

Lesson 11: Husbands and wives

Aims for each learner:

- Understand God's design for marriage: one man united with one woman for their whole life.
- Want to please their spouse above themselves.
- Believe that men should give priority to their wives above their mothers.
- Memorize Genesis 2:24.

Cultural clues:

- Marriage in Islam
- Motherhood in Islam

Prepare: Paper and pens, consider issues to discuss for q.3.

Opening

Last week's practical task: Were you able to forgive someone who has hurt you? What difference did that make in your life? *Speak privately with any members who do not speak or found forgiveness difficult.*

Lesson 11 home study review:

Question 1: leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). **Question 2:** one, one, whole **Question 3:** a) submit; b) considerate **Question 4:** I

Pray for today's Lesson, Introduce today's topic: Our relationship with our spouse is the most important human relationship we have, even more than with our parents. Today's topic is God's design for marriage. *It is important to adapt today's lesson, e.g. if your learners are unmarried. We suggest single-gender discussion groups, with a leader of the same sex. Focus on the questions more relevant for your learner(s). This topic is important, so don't rush it, and come back to it later if needed.*

Discussion

God's design for marriage (Questions 1-11)

Question 2: Read each statement and ask:

- Do you personally agree with this statement?
- Why or why not?

These answers are coming from a biblical viewpoint, based on the teaching of men and women made in God's image, but Christian views can vary on some aspects of gender roles.

Question 3: Revise the memory verse, Genesis 2:24.

- What is God's design for marriage? *See the question.*
- What should happen between them, in body, mind and spirit? *They should be united - one flesh.*
- In the culture we live in, when and how does marriage start?
- How should it be different for those who follow Christ? *Take time to discuss issues and challenges where you live, e.g. In the west: how to find a partner, dating, living together, sex before marriage, weddings. And make it clear what the difference should be for Christians.*

Question 5:

Look at the picture.

- What did each of you write for Question 5 a) and b)?



*This is a classic scenario which most learners will recognise. The biblical principle is clear that the wife should come first, but care and respect for his parents is a biblical principle under-emphasised in the West. **Read Question 4 together.***

Discuss the next topic, divorce, sensitively and teach God's grace & forgiveness for believers who have gone through divorce.

Question 7: Read Matthew 19:3-6.



- It was easy in those days for a man to divorce his wife. What does Christ quote in v. 5?
- How can a husband and wife strengthen their marriage, not just physically but also with their hearts and minds?
- In v. 6, does Christ say that marriage is just a human contract, or something greater?

In fact, some Pharisees taught that a man could divorce his wife if she burnt the food!

Genesis 2:24.

Spend time together, talk with each other and do things together, as true friends.

Islam teaches the idea of marriage as a contract but the Bible says it is harder to break than that.

God has 'joined together' so humans should not

- According to Christ's words in verse 6, why is divorce wrong? *break it (see also v.9). However, sometimes marriages fail even among Christ's followers.*

Question 9: Read the question. Which answers did you tick? Why do you think this happens?
a), b) and d) are quite common in Muslim societies. There may be rare cases of c).

Question 10: Read the speech bubble and final paragraph. What did you write here?

This man thinks his wife is like property, but the Holy Bible teaches men and women have equal value.

Question 11: Read the entire question. How does it help us, knowing that God feels our pain?

Maybe your learner(s) are in one of these unhappy situations. It helps them to know that Jesus Christ on this earth felt strong compassion for people who suffer and he feels our pain if we are unhappy about marriage.

Husbands and wives in 1 Peter (Questions 12-22)

Question 13: Read the entire question.

- Why is it sometimes hard for a wife to submit to her husband?
- Why is it sometimes hard for a husband to be considerate towards his wife?

E.g. The husband may be selfish, domineering or unwise; or the wife may want her own way.

E.g. many husbands expect their wives to serve them.

Question 15 & 20: Ask two people to read out what the wife (q.15) and Tariq (q.20) are saying.

- Who are they trying to please – themselves or their spouse?
- What does God want us to care more about: how we can please our spouse or how he/she can please us? Give examples of how you try to please your spouse, or what you find hard about it.



Question 21 & 22: Read the first paragraph.

- Can a man maintain his authority at home without beating his wife and children?

In some cultures, wife-beating is common, but the Bible says 'love [your] wives as [your] own bodies'. Eph.5:28.

- What does 1 Peter 3:7 say about how a wife should be treated? 'considerate' and 'with respect'.
- Give examples of what this would look like in practice.
- **Read question 22:** What did you write down? *Answers may differ, but the question is to help husbands think about how to be considerate towards their wives in an unselfish way.*

Christ and your spouse (Questions 23-26)

Question 24: Read the true story in the box, and the question below. What is your opinion?

The spouse may turn to Christ. But even if not, when Christ's follower is patient and loving, it helps to keep harmony in the home.

Question 26a: Read the first paragraph.

- Which answers did you tick, and why?
- How can you 'jointly train your children to be followers of Jesus'?

E.g. Be a good Christian example; give our children time, attention, love, wise discipline; apologize if we fail; pray for them; pray and read the Bible with them each day; include them when meeting with believers.

Question 26b: Read the teacher's speech bubble. **Adapt this exercise according to your group.**

 Give learners paper & pens. In 5 minutes, consider and write down either:

- 5 Practical ideas to strengthen your relationship with your wife or husband.
- **OR,** If not married, 5 areas you want to grow in, in order to become a good husband/wife.

Conclusion

Obeying today's teaching: What was the most important thing you learned about marriage? How will you put this into practice?

- Which of the ideas you wrote down will you do this week?

Encourage: Suggest a Christian marriage course if relevant. Offer to talk in private about any questions people have about this lesson.

Pray together:

Divide into single-gender pairs or married couples to ask for God's help to obey what they learned about marriage.