



**REGENT
UNIVERSITY**

Charis Institute



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**CHARIS INSTITUTE,
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND
COUNSELING**

REGENT UNIVERSITY

GRACE TOGETHER WORKBOOK

SESSION ONE – THE US:
WHO ARE WE AS A COUPLE AND WHY ARE WE
HERE?

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is where two individuals form an _____.

How many times in the Javier and Gina’s “rule of life” did they use the words "we", "us", and "our"?

Javier and Gina’s Rule of Life

We will commit to seeking God’s Kingdom first in all that we are and do. Our home will be a place where family, friends and guests find joy, comfort, peace and happiness. We will exercise wisdom in what we choose to eat, read and do in our home. We will learn to love another as we develop our own talents. We will exercise initiative in accomplishing our life’s goals. We will act on situations as opportunities, rather than to be acted upon. We will always try to keep ourselves free from addictive and destructive habits. We will develop habits that free us from old labels and limits and expand our capabilities and choices. Our money will be our servant, not our master. Our wants will be subject to our needs and means. We will honor God and choose to obey him every day of our lives.

Other Notes:

SESSION ONE: DISCUSSION

1. How did you meet and marry?

2. What is your partner's best character trait from the list below?

My partner is:

1. **Wise.** has been someone I turn to for wise help
2. **Courageous.** does not shrink away from relationship fears
3. **Persevering.** will persevere in tough times
4. **Honest.** is honest and sincere
5. **Authentic.** is warm and genuine
6. **Kind.** Does kind and compassionate things for me
7. **Fair.** Always does her/his share
8. **Forgiving.** is easily able to forgive me
9. **Humble.** is a humble person, not self-seeking
10. **Thoughtful.** is careful and thoughtful in what is said or done in our relationship
11. **Self-controlled.** is able to remain cool under pressure and regulate impulses or emotions
12. **Grateful.** expresses gratitude toward me for how I contribute to the relationship
13. **Hopeful.** is hopeful and expects the best
14. **Humor.** has a great sense of humor and is playful
15. **Insightful.** knows what makes me tick, is aware of what is going on in my emotions and mind
16. **Protective.** protects me, always makes me feel safe
17. **Companion.** makes me feel like I am never truly alone
18. **Intimate.** is someone who makes our sexual experiences positive for me
19. **Committed.** never waives in commitment to our relationship and me
20. **Godly.** holds to a good set of spiritual beliefs

Or Something else:

SESSION ONE: DISCUSSION

CONTINUED

3. How has that trait been a gift to you in your family life?

4. How do the character traits you both possess contribute to your “US”...Your purpose and intention in being married.

SESSION TWO: A CHRISTIAN VISION OF US

When we marry we are no longer two individuals but an
-----.

C.S. Lewis wrote death itself will start to work -----.

Of the things Dr. Jen listed as real world imperfections. Which one do you most resonate with today? (laundry, work stress, kids, home improvement, etc.)

If a husband relinquishes himself for the other, and the wife relinquishes herself for the other, then both are invested in
-----.

Set aside a "me first" and focus on the -----.

Humility is most evident through the mindset of we can
-----.

Are you willing to see what God will do if you put your down
your -----?

Other Notes:

SESSION TWO: DISCUSSION

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1. Dr. Sells states that our identity is now in Christ, and this is similar to how our identity after being married is being a wife/husband. We are a new “us.” How is being an “us” as a couple similar to how the Trinity (God-Jesus-Holy Spirit) is an “us” ?

2. “For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ...” says verse 3. What things have you given up in your life in your decision to follow Christ?

3. Similarly, marriage requires couples to give up self-focused things for the sake of the marriage/family. What things do you try to do to build up your relationship/family even though it’s not easy for you as an individual?

SESSION TWO: DISCUSSION

CONTINUED

4. Think of all the relationship-type roles that you play in your life (i.e., spouse, son/daughter, sibling, parent, church member, employee). How should a Christian try and set your mind on “things above” in those relationships? To be more Christ-like in how Christians relate to others in those roles?

5. Turn to your spouse right now (if spouse isn't there, consider writing down a couple things to say later on) and state how you enjoy being part of the mysterious two-in-one “us” that is your relationship. If you want to improve your relationship, tell your spouse your intent to do that.

SESSION THREE: PAIN

The _____ system in our brains takes over when in pain.

The presence of people's _____ becomes _____ to us.

Stanley had to get along with his _____ and _____ at the same
time

Imani believed she is all _____.

What happens to _____ when in pain.

Other Notes:

SESSION THREE: PAIN

SCRIPTURE: COLOSSIANS 3:5-10

Fill in your half of this worksheet below and then ask your partner and fill in their half. Important rule is not to write how your partner stresses you! Only write stressors other than your partner

The diagram consists of a central dark blue circle containing the word "Us" in white. Surrounding this central circle are four large green circles, each with a white center. The top-left green circle is labeled "His Life Stressors (Not in Marriage)", the top-right is "Her Life Stressors (Not in Marriage)", the bottom-left is "Write His Feelings Here", and the bottom-right is "Write Her Feelings Here".

