CELEBRATING MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

the Church at **Martinsburg**
people helping people find and follow Jesus

Marriage & Parenting Conference
September 15 & 16, 2017

Equipping the church to glorify God and serve one another in biblical marriage.

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The Church at Martinsburg's G4 Children's Ministry is privileged to partner with Twelve Stones Ministries and provide this opportunity for our members

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g4 kids

Celebrating Marriage Conference Schedule

Friday, September 15 & Saturday, September 16, 2017

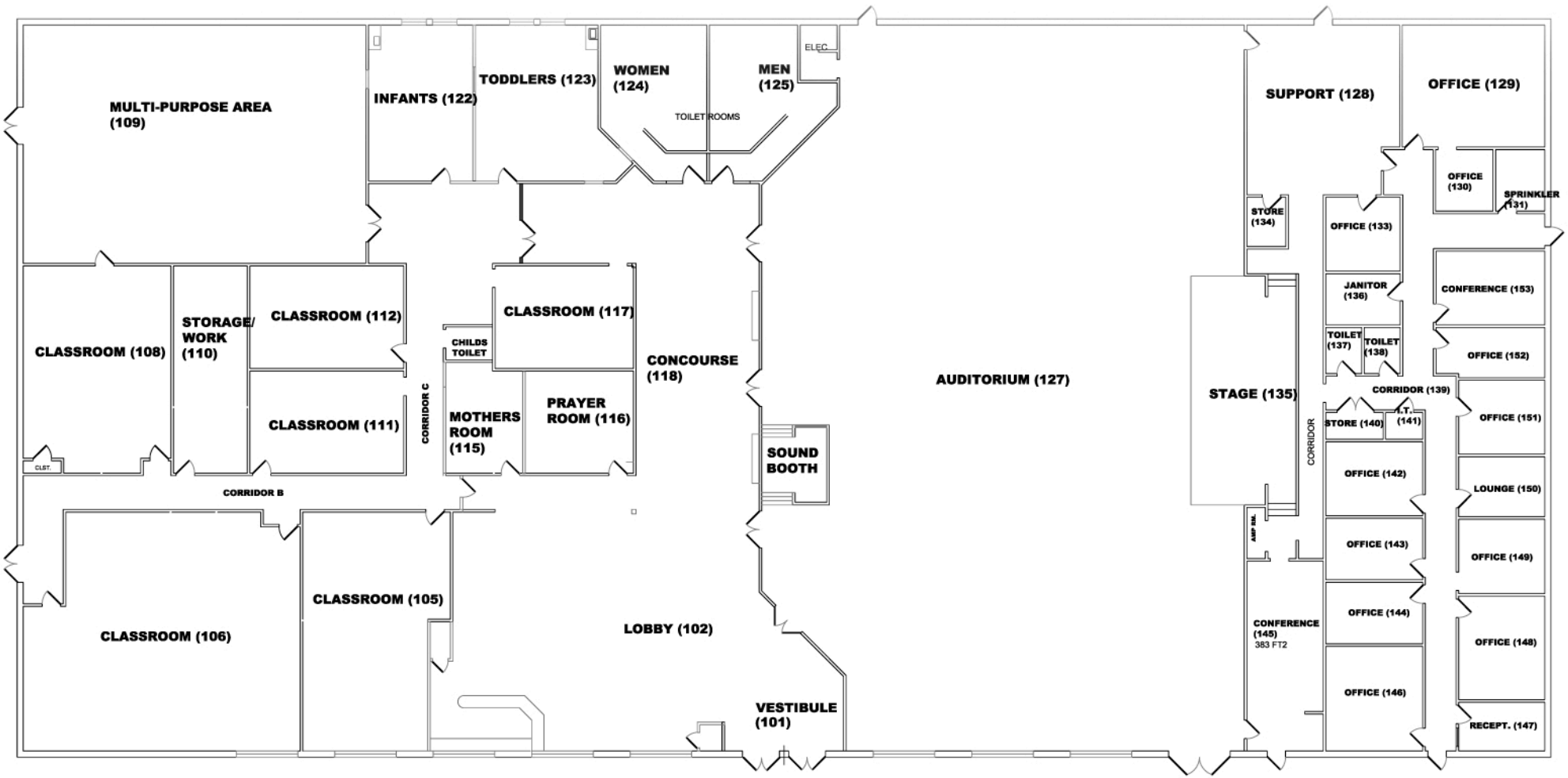
Friday Schedule

6:00pm	Childcare Opens
7:00pm – 8:00pm	**Celebrating the Promise of Marriage**
8:00pm – 8:15pm	Break
8:15pm – 8:30pm	Discussion
8:30pm – 8:45pm	Discussion & Fellowship
8:45pm	Dismissal
9:00pm	Childcare Ends

