GRACE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

The knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness

BC7630 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELLING

2027

When: 7-9pm, **Thursdays. Starts:** 4 March, 2027

Online: You will receive a MS Teams invitation before the class begins.

Tutor: Dr. Peter D. Reynolds D.Min

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1. BIBLICAL CASE

1.1. John 17:3 *Christian marriage is at its best when both spouses take responsibly to grow increasingly like Jesus. Then they will grow closer to each other.*

1.2. 1 Peter 2:18 *Jesus Christ and his grace and knowledge are the necessities for a marriage that demonstrates to a watching world the relationship Christ has with his people, and they with Him.*

1.3. Genesis 1:27-28 *The blessing and the commands came to them equally. The oneness of marriage is worked out in the them-ness of their obedience to the Lord.*

1.4. Ephesians 5:32-33 *Christian marriage, along with communal Christian worship, are the two ways we declare to a watching world both the authority of God over us and the love of God toward us.*

2. GRADUATE IDEALS

At GTC we believe that the ideal graduate is someone who, because of Christlikeness and kingdom focus, by hard work, a commitment to a lifetime of learning, becomes mighty in the Scriptures, and commits themselves to serving the church and evangelising the world.

3. COURSE DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE

3.1. Description

This class is part of the counselling programme at GTC, a programme that takes a student on a voyage of discovery first of their own hearts and then to learning how to speak biblical truth into the hearts of others. In this course we will study the principles, approaches and issues required for developing skill and discernment needed for effectively helping marriages and enhancing family life within the Christian community. The purpose of

marriage is to agree. With this in mind, our approach will be to develop an understanding of people that will enable us to access their heart issues, the idols of the heart, the sins of the heart that are causing conflict and disruption in marriage and family relationships. The heart of the matter is always the matter of the heart.

3.2. Purpose

The counselling programme is designed to equip Christian people to effectively encourage and build-up one another in the faith by using compassionate words and actions to effect long-lasting life change in one another. In this course we will consider the biblical teaching on marriage and family relations in order to know, as God would have us know, so as to help marriages reflect the glory of Christ's relationship with his bride the church.

4. TECHINCAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS FOR THIS COURSE INCLUDE:

relational style *our particular and chosen way of relating to others*

family system *the relational dynamics within a family*

personality *a Freudian theory that seeks to describe/account for the differences in people*

genogram *a diagram showing the interrelationships within a family system*

redemptive-history: *the structure of biblical revelation as the unfolding over time of God's redemptive purposes for his people.*

two-age tension*: the reality of living as Christians in a fallen world while simultaneously living in both the age to come and this present evil age.*

modality*: the approach we take to helping another.*

presenting problem*: the initial issue that brings a seeker to counselling.*

the victorious Christian life: *A life that only Jesus Christ has ever lived. He will share his victorious life with us on the day of his return.*

spiritual maturity: *With fear and trembling facing life in a fallen word with a growing commitment to faith, repentance and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as he and his promises are revealed in the gospel.*

5. COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

5.1. General Objectives

Those students successfully completing the requirements of this course will be able to articulate the biblical understanding of the marriage relationship and family dynamics as it has been progressively revealed to us in the Scriptures. Furthermore,

they will be able to identify common struggles within marriages and family relationships and will have learnt how to apply their biblical insights to these issues with compassion and wisdom.

5.2. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should demonstrate growth in the following areas:

5.2.1. A clearer understanding of what goes on in your own heart as you interact with your own marriage and/or family relationships.

5.2.2. With humility you will be able with confidence to bring biblical insights to bear upon your marriage and family relationships.

5.2.3. Understand how to use the Scriptures to bring hope and change to the marriage and family relationships of others in the Body of Christ.

5.2.4. My personal learning goal is to:

_____

5.3. Participation. In online classes it is vital that you have a webcam and microphone. Your webcam must remain on during class.

6. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Credit students should read through the following outline and ask any questions about things that you are unclear on. If any of the tasks are not suitable for your optimal learning, you are welcome to discuss an alternative that is acceptable to the tutor.

6.1. Classes (5%): Attend and participate in the classes. We learn when we are present and engaged with the material. We learn better when we think through what is being presented and discuss it with others. You will receive the lecture notes ahead of time. Please read these over before class and come with questions and ideas.

Activity	**% grade**
Class attendance	5%
Reading Reflections	25%
Assignment	40%
Exam	30%
Total	**100%**

6.2. Reading: Credit students are required to read through the following:

The Meaning of Marriage, by Tim Keller, Penguin Books, 2013

Child Proof by Julie Lowe, New Growth Press, 2018

Age of Opportunity, Paul Tripp, P&R Pub., 2022

6.3. Reading Reflections (25%):

Write a 500 word response paper for each of the three required readings. These written responses should be both an appreciative and critical reflection of what you have read. Begin with a one paragraph summary of the reading, then spend the rest your response demonstrating that you have interacted with the contents as to the impact on your *heart* as you have learnt new ideas or been reminded of old ones. ***Due November 11***

6.4. Assignment (40%): Credit students are required to complete a research paper. The most significant learning occurs when we are required to research a topic and then repackage it in our own words. Assignments are not merely a way of testing your knowledge, but also your understanding of the topic. The GTC library has valuable resources for this.

Research and write a minimum of 1,500 words on the issue of *Complementarianism*. In whatever position you choose to take on this issue you should interact with the lecture notes, your readings both required and recommended, and at least one reading contrary to your position, all to be noted in your bibliography. Your biblical support for your position should demonstrate an appreciation of the biblical framework of *creation, fall, redemption, glory*.

