



Covenant40

The 40 day workbook

A free Christian marriage resource

Scripture, honest conversation, deliberate action, and prayer. Read the passages in your Bible. Reflect privately, then discuss the questions together. Use the space after each lesson for your own notes.

covenant40.com

Remember the Covenant

Read Scripture

Genesis 2:18–25

Matthew 19:4–6

Consider

Christian marriage is a covenant before God, not a contract that lasts only while both people feel satisfied.

Begin by remembering what you promised and what God designed marriage to be: a faithful union in which husband and wife belong to one another and build a life together.

Reflect privately · Husband

Where have I put my comfort ahead of sacrificial love for my wife?

What promise can I honor through one concrete act of service today?

Reflect privately · Wife

Where can I practice honest respect and partnership toward my husband today?

What promise can I honor through one concrete act of service today?

Discuss together

Why did we choose each other?

What did we believe we were promising when we married?

Where have we begun treating marriage transactionally?

What is still genuinely good between us?

Put it into practice

Each spouse names one thing about the marriage they are thankful for.

Pray together

Thank God specifically for your spouse and ask Him to make you faithful to the covenant you made.

Reflection and conversation notes

What Kind of Spouse Am I Becoming?

Read Scripture

Matthew 7:3–5

Psalm 139:23–24

Consider

Today is deliberately one-sided: do not diagnose your spouse. Turn the mirror toward yourself.

Christian growth begins with honest self-examination, repentance, and a willingness to change before demanding change from someone else.

Discuss together

Where have I grown selfish?

Where have I become lazy, bitter, passive, or harsh?

Where have I stopped pursuing my spouse?

What would my spouse probably say is hardest about being married to me?

Put it into practice

Write down one personal change you know you need to make and tell your spouse what you are taking responsibility for.

Pray together

Ask God to expose your own sin clearly and give you courage to change it.

Reflection and conversation notes

Christlike Headship

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:25–33

Consider

Biblical headship is modeled after Christ. It is responsibility, sacrifice, service, courage, and love—not domination.

A husband's leadership should make his wife more secure and cherished, not smaller or afraid.

Reflect privately · Husband

Where am I passive when I should lead?

Where am I protecting my comfort instead of carrying responsibility?

Does my wife experience my leadership as security or pressure?

Reflect privately · Wife

Where do I feel supported by my husband's leadership?

Where do I need greater clarity, initiative, or sacrificial support from him?

Discuss together

What does sacrificial leadership look like in our actual household?

Where does leadership become confused with control or preference?

What responsibilities need clearer ownership?

Put it into practice

The husband intentionally removes one real burden from his wife's shoulders today without seeking praise for it.

Pray together

Ask Christ to teach the husband to lead by serving and laying down selfishness.

Reflection and conversation notes

Biblical Respect

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:22–24, 33

1 Peter 3:1–6

Consider

Biblical respect does not require pretending a husband is always right or remaining silent about sin. It does reject contempt, humiliation, manipulation, and treating marriage as an adversarial contest.

Reflect privately · Husband

Do I behave in ways that make respect unnecessarily difficult?

Do I receive correction humbly or punish disagreement?

Reflect privately · Wife

Where has frustration become contempt?

Does my husband know that I value and respect him?

How can I disagree without belittling him?

Discuss together

What does respectful disagreement look like for us?

Where has contempt or defensiveness entered our communication?

How can respect and honest correction exist together?

Put it into practice

The wife intentionally communicates one specific thing she respects or appreciates about her husband.

Pray together

Ask God to remove contempt and build a marriage marked by honor, humility, and truth.

Reflection and conversation notes

Speak Truth Without Wounding

Read Scripture

Ephesians 4:25–32

Proverbs 15:1

Consider

Conflict is not automatically a sign of a bad marriage. Sinful conflict is destructive.

Truth should be spoken plainly, but the goal is understanding and reconciliation—not winning, humiliating, or punishing.

Discuss together

Which conflict habits hurt us most: sarcasm, shouting, shutdown, contempt, old grievances, or something else?

What helps each of us stay engaged without escalating?

Practice: 'When ____ happens, I feel ____, and I need ____.'

