

Student Workbook
Making The Most of Your Marriage
by Dr. John Maxwell

Video Session 3: "Top Ten Marriage Killers"

1. Introduction

I Corinthians 13 from The Promise Study Edition (Contemporary English Version)

¹ What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing, unless I loved others.

³ What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive? I would gain nothing, unless I loved others. ⁴ Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or ⁵ rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. ⁶ Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.

⁷ Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. ⁸ Love never fails!

Everyone who prophesies will stop, and unknown languages will no longer be spoken. All that we know will be forgotten. ⁹ We don't know everything, and our prophecies are not complete. ¹⁰ But what is perfect, will someday appear, and what isn't perfect will then disappear.

¹¹ When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways. ¹² Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything but then we will, just as God completely understands us. ¹³ For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

2. Video Session Begins

Four Stages of a Bad Marriage

_____ Stage - Marriage is going to be easy.

_____ Stage - This isn't what I thought it would be.

_____ Stage - Every issue is negatively blown out of proportion.

_____ Stage - Intentionally provoke one another.

"Though I cannot go back and make a brand new start my friend, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end."

"Early detection prevents early death."

Top Ten Marriage Killers

1. _____

A. _____ - sign of immaturity.

Basic cause of divorce.

Two kinds of people in the world:

1) _____ - "What can I do for you?" builder of healthy marriages.

2) _____ - "What can you do for me?" builder of unhealthy marriages.

B. _____ - sign of immaturity.

2. _____ - coming from a dysfunctional family.

A. Common Characteristics of a Dysfunctional Family

1) _____ - someone controls all interactions, feelings and personal behavior at all times.

2) _____ - everyone must always be right in everything they do.

3) _____ - whenever things don't turn out as planned, family members blame themselves or others.

4) _____ - they deny feelings, perceptions, thoughts, wants, and especially negative feelings by not talking about them and acting as if they do not exist.

5) _____ - family members never complete transactions, but instead keep the same fights and disagreements going for years.

6) _____ - no one gets their needs met, so the trust level is very low.

3. _____ - unbelievable high ideal of what the marriage should be.

4. _____

5. _____ - the little things add up. Drip, drip, drip of the marriage faucet.

6. _____ - inattentiveness to each other.

A. Inattention signals:

- 1) You give answers without _____; communication becomes mechanical.
- 2) You stop cultivating _____.
- 3) You would rather be with other _____.
- 4) You stop _____.
- 5) You avoid your _____.

7. _____

A. Warning Signs of a Potential Affair

- 1) _____ - Am I and my marriage partner growing together or apart?
- 2) _____ - People who have special feelings for another person find ways to see that person.
- 3) _____.
- 4) _____ - All affairs are set up by compromising.
- 5) _____.

B. How to "Affair Proof" Your Marriage

- 1) Know the _____ when you are vulnerable.
 - Early career building.
 - New baby in home.
 - Age transition
 - Unmet needs for intimacy.
 - Mid-life crisis.
 - Dealing with aging body.
 - IBM (I've Been Moved) Transition.
 - Wife entering or re-entering the job market.
- 2) Stop _____ your marriage with others.
- 3) Continually work on _____. Studies show wives who become involved in extramarital affairs, do so mainly for someone to talk to.

"When a girl marries, she gives up the attention of many for the attention of me."

"Partners cheat because of emotional immaturity, unresolved conflict in the marriage and unmet needs in the marriage."

"People who are not looking for affairs and not sending off messages, are not hustled. It's as simple as that."

Jean Rose

4) Choose your _____ carefully. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, "Bad company corrupts good character." It's very well documented that most affairs occur between family members, close personal friends or co-workers. If your close friends do not have a strong commitment to their marriage, they should not be your best friends.

5) "Don't think "this could never happen to me."

6) Look beyond the temptation to the _____.
(See quoted source material below)

7) Start your own affair at _____. Provide at home what an affair offers and reduce the odds of having one outside your marriage.

How to Have an Affair With Your Spouse

- a) value your _____
- b) add _____ to your marriage
- c) _____ a lot
- d) do the _____
- e) give _____ to your mate
- f) share _____
- g) be _____
- h) take _____ from responsibilities
- _____
- h) take _____ from responsibilities

Dr. Maxwell refers to the following source material in the process of going through # 6). The following is quoted by Nicki Whirter of Knight-Ridder News Service.