Saturday Schedule

8:30am	Childcare Opens
9:00am – 9:15am	Donuts & Coffee Fellowship
9:15am – 10:15am	**Celebrating the Privilege of Marriage**
10:15am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am – 10:45am	Discussion
10:45am – 11:45am	**Celebrating the Proclamation of Marriage**
11:45am – 11:50am	Quick break
11:50am – 12:00	Discussion
12:00pm - 12:30pm	Q&A
12:30pm	Dismissal
1:00pm	Childcare Ends

There will be snacks provided during each break in the Lobby. You may bring food and drinks into the sanctuary.



the Church at Martinsburg | **Fire Escape Plan**

Friday Session: Celebrating the Promise of Marriage

I. Introduction

A. What to expect.

B. Our God is a _____.

C. _____ as Covenant.

D. Marriage is _____.

> "As all social history books will tell you, marriage had its origins in 'pre-history' – in other words, the human race cannot remember a time in which marriage did not exist. There have been some efforts to make the case that this or that remote culture or small ethnic group has existed without marriage, but none of these efforts are widely regarded as successful" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 253).

E. As a result of marriage being a "Covenant Keeping" idea of God's, John Piper has argued that staying married is not mainly about staying in love but about keeping one's covenant.

- Tim Keller has written, "Traditional societies made the family the ultimate value in life, and so marriage was a mere transaction that helped your family's interests. By contrast, contemporary Western societies made the individual's happiness the ultimate value, and so marriage becomes primarily an experience of romantic fulfillment. But the Bible sees *God* as the ultimate good – not the individual or the family – and that gives us a view of marriage that intimately unites feeling *and* duty, passion *and* promise. **That is because at the heart of the Biblical idea of marriage is the covenant"** (*The Meaning of Marriage* pg.80-81).

II. God's Original Design for Marriage (Genesis 2:18-25).

A. _____ agreement – Marriage is God's idea (Gen 2:18-22).

B. Built on _____ (Gen 2:24).

C. Embraces _____ (Gen 2:24).

D. _____ (Gen 2:24).

> "What, then, is a covenant. . . It is a relationship far more intimate and personal than a merely legal, business relationship. Yet at the same time, it is far more durable, binding, and unconditional than one based on mere feeling and affection; a covenant relationship is a stunning blend of law and love" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 84).

E. Joy through _____ (Read Gen 2:23,25).

- "The legal bond of marriage . . . creates a space of security where we can open up and reveal our true selves. We can be vulnerable, no longer having to keep up facades. We don't have to keep selling ourselves. We can lay the last layer of our defenses down and be completely naked, both physically and in every other way" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 85).

- "Marriage was designed from the beginning to display the new covenant between Christ and the church . . . The very essence of this new covenant is that Christ passes over the sins of his bride. His bride is free from shame not because she is perfect, but because she has no fear that her lover will condemn her or shame her because of her sin. This is why the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is at the very heart of what makes marriage work the way God designed it. Justification creates peace with God vertically, in spite of our sin. And when experienced horizontally, it creates shame-free peace between an imperfect man and an imperfect woman" (Piper, *MM* pgs. 33-34).

III. _____ of Marriage.

"During the Enlightenment, things began to shift; the meaning of life came to be seen as the fruit of freedom of the individual to choose the life that most fulfills him or her personally . . . marriage was redefined as finding emotional and sexual fulfillment and self-actualization" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg.28).

"Marriage used to be a public institution for the common good, and now it is a private arrangement for the satisfaction of the individuals. Marriage used to be about us, but now it is about me" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 29).

A Covenant is . . .	A Contract is . . .
A sacred moral agreement Overseen by God	A common legal document regulated _____
Based upon trust between two people and God	Based upon _____ by two people
Accepted to embrace unlimited responsibility	Written to create _____ liability
Intended to be permanent	Embedded with an _____
Seeks joy through mutual sacrifice	Demands joy through _____

Adapted from a chart by Brad Hambrick *www.bradhambrick.com/weddingceremony*

IV. Results of an Enlightenment View of Marriage

A. We selfishly seek someone who is _____

> "Some people are really, *really* the wrong person to marry. But everyone else is still incompatible . . . Over the years, you will go through seasons in which you have to learn to love a person who you didn't marry, who is something of a stranger . . . the journey may eventually take you into a strong, tender, joyful marriage. But it is not because you married the perfectly compatible person. That person doesn't exist (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 38-39).