Put it into practice

Discuss one minor disagreement using the new format. Stay on that one issue only.

Pray together

Ask God to govern your tongue and make your words truthful, restrained, and useful.

Reflection and conversation notes

Learn to Listen

Read Scripture

James 1:19–20

Proverbs 18:13

Consider

Listening is not waiting for your turn to rebut. Understanding your spouse does not require agreeing with every conclusion.

A spouse who feels accurately heard is far more able to work toward a solution.

Discuss together

One spouse speaks for five minutes while the other asks only clarifying questions.

The listener summarizes: 'What I hear you saying is...'

Switch roles.

What did you understand today that you had previously missed?

Put it into practice

Use reflective listening once during a real conversation today before offering advice or defense.

Pray together

Ask God for patience, humility, and the discipline to hear before speaking.

Reflection and conversation notes

Repentance

Read Scripture

Proverbs 28:13

1 John 1:8–10

Consider

A Christian apology names the wrong instead of hiding behind vague language.

Real repentance says: I did this. It was wrong. I understand how it affected you. I have no excuse. Will you forgive me? Then it pursues actual change.

Discuss together

Where have I apologized without really taking responsibility?

What makes it difficult for me to admit wrong quickly?

Put it into practice

Each spouse makes one specific confession. No 'but you' sentence is allowed afterward.

Pray together

Confess your sins to God and ask for a soft heart toward correction.

Reflection and conversation notes

Forgiveness

Read Scripture

Colossians 3:12–14

Matthew 18:21–22

Consider

Forgiveness does not mean pretending nothing happened, eliminating every consequence, or instantly rebuilding damaged trust.

It does mean refusing vengeance and refusing to keep a genuinely repented-of offense loaded as ammunition for the next fight.

Discuss together

What am I still holding over my spouse?

Have I said 'I forgive you' while repeatedly weaponizing the same offense?

Is there an issue where forgiveness and rebuilding trust need to be distinguished?

Put it into practice

Identify one resentment that needs to be released, or one trust issue that needs a clear rebuilding plan.

Pray together

Ask God to make you both truthful about harm and generous in forgiveness.

Reflection and conversation notes

Friendship

Read Scripture

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Song of Solomon 2:10–13

Consider

A marriage cannot thrive forever as a household management company.

Husband and wife should still enjoy one another, laugh together, and maintain a friendship that exists apart from chores, bills, and children.

Discuss together

What did we enjoy when we were dating?

When have we laughed together most?

When do you feel closest to me?

What have we stopped doing that we should bring back?

Put it into practice

Spend at least 20 uninterrupted minutes together doing something enjoyable. No household administration.

Pray together

Thank God for companionship and ask Him to restore warmth and delight in your friendship.

Reflection and conversation notes

The State of Our Marriage

Read Scripture

Lamentations 3:40

Philippians 1:9–11

Consider

Healthy marriages periodically tell the truth about where they are instead of waiting for a crisis.

The purpose of a marriage review is direction, not accusation.

Discuss together

Rate spiritual unity, communication, friendship, affection, sexual intimacy, trust, parenting teamwork, household teamwork, finances, fun, respect, and feeling loved from 1–10.

Where are our ratings most different?

Which two areas would make the biggest difference if they improved?

Put it into practice

Choose two priority areas for the next 30 days. Write them down without turning them into demands on your spouse.

Pray together

Ask God for wisdom to see the marriage accurately and hope to work on what needs attention.

Reflection and conversation notes

Know Your Spouse Again

Read Scripture

Philippians 2:3–4

Consider

People change over years. Loving your spouse well requires continuing to learn who they are now, not assuming you already know everything.

Discuss together

What are you currently stressed about?

What are you excited about?

What are you afraid of?

What are you looking forward to?

What do you wish I asked you about more often?

Put it into practice

Learn one thing about your spouse today that you did not know yesterday.

Pray together

Ask God to make you attentive to your spouse's inner life.

Reflection and conversation notes

Appreciation

Read Scripture

Proverbs 16:24

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Consider

Familiarity can make faithful service invisible. Gratitude brings ordinary acts back into view.

Discuss together

What does my spouse do routinely that I rarely acknowledge?

