

Fall 2025 Marriage Study | Week 11

Infertility in Marriage

**Opening Icebreaker (5 minutes)**

**Prompt (choose one):**

* “Name one small act of kindness someone did for you in a hard season.”
* “Share a place or activity that helps you exhale when life feels heavy.”

**Leader Notes:**

* Keep the tone calm and spacious.
* Remind: *“This topic is tender. Feel free to pass on any question.”*
* Transition: *“If little kindnesses or safe places matter in ordinary hardship, how much more when couples face deferred hopes and deep disappointments?”*

**2) Scripture Reflection (12–15 minutes)**

**Read Psalm 34:18 & Romans 12:15 aloud**
*“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted…”*
*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What do these verses invite a church family to be for each other in seasons of deferred hope?
2. Practically, what does *“near”* look like (texts, meals, presence, listening) without fixing or prying?

**Read Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15; John 3:3 aloud**
*“Be fruitful and multiply…”*
*“What was the one God seeking? Godly offspring.”*
*“You must be born again.”*

**Discussion Questions:**
3. How do these passages hold together biological children as a good gift and spiritual children as the ultimate horizon of fruitfulness?
4. How might that balance reshape our expectations, prayers, and language around family?

**Read Psalm 139:13–16 & Genesis 2:24 aloud**
*“You knit me together…”*
*“A man shall leave… and hold fast to his wife…”*

**Discussion Questions:**
5. What convictions do these texts give us about (a) when life begins and (b) the covenant context for creating children?
6. How can convictions be held with both clarity *and* compassion in real stories?

**Leader Notes:**

* Keep group from drifting into abstract debate. Keep Scripture open and compassion high.
* Transition: *“Now let’s move from convictions to what care looks like in practice.”*

**3) Principles in Practice (8–10 minutes)**

**Leader Recap (30 seconds):**
Two anchors from the teaching:

* Life begins at conception → protect embryos as persons.
* Children belong within covenant marriage → avoid third-party sperm/egg/surrogacy that break the one-flesh bond.

**Activity: “Convictions** → **Care” (6 minutes in pairs/triads):**

* Each person names one conviction and one care implication.
	+ Example: *“We won’t freeze or destroy embryos.”*
	+ Implication: *“We’ll ask an elder to help us set written limits with the clinic.”*
* Write one sentence you could say to a friend that communicates both truth and tenderness.

**Group Debrief (2–3 minutes):**

* Which phrases best combined conviction with compassion?

**Leader Notes:**

* Encourage short, realistic phrasing (“We love you and we’ll walk with you” instead of theological lectures).

**4) ARTs & Wise Guardrails (7–8 minutes)**

**Leader Recap (30 seconds):**
Common paths: hormones, IUI, IVF. Four guardrails:

1. Preserve the marital parent–child link.
2. Do not destroy embryos.
3. Do not freeze embryos.
4. Always seek to preserve life — with church community invited in.

**Discussion (5–6 minutes):**

* If a couple pursues medical help, what wise first steps should they take (prayer, written clinic limits, financial count, marriage care, asking 2–3 friends to pray)?
* If a couple already crossed lines and now feels convicted, what does a grace-filled next step look like (confession, honoring existing embryos, seeking church support)?

**Do/Don’t Quick List (leader reads):**

* **Do:** speak hope, offer presence, ask permission before advice, protect confidentiality.
* **Don’t:** pry (“When are you trying?”), promise outcomes (“It will happen!”), tell others’ stories, minimize grief.

**Leader Notes:**

* Anticipate emotion. Normalize tears or silence.
* Transition: *“Scripture also highlights another path: adoption and spiritual parenting.”*

**5) Adoption & Spiritual Parenting (5–6 minutes)**

**Leader Recap (20 seconds):**
Adoption is not plan B; it reflects the gospel (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8). Motivation is love for a child, not heroics. Biology is good but not ultimate. Many pathways; no one should walk alone.

**Discussion Questions:**

* What heart checks (motives, expectations, cross-ethnic posture) seem most important for adoption/fostering?
* How can our group/church practically support adoptive/foster families (meals, respite, grants, babysitting, mentoring teens, children’s ministry)?

**Optional Brainstorm (1–2 minutes):**

* Name 2 supports this group could offer an adoptive/foster family now.

**6) Caring as a Community (4–5 minutes)**

**Prompt:**
How can we *“rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep”* in a baby-celebrating church?

**Discussion:**

* What wise practices help (sensitive invites, seating flexibility at showers, private notes on anniversaries, lament in prayer gatherings)?
* What language shifts would serve better (from *“When are you having kids?”* to *“How can I pray for you this month?”*)

**Group Commitment (1 min):**
Each person writes one concrete way to show up for someone in a valley this month (text, meal, prayer, childcare, ride).

**Leader Notes:**

* Keep application practical. *“What’s one thing you can put on your calendar this week?”*

**7) Closing Scripture & Prayer (3–4 minutes)**

**Read Revelation 7:9–10 aloud**
*“A great multitude that no one could number… crying out, ‘Salvation belongs to our God…’”*

**Prayer Focus:**

* For couples in the valley: endurance, unity, felt nearness of Christ.
* For the church: courage with compassion, truth with tenderness.
* For fruitfulness: biological where God wills, and abundant spiritual sons and daughters.

**Leader Notes:**

* End with hope: *“No matter our earthly stories, our eternal family is countless and secure.”*

**Optional Homework (15–30 minutes this week)**

* **Prayer Card:** Write two names—one rejoicing, one grieving. Pray 3× this week; send a note.
* **ART Prep:** Couples discerning ART draft written clinic boundaries (no third-party gametes, no freezing/destruction, fertilize only embryos transferred). Share with an elder.
* **Adoption/Spiritual Parenting Step:** Attend an info session, serve in children’s/teen ministry, or offer respite to a foster family.
* **Lament & Hope:** Read Psalm 13; journal a two-column prayer (“How long?” / “But I will trust…”).
* **Community Calendar:** Put one act of presence on your schedule this week (meal, walk, errand, childcare).

**Leader Tips**

* Name tenderness up front. Normalize passing on any question.
* Keep Scripture central; keep applications concrete.
* Protect confidentiality: “What’s said here stays here.”
* Resist problem-solving; emphasize presence.
* End with hope: *“Our identity is beloved in Christ, and our future family is a multitude no one can number.”*