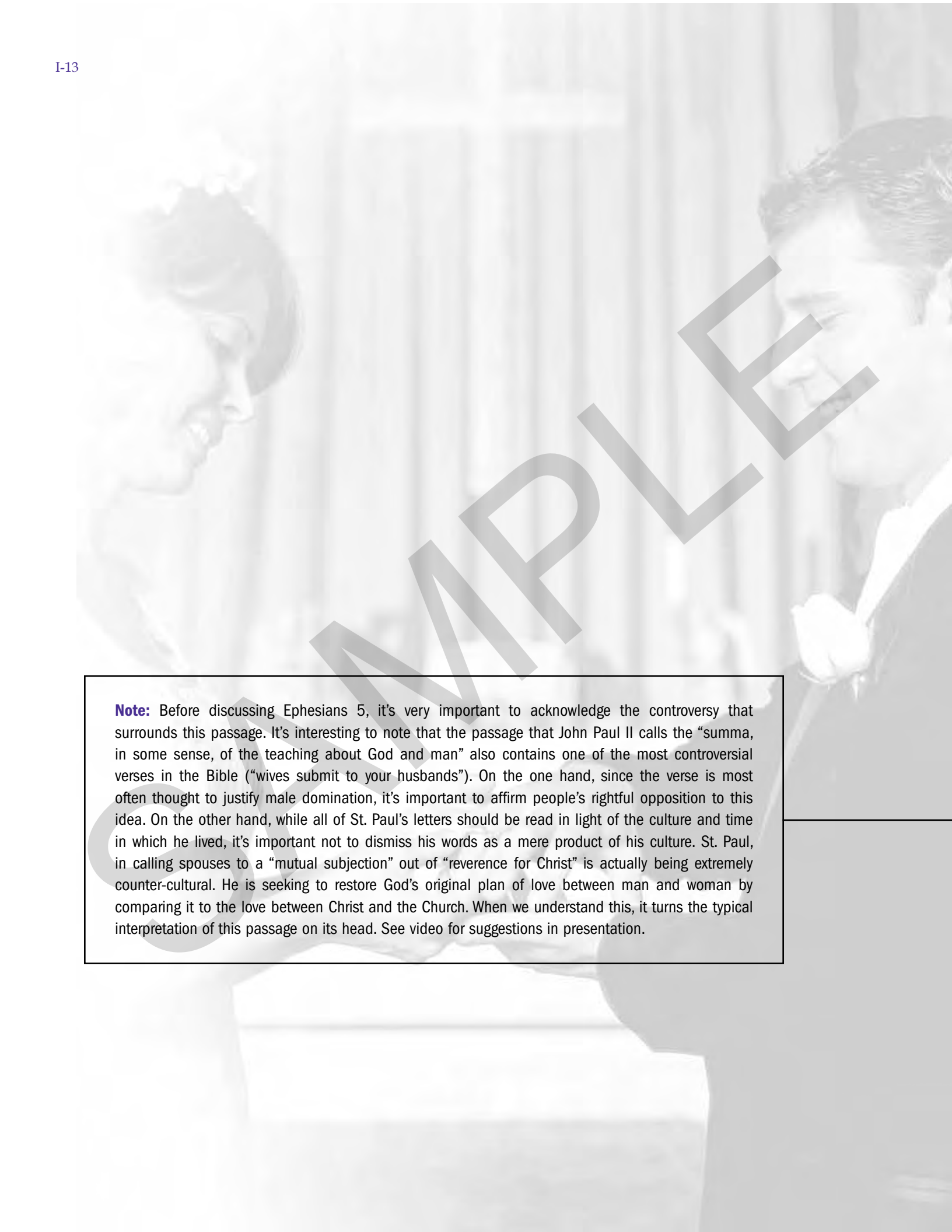
DVD

SEGMENT 4: 5:00
The Redemption of
Human Sexuality



POINTS TO PONDER

If Christ has restored God's original plan for sexual desire as the norm, and truly gives us the power to live it, why, then, do so few people seem to be living it? What can I do, personally, to enter more fully into a transformed or "redeemed" experience of sexual attraction and desire?