SESSION THREE: PAIN

PAINFUL FEELINGS WORD BANK

Angry type feelings: Agitated, bothered, irritated, offended, enraged, furious

Confused type feelings: Clueless, lost, mixed up, mystified, perplexed, stumped

Attacked type feelings: blamed, cornered, attacked

Fear type feelings: anxious, apprehensive, concerned, fearful, edgy, nervous, petrified

Hurt type feelings: Belittled, broken, inadequate, insignificant, rejected, small, wounded

Lonely type feelings: abandoned, alone, disconnected, forgotten, unappreciated

Overwhelmed type feelings: Ambushed, shocked, stunned

Sad type feelings: blue, bummed, disappointed, discouraged, grieving, helpless, hopeless

Tired type feelings: Burned out, drained, exhausted

SESSION THREE: DISCUSSION

1. When something in life gets under your skin, what do you usually do? Do you tend to fight the pain or try and escape it?

2. How might God allow pain in your life as a way to strengthen your character?

SESSION FOUR: PAIN DEFENSE OFFENSE CYCLE

Their _____ feels like it's against me.

The baby's first defense is to _____.

What examples did the speakers give of good ways to handle pain?

Do you use any of the examples that the speakers gave in your life?

The suit that protects you can also _____ you.

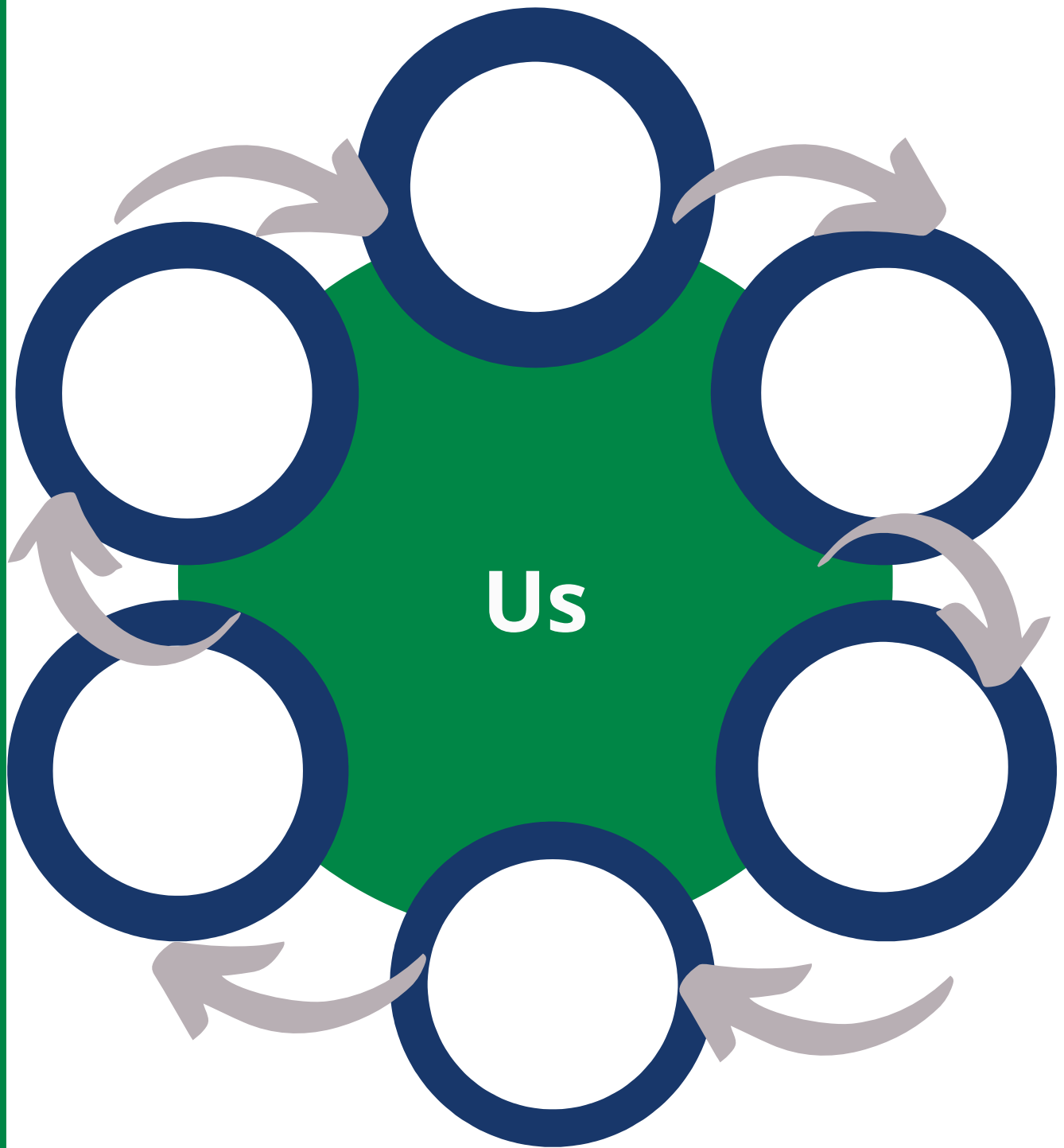
Defense can become _____.