When do I feel most appreciated by you?

What kind of appreciation feels sincere rather than performative?

Put it into practice

Name five things you appreciate about your spouse. Say at least one aloud and send or write another during the day.

Pray together

Thank God for specific qualities and acts of service in your spouse.

Reflection and conversation notes

Physical Affection

Read Scripture

Song of Solomon 1:2

Song of Solomon 2:6

Consider

Physical intimacy is broader than intercourse. Marriage needs ordinary warmth: hugs, kisses, closeness, touch, and affection that does not always carry an agenda.

Discuss together

Do we show enough casual affection?

What kind of physical affection helps you feel connected?

Does affection ever feel absent, transactional, or automatically sexualized?

Put it into practice

Intentionally increase non-sexual affection today in ways your spouse welcomes.

Pray together

Ask God to restore tenderness and warmth between you.

Reflection and conversation notes

Date Your Spouse

Read Scripture

Proverbs 5:18

Consider

Marriage should not receive less intentional pursuit than dating did. Romance does not require expensive plans; it does require attention.

Discuss together

What makes time together feel like a date instead of another errand?

What simple date would you genuinely enjoy?

What usually keeps us from making time for this?

Put it into practice

Have a simple date. Put the phones away and talk to each other.

Pray together

Thank God for the privilege of continuing to pursue the person you married.

Reflection and conversation notes

Sexual Intimacy: Honest Conversation

Read Scripture

1 Corinthians 7:2–5

Consider

Scripture treats marital sexuality as mutual, meaningful, and worthy of honest attention.

Neither coercion nor chronic neglect is a healthy model. The goal today is truthful conversation without punishment for the answers.

Discuss together

Are you satisfied with our sex life?

How often would you ideally have sex?

What helps you feel desired?

What makes intimacy difficult?

Do you ever feel pressured or rejected?

Is unresolved resentment affecting desire?

Put it into practice

Each spouse identifies one change they personally can make to improve sexual intimacy. The goal today is honesty, not forcing an outcome tonight.

Pray together

Ask God for tenderness, mutual generosity, honesty, and purity in your sexual relationship.

Reflection and conversation notes

Sexual Intimacy: Pursuit

Read Scripture

Proverbs 5:18–19

Song of Solomon 7

Consider

Marital sex should contain desire and pursuit, not merely obligation. Husbands and wives both benefit from knowing they are wanted.

Discuss together

What makes you feel attractive?

What communicates desire to you?

What tends to kill desire?

What would make romantic pursuit feel more natural between us?

Put it into practice

Intentionally pursue your spouse romantically today in a way that respects what they told you.

Pray together

Ask God to protect desire within the covenant and teach you to pursue one another generously.

Reflection and conversation notes

Emotional Availability

Read Scripture

Romans 12:15

Galatians 6:2

Consider

Sometimes your spouse needs a solution. Sometimes they need companionship inside the problem before any solution is offered.

Discuss together

When I bring you a problem, what do I usually want first?

Do you tend to fix, withdraw, minimize, or listen?

What helps you feel emotionally supported?

Put it into practice

Ask at least once today: 'Do you want advice, help, or just for me to listen?' Then honor the answer.

Pray together

Ask God to make you compassionate without becoming controlling or dismissive.

Reflection and conversation notes

Fun

Read Scripture

Ecclesiastes 3:4

Proverbs 17:22

Consider

Laughter is not frivolous. Shared joy creates memories and reminds a husband and wife that they are more than coworkers surviving a schedule.

Discuss together

What do we do that reliably makes us laugh?

What kind of fun have we neglected?

What is something low-effort we could do more often?

Put it into practice

Do something deliberately fun together today.

Pray together

Thank God for joy and ask Him to keep your home from becoming joyless or relentlessly serious.

Reflection and conversation notes

Phones, Screens, and Attention

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:15–16

Consider

Attention is one of the clearest ways we communicate value. Screens easily consume the small windows when marriages could reconnect.

Discuss together

Do our phones receive more focused attention than our spouse?

Do screens invade meals, conversations, or bedtime?

When do you most notice me half-listening?

Put it into practice

Establish one daily phone-free marriage window of at least 20 minutes.

