

UNION



**PREMARITAL
COUNSELING
2026**

PREPARING TWO
HEARTS FOR A
COVENANT THAT
LASTS

A GUIDE TO BUILDING A STRONG AND LASTING MARRIAGE

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THIS WORKBOOK UTILIZES A FOUR TEMPERAMENTS PERSONALITY FRAMEWORK INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF FLORENCE LITTAUER (PERSONALITY PLUS). THESE CONCEPTS ARE ADAPTED AND PRESENTED WITHIN A BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP AND PASTORAL COUNSELING CONTEXT.

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FOREWARD



MARRIAGE IS TOO IMPORTANT TO SIMPLY HOPE WE'RE READY FOR IT. TWO BECOMING ONE GIVES COUPLES AN OPPORTUNITY TO SLOW DOWN, HAVE HONEST CONVERSATIONS, AND PREPARE FOR MORE THAN JUST A WEDDING DAY. IT HELPS COUPLES THINK THROUGH THE REAL STUFF OF MARRIAGE: COMMUNICATION, EXPECTATIONS, CONFLICT, FAITH, FINANCES, FAMILY, AND THE EVERYDAY CHOICES THAT SHAPE A LIFE TOGETHER. THE WEDDING IS A MOMENT. MARRIAGE IS A LIFETIME. IF YOU'RE PREPARING TO SAY "I DO," DON'T JUST PREPARE FOR THE DAY, PREPARE FOR THE LIFE YOU'RE ABOUT TO BUILD TOGETHER.

WHAT I LOVE MOST IS THAT THIS RESOURCE REMINDS US THAT MARRIAGE ISN'T ABOUT FINDING A PERFECT PERSON OR BUILDING A PERFECT LIFE. IT'S ABOUT TWO IMPERFECT PEOPLE CHOOSING COVENANT, CHOOSING EACH OTHER, AND CHOOSING TO KEEP GROWING WITH JESUS AT THE CENTER. WHAT I ALSO LOVE ABOUT THIS RESOURCE IS HOW MUCH THOUGHT AND INTENTIONALITY HAS GONE INTO IT. IT'S ONE OF A KIND AND STRUCTURED TO TAKE COUPLES DOWN A PATH OF TRUE DISCOVERY AND PREPARATION. I WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECOMMEND TWO BECOMING ONE TO COUPLES WHO WANT TO ENTER MARRIAGE WITH INTENTION, HONESTY, AND A FOUNDATION THAT CAN TRULY LAST.

PS CHRIS & AUDREY CARMONA

PREFACE

MARRIAGE IS ONE OF GOD'S MOST SACRED INSTITUTIONS, A COVENANT DESIGNED TO REFLECT HIS FAITHFULNESS, LOVE, AND COMMITMENT. YET IN TODAY'S CULTURE, MANY COUPLES ENTER MARRIAGE WITH GREAT HOPE BUT LITTLE PREPARATION. WHILE SIGNIFICANT TIME AND ENERGY ARE INVESTED IN PLANNING A WEDDING, FAR LESS ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO PREPARING FOR THE LIFELONG JOURNEY THAT FOLLOWS.



MY WIFE AND I HAVE DEDICATED OURSELVES TO WALKING ALONGSIDE COUPLES AS THEY PREPARE FOR MARRIAGE. THROUGH YEARS OF PASTORAL MINISTRY, COUNSELING, AND MENTORING, WE HAVE WITNESSED BOTH THE BEAUTY OF STRONG, CHRIST-CENTERED MARRIAGES AND THE PAIN THAT RESULTS WHEN COUPLES BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY WITHOUT A SOLID FOUNDATION. MANY OF THE CHALLENGES COUPLES FACE ARE NOT THE RESULT OF A LACK OF LOVE, BUT A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING—UNDERSTANDING GOD'S DESIGN, HEALTHY COMMUNICATION, EMOTIONAL MATURITY, AND SPIRITUAL UNITY.

TWO BECOMING ONE WAS CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THIS NEED. THIS WORKBOOK IS MORE THAN A COLLECTION OF LESSONS; IT IS A GUIDED JOURNEY DESIGNED TO HELP COUPLES EXAMINE THEIR HEARTS, EXPECTATIONS, AND READINESS FOR COVENANT MARRIAGE. IT INTENTIONALLY ADDRESSES THE SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, RELATIONAL, AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MARRIED LIFE THROUGH A BIBLICAL LENS, ENCOURAGING COUPLES TO BUILD THEIR RELATIONSHIP ON TRUTH RATHER THAN CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS.

