

SOUTHWESTERN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD UNIVERSITY
HARRISON SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MOTIVATION, TEAMS, COACHING, & MENTORING

LDR 5283-531

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. ROBIN BLAKNEY

ASSIGNMENT: Application project: Thirteen-week mentoring plan for a young, married couple
struggling in their marriage.

STUDENT DATA:

Name: Daniel De los Reyes

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Week 1 – Introduction

The first goal of this exercise is to connect with the couple relationally. For this journey, I will be joining my wife to mentor this couple one-on-one. The target demographic for this mentoring program is a young, married couple struggling in their marriage, or finances, or parenting. The first week would consist of assessing their needs and determining a course of action. For example, if the couple struggles with their finances or parenting, we would adjust to going over those topics sooner. However, the first couple of weeks will focus on broader issues of communication and emotional intelligence.

We will give the couple a copy of *The Marriage Book* by Nicky and Sila Lee during our first meeting, as they cover a comprehensive list of marriage topics. Many ways to explain the following issues will flow from the conclusions they have drawn in their book. We will develop objectives and desired outcomes at the first meeting and establish healthy boundaries and privacy concerns for this thirteen-week journey.

Week 2 – The Five Love Languages

To help their marriage, they must first know more about themselves individually. For this week, we will focus on covering the five expressions of love from Gary Chapman's *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate* (1992). The five love languages are words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, presents, and physical touch. We will discuss what these languages are and what they are not. This meeting will consist of general ideas about the love languages and their importance. We will look at how these love languages interact with each other.

We will dive into their love languages the following week. The couple will have two assignments for the next week:

1. Take an assessment to find out their love languages. They can find the evaluation online by visiting: <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language>
2. Read chapters five, six, and seven from *The Marriage Book*.

Week 3 – Findings from their love languages

During this week's session, we will focus on their findings after taking the assessment. What have they learned about themselves that they did not know? What have they found about their spouse that they did not know? In light of knowing their love languages, how do they think they see their marriage? Does it make sense that God would create each of them so differently? The second half of this session will focus on what needs to change. What can each individual do to improve their marriage after finding out about their spouse's preferences?

Their assignments for the following week will be to find one or two practical ways to show intentional love to their spouse according to their mate's love language. They will also read chapters three and four from *The Marriage Book* to discuss at the next meeting.

Week 4 – Effective communication: Talking and listening

We will dedicate the first five to ten minutes to discussing their previous assignment. We will then devote the rest of our time to discussing the topic of effective communication. We will consider some questions at the beginning: Why do they think so many couples struggle to find subjects about which to talk? Why do they think it is easier to give instructions than have a meaningful talk? What are some rules to establish to talk about their feelings openly? To end this section, we will discuss the importance of timing.

Then we will devote the rest of the time to discuss some of the positive effects of listening and some not desired outcomes of poor listening. As we have this part of our discussion, some questions to keep in mind: Do you often find yourself trying to problem-solve

instead of listening? What are some of the issues you have encountered when your spouse does not listen? How does poor listening from your spouse make you feel?

We will look at James 1:19 NIV: “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Are there correlations between listening, speaking, and becoming angry with one another? Finally, what are some ways in which you can improve your talking and listening abilities?

They will have three tasks to complete for next week:

1. Talk slowly and thoughtfully. My recommendation is that whenever the individual feels they are in a situation where things escalate out of their hands, it is acceptable to stop and gather their thoughts.
2. Second, memorize one scripture that they can recite before they have any conversations with their spouse. I propose my favorite scripture: “My mouth will speak words of wisdom,” Psalm 49:3b NIV. Although, they are free to find one that they identify with better. Some examples are Proverbs 18:21, Luke 6:45, Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 13:3, Proverbs 3:9, and others.
3. Read chapters eight and nine from *The Marriage Book*.

Week 5 – Conflict resolution

We will start week five by revising last week’s assignments. Last week, how often did you apply the first assignment with your partner?

As the adage says, opposites attract. So then, it should not surprise us that every marriage experiences significant differences because our distinctions draw us to each other. Conflict exists in every relationship, yet its impact on marriage is substantial. A couple must learn to recognize that they see the world from different perspectives. However, since the members of a marriage

union are one in covenant under God, they must resolve their differences. One of the keys to tackling conflict in marriage is focusing on the issue instead of the person.