Pray together

Ask God to help you use time deliberately and give your spouse undivided attention.

Reflection and conversation notes

Connection Review

Read Scripture

Philippians 1:3–6

Consider

Ten days of intentional connection should now give you evidence about what actually helps rather than what sounds good in theory.

Discuss together

What has made you feel closest to me during the last ten days?

What felt forced or ineffective?

What should we continue?

What should we change?

Finish: 'I feel most loved by you when...'

Put it into practice

Choose two connection practices worth keeping for the rest of the 40 days.

Pray together

Thank God for any progress and ask for perseverance where connection still feels difficult.

Reflection and conversation notes

Household Responsibilities

Read Scripture

Philippians 2:4

Galatians 6:5

Consider

Many arguments that feel emotional are actually systems problems: unclear ownership, invisible work, overload, or unmet expectations.

Discuss together

List the recurring responsibilities in our household.

Who owns each one?

Who carries the invisible planning?

Where is someone overloaded or under-contributing?

Put it into practice

Clarify ownership of at least one recurring responsibility and reassign one burden if needed.

Pray together

Ask God to make your household a place of service rather than scorekeeping.

Reflection and conversation notes

Money

Read Scripture

Proverbs 21:5

Luke 14:28

Consider

Money reveals priorities and creates pressure. Financial unity requires shared facts, shared goals, and the ability to talk without secrecy or contempt.

Discuss together

Review income, debt, spending, savings, giving, retirement, and upcoming expenses.

What are we trying to accomplish financially as a family?

Where do our priorities differ?

What financial issue creates the most stress?

Put it into practice

Choose one shared financial priority and one next action.

Pray together

Ask God for wisdom, contentment, generosity, discipline, and unity with money.

Reflection and conversation notes

Parenting as a Team

Read Scripture

Ephesians 6:1–4

Deuteronomy 6:6–9

Consider

Children benefit when husband and wife operate as a team instead of undermining one another or forcing children to navigate competing authorities.

Discuss together

Do we undermine each other in front of the children?

Can the children get different answers by asking a different parent?

Where are discipline standards inconsistent?

What are our biggest shared parenting goals?

Put it into practice

Agree on one parenting issue where you need greater unity and decide what both parents will do.

Pray together

Ask God for wisdom to raise your children faithfully and as a united team.

Reflection and conversation notes

Protect the Marriage From the Children

Read Scripture

Genesis 2:24

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Consider

Children are blessings, but they are not meant to become the entire marriage. Your parenting partnership is strengthened when the marriage itself is protected.

Discuss together

Has nearly all of our time become child-centered?

When do we regularly relate as husband and wife rather than only Mom and Dad?

What marriage time is realistic in this season?

Put it into practice

Establish one recurring block of husband-and-wife time that does not revolve around the children.

Pray together

Thank God for your children and ask Him to help you protect the marriage that anchors the household.

Reflection and conversation notes

Extended Family and Boundaries

Read Scripture

Genesis 2:24

Consider

Marriage creates a new primary human loyalty. Parents, siblings, friends, work, and outside voices should not govern the marriage from the sidelines.

Discuss together

Does anyone outside our marriage have too much influence over us?

Are there boundaries with family or friends that need clarification?

Do we protect one another publicly and address disagreements privately?

Put it into practice

Identify one boundary that would better protect your marriage and agree on how to communicate it.

Pray together

Ask God for wisdom to honor extended family while keeping the marriage covenant primary.

Reflection and conversation notes

Protecting Fidelity

Read Scripture

Matthew 5:27–30

Proverbs 5

Consider

The standard of marital fidelity is higher than 'technically, I did not cheat.' Faithfulness includes guarding the heart, attention, secrecy, and sexual boundaries.

Discuss together

What boundaries do we need around pornography, social media, flirting, private messaging, former partners, or emotional intimacy with others?

Is there any secrecy that would damage trust if discovered?

What does proactive covenant protection look like for us?

Put it into practice

Agree on one concrete boundary that protects fidelity and transparency.

Pray together

Ask God to guard your hearts, eyes, communication, and sexual faithfulness.