B. Dating and Marriage relationships are more about experiencing the high of _____ than sacrificial love.

C. _____ results when the romance has died.

> Longitudinal studies reveal that two-thirds of unhappy marriages will become happy within five years if people stay married and do not get divorced. "What can keep marriages together during the rough patches? The vows; a public oath, made to the world, keeps you 'tied to the mast' until your mind clears and you begin to understand things better . . . By contrast, consumer relationships cannot possibly endure these inevitable tests of life, because neither party is 'tied to the mast'" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 87).

V. Conclusion – I would like to conclude this session with 2 questions.

A. **ASK:** What are some things from this talk that stood out to you (i.e. challenged, encouraged, equipped, or left a question)?

B. **ASK:** What have been some of your greatest joys in marriage that help you to be grateful that you have stayed "tied to the mast"?

C. As you reflect on this talk – take another look at the list I asked you to write down a few minutes ago. I asked, "how have you allowed the cultural view of marriage being, more about personal fulfillment than self-denial, to influence you as a spouse?" Ask your spouse for forgiveness – husbands go first.

Saturday Session 1:

Celebrating the Privilege of Marriage

I. Introduction

II. It is _____ to be alone (Gen 2:18).

III. What is the purpose of this friendship in marriage?

A. A life of _____.

1. Let's first look at this life of joy God has for us (fill in Scripture below).

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

2. Marriage as a joyful experience (fill in Scripture below).

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

B. Marriage is to prepare you and your spouse for that great day when we will _____.

Tim Keller gives us a great picture of what love and friendship in marriage can look like:

> "Within this Christian vision for marriage, here's what it means to fall in love. It is to look at another person and get a glimpse of the person God is creating, and to say, 'I see who God is making you, and it excites me! I want to be a part of that. I want to partner with you and God in the journey you are taking to his throne. And when we get there, I will look at your magnificence and say, 'I always knew you could be like this. I got glimpses of it on earth, but now look at you!'' . . . Each spouse then should give him or herself to be a vehicle for that work and envision the day that you will stand together before God, seeing each other presented in spotless beauty and glory" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 121).

IV. Qualities of Friendship that should be cultivated in our Marriages.

A. A growing _____.

B. _____.

C. _____.

- "Love finds joy in your comfort, satisfaction, and safety. Love will serve you and not use you. Love finds more excitement with giving than receiving. Love enjoys the unique vulnerability of the nakedness of the marriage bed and takes care that this vulnerability is never demanding or dangerous. **Love sees sex as an act and celebration of the relationship of self-sacrificing love that the marriage is all about"** (Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect?* pg. 173).

D. _____ – it does not waver.

"Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving" (Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect??* pg. 188)

V. Conclusion/Questions to ponder.

A. What was the most helpful or encouraging thought we discussed during this talk?

B. Spend a few minutes talking together as a couple evaluating the quality of your friendship in marriage in the 4 characteristics we just looked at: affection; transparency; self-sacrifice; and constant.

C. What are some things you have been thinking, saying, and/or doing that has cultivated an intimate friendship in your marriage or you have not been doing that has hindered an intimate friendship in your marriage?

E. Can anyone share any specific concern(s) you have for your marriage and how something we have discussed is pertinent or helpful to that concern?

F. Any other questions before we take a break?

Saturday Session 2:

Celebrating the Proclamation of Marriage

I. Introduction

Celebrating the Proclamation of Marriage.

> "Marriage was designed from the beginning to display the new covenant between Christ and the church . . . The very essence of this new covenant is that Christ passes over the sins of his bride. His bride is free from shame not because she is perfect, but because she has no fear that her lover will condemn her or shame her because of her sin. This is why the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is at the very heart of what makes marriage work the way God designed it. Justification creates peace with God vertically, in spite of our sin. And when experienced horizontally, it creates shame-free peace between an imperfect man and an imperfect woman" (Piper, *This Momentary Marriage* pgs. 33-34).

In this talk, I would like to persuade you that **the key to proclaiming this gospel through our marriages is that we first remember how much we are _____** (v. 12a).

- William Smith, in his wonderful book entitled *Loving Well* says, "In my relationship with God, what's always been most important is the quality of his love for me, not the quality of my love for him. It's only as the reality of his love for me becomes my present experience that I will be more concerned about expressing my love to others than insisting they express theirs for me" (pg. xix).