As we have our discussion, some questions to keep in mind:

- What are the pros and cons of approaching conflict from two different angles?
- In which ways have you seen disagreements inflict pain in a marriage? To answer this question, they could respond with an example of someone in their life who let wrong conflict resolution get the best of their family.
- Among the critical stress factors in a marriage are finances, sex, work commitments, and raising children, which are not a problem to solve but a tension to manage. It is essential to understand what your spouse thinks about these areas. So how can you commit to openly discussing these issues with your spouse?
- Finally, do you think conflict can become a vehicle to unify a marriage? We hope they understand that their differences could be the key to resolving their dispute with the last question.

We will ask them to have a private conversation about where they stand on marriage's four critical stress factors. Lastly, we will assign them to read chapters ten and twelve of *The Marriage Book* to discuss at our next appointment.

Week 6 – Centering our marriage on God

This thirteen-week journey assumes that the couple looking for advice wants Christian-based advice. As discussed in the previous week, our differences can destroy a marriage, but they can also enrich it. Also, God instituted marriage, so he desires that the people who enter it experience fulfillment. Therefore, one of the main points of this session is for them to get to a place where they can bring their differences to God. By asking questions such as, what does it

mean for marriage to be a gift from God? What would it look like to have God as the center of our marriage? How should a Jesus-centered marriage reflect God's attributes? What are some of the essential godly characteristics to reflect in marriage?

Our assignment for week eight is reading chapter eleven from *The Marriage Book*.

Week 7 – Forgiveness

The foundation of any successful marriage relationship is trust. Trust is like a bank in which you deposit good intentions and faith. However, the account shatters when we withdraw from it, and restoring it could take a lifetime. Nevertheless, there is hope; though trust is restored one single action at a time, it is possible to initiate the process with forgiveness.

It takes one small thing to spoil everything. “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour” Ecclesiastes 10:1 KJV. Like the fly in the ointment, minor issues often leave a lasting impact on marriage because if we do not heal them, they grow and become unhealthy.

Some of the critical questions are: What are they holding on to that harbors resentment in their lives? Do they have issues that they need to clarify to clear the air? How have I contributed to hurting my partner? Understanding their part in hurting their spouse will help heal the relationship.

At our next appointment, we will discuss how to move forward with prayer. The assigned reading is appendix 4, found on page 307 of *The Marriage Book*.

Week 8 – Praying together

We will start our conversation by asking why they think it is hard to pray with their spouse. Then, we will share our struggles about praying together. Some of the advice will center on how to get started. It is best to start with five to ten minute prayers rather than long and extended

sessions. Beginning with short sessions will nurture this habit until praying together for a more extended time becomes more natural. In addition to starting small, they can use template prayers to kick start their practice. We will then gift them the book *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*; they can use this book to draw inspiration for their prayer time. It also encourages seeing how saints from hundreds of years ago handled their spiritual walk.

One last thought, as parents, and specifically men, we are the priests of the home. If we are to function as priests, we need to learn how to intercede for our families. It is not just about going to church but having a prayer life. A healthy prayer life will help us:

- not crack under pressure
- flee from destructive things as escapes
- and to cast our cares on God.

Our assignment for week ten is to print out a schedule of their work and personal commitments for the next month.

Week 9 – Balancing work commitments and life

As a couple, they will need to learn to balance their workload and personal life. Couples need to steward their time together well. We will address the misconception of a balanced life. While some think a balanced life is one where you never miss a family commitment or show up to work every business day of the year, real-life lies somewhere in the middle. When we focus on achieving balance in our daily life, it might be impossible, but what if we look past the day-to-day and look to seasons of work and family demands.

With their work and family schedules in hand, we will act as consultants and advise on how best to balance both ends of their responsibilities. We will repeatedly ask, does your calendar contribute to the kind of couple you want to become in the future? Are you making

space to devote to one another? Is there anything you leave out of your calendar that you need to weigh in to make better decisions about your future?

Next week, their assignment will be to write a page about the kind of parent they want to become. They will describe it from a general to specific approach, touch on how they will educate, correct their children, and describe the type of legacy they want to leave in their children.

Week 10 – Raising children

We will unpack the couple's information about the kind of parent they want to become during this session. We are whom we learned to be from our parents, who, in turn, knew those behaviors from their parents. So it is crucial to identify these types of behaviors because you will likely pass them on to your kids. Parents must understand that raising children is not about the parents; it is about guiding the children. You might idealize the type of person you want them to be, but ultimately, our kids will take on their path. Our job is to guide them.