Reflection and conversation notes

Work and Ambition

Read Scripture

Colossians 3:23

Psalms 127:2

Consider

Work is good and responsibility matters. But work can consume the best of a person while the family receives only exhaustion and leftovers.

Discuss together

Does work regularly get my best energy while home gets what remains?

Which sacrifices are temporary and which have simply become normal?

What work boundary would make our home healthier without ignoring real responsibilities?

Put it into practice

Establish one realistic boundary around work, availability, or recovery time.

Pray together

Ask God to make you diligent at work without allowing work to become your master.

Reflection and conversation notes

Rest

Read Scripture

Mark 6:31

Psalms 127:2

Consider

Exhausted people often become impatient spouses. Rest is not laziness when it restores a person to serve faithfully.

Discuss together

Are we sleeping enough?

Does either spouse receive far more leisure than the other?

What kind of rest actually restores each of us?

What can we stop doing?

Put it into practice

Help one another receive a meaningful period of genuine rest this week.

Pray together

Ask God for humility to respect human limits and wisdom to order your time.

Reflection and conversation notes

Health and Stewardship

Read Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

1 Timothy 4:8

Consider

Your body affects your marriage through energy, health, mobility, mood, attraction, and longevity. Stewardship is not perfection or control of your spouse.

Discuss together

Am I taking reasonable responsibility for the body and life God has given me?

What health habit would genuinely improve our household?

How can we support rather than police each other?

Put it into practice

Choose one sustainable health practice each spouse can own personally and one way to support each other.

Pray together

Ask God for discipline without vanity and care for one another without control.

Reflection and conversation notes

Household Review

Read Scripture

1 Corinthians 14:40

Proverbs 24:3–4

Consider

Repeated arguments often need a system, not another emotional conversation. Clear routines remove avoidable friction.

Discuss together

Where are we functioning well?

What produces repeated friction?

What responsibility remains unclear?

Where does one spouse feel unsupported?

What simple system could solve a recurring problem?

Put it into practice

Implement one system: shared calendar, budget review, assigned chore, meal plan, bedtime routine, or another recurring process.

Pray together

Ask God for practical wisdom to build an orderly, peaceful home.

Reflection and conversation notes

Spiritual Leadership

Read Scripture

Joshua 24:15

Ephesians 5:25–27

Consider

A husband should not outsource the spiritual direction of his household entirely to his wife or church. Spiritual leadership can be simple and consistent rather than impressive.

Reflect privately · Husband

Do I initiate prayer, Scripture, worship, and spiritual conversations?

Where have I been passive because I felt unqualified or busy?

Reflect privately · Wife

What kind of spiritual initiative from my husband would genuinely help me?

How can I encourage rather than manage his leadership?

Discuss together

What would a sustainable spiritual rhythm look like in our home?

Where have we made spiritual life too complicated or too sporadic?

Put it into practice

The husband initiates Scripture and prayer tonight. Keep it simple enough to repeat.

Pray together

Ask God to make the husband a humble spiritual servant and the home increasingly centered on Christ.

Reflection and conversation notes

Pray for Your Spouse

Read Scripture

Philippians 1:3–6

James 5:16

Consider

Prayer changes the posture of marriage. It is difficult to continually reduce your spouse to a complaint while sincerely bringing their burdens before God.

Discuss together

What are you struggling with right now?

What do you want me praying for this week?

Is there anything you have been carrying alone?

Put it into practice

Pray aloud specifically for one another by name and by request.

Pray together

Use your spouse's actual requests rather than a generic prayer today.

Reflection and conversation notes

Worship Together

Read Scripture

Hebrews 10:24–25

Acts 2:42

Consider

A Christian household should not treat church as a religious add-on. Worship, teaching, fellowship, and service help place marriage inside a larger covenant community.

Discuss together

Are we participating faithfully in church life?

Are we being spiritually fed?

Are we serving or only consuming?

What would deeper Christian community look like for our household?

Put it into practice

Identify one realistic way your family can become more intentional about worship, fellowship, or service.

Pray together

Ask God to root your marriage in a faithful local church and Christian community.

Reflection and conversation notes

Shared Mission

Read Scripture

Matthew 6:33

Ephesians 2:10

Consider

A marriage becomes stronger when husband and wife are building something larger than personal comfort. God entrusts homes with people, resources, opportunities, and work to steward.