OUR GOAL IS NOT SIMPLY TO HELP COUPLES SUCCEED IN MARRIAGE, BUT TO HELP THEM THRIVE IN A MARRIAGE THAT HONORS GOD. THIS WORKBOOK EMPHASIZES COVENANT OVER CONVENIENCE, COMMITMENT OVER EMOTION, AND FORMATION OVER INFORMATION. IT INVITES COUPLES TO SLOW DOWN, REFLECT HONESTLY, AND ENGAGE DEEPLY WITH BOTH SCRIPTURE AND ONE ANOTHER. WHETHER YOU ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS WORKBOOK THROUGH A CHURCH PREMARITAL CLASS, ONE-ON-ONE PASTORAL COUNSELING, OR MENTORING RELATIONSHIP, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO APPROACH EACH CHAPTER WITH HUMILITY, OPENNESS, AND PRAYER. THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAVE NOW WILL SHAPE THE MARRIAGE YOU EXPERIENCE LATER.

MARRIAGE IS NOT A DESTINATION, IT IS A LIFELONG PROCESS OF BECOMING ONE. WHEN CHRIST REMAINS AT THE CENTER, AND WHEN COUPLES COMMIT TO GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE, MARRIAGE BECOMES A POWERFUL TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GRACE.

MAY THIS WORKBOOK SERVE AS A TOOL GOD USES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP, DEEPEN YOUR FAITH, AND PREPARE YOU FOR A LIFETIME OF COVENANT FAITHFULNESS.

DR. ANGEL M. COLLAZO

WHY THIS WORKBOOK MATTERS

WE ARE LIVING IN A GENERATION WITNESSING THE STEADY UNRAVELING OF ONE OF GOD'S MOST SACRED INSTITUTIONS. MARRIAGE, DESIGNED BY GOD TO BE A COVENANT OF UNITY, PERMANENCE, AND LIFE-GIVING LOVE, HAS BEEN DELAYED, REDEFINED, AND IN MANY CASES DISMISSED ALTOGETHER. IN THE UNITED STATES, MARRIAGE RATES HAVE FALLEN TO HISTORIC LOWS, LEAVING A GENERATION UNCERTAIN WHETHER LIFELONG COMMITMENT IS EVEN POSSIBLE. WHAT WAS ONCE ASSUMED IS NOW QUESTIONED; WHAT WAS ONCE PREPARED FOR IS NOW OFTEN ENTERED CASUALLY OR AVOIDED ENTIRELY.¹

IN 1970, APPROXIMATELY 76% OF U.S. ADULTS WERE MARRIED. TODAY, THAT NUMBER HAS FALLEN TO LESS THAN 47%, REPRESENTING A DECLINE OF MORE THAN 50% OVER THE LAST FIVE DECADES. YOUNG ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 34 HAVE EXPERIENCED THE SHARPEST DROP IN MARRIAGE PARTICIPATION.² THESE TRENDS ARE NOT LIMITED TO SECULAR CULTURE. AMONG SELF-IDENTIFIED CHRISTIANS, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE PATTERNS OFTEN MIRROR THOSE OF THE BROADER POPULATION, REVEALING THAT FAITH AFFILIATION ALONE DOES NOT GUARANTEE MARITAL STABILITY.³

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT DIVORCE RATES AMONG CHRISTIANS ARE COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF NON-CHRISTIANS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THOSE WHO IDENTIFY CULTURALLY RATHER THAN THROUGH ACTIVE CHURCH INVOLVEMENT.³ HOWEVER, STUDIES ALSO SHOW A MEANINGFUL DISTINCTION: CHRISTIANS WHO REGULARLY ATTEND CHURCH, ENGAGE IN SHARED SPIRITUAL PRACTICES, AND PARTICIPATE IN PREMARITAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER DIVORCE RATES AND HIGHER MARITAL SATISFACTION.⁴⁻⁵ THIS CONTRAST EXPOSES A CRITICAL TRUTH—BELIEF WITHOUT FORMATION, AND FAITH WITHOUT PREPARATION, LEAVES COUPLES VULNERABLE.