From a spiritual perspective, the enemy is not fighting you over you. The enemy is fighting you to destroy your kids. If we are dysfunctional as adults, it is likely due to something that happened when we were a kid. One of the main reasons we suffer attacks in this area is our spiritual enemy trying to get us to stumble bad enough to mess up our kids enough to produce the next generation of heartbroken and dysfunctional adults.

What is one thing from your preceding generation that you would not like to give to your children? So then, what steps should you take as parents to cover your kids from such patterns? As we touched on in the forgiveness session, one small thing can spoil everything. So what small areas in your lives could have enormous repercussions on your kids if you do not work to fix them?

At our next appointment, we will discuss balancing their relationship with their parents and in-laws. The assigned reading is chapters thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen of *The Marriage Book*.

Week 11 – In-laws and boundaries

Proverbs 23:22 NIV says, “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” The opposite of despise is respect, and you can show respect by honoring your parents. In the ten commandments, honoring your parents has a life promise attached to it. However, honor does not mean that they can meddle in your business as a married couple. Couples, especially young newly married ones, must establish healthy boundaries with their in-laws while at the same time showing them honor. It is hard to deal with the heartache of messy relationships, as mentioned in week ten.

Questions to ask during this session, avoiding conflict will not help, so what are some ways to deal with in-laws meddling in your business? What are some of the boundaries you have established with your in-laws? How can you show grace in circumstances that cross your limits while you still uphold your standards?

Some of the more challenging questions to ask, how often will you see your parents? How much communication will you have with them regularly? If they live nearby, do they have a key to the house? Do they get an extra car key? Keep in mind, some of these boundaries work both ways. If you expect them to do favors for you often, then your limits will be looser, and therefore, they will cross them more often. What regulations can you establish to ensure they respect your boundaries?

Next week we will discuss how to live within a budget. We will need the couple to bring a list of monthly household expenses. The assigned reading is appendix 3, found on page 301 of *The Marriage Book*.

Week 12 – Finances and stewardship

The purpose of a budget is to control spending and arrange where you will invest your money. First, we will show the couple how to develop a zero-sum budget. In a zero-sum budget, your expenses must match your income, equaling out to zero. We can classify as expenses anything to which we devote money. I will help them create a template of a zero-sum budget for their household.

We will discuss what expense lines should be in their budget. Of course, every budget is different; it depends on their earnings, needs, lifestyle, and amount of debt. Finally, we will give them some quick points about the financial implications of owning a home, like not having a larger payment than a quarter of their take-home pay and other concerns they may have.

Finally, the importance of living on a budget is stewardship and accountability. We may work, and our boss sends us a paycheck, but God is our primary provider. Therefore, our finances should reflect how to live an orderly life that pleases him. Final discussion about finances, why is it so hard to devote ten percent of our money to God? If you do not give, where can you start?

The following week will discuss sex and intimacy; their assignment is to read chapters sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen in *The Marriage Book*.

Week 13 – Sex and intimacy

A fulfilling sex life does not primarily have to do with the physical; it has to do with intimacy, and intimacy requires trust. As we mentioned in week seven, trust is like a bank in

which you deposit good intentions and faith. Furthermore, marriage is not just a connection, but it is a covenant. A covenant is the promise of future love and commitment.

In Proverbs 5:18 and 19 NLT, the writer says, “Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love.” Captivated is another word for a love that hypnotizes you, a love on which you focus your attention. It is mesmerizing. Love, romance, and sexual fulfillment characterize successful relationships.

The principles that we learned in the first few weeks are foundational pieces for this part of your relationship. In addition, to have successful sex lives, couples must exercise clear communications and conflict resolution, keeping their partner in mind. Questions for the participants. What are some of the ways that you feel closer to each other? What can each of you do to break down barriers to intimacy? What are some ways in which you can create expectancy about being with your partner?

To finalize our thirteen-week journey, we will ask them to mention the findings that have helped them the most in their marriage. We will also ask them to prayerfully consider walking other couples through a similar experience. Leading or co-leading a journey like this can be of benefit to a couple who has recently studied these topics. Guiding another couple through this process could help them learn and apply these principles even deeper.