

# STUDY GUIDE

## *PREPARING* FOR A *VISIONARY MARRIAGE*

CAPTURE A GOD-SIZED  
VISION *for your* MARRIAGE



  
**VISIONARY  
FAMILY**  
MINISTRIES

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# *BECOMING ONE*



I. Falling in love—what is your story?

II. When we are engaged...

A. On a scale of 1-10, (10 being the highest) how high of a priority will your marriage be to you?

B. On a scale of 1-10, (10 being the highest) how important is the health of your marriage in the eyes of God?

C. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest) how much time, effort, money, planning, and focus have you given to preparing yourself for marriage?

D. Why are you getting married?

III. You are marrying a moving target

IV. Marriage 101

A. God created a man and a woman (Genesis 1:26).

B. God gave man and woman a mission to fill the earth (Genesis 1:28).

C. Marriage involves leaving, holding fast, and becoming one (Genesis 2:24).

D. The five great purposes of marriage

1. Marriage reflects the character of God.
2. Marriage is a picture of God's love for us.
3. Marriage is the foundation of all human society.
4. Marriage transforms us spiritually.
5. Marriage and family is God's plan to fill the earth with His people.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Which aspects of your family life growing up will serve as an asset and a blessing in your marriage?
2. What is a special memory you have as a part of your "falling in love" story?

3. As you consider God's five purposes for marriage, which one are you most interested to learn more about?

## GOING DEEPER:

*Use these questions to continue talking after the conference:*

1. What is one aspect of your parents' relationship that you want to repeat in your marriage? What is one aspect of their relationship that you do not want to repeat?
2. What words would you use to describe a "Christian marriage"?
3. In what ways do you see your fiancé helping to positively shape and grow your character?

# *THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS*



- I. For your marriage to thrive, you must become experts in forgiveness
  
- II. Forgiveness matters to God – Hebrews 12:15
  - A. Bitterness spreads
  
  - B. Seeds, roots, plants, and fruit
  
- III. Testing for the poison of unforgiveness – the “overflowing cup”

#### IV. Action plan

##### A. Keep new poison from seeping into our foundation

Use the Bible's language of apology:

Confess: I \_\_\_\_ you.

Acknowledge: I was \_\_\_\_\_

Express: I am \_\_\_\_\_

Ask: Will you please \_\_\_\_\_?

Response: Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ you.

##### B. We actively forgive those in our past who have hurt us *"Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* (Colossians 3:13)



## PHASE 1: Forgiveness with your will

Make the list

It hurt me when...

I choose to forgive...

## PHASE 2: Forgiveness with your heart

Pray for God to heal your heart

Stay active in prayer until God finishes the job

## PHASE 3: Reconciliation

The primary burden for reconciliation is on the offender.

Ask for God's strength to stay at the reconciliation line.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In the home you grew up in, how was forgiveness practiced? How were conflicts and hurt feelings handled?
2. What is a recent conflict or difficulty that the two of you worked through in a healthy and positive way?
3. Based on the principles in this session, what would be a good “next step” for your growth in giving and receiving forgiveness? (Each person should identify something specific they believe they could do to grow in this area).

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Pray and ask God if there is anyone from your family of origin whom you need to forgive. Determine to start working through the three phases of forgiveness this week. Ask your fiancé to pray for you as you work through this process.
2. Are there certain issues or events which continually cause conflict, hurt, or anger in your relationship? Talk about these “chronic” areas of conflict. Pray together and mutually ask God to give you humble hearts in these areas. Talk about steps you (not your spouse) could take to reduce conflict in this area.

# COMMUNICATION



## I. Why is this so hard?

A. Different people think and feel differently.

B. Your “oneness” will be under constant spiritual attack.

## II. Essential Scriptures

A. James 1:19

B. 1 Peter 3:7

C. Proverbs 27:15

D. Colossians 3:19

### III. Communication Approaches

A. Pray first

B. Communicate “directly”

C. Going “below ground”

D. Use “core feelings”

- afraid
- anxious
- uncomfortable
- insecure
- happy

- sad
- angry
- inadequate
- overwhelmed
- guilty
- hurt
- content
- peaceful
- hopeless
- embarrassed
- lonely
- hopeful

#### E. Reflective listening

1. Don't interrupt
2. Repeat back, *"If I heard you correctly, you are saying A, B, C. Is that right?"*
3. *"Is there more you want to say?"*
4. Respond directly to the issues raised. Go "below ground" if needed.
5. Switch sides, *"Are you ready to hear my thoughts on this?"*
6. Back to step 1.

F. How to compromise

G. Getting angry? Is the conversation about to get ugly?  
Pray!

H. The “I Feel Loved” list

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are some ways in which you communicate well?
2. In what areas of your communication do you seem to have repeated struggles or conflict?
3. Which of the communication principles from this session do you most need to work on? If you did grow in that area, what impact would it have on your marriage?

