

## HTPC Marriage Class

### Week 1: Sunday, March 20, 2022: Overview and Introduction of *Reforming Marriage*

#### Overview

**A. Vertical and Horizontal Intimacy Pre-Fall (Life in the Garden):** “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your bridegroom rejoice over you” (Isaiah 62:5).

1. Vertical: “so shall your bridegroom rejoice over you.” “To glorify God and enjoy **him** forever.”

2. Horizontal: “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride” Adam and Eve as sinless husband and wife. Genesis 2:18-25. Marriage union is **good**. Earthly marriage a beautiful reflection of vertical intimacy. Both/and!

#### **B. Vertical and Horizontal Intimacy Post-Fall (East of Eden in Our Sin)**

1. Vertical (Ezekiel 16:1-14; cf. Hosea 11:2-11); Sin and Grace. Restoration. Forgiveness. Purification. Humility. JOY. Praise. Functionality. Creature properly relating to Creator.

— Church’s wrong-headed conclusions (Ezekiel 16:15-34, 44-49; spiritual whoredom; Hosea 11:2-11 without Hosea 14); God becomes a *wax-nosed husband* whom we recreate according to our sinful passions. Why still maintain commitment to “God”? To assuage our consciences; Calvin: “Hiding in the camouflage of the church” while still getting what *we* want on our terms.

2. Horizontal implications of wrongly defined vertical intimacy

a. If we do not see our sin, we will not process God’s grace; thus, earthly marriage will lack Gospel joy. Lack of gratitude. Pride. Mechanical. Self-righteous. Harsh.

b. If we process sin, but not God’s grace, our marriages will be joyless but for other reasons: fear, timidity, guilt, shame. Serving spouse but in order to appease God/spouse, not out of Gospel power.

c. If we normalize/rationalize sin, we will rationalize spiritual and even horizontal adultery. We will continue to sin so that grace may abound (Romans 6:1). A legalist will become “anyone to the right of us.”

d. If we start with horizontal and not with vertical intimacy, we will idolize/worship our marriages (and other callings) and will use God to facilitate our earthly dreams. “Man-centered Christianity” can pour God not its mold, but God subserves a higher standard.

e. If we avoid horizontal intimacy (which is always a byproduct of misdefined vertical intimacy), we will end up as functional Gnostics who see the body as a necessary evil and the spirit as good. We will live with our heads in the clouds, while avoiding the earthiness of our callings (and

assuaging our consciences that we are doing *spiritual* worship). But as embodied creatures, we cannot avoid these bodily roles; instead, we will misdefine and pervert them. “If the body doesn’t matter, then it doesn’t matter what I do in the body.” Beware if you have neglected the physical blessing of your marriage (or any other area of life, even if single). 1 Corinthians 7:5.

3. Pastoral exhortations to ALL of us (myself first and foremost!): 1. “Nice” house without a proper foundation will come down in time, no matter how well “maintained.” 2. Deferred maintenance of even a properly built house comes due (pay me now or pay me later). 3. “Break God’s law and it will break you.” “God’s law bites back.” (This includes even processing your pre-marriage sin.) 4. When issues go unaddressed, those issues get more complicated, and new trials and temptations press down. Dysfunction breeds further and more complicated dysfunction. 5. Repentance, faith, Gospel. Repeat. Repentance, faith, Gospel. Repeat.

4. Proper view of horizontal intimacy as anchored in the vertical; Ephesians 5:22-33; Song of Solomon 2:8-17.

Look to Christ as our Bridegroom; see his nail-scarred hands as our only salvation; lean on him and not on any earthly blessing, not even on human marriage, as wonderful as it is. See beyond good creation gifts like marriage to Christ’s face as he will soon welcome us to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But do not avoid our creation roles in this world. Our hope in Christ fuels us to receive these lesser present blessings as reflections of his love for us and our love for him. Husbands won’t seek to turn their wives into objects of worship, but neither will they neglect them. Wives won’t look to their husbands for what only Christ can provide, but neither will they forget the joy intended horizontally between a husband and a wife. Men will lay down their lives for their wives as a reflection of Christ’s care for his church. Wives will submit to their husbands as expressions of the church’s ultimate and deepest submission to Christ. And of course these principles apply to all of our other earthly callings in this present world.

### **Introduction to Doug Wilson’s *Reforming Marriage* (pp.9-12)**

- A. Have you ever witnessed a true Gospel aroma in someone’s home? What stood out?
- B. What have you noticed about counterfeits to such an aroma?
- C. Why the accent by Wilson on husbands? Men, pray we will take heed!
- D. What is the (honest, specific) spiritual aroma of your home? Gospel traffics in reality. It is big enough for the reality of our homes.
- E. PRAY.