Note: Before discussing Ephesians 5, it's very important to acknowledge the controversy that surrounds this passage. It's interesting to note that the passage that John Paul II calls the "summa, in some sense, of the teaching about God and man" also contains one of the most controversial verses in the Bible ("wives submit to your husbands"). On the one hand, since the verse is most often thought to justify male domination, it's important to affirm people's rightful opposition to this idea. On the other hand, while all of St. Paul's letters should be read in light of the culture and time in which he lived, it's important not to dismiss his words as a mere product of his culture. St. Paul, in calling spouses to a "mutual subjection" out of "reverence for Christ" is actually being extremely counter-cultural. He is seeking to restore God's original plan of love between man and woman by comparing it to the love between Christ and the Church. When we understand this, it turns the typical interpretation of this passage on its head. See video for suggestions in presentation.

3. Liberation from Lust Sets Us Free from the Law

65-66

DVDO

SEGMENT 5: 9:15
Beyond the Law:
The Experience of
Freedom in Christ

NOTES

You “were called to freedom... if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Gal 5:13, 18).

- How many people think that being a Christian means following a long list of oppressive rules?
- Christ did not come to give us more “rules” to follow; he came to change our hearts so that we would no longer need the rules.
- In effect Christ says, “You’ve heard the commandment not to commit adultery, but the problem is your *desire* to commit adultery.”
- Here’s where the Gospel becomes *good news*: If we let him in, Christ can change our hearts to the point that we become “free from the law” – not free to break it, but free to fulfill it.
- True freedom is liberation not from the *external* “constraint” that calls me to good, but from the *internal* constraint that hinders my choice of the good.

3a. Those bound by lust “experience God’s law as a burden, and indeed as ...a restriction of their own freedom. On the other hand, those who are impelled by love ...feel an interior urge... not to stop at the minimum demands of the Law, but to live them in their ‘fullness.’ This is a still uncertain and fragile journey as long as we are on earth, but it is one made possible by grace” (VS, n. 18)

3b. “The Law of the Gospel ...does not add new external precepts, but proceeds to reform the heart” (CCC, n. 1968). In “the Sermon on the Mount ...the Spirit of the Lord gives new form to our desires” (CCC, n. 2764).

→ 4. Liberation from Lust Leads to “Reverence for Christ”

“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:21, 24-25).

- According to the analogy, the wife is a symbol of the Church and the husband is a symbol of Christ.
- Christ came not to *be served* but to *serve* – to lay down his life for his Bride (see Mt 20:28).

61-63

DVDO

SEGMENT 6: 7:30
Ephesians Chapter 5:
Mutual Submission
in Christ



- St. Paul *does not justify male domination*. This is the result of sin (see Gen 3:16). St. Paul is seeking to restore the original order *before* sin.
- When St. Paul calls wives to “submit” to their husbands, he’s saying, “Wives, allow your husbands to (4) serve you by pouring their lives in love and care for you.”

4a. Since the “submission of the Church to Christ ...consists in experiencing his love,” we can conclude that “the wife’s ‘submission’ to her husband ... signifies above all ‘the experiencing of love’” (TB, 320).

4b. That “reverence for Christ” St. Paul speaks of is none other than a spiritually mature form of the mutual attraction of the sexes (see TB, 379).

4c. If a husband is truly to love his wife, “it is necessary to insist that intercourse must not serve merely as a means of allowing [his] climax. ...The man must take [the] difference between male and female reactions into account ...so that climax may be reached [by] both ...and as far as possible occur in both simultaneously.” The husband must do this “not for hedonistic, but for altruistic reasons.” In this case, if “we take into account the shorter and more violent curve of arousal in the man, [such] tenderness on his part in the context of marital intercourse acquires the significance of an act of virtue” (LR, 272, 275).

5. How Do We Live a Redeemed Marriage?

If the source of all of the problems of man and woman’s relationship is the fact that we have doubted God’s love for us and turned our back on him, then what would the solution be?

69-70
82-84
100-102

- We must (5) return to God. Christ’s first words of his public ministry were, “Repent and believe the good news!” (Mk 1:15).
- We must invite Christ into our lives as our Redeemer and allow him to convert our hearts. We must say “yes” to God’s marriage proposal.
- As members of the Church, we must submit to Christ as our Bridegroom, abandoning ourselves to his love for us and pledging our love to him in return.

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This means spending time with Christ in daily *prayer*, getting to know him by reading his *word* and living a (6) sacramental life.