"Married people seek out or succumb to affairs when they feel devalued and less than fully alive. They are bored. Overburdened. It amounts to being very lonely and it can happen in a household full of kids and babbling spouse in which there is a backbreaking schedule of "fun" things to do.

"People who have affairs have the child's deep longing to be touched, caressed, held, hugged, and kissed, whether they can admit or not. They want happy surprises. That might mean a sentimental, unexpected gift every once in a while. More important, it is the dependable gift of time and caring, the present of shared ideas, experiences, stories, nonsense, and games including sexual games. They want the world to butt out."

"They want a loving friend, a pal who isn't judgmental. They want someone to convince them they're still loved, lovable, and very special. For a little while, now and then, they want out from under the grown-up responsibilities that have become predictable, dreary and difficult."

- 8. _____ conflict.
- 9. _____ conflict.
- 10. _____ to things outside of the marriage.

"Home - a domestic clover leaf on which we pass one another en route to meetings."

I have Arrived

"I have not seen the plays in town
only the computer printouts
I have not read the latest books
only the Wall Street Journal
I have not heard birds sing this year
only the ringing of phones
I have not taken a walk anywhere
but from the parking lot to my office
I have not shared a feeling in years
but my thoughts are known to all
I have not listened to my own needs
but what I want I get
I have not shared a tear in ages
I have arrived.
Is this where I was going?"
Natasha Tosefowitz

Student Worksheet #3

Exercise #1: Busting the Marriage Killers

Part A: Let's review the top ten marriage killers:

Marriage Killers 1-5	Marriage Killers 6-10
Immaturity	Inattention
Bad Family Backgrounds	Affairs
Unrealistic Expectations	Constant Conflict
Inability to Enjoy Life	Financial Conflict
Pettiness	Over Commitment

In a small group of 3-4 couples, brainstorm on possible steps to take if a hypothetical couple you know faced this particular problem. When brainstorming, all ideas are acceptable and none should be judged for their merit. An idea should be shared in short sentences, not a lengthy description. Last, do not share from a personal perspective, but a neutral one. For example, "Well, when we have a conflict over the checkbook, we..." Instead, share, "Checkbook conflicts could be solved by agreeing..."

Go through brainstorming solutions for each marriage killer. This brainstorming should help you realize that many steps can be taken to start solving a certain problem in your marriage. No problem is so big or so difficult that you are unable to change with the Lord's help.

Part B: Identifying a problem is half the work to slowly solving it. The first step to identifying a problem is sometimes the most difficult because you both need to agree on what exactly is the problem. Agreeing is difficult if one spouse criticizes and lays blame on the other partner, or one spouse denies that the problem exists. Spend time together as a couple and pray that the Lord would help to identify problems in your marriage and give you strength and wisdom to change in your marriage. After praying, choose two killers from the list that might bring slow death to your relationship. Share with each other without blame or criticism what each of you see as a problem you both need to face. For example, "Ann, I feel that our family's overcommitted schedule is slowly killing our marriage because we have so little time together and so little energy to spend on each other." Find one problem you both agree on and want to solve or change. Now, having brainstormed in the last activity, suggest steps that can slowly change the situation. Not only come up with solutions, but also plan a time to begin solving these problems. For example: Solution - take a sabbatical from the next sports season for all the children: starting time - April/May. Solution - set aside Thursday evenings as candlelight talking - no TV, no work, no phone calls: starting time - after the big project at work is completed. Encourage one another that steps are small and change takes time.

Making the Most of Your Marriage

Session #3– Answer Key

Dumb; Dissolution; Distorted; Dismantling

1. Immaturity

A. Selfishness

1. Givers
2. Takers

B. Pride

2. A bad family background

1. Control
2. Perfection
3. Blame
4. Denial
5. Incompletion
6. Unreliability

3. Unrealistic expectations

4. Inability to enjoy life

5. Pettiness

6. Inattention

1. affection
2. common interests
3. people
4. listening
5. spouse

7. Affairs

1. A drifting marriage
2. Excuses to be continually with someone else
3. Preoccupied thoughts about another person
4. Put self in compromising positions
5. Body Language

1. prime times
2. comparing
3. communication
4. friends
6. consequences
7. home

- a. mate
- b. spice
- c. Touch
- d. unexpected
- e. time
- f. experiences
- g. best friends
- h. vacations

8. Constant

9. Financial

10. Over commitment