



THE WHITBY FOUNDATION

THE SEVEN C'S OF A CHRIST-CENTERED MARRIAGE

Faith, Confession, Connection, and Weekly Covenant Stewardship

A Biblical Teaching and Practical Framework for Husbands and Wives

SELECTED SCRIPTURES

CENTRAL THESIS

The Christian household needs more than an organized calendar and completed responsibilities. Marriage flourishes as husbands and wives receive grace from Christ, speak truthfully, confess sin, pursue reconciliation, nourish connection, and faithfully steward their shared life. The Seven C's offer a simple weekly rhythm to help couples attend to what matters without confusing organization with holiness.

MAKING FAMILIES STRONGER

Introduction: Order in the Service of Love

Genesis 1 presents God's purposeful work of creating and ordering the world. The creation account establishes that the Lord acts with wisdom and intention; it does not prescribe a seven-part marriage meeting. Likewise,

Paul's instruction that worship occur decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40) concerns the gathered church, not a divine mandate for household scheduling. Nevertheless, organization can serve responsibilities God has actually entrusted to a family.

Some marriages are efficient but emotionally distant. Others are affectionate yet repeatedly strained by unspoken expectations, unresolved concerns, and preventable logistical conflicts. Neither administrative control

nor improvisation alone is the biblical ideal. Paul calls believers to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love (Colossians 3:12–17). Those virtues should shape the way spouses plan, decide, and speak.

Governing Principle

Godly order is not the absence of tension or inconvenience. It is the wise arrangement of shared life so that truth, love, responsibility, and spiritual growth are not consistently displaced by urgency.

1. The Gospel Before the Meeting

The Seven C's are not seven ways to earn God's favor, secure a spouse's affection, or prove that a marriage is successful. Ephesians 2:8–10 places grace before good works. Christ lived, died, and rose for sinners, and those

who belong to Him respond through Spirit-enabled obedience. Confession is possible because forgiveness in

Christ provides hope; repentance becomes more than image management because the Holy Spirit changes the believer's direction (Galatians 5:22–23).

This matters when the meeting reveals something uncomfortable: neglected spending, a hurtful exchange, an overwhelmed spouse, or a commitment that was forgotten. The gospel invites truthful responsibility without personal condemnation or blame shifting. Both spouses can say, "I was wrong," and both can receive honest correction without equating their failures with their identity.

2. What the Seven C's Are, and What They Are Not

The meeting is intended to...	It is not intended to...
Bring shared responsibilities into view.	Monitor a spouse or demand constant disclosure.
Give both spouses an opportunity to be heard.	Stage a weekly trial or determine a winner.
Encourage confession and specific repair.	Require forced admissions or instant forgiveness.
Identify realistic decisions and follow-through.	Make rigid rules that punish ordinary limits.
Keep spiritual and relational priorities visible.	Replace worship, friendship, counsel, or spontaneous affection.

3. Before You Begin: A Weekly Rhythm

Choose a predictable time when both spouses have reasonable capacity. Begin with gratitude and prayer.

Speak in ordinary, direct language and listen to understand before offering a solution. One hour is a useful starting point, not a spiritual requirement. Some topics deserve a separate, longer conversation; do not attempt

to resolve a serious conflict in the final five minutes.

Suggested Time Guide

Christ 10 minutes • Conflict 15 minutes • Connection 10 minutes • Children 10 minutes • Chores 5 minutes • Calendar 5 minutes • Cash 5 minutes. Confession and repentance belong within Christ and the movement into Conflict, not in a forced eighth segment.

4. The Seven C's

C1. Christ: How Are We Walking with the Lord?

Read a short portion of Scripture, share where God has encouraged or convicted you, and pray for one another.

John 15:4–5 teaches dependence upon Christ, not self-sufficient religious performance. This conversation should invite genuine disclosure without measuring spirituality by identical devotional routines.

Consider asking: “What has God been teaching you?” “Where do you need prayer?” “How can I support you in following Christ this week?”

Confession and Repentance: The Bridge to Conflict

Confession comes before conflict for a reason: both spouses first stand under Christ's authority and mercy rather than arriving to prove the other wrong. As those forgiven in Him, they can examine their own conduct (1

John 1:9; James 5:16; Ephesians 4:32). Where wrongdoing has occurred, each spouse names personal sin without shifting blame. This does not require either spouse to accept responsibility for harm committed by the

other.

A Clear Confession

“I interrupted and dismissed you while you were explaining your concern. That was wrong. I am sorry. Will you forgive me? Next time I will listen before answering.” Genuine repentance includes a changed response and, where needed, restitution and repeated follow-through.

No one must manufacture a confession to satisfy the agenda. Neither forgiveness nor restored trust should be coerced. Confession is not a substitute for necessary safety measures, outside accountability, or the patient rebuilding of trust.

C2. Conflict: What Needs Honest Repair?

Unresolved matters can shape the atmosphere of a home, but addressing them wisely requires patience and truthful speech. Ephesians 4:25–32 calls believers away from corrupting talk, bitterness, and malice and toward

kindness and forgiveness. The aim is to identify what occurred, how each person experienced it, what responsibility belongs to whom, and what concrete repair is needed.