## GOING DEEPER:

1. When you were growing up, what positive and negative communication patterns did you experience? How might those be impacting the way you relate with your fiancé?
2. Do you struggle with indirect or sarcastic communication patterns? How can you help each other change those toxic habits?
3. Write and share your “I feel loved when you...” list. Is there anything on the other person’s list that surprises you?



# *FINANCES*



## I. Foundations

A. Leaving, cleaving, and becoming one – Genesis 2:24

B. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil – 1  
Timothy 6:10

C. You shall not covet – Exodus 20:17

D. God loves a cheerful giver – 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

## II. Pursuing a shared vision

## III. Practical approaches

A. Making and tracking a monthly budget

B. Prioritizing giving

C. Talking about your family backgrounds

D. Don't trade kids for money

E. Share your “core feelings”

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think money causes so many marriage problems?
2. When you were growing up, what was your family's attitude toward money? Did your families share the same values and approaches related to money? What was the same? What was different?
3. Which of the “core feelings” do you most often experience when it comes to money and finances?

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Talk about your “shared vision” for your financial life. Be specific. Which goals do you share in common? Which goals are different?
2. What area of your financial life causes you the most stress? Would you be willing to make a plan to pray together about that stressful area each day for the next month?

3. Together, write out your monthly budget for your first month of marriage. If your wedding day is a long way off, you can revisit this budget as time gets closer.

# *INTIMACY*



## I. Biblical foundation

A. Leave, hold fast, and become one—Genesis 2:24

B. Sex was created for covenant marriage between a man and a woman

C. Flee from sexual immorality—1 Corinthians 6:18

D. Sex is both physical and spiritual—  
1 Corinthians 6:15-16

E. God's three purposes for sex:

1. Uniting the spirit of husband and wife
2. Making babies
3. Pleasure

II. Clearing out the past

A. No secrets

B. Prayers of confession—1 John 1:9

C. Prayers to break any spiritual attachments

### III. Preparing for the future

A. Great sex later means waiting now

B. What if we are already living together?

C. Cut off all previous romantic attachments—  
Proverbs 5:7-14

D. Get all porn out of your life—Matthew 5:28

E. Communicate about any anxieties

### IV. A blessing and a warning—Proverbs 5:15-23

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How much teaching, mentoring, and discipleship did your parents give you in this area of sexuality?
2. Which of the Scriptures that Rob shared in this session were most meaningful to you?
3. Were you convicted that God is calling you to take a particular action step in this area of your relationship?

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Set aside time to pray together, confessing any past sexual sin, and asking God to break any heart connections you may have with any people from your past.
2. Are there aspects of your present or future sexual relationship that are causing you stress or anxiety?



# *GOD'S MISSION FOR HUSBANDS*



## I. The role and purpose of a husband

Ephesians 5:25-26

Mission 1: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Mission 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Mission 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Sometimes people get uncomfortable talking about different roles for men and women in marriage. Why do you think this is?
2. If you had a father in your home growing up, what role did he play? If your father was married, did you see him exhibit the roles of lover, servant, and leader?
3. What would be one step you could take toward spending more time in prayer and reading Scripture together?

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Do you ever feel awkward or uncomfortable talking about spiritual things or praying together? Why do you think this is? What could you do to help each other “press through” this awkwardness?
2. Men, go back and look at the list of “love” in 1 Corinthians 13. Which aspect of love do you think you need to grow in the most? Pray and ask God to strengthen you in this area.

3. Women, look again at the list of “love” in 1 Corinthians 13. Which aspect of love does your fiancé best exhibit? Thank him for loving you in this way, and give him specific examples of times he has done this.

# *GOD'S MISSION FOR WIVES*



## I. The role and purpose of a wife

Mission 1: \_\_\_\_\_—Genesis 2:18

Mission 2: \_\_\_\_\_—Ephesians 5:22

Mission 3: \_\_\_\_\_—Ephesians 5:33

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. If you had a mother in your home growing up, what role did she play? If your mother was married, did you see her exhibit the biblical roles of helping, respecting, and submitting?
2. Women, which of these biblical responsibilities is most challenging for your character?
3. Women, in which of these roles and purpose do you most need the Holy Spirit's empowerment?

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Men, how would you describe your "life vision" up to this point? How has God used this conference so far to expand and reshape that vision?
2. Women, ask your fiancé how you can best help him grow in his faith and walk with God.

# *THE MISSION OF PARENTING*



I. Marriage and family is God's plan to fill the earth with His people

A. How many, how soon?

B. How does a Christian make big decisions?

C. The current battle

## II. Unless the Lord builds the house

Psalm 127

## III. The “rewards” of following God

## IV. The “feature presentation”

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Think about how you were parented. In what ways do you want to repeat the parenting patterns set by your parents? In what ways do you want to do things differently?
2. How do you think most couples make decisions about having children?

3. How do you see the four areas being separated in our culture today? (Life purpose, marriage, sex, children).

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Up until this point, how have you discussed and thought about welcoming children into your family? Was there anything in this session that challenged you to think in new ways?
2. Go back to the “core feelings” list. Share any core feelings you have about children and parenting.