THIS DECLINE IS NOT ONLY STATISTICAL; IT IS SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND GENERATIONAL. AS MARRIAGE FADES, SO DOES A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SACRIFICE, PERMANENCE, AND COVENANT RESPONSIBILITY—EVEN WITHIN THE CHURCH. TOO MANY CHRISTIAN COUPLES ENTER MARRIAGE WITH BIBLICAL LANGUAGE BUT WITHOUT BIBLICAL FORMATION. THIS WORKBOOK EXISTS AS A PROPHETIC INTERVENTION—CALLING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BELIEVERS TO SLOW DOWN, COUNT THE COST, AND REBUILD MARRIAGE ON GOD'S DESIGN. IF MARRIAGE IS TO BE RESTORED IN THE CHURCH AND BEYOND, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT, BUT THROUGH INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP, SPIRITUAL MATURITY, AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO COVENANT.

FOOTNOTES

1. PEW RESEARCH CENTER, THE STATE OF AMERICAN MARRIAGE: LONG-TERM TRENDS IN MARRIAGE, COHABITATION, AND DELAYED COMMITMENT AMONG U.S. ADULTS.
2. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICA'S FAMILIES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS: HISTORICAL AND CURRENT MARRIAGE PARTICIPATION DATA BY AGE GROUP.
3. BARNAS GROUP, CHRISTIANS AND DIVORCE IN AMERICA: FINDINGS ON DIVORCE RATES AMONG SELF-IDENTIFIED CHRISTIANS COMPARED TO THE GENERAL POPULATION.
4. INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY STUDIES, RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND MARITAL STABILITY: CORRELATION BETWEEN CHURCH ATTENDANCE, SHARED FAITH PRACTICES, AND REDUCED DIVORCE RISK.
5. UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, PREP RESEARCH: EVIDENCE THAT PREMARITAL EDUCATION AND FAITH-BASED PREPARATION SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE LONG-TERM MARITAL OUTCOMES.

THE MISSING LINK IN MARRIAGE PREPARATION

1. LACK OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING: RESEARCH SHOWS STRUCTURED PREMARITAL COUNSELING CAN REDUCE DIVORCE RISK BY UP TO 30%. MANY COUPLES MARRY WITHOUT ADDRESSING COMMUNICATION, FINANCES, FAMILY PLANNING, OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION BEFOREHAND.
2. UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS & MINIMAL TEACHING: CHURCHES OFTEN EMPHASIZE THE WEDDING DAY BUT UNDERPREPARE COUPLES FOR THE MARRIAGE JOURNEY. TOPICS LIKE FORGIVENESS, HEALTHY INTIMACY, AND HANDLING DIFFERENCES ARE RARELY TAUGHT IN DEPTH.
3. CULTURAL PRESSURES & INDIVIDUALISM: SOCIETY PROMOTES SELF-CENTEREDNESS, INSTANT GRATIFICATION, AND DIVORCE AS A QUICK SOLUTION WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE.
4. LACK OF ONGOING MARRIAGE SUPPORT: MANY CHURCHES LACK MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT CLASSES, MENTORING COUPLES, OR SMALL GROUP SUPPORT FOR MARRIED COUPLES, LEAVING COUPLES ISOLATED WHEN CHALLENGES COME.

THE ROLE OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING IN REDUCING DIVORCE

STUDIES FROM THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE PROJECT CONFIRM THAT COUPLES WHO UNDERGO FAITH-BASED PREMARITAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE:

- HIGHER MARITAL SATISFACTION
- LOWER CONFLICT RATES
- STRONGER SPIRITUAL CONNECTION
- INCREASED LONGEVITY IN MARRIAGE

WHEN COUNSELING COMBINES BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES WITH PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS, SUCH AS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, MARRIAGE SUCCESS RATES INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY.

“THEREFORE,
WHAT GOD HAS
JOINED
TOGETHER, LET
NO ONE
SEPARATE.”

MARK
10:9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

about the author

DR. ANGEL M. COLLAZO IS A PASTOR, BIBLE TEACHER, MARRIAGE COACH, AND AUTHOR WITH DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN DISCIPLESHIP, SPIRITUAL FORMATION, AND PASTORAL CARE.

HIS MINISTRY FOCUS CENTERS ON HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND COUPLES BUILD CHRIST-CENTERED LIVES MARKED BY EMOTIONAL HEALTH, SPIRITUAL MATURITY, AND BIBLICAL OBEDIENCE. THROUGH YEARS OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING, MARRIAGE MENTORING, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, DR. COLLAZO HAS GUIDED COUNTLESS COUPLES TOWARD COVENANT-BASED RELATIONSHIPS ROOTED IN GOD'S DESIGN.

TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE, HE HAS INVESTED DEEPLY IN PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION FOR MARRIAGE—EMPHASIZING FORMATION OVER INFORMATION AND COVENANT OVER CULTURE.

TWO BECOMING ONE REFLECTS HIS HEART FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH AND HIS COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHENING MARRIAGES FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

DIVORCE STATISTICS

The Church vs. the Secular World

CURRENT DIVORCE RATES

RECENT STUDIES BY BARNAB GROUP AND PEW RESEARCH (2023–2024) REVEAL THE FOLLOWING TRENDS:

- OVERALL U.S. DIVORCE RATE: AROUND 40–45% OF ALL MARRIAGES END IN DIVORCE.

CHRISTIAN COUPLES:

NOMINAL CHRISTIANS (IDENTIFY AS CHRISTIAN BUT RARELY ATTEND CHURCH):

DIVORCE RATES ARE ABOUT 42–46%, NEARLY IDENTICAL TO THE GENERAL POPULATION.

ACTIVE, CHURCH-ATTENDING CHRISTIANS:

DIVORCE RATES DROP TO ABOUT 27–30%, SHOWING FAITH PRACTICE AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE.

SECULAR/NON-RELIGIOUS COUPLES:

DIVORCE RATES RANGE FROM 44–50%, OFTEN AFFECTED BY COHABITATION, LACK OF SHARED VALUES, AND MINIMAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

KEY INSIGHT:

REGULAR CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP STRONGLY CORRELATE WITH STRONGER, LASTING MARRIAGES—NOT JUST RELIGIOUS IDENTITY ALONE.

REASONS FOR HIGH DIVORCE RATES AMONG CHRISTIANS

DESPITE LOWER RATES AMONG ACTIVE BELIEVERS, DIVORCE STILL IMPACTS MANY CHRISTIAN COUPLES DUE TO:

1. **LACK OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING:** RESEARCH SHOWS STRUCTURED PREMARITAL COUNSELING CAN REDUCE DIVORCE RISK BY UP TO 30%. MANY COUPLES MARRY WITHOUT ADDRESSING COMMUNICATION, FINANCES, FAMILY PLANNING, OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION BEFOREHAND.
2. **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS & MINIMAL TEACHING:** CHURCHES OFTEN EMPHASIZE THE WEDDING DAY BUT UNDERPREPARE COUPLES FOR THE MARRIAGE JOURNEY. TOPICS LIKE FORGIVENESS, HEALTHY INTIMACY, AND HANDLING DIFFERENCES ARE RARELY TAUGHT IN DEPTH.
3. **CULTURAL PRESSURES & INDIVIDUALISM:** SOCIETY PROMOTES SELF-CENTEREDNESS, INSTANT GRATIFICATION, AND DIVORCE AS A QUICK SOLUTION WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE.
4. **LACK OF ONGOING MARRIAGE SUPPORT:** MANY CHURCHES LACK MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT CLASSES, MENTORING COUPLES, OR SMALL GROUP SUPPORT FOR MARRIED COUPLES, LEAVING COUPLES ISOLATED WHEN CHALLENGES COME.

