

POST—MARITAL

BUILDING A MARRIAGE THAT STILL WORKS



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Building a Marriage That Still Works

A practical Christian companion workbook for couples

Ps. Leverno de Lange

A Word to the Couple

Marriage does not become easier simply because the wedding day is behind you. The post-marital years bring new pressures: work, money, children, family expectations, technology, tiredness, changing bodies, changing dreams, disappointment and seasons where two people can live in the same home while slowly becoming strangers.

This workbook is designed to help couples stop treating marriage as a finished milestone and start treating it as a living covenant that requires attention, honesty, grace and intentional practice.

The original source workbook that informed this adaptation emphasises practical behavioural change, appreciation, core values, shared responsibilities, communication, conflict, forgiveness, presence, shared scheduling, challenges, reconnection and outside support. This edition retains that practical spine while rebuilding the material for contemporary married life and a Christian pastoral setting.

Important Care & Safety Note

This course is educational and pastoral relationship support. It is not a substitute for licensed psychological, medical, legal or specialised clinical care. Couples should not use joint exercises to force disclosure or reconciliation where there is active abuse, coercive control, threats, stalking, sexual violence, serious intimidation or immediate danger. In those circumstances, prioritise safety and seek appropriately qualified professional or emergency support. Forgiveness does not require remaining in danger, and reconciliation requires genuine safety, accountability and change.

How to Use This Workbook

- Work through one module at a time rather than trying to repair everything in one weekend.
- Complete individual reflection before the couple conversation where instructed.
- Use specific behaviours and examples rather than character attacks.
- Do not use the exercises as ammunition in future arguments.
- End difficult conversations with one concrete next step.
- Return to the practices repeatedly; the goal is formation, not a perfect score.

Module overview

Module 1	After the Wedding: Choosing the Marriage Again
Module 2	Communication in the Age of Screens
Module 3	Conflict Without Becoming Enemies
Module 4	Trust, Transparency & Digital Boundaries
Module 5	Money, Work & the Pressure to Provide
Module 6	The Mental Load, Home & Parenting
Module 7	Intimacy, Affection & Difficult Conversations
Module 8	In-Laws, Friends & Boundaries
Module 9	Forgiveness, Hurt & Rebuilding
Module 10	Reconnecting After You Became Roommates
Module 11	Faith, Prayer & Spiritual Partnership
Module 12	The Future: Building a Marriage That Can Grow

Module 1 — After the Wedding: Choosing the Marriage Again

The shift from wedding-day expectations to everyday covenant. Identify the gap between the marriage you imagined and the marriage you are actually building.

Before You Talk

- What did I expect marriage to feel like by now?
- Where have our expectations changed?
- What part of our marriage still feels strong?
- What part have we stopped intentionally protecting?

Exercise: The Marriage Reality Check

Individually write three things you appreciate, three disappointments you have carried silently, and three hopes you still have. Share without interrupting. Finish by choosing one hope to pursue together.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

Marriage Practice

What will we do differently this week?

When will we review it? _____ What evidence will show progress?

Module 2 — Communication in the Age of Screens

Modern marriage often competes with notifications, work messages, social media and endless digital input. Presence has become a relationship skill.

Before You Talk

- When do phones most interfere with our connection?
- What digital behaviour makes me feel ignored or unsafe?
- What conversations should never happen through text?
- What does 'being present' look like for us?

Exercise: The Digital Covenant

Create three phone rules for meals, conflict, bedtime and dates. Decide what counts as an emergency. Choose a weekly phone-free connection period.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 3 — Conflict Without Becoming Enemies

Move from winning an argument to understanding the problem. Separate the person from the behaviour and identify the specific issue underneath the fight.

Before You Talk

- What topic repeatedly starts our arguments?
- What usually happens immediately before escalation?
- What do I do that increases the conflict?
- What does my partner need from me when they are overwhelmed?

Exercise: One Problem, One Plan

Choose one recurring conflict only. Record the trigger, the behaviour, the emotion, the impact and a replacement response. Agree on a pause phrase and a time to resume the conversation.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

Marriage Practice

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Module 4 — Trust, Transparency & Digital Boundaries

Trust is strengthened by truthful patterns, predictable behaviour and appropriate transparency. Modern marriage also requires conversations about DMs, private accounts, pornography, secrecy, passwords and online relationships.

Before You Talk

- What does transparency mean to each of us?
- Where do we currently have unclear boundaries?
- Are there digital behaviours we would hide from one another?
- What agreements would protect trust without creating unhealthy control?

Exercise: Our Trust Agreement

Define boundaries for private messaging, friendships, social media, financial secrecy, pornography/sexual content, location sharing and conversations with former romantic partners. Agree on what happens when a boundary is crossed.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

Marriage Practice

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PASTORAL CHECK-IN: If this module raises an issue that feels too complex or unsafe to manage alone, pause and seek appropriate pastoral or professional support.

Module 5 — Money, Work & the Pressure to Provide

Financial pressure can turn spouses into opponents. Work schedules and economic realities can also create unequal emotional and practical loads.

Before You Talk

- What does money represent emotionally to each of us?
- Who carries which financial responsibilities?
- Where do we experience secrecy or resentment?
- How does work pressure affect how we treat one another?

