COVENANT MARRIAGE BLUEPRINT

Mini-Course Workbook

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SESSION 5

Formation Over Time

What Change Actually Looks Like Across a Covenant Life

This is the final content session of the course.

It is designed to be honest about the long timeline of formation, not to discourage, but to set you free from unrealistic expectations.

Come to this session with your Blueprint Map and Cycle Map from earlier sessions. You will use them in the Practice Exercise.

✦ *What Formation Is Not*

Formation is not arriving at Confidently Connected as if it were a destination once reached and thereafter maintained. It is not the permanent elimination of the blueprint's negative _____.

The Closeness Seeker who has done years of genuine formation work still feels the _____ when her spouse goes quiet.

> *The blueprint does not disappear. Its grip loosens. Its automatic authority diminishes. The person inside it gains access to a _____ they did not previously have.*

There is a space between _____ and response, and in that space lies the freedom to choose. Formation is the slow, Spirit-led expansion of that space.

✦ *Hupomone: The Posture of Formation*

James 1:2–4, 'Count it all joy... for you know that the testing of your faith produces _____.' The Greek word does not mean passive _____.

It is active, forward-leaning perseverance: the posture of a person who has decided that the _____ is worth staying in.

The Greek word _____ means mature, whole, fully developed, not sinless perfection.

> *Formation in marriage is not a program with a completion date. It is a process that runs the entire length of a _____.*

✦ *What Marcus and Diane Learned*

Marcus spent sixty-three years telling himself a story about who he was, ‘a private man, not cold,’ that was half true and half _____.

What shifted first was the accusation. Once Diane understood that Marcus's withdrawal was not _____, she stopped building a case against him every time it happened.

For Marcus, what shifted was the _____ accounting. He had been measuring his investment in the marriage by provision and presence.

They established a _____; fifteen minutes at the end of the workday, no phones, no agenda.

Thirty-one years to get there. Steadfastness that has its full effect. Completeness: not finished, but more _____ than before.

✦ *Formation Looks Different by Blueprint*

Fill in the movement-toward-security for each blueprint as it is described.

CLOSENESS SEEKER MOVING TOWARD CONFIDENT CONNECTION

Internal _____ develops. Differentiation grows. The direct ask replaces the anxious pursuit.

DISTANCE KEEPER MOVING TOWARD CONFIDENT CONNECTION

Interior _____ develops. Presence deepens. The voluntary offer becomes possible.

MIXED SIGNALS MOVING TOWARD CONFIDENT CONNECTION

Naming the _____ instead of enacting it. Letting the _____ accumulate.

CONFIDENTLY CONNECTED: THE CONTINUING WORK

Security is not a destination. It is a living condition that requires ongoing _____.

✦ *Four Formation Disciplines for the Long Journey*

Fill in the name of each discipline as it is introduced.

1. The Annual _____ Review.

2. The Formation _____.

3. Find a couple _____ along.

4. The Daily _____.

✦ *The Covenant Is the Container*

The Covenant Marriage Blueprint framework is not primarily a _____ model. It is a _____ one. The covenant is not merely the setting in which the work happens. It is one of God's primary instruments for making disciples.

The blueprints are not the answer to the question of how a marriage grows. They are a _____: a way of seeing clearly enough to move. The _____ is the answer. The covenant is the container within which formation happens, the structure that holds two people in proximity long enough for the difficulty to do its work, the promise that makes steadfastness possible because the alternative- _____- is not on the table.

'I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.'
Philippians 1:6

Individual Reflection

Work through these questions privately before sharing with your spouse. This is the final individual reflection of the course. Write with that in mind. Let it be honest. Question 4 asks you to look forward. Questions 1–3 ask you to look at where you actually are right now.

1 The session describes formation as the expansion of the space between the trigger and the response. Think of a specific moment in the last few months where you made a different choice than your blueprint's default, however small. What was it? What made it possible?

2 Where in your marriage are you currently tempted to leave the process, not literally, but emotionally: through numbness, resentment, going through the motions, or quietly deciding that change is not really possible for you or your spouse? Be honest.

