

S T U D Y G U I D E



The Intimate Marriage

by R.C. Sproul



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What Is Marriage?

OUTLINE

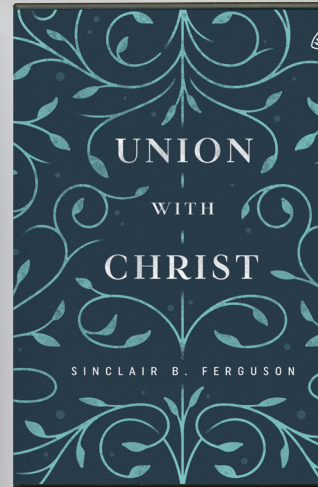
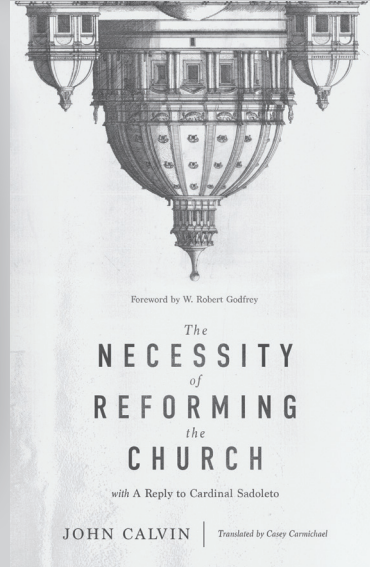
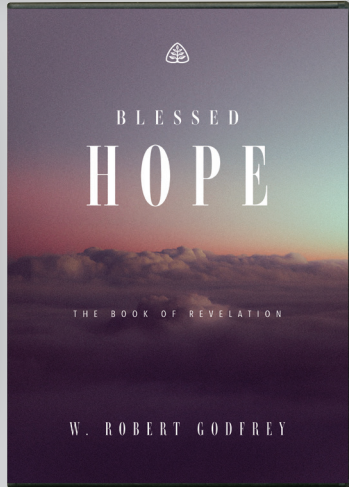
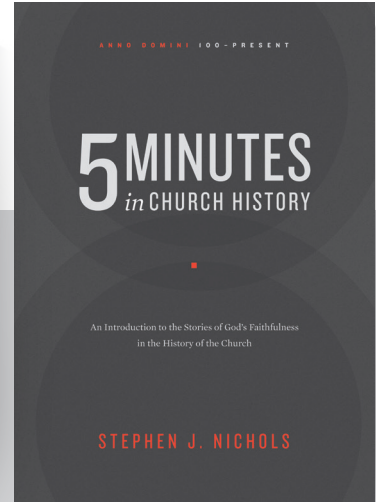
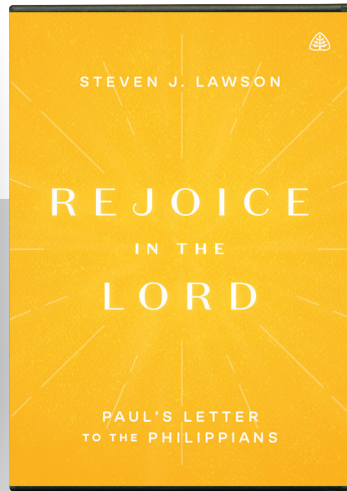
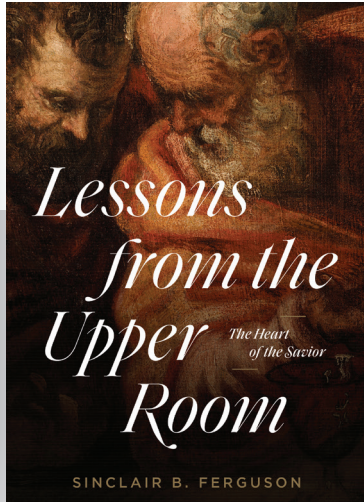
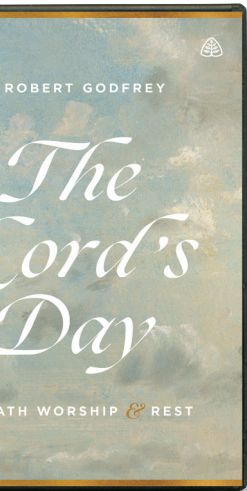
- I. Marriage is ordained and instituted by God.
 - A. Marriage was not created by men.
 - B. The origin of marriage:
 - i. At every stage of creation, God pronounced a benediction.
 - ii. The only malediction was spoken when God saw man was alone (Gen. 2:18).
- II. Marriage provides an answer to human loneliness.
 - A. Loneliness is one of man's worst pains.
 - B. Man and woman are created as sexual creatures designed to complement each other in a relationship of intimacy.
 - C. God created women as a special act of creation, not as an after thought or an inferior, but as an equal partner.
 - D. God ordained that a man should *cleave* to his wife.
 - i. *Cleaving* has nothing to do with a sense of bondage.
 - ii. Human fulfillment and intimacy is the reason for cleaving.
- III. Marriage is regulated by God's commandments.
 - A. God does not abandon His sovereign authority over marriage.
 - B. Marriage is a *covenant*.
 - i. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties which has at its heart a promise and contains provisions and stipulations undertaken in the presence of witnesses.
 - ii. The covenantal idea is seen in the formal vows in the wedding.
 - C. Marriage is the most dangerous institution we have.
 - i. Our highest emotional expectations are totally vulnerable in our marriages.
 - ii. The possibility of great happiness or terrible hurt exists.

- iii. Everything depends on our commitment.
- iv. We have lost the sacred and holy character of the vow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do most people have an honest picture of marriage before they get married? What are some common misconceptions about marriage today?
2. How important is romance to a marriage? What special things keep the romance alive in your marriage?
3. What is the most important vow you have made (will want to make) to your spouse? Have you kept it faithfully? Why is this one so important to you? What can you do this week to further demonstrate your desire to fulfill this sacred trust?
4. How should knowing that our marriages are controlled by God make a difference in the way we:
 - a. treat our spouses?
 - b. view our marriage commitment?
 - c. open our inner selves to our spouses?
 - d. view our responsibilities as marriage partners?
5. What do you think are the main reasons why the institution of marriage is in trouble today?
6. What elements in society have a destructive influence on marriage today?
7. What are your reactions when you hear that marriage is the most dangerous institution we have? Explain some of the dangers in marriage.
8. Why do people fear marriage? Why do people not want to get married, although they are willing to live with one another?
9. Do you feel divorce is too easy to obtain in today's society? Why are there more divorces today than ever before? What would have kept "bad" marriages together several generations ago?

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the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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