6.5. Examination(30%): There will be a two-hour exam requiring short written answers to questions on subjects covered in class. An examination is an opportunity for you to review everything that you have learned and attempt to recall it in your own words. If you are concerned about reading and writing in a limited time, or English is your second language, please talk to your tutor about how we can assist you.

7. LEARNING RESOURCES

Author	Title	Publisher
Allender Dan and Longman Tremper	*Intimate Allies*	Tyndale House, 1995
..... and	*Bold Love*	NavPress, 1991
Carter Betty and Monica McGoldrick	*The Changing Family Life Cycle – A Framework for Family Therapy* 2nd Ed.	Allyn and Bacon, 1989
Doherty William	*Take Back Your Marriage*	The Guilford Press, 2001
Galinsky Ellen	*The Six Stages of Parenthood*	Addison – Wesley, 1987
Napier Augustus with Whitaker Carl	*The Family Crucible*	HarperCollins, 1978
Lane Timothy Tripp Paul	*How People Change*	Punch Press, 2006
Geldard Kathryn & Yin Foo Rebecca	*Counselling Children* 6th edition	Sage Pub., 2024
..... & ..... with Gerald Geldard	*Counselling Adolescents* 5th edition	Sage, 2019
Gottman, John M	*The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*	Harmony Pub., 2015
.....	*The Relationship Cure*	Harmony Pub. 2002
Wangerin Walter Jr.	*As for Me and My House: Crafting Your Marriage to Last*	Thomas Nelson Pub. 2001
Worthington Everett	*Marriage Counselling*	
Koestenberger, Andreas J	*God, Marriage and the Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation, 2nd edition.*	Crossway Books, 2010
Pittman Frank	*Turning Points – Treating Families in Transition and Crisis*	Norton & C0., 1987
Piper John, Grudem, Wayne	*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*	Crossway Books, 2006
Richardson Ronald	*Couples in Conflict – A Family Systems Approach to Mariage Counseling*	Fortress Press, 2010

Sande, Ken.	*The Peacemaker, 3rd edition.*	Baker Books,2004
Hurley, Jim	*Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*	Wipf and Stock Pub. 2002
Smith, Winston	*Marriage Matters*	New Growth Press, 2010
Crabb, Larry	*The Marriage Builder*	Zondervan, 1992
.....	*Men and Women – Enjoying the Difference*	Zondervan, 1991
Tripp Ted	*Shepherding a Child's Heart*	Shepherd Press, 1995
Balswick, Jack and Judith	*The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home, 4th edition*	Baker Academic, 2014
Worden, Mark	*Family Therapy Basics, 3rd edition*	Brooks/Cole Pub., 2003
Lee-Barnwell	*Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*	Baker Academic, 2016
Beets Nick	*Make Love Work: A Practical Guide to Relationship Success*	Allen & Unwin Pub., 2023
Murray John	*Divorce*	Pres & Ref Pub., 1961
Adams Jay	*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*	Zondervan, 1980
Lowe Julie	*Building Bridges – Biblical Counselling Activities for Children and Teens*	New Growth Press, 2020
Wallerstein Judith Lewis Julia and Blakeslee Sandra	*The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*	Hyperion, 2000
Friedman, Edwin.H.	*Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*	Guilford Press, 2011
Vernick Leslie	*How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong*	WaterBrook Press, 2001

Google Scholar gives the careful searcher an often-surprising access to books.

7. RESEARCH RESOURCES

7.1. GTC library 75 Rogers Road, Manurewa. If you are a student, then you automatically receive library membership and can borrow books from our library for 1-month. Priority is given to credit students. You are welcome to come and use the library at any time between 9am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday.

We are able to post out books to students if students are willing to pay.

7.2. Christ College Library: Our friends at Christ College are happy to allow GTC students to be members of their library. While you cannot access their books without a trip to Sydney, for AU$55 per year, you can purchase access to their online database of

journals and e-books. This is highly recommended for any credit student. Their librarians have also curated a large list of free online research resources.

To join the Christ College electronic library, email: library@christcollege.edu.au

7.3. Purchasing books. Books purchasing in NZ is often expensive and books can take a long time to arrive. Try your local bookstore, Christian bookstore, or online. We also recommend:

Reformers Bookshop (reformers.com.au) in Australia offers students a discount on books. Please use the (2026) discount code: **BCD26N**

Grace Books (gracebooks.co.nz) are a NZ Christian bookshop which carries a good stock of books.

7.4. Logos Software Library. Logos Bible Software is more than simply a Bible search tool. It is also an electronic library where you can purchase many of the books that you need. Once you purchase books you own them, even if you choose to use the free software version. GTC recommends that you subscribe to a library package (annual or monthly) in order to gain access to reference resources. It is worth noting Logos also has a student discount scheme and GTC is registered with them.

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14. Contact Information

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Principal:

Geoff Macpherson:

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Office phone: 09-268-1469

Email: geoff.macpherson@gtc.ac.nz

Office Administrator: secretary@gtc.ac.nz

Librarian: librarian@gtc.ac.nz

Fees and Administrator: Rob Allan admin@gtc.ac.nz 09-268-1469
(Note: Under NZ law it is the responsibility of the customer (or student) to ensure they have paid their invoices. If you are having difficulty paying, speak to your tutor or someone in the office before midway through the semester.)