Every pastor and biblical counselor wants to help couples to enjoy a God-honoring, mutually-meaningful marriage. And many have taught the “leave, cleave, weave, and receive” biblical marriage blueprint. So why are so many Christian marriages struggling?

In this session, you’ll learn how to use the four pillars (leaving, weaving, cleaving, and receiving) for building oneness in marriage to address heart motivation. Rather than practicing “solution-focused marriage counseling,” you’ll be equipped to offer “SOUL-u-tion focused Gospel-centered marriage discipleship.”
Gospel-Centered Marriage Counseling:  
Four Pillars for Glorifying God through Oneness in Marriage

- The Big Idea: Our Biblical Marriage Counseling Duty
  - “The first duty of a true leader is to ________________ ________________.”
  - “The first duty of a biblical marriage counselor is to define ________________ reality.”

I. Laying the Christ-Centered Foundation of Marriage

- Two Typical Marriage Counseling Problems Result When We Do Not Define Marriage Based upon God-Reality

  A. Problem # 1: Self-_______________ Goals—“Marriage Is about Meeting My Needs.”
     - We have mis-defined the goal of marriage so that it becomes about me and my needs instead of following God’s ultimate three-fold purpose for marriage which are:
       - Purpose # 1: Every marriage is meant to represent the ________________: God’s perfect relationship with Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
       - Purpose # 2: Every marriage is meant to reflect ______________ and the ______________
       - Purpose # 3: Every marriage is meant for couples to assist each other to become more ______________

     - Our marriages have the calling, opportunity, responsibility, and privilege of being living pictures of the Trinity, of Christ and the Church, and of maturing image bearers!

     - The purpose of marriage is to reveal God’s glory as we represent the Trinity, reflect Christ and the Church, and enhance the maturity of our spouse.

  B. Problem # 2: Self-_______________ Means—“Working on My Marriage Is a Self-Improvement Project.”
     - We have mis-defined the problem with our marriages and, therefore, we have mis-defined the “solution” to our marriage problem. **Three false diagnoses include:**
       - False Diagnosis # 1: “We fight because we misunderstand each other. We need good teaching.”
       - False Diagnosis # 2: “We fight because we miscommunicate with each other. We need good communication skills.”
       - False Diagnosis # 3: “We lack intimacy because of our misunderstanding and our miscommunication. The solution to our marriage problems is to apply good teaching and communication skills.”
> We must hear God’s diagnosis of our true marital problem so that we can grasp God’s “SOUL-u-tion” to our marriage problem (James 4:1-4).

✓ Problems in our ____________ begin with problems in our ____________.

✓ Problems in our heart require ____________-dependence, not __________-dependence.

> Much of biblical marriage counseling is exposing the old (worldly) marriage narratives and engaging people in living out the new (biblical) marriage narrative.

II. Seeing the Christ-Centered Marital Foundation at Work: Ephesians

A. ________________ God: Ephesians 1:1-23

B. ________________ before God: Ephesians 2:1-3

C. ________________ from God (For Salvation and Sanctification): Ephesians 2:4-5:17

D. ________________ through God’s Spirit: Ephesians 5:18-6:20

> Our pulpit ministry of the Word and our personal ministry of the Word both must be founded on the Gospel indicatives—what Christ has done for us, who we are in Christ—and then move to Gospel imperatives—how we live out our new life for and through the Spirit.

III. Establishing Four Pillars for Building Oneness in Marriage: Designed to Delight—Each Other and God (Genesis 2:23-25)

A. Leaving
   1. What Leaving Is
   2. Why Leaving Is Vital from a Christ-Centered/Spirit-Dependent Perspective
   3. Now…Practical Implications: One Example—“In-Law By-Laws”
      a. Other-Centered: Seek to ______________/______________ your spouse’s family culture
      b. Christ-Centered: Seek to create ___________ ___________ culture to honor Christ
      c. Marriage-Centered: ________________ the husband/wife relationship

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B. Cleaving

1. What Cleaving Is

2. Why Cleaving Is Vital from a Christ-Centered/Spirit-Dependent Perspective

3. *Now...* Practical Implications: One Example—“Gospel Communication Principles”
   a. Speak ______________ words with _____________: 4:25
   b. Speak ______________ words with _____________: 4:26-28
   c. Speak ______________ words with _____________: 4:29-30
   d. Speak ____________/____________ words with _____________: 4:31-32

C. Weaving

1. What Weaving Is

2. Why Weaving Is Vital from a Christ-Centered/Spirit-Dependent Perspective

3. *Now...* Practical Implications: One Example—“Tapestry Principles”
   a. Understand that to ______________ is to __________
   b. Understand who ________ are __________________ in Christ
   c. ______________ one shared husband/wife ______________ narrative

D. Receiving

1. What Receiving Is

2. Why Receiving Is Vital from a Christ-Centered/ Spirit-Dependent Perspective

3. *Now...* Practical Implications: One Example—“Intimacy Instructions”
   a. Risk ____________________
   b. Respond ____________________/with grace
   c. Restore ____________________

So What? Taking It Home with Us

1. How will your biblical marriage counseling be different when built upon God’s narrative of the ultimate purpose of marriage?
2. Consider other practical implications we use in marriage counseling (communication skills, conflict resolution). How would you use these differently with a Christ-Centered/Spirit-Dependent focus?