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INTRODUCTION

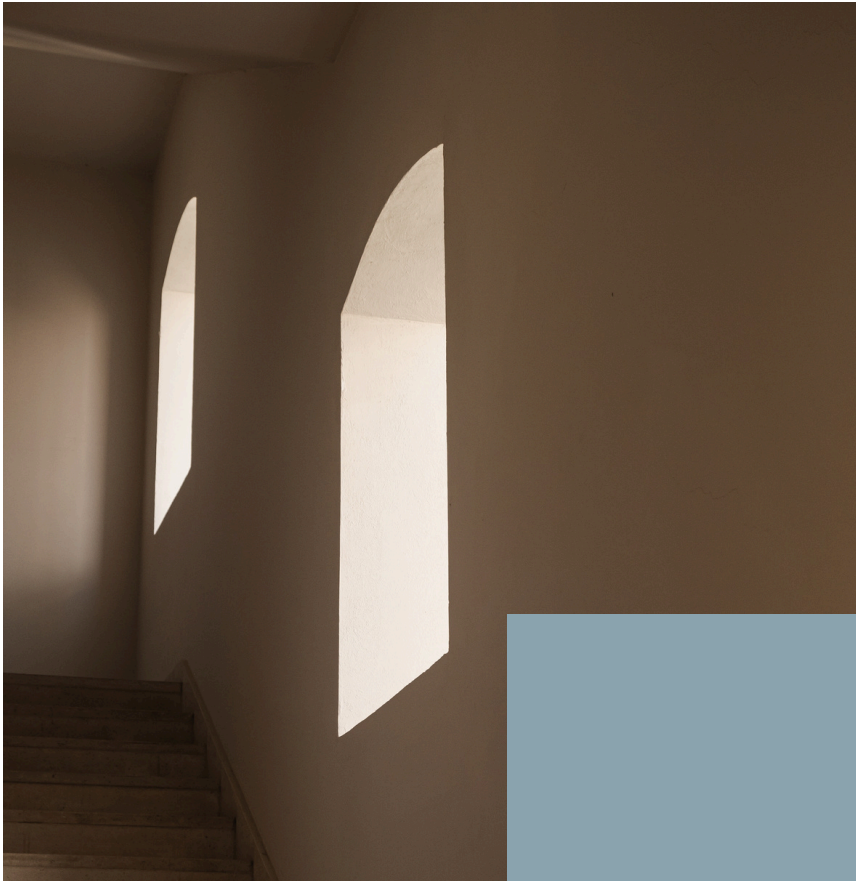
CONGRATULATIONS ON EMBARKING ON THE BEAUTIFUL JOURNEY OF GETTING MARRIED! THIS PREMARITAL WORKBOOK IS DESIGNED TO BE A GOD-CENTERED GUIDE AS YOU AND YOUR PARTNER LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A LIFETIME OF LOVE AND UNITY, REFLECTING CHRIST'S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CHURCH.

MARRIAGE, IN ITS ESSENCE, IS A SACRED UNION, A DIVINE INSTITUTION ORDAINED BY GOD TO MIRROR HIS LOVE AND GRACE. AS YOU PREPARE TO JOIN YOUR LIVES TOGETHER, BUILDING YOUR RELATIONSHIP ON THE SOLID ROCK OF FAITH IS ESSENTIAL, SEEKING GOD'S WISDOM AND GUIDANCE IN EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP. THIS WORKBOOK IS CRAFTED TO HELP YOU DO JUST THAT, INTEGRATING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND CHRISTIAN VALUES INTO YOUR PREMARITAL PREPARATION.

TWELVE CHAPTERS IN THESE PAGES WILL ADDRESS VITAL FACETS OF MARRIED LIFE FROM A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW. YOU'LL EXPLORE TOPICS SUCH AS UNDERSTANDING YOUR GOD-GIVEN PERSONALITY, CULTIVATING CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATION, PRACTICING BIBLICAL FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP, AND NURTURING A SHARED SPIRITUAL LIFE. THROUGH REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS, PRACTICAL EXERCISES, AND CAREFULLY SELECTED BIBLE VERSES, YOU'LL DIVE INTO THE HEART OF BUILDING A MARRIAGE THAT HONORS GOD AND BLESSES OTHERS.

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

1. PLEASE TAKE YOUR TIME READING AND FOCUSING ON THE PRINCIPLES IN EACH CHAPTER.
2. PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION IN THE CHAPTERS ASSIGNED.
3. RESPOND TO EACH QUESTION INDIVIDUALLY WITHOUT CONSULTING YOUR PARTNER TO ENSURE YOUR ANSWERS ARE PERSONAL.
4. TAKE ADEQUATE TIME TO REFLECT ON EACH QUESTION.
5. PLEASE HAVE THE MATERIAL COMPLETED FOR YOUR NEXT SESSION EITHER IN PRINTED OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT.



KEY PRINCIPLES

Chapter 3: Communication and Conflict Resolution

- **ACTIVE LISTENING:** FULLY CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOUR PARTNER IS SAYING WITHOUT INTERRUPTING, ENSURING THEY FEEL HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD.
- **OPEN EXPRESSION:** SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS HONESTLY AND RESPECTFULLY, FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY.
- **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:** BE MINDFUL OF BODY LANGUAGE, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, AND TONE, AS THEY SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT THE MESSAGE.
- **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** APPROACH DISAGREEMENTS WITH A PROBLEM-SOLVING MINDSET, FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE RATHER THAN PERSONAL ATTACKS.
- **FORGIVENESS:** BE WILLING TO FORGIVE AND LET GO OF GRUDGES TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP.
- **PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING:** THIS WEEK, PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING FOR 15 MINUTES EACH DAY.