- *Let us take a look at how Paul describes God's love for us in Ephesians 3:17b-19*

II. The Limitless love of God – Read Ephesians 3:18-19.

A. _____ of God's love can be seen in the invitation to salvation to all people.

- Acts 2:21

B. _____ of God's love can be seen in that God chose us before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and that our relationship with Him continues for all eternity (John 3:16).

C. _____of God's love can be seen in Ephesians 2:6 when it says, "and [God] raised us up with [Christ] and seated us with him in the heavenly places . . ."

D. _____ of God's love can be seen in that He reaches down to rescue believers who were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

E. Let me ask you to consider, how frequently do you meditate on the limitless love of God for you?

- "Only through a present, rich, practical relationship with Jesus will you be able to develop rich, practical relationships with each other" (William Smith, *Loving Well* pg. xxi).

III. As a result of remembering the limitless love of God, what are the fruit that will overflow?

A. A heart of _____ (v. 12b).

1. "(Put on) [compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience]**.** It is immediately evident that these qualities overlap. A person with 'a compassionate heart' will also be 'kind'. One who is lowly or humble in disposition will also be 'meek,' etc."[1]

[1] Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 156). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

2. Compassion – "The expression *heart of compassion* indicates a very deep feeling, 'a yearning with the deeply-felt affection of Christ Jesus' (Phil. 1:8)."[2]

3. Paul displayed this type of affection and compassion in Philippians 1:8-11.

B. Practice _____ (Col. 3:13).

"Anyone who has been wronged feels a compulsion to make the other person pay down that debt. We do that by hurting them, yelling at them, making them feel bad in some way, or just waiting and watching and hoping that something bad happens to them. Only after we see them suffer in some commensurate way do we sense that the debt has been paid and the sense of obligation is gone . . . What then is forgiveness? Forgiveness means giving up the right to seek repayment from the one who harmed you" (Tim Keller, "Serving Each Other Through Forgiveness and Reconciliation" pg. 1-2).

[2] Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 156). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Paul Tripp, in his book *What Did You Expect* says, “Forgiveness is the fertile soil in which unity in marriage grows. When you are living every day in the confession and forgiveness pattern, you are forsaking your way for a better way. Your marriage is no longer a daily competition for who is going to get his or her way . . . forgiveness puts you on the same page with each other. You have both submitted your desires to the desires of another” (pg. 98).

C. Put on _____ (Col. 3:14).

D. Be _____ (Col. 3:15-17).

E. Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16).

F. Exalt Christ through our _____(Col. 3:17).

G. Both spouses will embrace their _____(Col. 3:18-19).

1. A husband will love and lead without being harsh or domineering.

Tim and Kathy Keller, in *The Meaning of Marriage* write, "The husband's authority (like Jesus' over us) is never used to please himself but only to serve the interests of his wife. Headship does not mean a husband simply 'makes all the decisions,' nor does it mean he gets his way in every disagreement. Why? Jesus never did anything to please Himself. A servant-leader must sacrifice [himself] to please and build up his partner" (pg. 241).

2. A wife will use all her _____ to bless her husband and their marriage while willingly _____ to his leadership.

a. Proverbs 31:26-28

b. Ephesians 5:22

c. Titus 2:5

IV. Conclusion - Let's see if I can tie this all together for us.

"At the end of the day, Christ's love is the great foundation for building a marriage that sings. Some who turn to Christ find that his love comes in like a wave that instantly floods the hard ground of their hearts. Others find that his love comes in gently and gradually, like soft rain or even a mist. But in any case, the heart

becomes like ground watered by Christ's love, which enables all the forms of human love to grow" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 239).

"The whole business of marriage… [is] the loving joyful service of God, as we look outward from our marriages and as couples seek to care for God's world together… This is delight with a shared purpose, intimacy with a common goal, and companionship in a task that stretches beyond the boundaries of the couple themselves… proclaiming Jesus Christ is at the forefront of that service" (Christopher Ash, *Married for God* pgs. 33,37,44).

V. Questions for Discussion

A. Spend a few minutes honestly assessing how your marriage is doing at proclaiming the gospel to those around you?

B. Is there a couple you know that you can begin mentoring or be mentored by in the coming months? *The goal of course of being mentored is to eventually mentor another couple.*

C. Discuss with your spouse 1 or 2 areas you would like to change as a result of the teaching you have heard this weekend.

D. In some way, reaffirm your love and commitment to your spouse.