Exercise: The Weekly Marriage Meeting

Create a 30-minute weekly meeting covering money, work, children, household tasks, upcoming commitments and one relationship need. End with one thing you appreciate about your spouse.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 6 — The Mental Load, Home & Parenting

Marriage can become a project-management relationship. Invisible planning, parenting, school communication, shopping, appointments and household decisions can create resentment.

Before You Talk

- Who notices what needs to be done?
- Who carries the planning burden?
- What task do I assume my partner will simply handle?
- Where do we need a clearer division of responsibility?

Exercise: Invisible Work Inventory

List recurring household and parenting responsibilities. Mark who currently notices, plans, executes and follows up. Redesign the load around capacity, fairness and season rather than stereotypes.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 7 — Intimacy, Affection & Difficult Conversations

Emotional and physical intimacy require safety, communication, patience and mutuality. Couples need language for desire, rejection, fatigue, body changes, expectations and affection.

Before You Talk

- When do I feel most emotionally connected?
- What helps me feel desired and safe?
- What makes intimacy difficult in this season?
- What conversation about intimacy have we avoided?

Exercise: Connection Before Expectation

Each partner identifies five non-sexual forms of affection and three conditions that help them feel emotionally safe. Agree on a weekly connection ritual. No pressure, punishment or scorekeeping.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 8 — In-Laws, Friends & Boundaries

Marriage creates a new primary family unit while still requiring healthy relationships with parents, siblings, friends and community.

Before You Talk

- Where do outside voices create tension?
- Do we protect private marital matters?
- Where do we struggle to say no?
- What boundary would bring peace without unnecessary hostility?

Exercise: Our Boundary Map

Identify three areas where outside relationships affect your marriage: time, money, decisions, parenting, privacy or conflict. Agree on one united boundary in each area.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 9 — Forgiveness, Hurt & Rebuilding

Forgiveness is not pretending harm did not happen. Rebuilding trust after betrayal or repeated hurt requires truth, accountability, changed behaviour and time.

Before You Talk

- What hurt have I never properly expressed?
- What am I asking my partner to take responsibility for?
- What am I responsible for?
- What would observable change look like?

Exercise: Repair, Don't Rewrite

Use four steps: name the harm, acknowledge impact, identify responsibility, agree on changed behaviour. For serious betrayal or trauma, use this only as preparation for appropriate pastoral/professional support.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 10 — Reconnecting

After You Became Roommates

Couples can become efficient at running a household while becoming poor at knowing one another. Connection must be intentionally rebuilt.

Before You Talk

- What did we enjoy doing together before life became so busy?
- What have I stopped asking my partner about?
- What part of their inner world do I want to rediscover?
- What new experience could we share?

Exercise: 30 Days of Reconnection

Choose one small daily connection: appreciation, a hug, a prayer, a walk, a conversation, a voice note or a phone-free meal. Track consistency rather than perfection.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

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Module 11 — Faith, Prayer & Spiritual Partnership

For Christian couples, spiritual life should not become another performance metric. Explore how faith shapes forgiveness, service, priorities, sexuality, money, parenting and the way you speak to one another.

Before You Talk

- What does putting God first look like inside our marriage?
- Do we pray together, and if not, why?
- Where does faith currently strengthen us?
- Where have church, ministry or religious expectations created pressure?

Exercise: Our Spiritual Rhythm

Create a realistic weekly rhythm: prayer, Scripture, church/community, rest and one conversation about what God is teaching each of you. Keep it sustainable rather than impressive.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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Module 12 — The Future:

Building a Marriage That Can Grow

A healthy marriage keeps evolving. The goal is not returning to who you were when you first met, but learning how to love who you are becoming.

Before You Talk

- What do we want our marriage to look like in one year?
- What should we protect at all costs?
- What do we need to stop?
- What do we need to start?

Exercise: The Marriage Vision

Write a one-page vision for your marriage covering faith, friendship, intimacy, money, family, work, rest, community and future dreams. Choose three measurable practices for the next 90 days.

Partner A notes:

Partner B notes:

Our agreement for this week:

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90-Day Marriage Reset

Choose only three practices. Consistency matters more than intensity.

- ☐ ☐ Our weekly marriage meeting
- ☐ ☐ Our phone-free connection ritual
- ☐ ☐ Our conflict pause-and-return agreement
- ☐ ☐ Our financial transparency practice
- ☐ ☐ Our intimacy conversation
- ☐ ☐ Our prayer/Scripture rhythm
- ☐ ☐ Our monthly date or new experience
- ☐ ☐ Our household/mental-load review

90-day goal: _____

What we will stop: _____

What we will start: _____

What we will continue: _____

When You Need More Than a Workbook

There are seasons when a workbook is not enough. Seek qualified help when there is persistent betrayal, severe conflict, trauma, addiction, sexual dysfunction causing significant distress, serious mental-health concerns, abuse, coercive control, threats or safety concerns. Couples work should never be used to pressure a person into staying in an unsafe situation.

Prepared and branded for the online Post-Marital course by Ps. Leverno de Lange.
