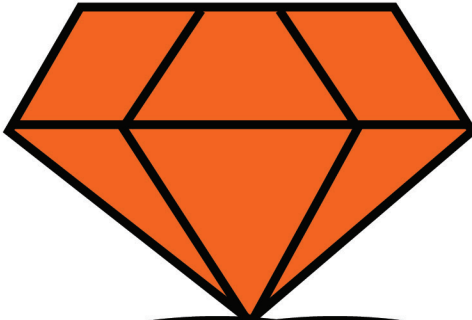


STUDY GUIDE



A PAUL TRIPP

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

HABITS OF A HEALTHY MARRIAGE





Every marriage is guided by a set of habits. The question is, are they healthy habits that result in a God-honoring and joyful marriage, or are they bad habits that lead to a self-centered and strained marriage? In this new 4-session seminar, pastor, marriage counselor, and best-selling author Dr. Paul David will detail the good habits that need to be planted while identifying the bad habits that need to be uprooted for the marriage of your dreams to blossom.

DISCUSS AND REFLECT:

1. Think of the huge, consequential moments that you have experienced in your life? What are they, and how few and far between have they been? Compare the infrequency of these dramatic decisions to the dozens (or hundreds) of little decisions that you have to make in a given day.

2. Detail some of these little decisions and consider how they are actually quite consequential in your life and marriage. How have your little habits positively or negatively contributed to dramatic life decisions?

3. What are some of your bad habits that currently chip away from a vibrant life and marriage? What type of harvest are you reaping as a result of these bad habits?

4. What are some of the good habits that you, by grace, have developed in your life and marriage? How have these habits resulted in a healthy harvest? Share with humility so others may be inspired and encouraged to do the same.

5. What are some small steps that you can take this week to develop healthy habits, or to kick bad habits? Be realistic with the process of change being a process and not an event!

KEY VERSE:

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)

DISCUSS AND REFLECT:

1. Consider this non-exhaustive list of destructive, habitual weeds that you want to pull in your marriage. You can add others to the list. Choose one, or several, and confess to the Lord, your spouse, and your group how these weeds have been permitted to grow. What steps can you begin to take to pull these weeds, and how do you need help pulling them?

SELFISHNESS: Where do you need to die to self and sacrifice your own preference for the good of your spouse?

LAZINESS: Where do you simply need to put forth more effort?

BUSYNESS: Is your schedule so busy that you have neglected your spouse?

INATTENTION: How can you shift your attention to make your marriage a top priority?

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS: How do you respond when your spouse approaches you with a criticism or concern?

FEAR OF FAILURE: Are you allowing anxiety - failing your spouse or failing at life - to suck the life and joy from your marriage?

FEAR OF MAN: Are you allowing peer pressure or cultural values shape your marriage instead of fear of God and Biblical values?

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS: Are you asking your spouse to provide for you what only Christ can provide?

2. Consider this list of constructive, habitual seeds that you want to plant in your marriage - also known as the fruit of the Spirit! Choose one, or several, and consider the daily steps needed to sow this fruit. How do you need help planting these seeds?

LOVE: Are you proactively searching for ways to serve your spouse that doesn't demand reciprocation?

JOY: How often do you search for reasons to celebrate and be thankful, rather than complain?

PEACE: How can you choose peace over bickering and accusation?

PATIENCE: What reasons do you have to show patience for your spouse's sin, weakness, and failure?

KINDNESS: What reasons do you have to show patience for your spouse’s sin, weakness, and failure?

FAITHFULNESS: How can you flee from thoughts, desires, or fantasies that are inappropriate and violate your wedding vows?

GENTLENESS: How can you treat your spouse with tenderness and care instead of being abrasive?

SELF-CONTROL: What do you need to say “No!” to in your marriage? Not “No!” to your spouse, but “No!” to sinful desires, words, or actions that you have.

KEY VERSE:

"See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10)

DISCUSS AND REFLECT:

1. Consider the list of differences that you share with your spouse. How do you differ from them in your hardwiring (personality), your gifts and skills, in the way you see the world as a result of your family and cultural background, etc?

2. Pick one area where your spouse is hardwired or gifted differently than you. Why is this something to be celebrated and encouraged? How can you sacrifice your own preferences to develop this in their life?

3. Pick one aspect of your spouse's cultural or family upbringing that is different from yours. How can this help bring you a different or wider perspective?

4. Confess how you failed to treat your spouse with appreciation and respect this week when your differences clashed. What was the core motivation behind your sinful reaction?

5. When your spouse expresses their differences that result in your hurt or disrespect, how can you communicate to them in a way that is wholesome and constructive, rather than compounding the problem by hurting and disrespecting them in return?

KEY VERSE:

"...having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us."
(Acts 17:26b-27)

1. Are there ways in which you are treating your marriage as if it is safe from the dangers of life in a fallen world? In other words, are you coasting in any way in your marriage?

2. Have you allowed lethargy to creep into your marriage? How can you look at your spouse with excited eyes, listen to them with excited ears, and speak to them with excited lips like you did during courtship and the early days of marriage?

3. Are you protecting your marriage with the power of prayer? How can you come before the Lord on your knees in prayer to strengthen your relationship with him, and with each other?

4. Commit to praying and living The Lord's Prayer in your marriage. Choose one phrase that you need to focus on most this week:

"OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN": Prayer reminds you that you are never left alone in your marriage. Are you trying to make it through on your own strength?

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME. YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN": Prayer reminds you that God's purpose for your marriage is always bigger than your marriage. How have you shrunk your marriage down to a list of your wants and desires?

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD": Prayer requires you to see yourself as needy. Do you see yourself as self-sufficient and autonomous?

“FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS”:

Prayer requires you to love others as you have been loved. How can you remind yourself daily of the forgiveness that Christ has shown you?

“AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL”: Prayer forces you to admit that your greatest problem is inside of you. How often do you point the finger of blame at your spouse or circumstances?

“FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER.

AMEN.”: Prayer ends with the reminder to pledge allegiance to the Kingdom of God and his glory. How can you live for the glory of God this week in your marriage?

KEY VERSE:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)