

# What Did You Expect?

Redeeming the Realities of Marriage

*By Paul David Tripp*

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Leader's Guide to be used with the conference on DVD  
(10 – 25 minute sessions)  
for Small Groups or Individual Couples

*This resource is a product of:*

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# WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

Redeeming the Realities of Marriage

## LEADERS' GUIDE

### SESSION 1

#### Opening Discussion Questions:

Title: *Some ideas could include: The title implies that perhaps married couples have incorrect or unrealistic expectations about marriage; it implies that marriage realities should and can be redeemed, rescued, put in their proper perspective; it implies that the reality of marriage is that it can be difficult but that those difficulties can be used for good*

Essential Ingredients: *Leader, allow time for participants to write a list, and then allow time for participants to share their list. Avoid allowing them to explain—ask them to just share the list without commentary. Say, “Using either an idea from your list or something you heard someone else say, what do you believe is the one essential ingredient that determines the character and quality of a good marriage?” Allow time to think and then ask for ideas. Again, don’t look for commentary; just solicit answers to the question.*

#### DISCUSSION

1. Because life is mostly made up of little moments; that is where we live—“If God doesn’t rule your little moments then [God] doesn’t rule you because that is where you live.” “If the character of a life is not set by four or five big moments . . . but is set by 10,000 little moments, then every little moment of your life is important.”
3. We all worship; we are all worshippers—everything we do is a result of some kind of worship. What we worship shapes our lives
4. The things we do and say are caused by what is inside of us; not outside. What comes out of us is what is already inside us
5. When we are convinced problems arise from outside of us, we stop seeking God’s help for ourselves; we focus on blaming others which fuels more conflict; there will be no change, healing or reconciliation—some of this will be stated in session 2

### SESSION 2

#### DISCUSSION

1. It is making the problems look good—working on the symptoms of problems rather than trying to correct the root problem; apple nailing solutions are temporary and do not bring about heart change.
2. The Creator or the creation
3. Some ideas could include: when things become more important than others or God or doing what is right; when a large portion of time is spent with things; when the main purpose of money is to buy things; when decisions are made based on things
4. Sin pulls us away from worship and service of the Creator to worship and service of the creation

## **SESSION 3**

### **Opening discussion/Review**

Hearts/worship/relationships: what we worship rules our hearts and what is in our hearts shapes our words and behavior which shapes and influences our relationships. Relationship problems are heart problems and heart problems are worship problems.

### **DISCUSSION**

1. Sin causes us to become self focused; sin creates selfish desires that lead to quarrels and conflict because we don't get what we want.

### **APPLICATION**

List of desires could include: to get what I want, to be right, to be comfortable, to have things, to be first, to be accepted, to look good, to be respected, to be self-sufficient/independent, etc.

## **SESSION 4**

### **DISCUSSION**

1. God himself and our relationship with him is the greatest treasure; eternal things; things we do and say that God will reward
3. God has promised to provide what we need; earthly treasures are temporary

## **SESSION 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

1. We justify or pretend to be serving God's Kingdom but in reality we are serving our own.
2. Answers may include the fruits of the Spirit, faithfulness, perseverance, abiding, prayer, trust, practical ways to serve

## **SESSION 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

1. True righteousness only ever begins when you come to the end of yourself; he wants to bring you to a place where you will begin to depend on him and to seek his way instead of your own way
2. When you are ruled by your own desires, own needs, own wants, feelings; you are driven by manipulation as you try to get what you want
3. Ruled and characterized by love for God exhibited through loving our neighbor; driven by ministry as we look to be part of how God can use us in another's life

# SESSION 7

## DISCUSSION

1. Galatians 5 says the entire law is summed up in the command, love your neighbor as yourself; God is love and he loves people; we cannot show love to God without showing love to others; we cannot love God while ignoring, devaluing or disrespecting what God loves.
2. Because God in Christ loved us willingly, sacrificially and unconditionally.

## APPLICATION

As you consider practical ways to show love to your spouse consider: when is the last time you served in a meaningful way at home for the benefit of just your spouse, when is the last time you spent time alone with each other in a meaningful way; when is the last time you gave a gift to your spouse spontaneously; when is the last time you held hands; is there a burden you can relieve from your spouse, when is the last time you spoke positively about your spouse in front of others; when is the last time you thanked your spouse?

# SESSION 8

## DISCUSSION

1. By God's grace and Spirit; by being in his Word so that we are reminded what he has done for us; through practice

# SESSION 9

## DISCUSSION

1. We can appreciate others' personalities, physical attributes, and unique qualities because it is all a part of God's perfect design.
2. God purposely made us all different to complement each other, sharpen one another and so we might display his diversity and vastness.
3. Knowing God's sovereignty reminds me that everything happens according to his plan. People I relate to are a part of my life and vice versa because of God's sovereign will.
4. Part of God's purpose in placing us with our spouse is that we might sharpen one another and be used to bring us to maturity in Christ.

# SESSION 10

## DISCUSSION

1. If we respond to our spouse with grace, compassion, and patience, we can turn their focus to God and to his Kingdom. If we have God's Kingdom in view, we can provide empathy and biblical wisdom. We can be God's hands, feet and mouth to show compassion, to give comfort, and to speak truth in love.
2. We need to abide in Christ; we need to be filled with his Spirit; we need to be reminded daily of God's grace toward us

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