Discuss together

What do we believe God has entrusted to our family?

Where can our marriage serve others?

What kind of home do we want to create for our children and community?

Put it into practice

Write a one- or two-sentence family mission statement.

Pray together

Ask God to use your marriage for His kingdom rather than merely for your own comfort.

Reflection and conversation notes

Respect and Admiration

Read Scripture

Romans 12:10

Philippians 4:8

Consider

Long familiarity can make strengths ordinary and failures vivid. Healthy spouses deliberately remember what is admirable in one another.

Discuss together

What do you admire about me?

Which character qualities do you hope never change?

Where have you seen me grow?

Put it into practice

Tell your spouse something you genuinely admire about their character, work, parenting, faith, courage, patience, competence, or generosity.

Pray together

Thank God for specific strengths in your spouse and ask Him to continue forming their character.

Reflection and conversation notes

Romance

Read Scripture

Song of Solomon 2:10–13

Proverbs 5:18

Consider

Routine is unavoidable; neglect is not. Romance is the repeated decision to communicate, 'I still choose you and enjoy pursuing you.'

Discuss together

What makes you feel pursued?

What would make our marriage feel less routine?

What would you enjoy doing together this month?

Put it into practice

Plan your next date before going to bed. Put it on the calendar.

Pray together

Ask God to keep affection and delight alive as your marriage matures.

Reflection and conversation notes

Our Conflict Plan

Read Scripture

Ephesians 4:26–32

James 1:19–20

Consider

You will disagree again. The goal is not to imagine a conflict-free marriage but to decide in advance how you will behave when conflict comes.

Discuss together

Which rules would protect us when emotions are high?

When is a short break helpful and when does it become avoidance?

When should we seek pastoral or professional help?

Put it into practice

Write your conflict rules. Include no insults, no divorce threats, no text-war when a conversation is possible, return to unresolved issues, and seek outside help if stuck.

Pray together

Ask God to make future conflict an occasion for truth and growth rather than destruction.

Reflection and conversation notes

Marriage Rhythms

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:15–16

Hebrews 10:24

Consider

Habits protect good intentions. Day 41 should not mean returning to autopilot.

Discuss together

Which daily practices are worth keeping?

What should happen weekly?

What should happen monthly?

How often should we intentionally review the health of our marriage?

Put it into practice

Choose your post-course rhythm: daily affection/check-in/prayer; weekly marriage conversation; monthly date and money/calendar review; quarterly marriage review.

Pray together

Ask God for consistency in small faithful habits.

Reflection and conversation notes

Five-Year Vision

Read Scripture

Proverbs 16:3

Philippians 3:12–14

Consider

A marriage drifts when husband and wife never decide what they are trying to build. Vision turns today's habits into tomorrow's household.

Discuss together

What do we want our faith to look like in five years?

What kind of parents and friends do we want to be?

What do we want our sex life, finances, health, and home to look like?

What memories do we want to create?

What do we want our children to remember about our marriage?

Put it into practice

Choose three things you must start doing now for that five-year marriage to exist.

Pray together

Commit your plans to God and ask Him to correct your ambitions where needed.

Reflection and conversation notes

Renew the Covenant

Read Scripture

Ephesians 5:1–2, 21–33

Colossians 3:12–17

Consider

The goal was never to finish an app. The goal was to establish a way of living together marked by covenant faithfulness, repentance, affection, truth, and prayer.

Look back honestly, celebrate real growth, and decide what you will carry forward.

Discuss together

What did I learn about myself?

What did I learn about you?

What do I still need to change?

What do I appreciate more about you?

What do I want our marriage to become?

Put it into practice

Read your commitments aloud: pursue Christ before demanding change; protect the covenant; speak truth without contempt; repent; forgive; preserve friendship, affection and intimacy; build the household together; pray; remain teachable; choose each other intentionally.

Pray together

Thank God for what He has done, confess where you still fall short, and ask Him to make your home increasingly marked by faith, peace, affection, truth, laughter, repentance, hospitality, fidelity, and love.

Reflection and conversation notes