Adding healthy responses and using them more _____.

Scripture reference was Colossians 3:_____.

Other Notes:

SESSION FOUR: PAIN DEFENSE
OFFENSE CYCLE



SESSION FOUR: DISCUSSION

1. When during the week is the most stressful time for your family?

2. Do you see the pain-defense-offense pattern happening at that time more often?

3. Do you have complicated situations in your lives that are hard to live with? Able to share one?

4. Do you find that you "use up" all your patience, kindness, and self-control while at work/parenting/ministering to others and you have little left for each other at the end of the day? How?

SESSION FIVE: GRACE - THE STORY OF A HEALTHY FAMILY

SCRIPTURE: COLOSSIANS 3: 12-13

The three things essential in succeeding at any task

- _____
- _____
- _____

_____ is both the grand essential theme of God's redemptive plan and the way that couples intentionally alter their conflict cycle.

SESSION FIVE DISCUSSION

1. WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF GRACE? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

2. Share a time when someone who did not need to be good to you went out of their way to do so.

3. . Now share a time when you showed someone grace from which there was not obligation, expectation or necessity...It was just good to do.

4. Go back and look at the top character traits you said were your spouse a couple of weeks ago. When we and our spouse are not engaging in or embodying these virtues, how can we give grace? Is it difficult to give grace or receive grace during those times?.

SESSION FIVE: GRACE

5. Where do you get your support for Christian living?
or Possible places you get support for Christian living?
Extending grace and living a positive-virtue marriage can't just be done by deciding to do it. What are life-habits you can develop to support that?

- Church services
- Listening to podcasts/watching YouTube videos about your faith
- Attending retreats
- Christian classes
- Small group Bible study
- Talking with friends/family about spiritual things
- Worship music
- Reading scripture
- Prayer
- Reading stories about Christian heroes
- Studying theology
- Serving others
- Celebrating holidays like Easter or Christmas

6. What spiritual practices do you engage in on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis?

7. Are there any practices on that list that affect your relationship with your spouse for the good?

SESSION FIVE: DISCUSSION

CONTINUED

7. Return to the list of positive virtues from the very first session. What did your spouse say was your #1 relationship virtue? What is something you could do more of, inspired by that positive trait?

8. What purpose, peers or practice do you need to accomplish that?

SESSION SIX: THE GOOD MARRIAGE

SCRIPTURE: COLOSSIANS 3: 14-17

The Formula

1. Raised with _____
2. Mind and heart set on things above.
3. Identify the pattern: _____.
4. Exercise the exchange of _____
5. Clothe yourself with good things
_____ the weeds. _____ the roses.

SESSION Six DISCUSSION

1. Like Corduroy we find in goodness, what we always wanted. What good thing from Colossians 3 have you always wanted in your marriage?
2. What 1-2 objects in your home represent your love story?
3. Please pull out your roses or hold hands and turn to your spouse now and exchange your commitment for your relationship going forward. What is something you learned in this course you want to commit to doing in your relationship? (You can follow the lead of Imani and Stanley's words in the video)

DO YOU WANT TO ENGAGE IN THE
8-WEEK LOYAL LOVE SMALL GROUP
BIBLE STUDY?

LOYAL LOVE

The 8-week Small Group Curriculum

- **Week 1: Cast a Vision**
- **Week 2: Grace Together**
- **Week 3: Gratitude**
- **Week 4: Compassion**
- **Week 5: Humility**
- **Week 6: Forgiveness**
- **Week 7: Trust and Trustworthiness**
- **Week 8: Love**

DO YOU WANT TO ENGAGE IN THE 8- WEEK LOYAL LOVE SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY?

The Charis staff have collected over 100 Daily activities you can choose from to "Control Weeds, Grow Roses" available online.

You decide where you will focus your heart and mind and see God working in your life and marriage. You can do these as a couple or individually- either way is great! Most are designed to need 5 minutes of your day- to focus on what is most important.

These daily activities include many choices to fit your style:

- brief devotionals on the theme of the week (approx. 5 minute style)
- podcasts to listen to on the theme (varied lengths)
- artwork to appreciate that reflects the theme
- YouTube videos on the theme (varied lengths)

Why daily activities?

Research shows you need purpose, peers, & practice to re-orient your heart away from pain-defense-offense towards grace and love. We know that the small groups will be a powerful help. But the practice of marriage happens at home, on your own & as a couple. Focusing daily on grace, love and similar good things are where the real action is for strengthening your marriage and your relationship with God. We expect those who participate in the small group and do daily activities will find meaningful growth of love and grace in their spiritual life and marriage.

**Find all these resources free to you at the Charis website:
www.charis.regent.edu and on the Charis Institute Facebook page
(link from the website)**