



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..."

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"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."*