# *FAITH AND THE FUTURE OF YOUR FAMILY*



## I. The need for multi-generational vision

A. The ripple effect of future generations

B. Praying for future generations

C. Laying foundations for future generations

## II. Why are you getting married?

III. God created the family at the foundation of society.

IV. Your relationship with God is even more important than your relationship with your spouse.

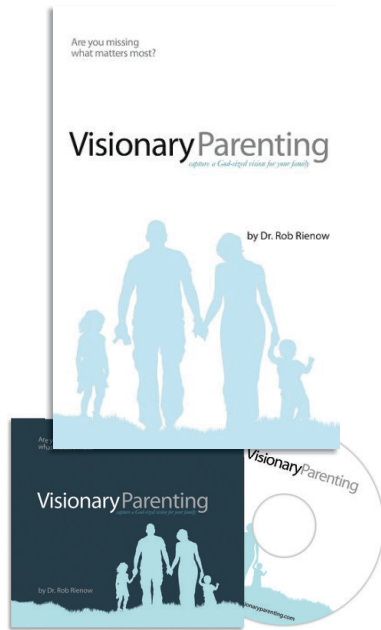
## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What was the most encouraging thing you heard in this session?
2. How has your time at this conference deepened your answer to the question “Why are you getting married”? Explain.
3. What are some subjects or issues that you want to talk more about during the next few weeks?

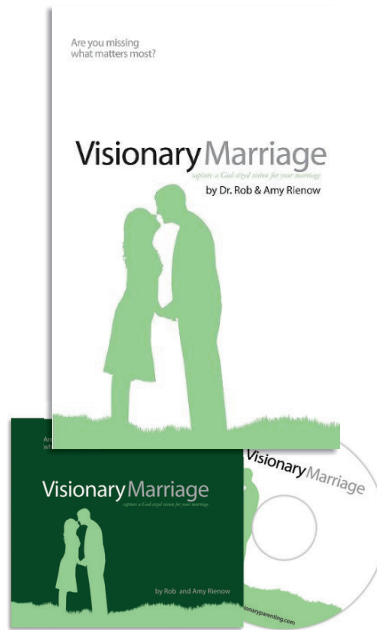
## GOING DEEPER AND ACTION STEPS:

1. As of this moment, how would you describe your relationship with God?
2. Consider taking time to write out a mission statement for your marriage and family.
3. Are you connected to a church that teaches God's truth from the Bible and is prepared to care for your marriage and family? If not, what are some next steps you can take to make that happen?
4. Make an all-out commitment to practicing the disciplines of prayer and Bible reading together. Your marriage and family need the supernatural power of God and the filling of the Holy Spirit!

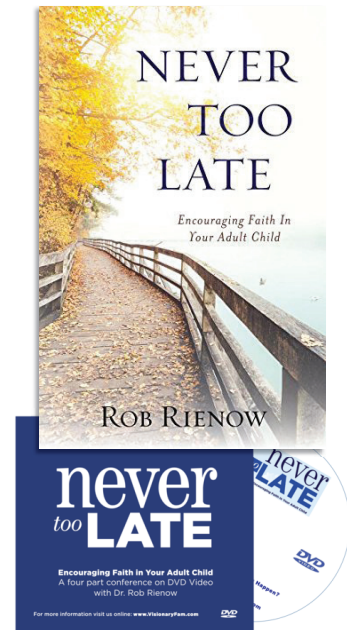
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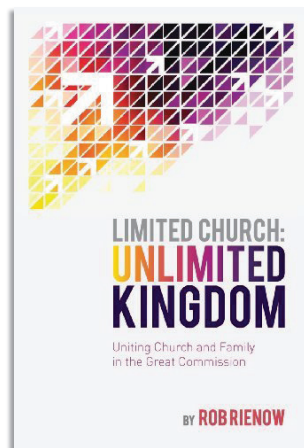
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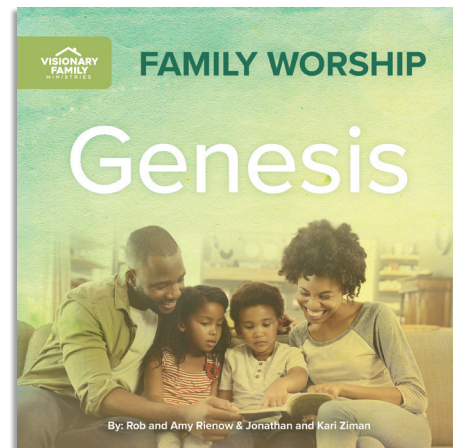
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## CONTACT US

### WEB


[visionaryfam.com](http://visionaryfam.com)

### PHONE

630-215-9399

### SOCIAL MEDIA

 [@visionaryfam](https://twitter.com/visionaryfam)

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### EMAIL

Rob Rienow | [rob@visionaryfam.com](mailto:rob@visionaryfam.com)

Jonathan Ziman | [jonathan@visionaryfam.com](mailto:jonathan@visionaryfam.com)

Kate Hoffman | [kate@visionaryfam.com](mailto:kate@visionaryfam.com)

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