Ask: “Is anything unresolved between us?” “What do we each need to understand?” “What is one faithful next step?” A pause is appropriate when either spouse is overwhelmed; identify when to return. Serious

intimidation, abuse, or coercive control calls for protective help rather than a routine joint conflict meeting.

C3. Connection: Are We Cultivating Friendship?

Marriage is a shared covenant life, not simply an arrangement for raising children and paying bills (Genesis

2:18–24). Connection includes affection, attention, friendship, companionship, emotional availability, and the respectful cultivation of marital intimacy. Philippians 2:3–4 calls believers to consider the other's interests, not

only their own.

Ask: “Have you felt known and cared for this week?” “Where have we drifted apart?” “What would help us reconnect?” Do not turn a vulnerable answer into leverage or a demand for immediate intimacy.

C4. Children: How Are We Shepherding Together?

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 describes instruction woven into ordinary family life, and Ephesians 6:4 calls fathers to nurture without provoking children to anger. Talk about each child as a person: spiritual growth, temperament, friendships, learning, health, behavior, encouragement, and needed support. Parenting differences should be discussed privately rather than through children.

Ask: “Who needs more of our attention?” “Are we consistent about expectations and discipline?” “What is one intentional opportunity for discipleship or connection this week?”

C5. Chores: How Are We Sharing the Work?

Household work can stir resentment when ownership is unclear or unseen. Galatians 6:2 calls believers to bear burdens, while verse 5 recognizes personal responsibility. These verses do not require identical labor, but they encourage honest care. Because Christ served us, ordinary chores can become opportunities to serve one another freely, without using effort as leverage for approval or superiority.

Ask: “What must be done?” “Who owns it?” “Is either spouse overloaded?” Name the task, owner, and realistic completion point without keeping a running score of worth.

C6. Calendar: Does Our Time Reflect Our Priorities?

Ephesians 5:15–16 calls believers to use time wisely. Reviewing work, church, appointments, parenting, rest, and time together can prevent avoidable collisions. In light of Christ’s grace, the calendar serves people rather than measuring their worth. It should preserve room for worship, rest, shared delight, and unexpected needs, never become a tool for policing a spouse.

Ask: “What is already committed?” “What needs a decision?” “Have we made room for rest, worship, and time together?”

C7. Cash: Are We Practicing Shared Stewardship?

Proverbs 21:5 commends careful planning, and Jesus warns against serving wealth (Luke 16:10–13). The gospel frees us to approach money without secrecy, fear-driven control, or using spending as a measure of worth.

Review the budget, bills, discretionary spending, saving, giving, and major decisions with honesty and generosity. Shared financial stewardship is more important than a flawless spreadsheet.

Ask: “What changed this week?” “What expenses are approaching?” “What do we need to agree on?” Shared visibility must not become surveillance, humiliation, or the denial of reasonable financial access.

5. End with Commitments, Not a Scorecard

Close with a few clear commitments, naming who will do what and when. Thank each other and pray. Revisit plans with mercy next week. Completing the agenda is not connection: if either spouse feels unheard, slow down. Understanding and affection matter more than checked boxes.

Three Outcomes to Seek

Understanding: we know one another more truthfully. • Ownership: responsibilities and decisions are clear. • Grace-shaped action: confession, repair, service, and prayer lead to practical faithfulness during the week.

6. Guardrails That Protect the Purpose

- Neither spouse uses the meeting to interrogate, overwhelm, lecture, or assign motives to the other.
- The agenda does not require a spouse to disclose private details or make confessions under pressure.
- Forgiveness is not permission for repeated harm; reconciliation and rebuilding trust may require time, evidence of change, and outside help.
- A difficult topic may need a separate conversation with sufficient time, emotional capacity, and qualified support.
- If abuse, threats, violence, or coercive control is present, safety and individual support take priority over a shared meeting.

Faithful Application

Use the companion Weekly Marriage Meeting Guide for four weeks. Begin with one commitment: show up, tell the truth, listen with humility, and take responsibility for your own obedience. After four meetings, ask whether this rhythm is deepening friendship and cooperation. Adjust the format if it becomes procedural, burdensome, or disconnected from your actual marriage.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which of the Seven C's has received too little attention, and what has that cost our relationship?
2. How can confession and repentance become more normal without making either spouse fearful or defensive?
1. Where have household organization and covenant intimacy become confused with one another?
2. What is one action we can take this week that reflects the grace and love we have received in Christ?

A Prayer for Covenant Faithfulness

Father, thank You for Your mercy in Jesus Christ. Teach us to speak truthfully, confess our sins, forgive wisely, and care for one another. Give us patience for conflict, joy in companionship, wisdom in parenting, diligence in our responsibilities, and integrity in how we steward time and money. May the order of our home serve the love of Christ rather than replace it. Amen.

Selected Scripture References

Genesis 1:1–31; 2:18–24; Deuteronomy 6:6–7; Proverbs 21:5; John 15:4–5; Luke 16:10–13; 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40;

Galatians 5:22–23; 6:2, 5; Ephesians 2:8–10; 4:25–32; 5:15–16; 6:4; Philippians 2:3–4; Colossians 3:12–17; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9.

Interpretive note: The Seven C's are a practical framework informed by biblical teaching, not a sequence mandated by Scripture.

Biblical exhortations, theological inferences, and suggested weekly practices should be kept distinct.