3 *Hupomone*, steadfastness, is described as active, forward-leaning perseverance. The willingness to remain in the process because what is being formed is worth more than what would be lost by leaving it. What do you believe is being formed in you right now through your marriage? What evidence do you see of it, however small?

4 Marcus and Diane at thirty-one years are different from Marcus and Diane at thirteen years not because the patterns are gone, but because they are named, interrupted more often, and less automatic. What do you want your marriage to look like thirty years from now? What will have had to change for that to be true?

5 Philippians 1:6, “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.” Do you believe that about your marriage? About yourself inside your marriage? Where does that belief hold and where does it struggle to hold?

Couple Discussion

This is the final couple discussion of the content sessions. Give it the time it deserves. The goal is not to resolve anything. It is to name what is true-where you are, what you hope for, what you are willing to commit to. Question 3 introduces a shared commitment. Do not rush past it.

1 Share your answers to Individual Reflection question 2, where you are each tempted to leave the process emotionally. Listen without defending. This is not an accusation; it is a disclosure. After both have shared, ask each other: what would help you stay in it?

2 Share what you wrote in Individual Reflection question 3, what you believe is being formed in you right now. Then ask each other: what formation fruit do you see in me that I may not be seeing in myself? Receive the answer without dismissing it.

3 Share your answers to Individual Reflection question 4, the thirty-year vision. Do your visions overlap? Where are they different? Together, name one specific thing that would have to change in each of you for that vision to become more likely.

4 The session introduces four formation disciplines: the Annual Blueprint Review, the Formation Prayer, finding a couple further along, and the Daily Debrief. Which one are you each most drawn to? Which one do you most resist and why?

Practice Exercise

This exercise has three parts. Parts 1 and 2 are done individually. Part 3 is a shared commitment you make together. Part 1 is a Formation Review. Part 3 is the most important part. Do not skip it.

✦ *Part 1: Formation Review (Individual, 20 minutes)*

Pull out your Blueprint Map from Session 2, your Cycle Map from Session 3, and your Fear Inventory from Session 4. Read through what you wrote. Then answer the following questions.

LOOKING BACK

1 What did you believe about your marriage before this course that you now see differently, even slightly?

2 What did you learn about yourself that you did not know before, or knew but had not articulated?

3 What did you learn about your spouse that changed how you understand their behavior in conflict or disconnection?

4 Name one moment during this course-in a video, a reflection question, a couple conversation, or a practice exercise-where something shifted for you. Describe what shifted and why.

✦ *Part 2: The Next Formation Frontier (Individual, 15 minutes)*

Formation does not stop at the end of a course. This exercise identifies the specific area where your formation work needs to go next, and the one practice most likely to move it.

MY NEXT FRONTIER

1 The area of my blueprint where the grip is still tightest, where the space between trigger and response is still narrowest, is:

2 The counterintuitive move that would most change my marriage if I practiced it consistently is:

3 The single biggest obstacle to making that move is:

4 The one formation practice from this session that I am most willing to commit to specifically, regularly, starting this week, is:

5 What I need from my spouse to support that commitment is:

✦ *Part 3: The Formation Covenant (Together, 20 minutes)*

Sit together with your individual responses from Parts 1 and 2. This is not a debrief; it is a commitment conversation. The goal is to leave this course with a specific, shared understanding of what you are each committing to next.

Take turns sharing your answers to Part 2, questions 1 through 4. Listen without interrupting. After both have shared, discuss the following together:

• What one formation practice will we commit to together, something we will do consistently, starting this week?

• What is our agreement for when we notice each other returning to default blueprint? How will we name it without it becoming an accusation?

• When will we do our first Annual Blueprint Review, and what date will we put on the calendar now?

OUR FORMATION COMMITMENTS

The shared practice we are committing to, starting this week:

The language we will use to name the cycle without accusation, our shared shorthand:

Our Annual Blueprint Review date:

One thing we want to say to each other before closing this course:

Session Notes

Use this space for anything from the session you want to capture-questions that came up, things that surprised you, or observations about yourself or your marriage that you want to carry forward.

Contact Wade

Scan the QR Code below and add me to your contacts.

