

Marriage in Today's World – 43:30
Outline Only - Common Protestant Outline

I. Introduction and optional opening prayer (LW: 0:30)

II. The world's plan for our marriage (Total time: 6:30)

- A. Personal expectations of marriage, including influences from family and friends (LH & LW and CL & CS: 1:00 each)**
- B. General expectations of marriage, including influences from society and media (LH or LW: 1:00)**
- C. Exercise on expectations (CL or CS: 1:30)**

III. Stages of relationship (Total time: 11:00)

- A. Romance (First stage)**
 - 1. Definition of Romance (LH or LW: 0:30)**
 - 2. Sharing on the state of romance (LH & LW and CL & CS: 1:00 each)**
 - 3. Exercise: What attracted me to you?**
(CL or CS: 2 min – time includes introduction, writing time, and sharing of answers)
- B. Disappointments**
 - 1. Sharing of disappointments over unmet expectations (LH & LW and CL & CS: 0:45 each)**
 - 2. Unmet expectations and disappointments lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors (LH or LW: 1:30)**
 - a. Definition of attitudes**
 - b. Sharing of attitudes and behaviors resulting from unmet expectations**

IV. The consequences (Total time: 8:00)

- A. Married singles attitudes and behaviors (Other lay spouse and CL or CS: 0:45 each)**
- B. Disillusionment (Second stage)**
 - 1. Explain the downward spiral and define the stage of disillusionment (CL or CS: 0:30)**
 - 2. Share personal examples of the deep loneliness in disillusionment (LH & LW and CL & CS: 1:30 each)**

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V. To love is a decision (Total time: 11:30)

- A. Explain “to love is a decision”** (LH or LW: 1:30)
- B. Share how you strive to break out of the spiral**
 - 1. By making daily decisions to love and be loved** (LH & LW: 3:00)
 - a. Making the decision to love**
 - b. Making the decision to be loved**
 - 2. By confronting for the sake of your relationship**
(CL or CS: 2:30 includes 1:00 for exercise)
- C. The result of making the decision to love is reaching the stage of joy (Third stage)** (4:30)
 - 1. Definition of the stage of joy** (CL or CS: 0:30)
 - 2. Sharing the stage of joy** (CL or CS and LH or LW: 1:00 each)
 - 3. How romance, disillusionment, and joy cycle through the call to ministry** (CL: 2:00)

VI. Preparation for dialogue (Total time: 6:00; LH & LW: A-C – 4:00; CL or CS: D – 2:00)

- A. Ask them to write a love letter instead of a reflection**
- B. What we mean by love letter**
- C. Briefly review the dialogue process**
- D. Set up dialogue**

Worksheets for dialogue (as in Workbook): Symptoms of Disillusionment

Writing time: 20 minutes

Dialogue time: 20 minutes

Husbands stay in the conference room to write (recommended).