

A Study Guide for

“Choosing Us: Breaking the Me-First Mindset”

Crosspointe Marriage | Class 4

Vision: To build strong marriages with a foundation in Christ.

Mission: Mentor, encourage, and support marriages through Biblical teaching and guidance.

Ice Breakers

- **Everyday Battle:** Without naming names, what is one source in your life right now (a voice, a habit, a screen, a place, a feeling) that quietly tells you that you are all that matters or that you should always put yourself first? What is it telling you to believe?
- **Me-First Moments:** Think back over the last week. Where did “me-first” show up in small ways at home, in tone, in choices, in who got served, in who had to wait? You do not have to confess everything; just notice the pattern.
- **Foundation Check:** Class 1 anchored us in Christ, Class 2 named marriage as a covenant, and Class 3 said love is grown, not found. Walking into this lesson, where do you sense a daily battle between “me” and “us” in your marriage right now?

Key Scripture Passages

- **2 Peter 1:1–4** — Faith is given to us by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and through His divine power we have already been given everything we need for life and godliness. We do not have to manufacture what God has already supplied. Faith is the foundation we begin with.
- **2 Peter 1:5–11** — With all diligence, we add to our faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. The whole “Choosing Us” lesson sits on this passage: faith is the gift, and growth is the choice.
- **Romans 10:1–4** — Paul names the heart cry of people trying really hard to make themselves righteous through effort, religion, or performance. He gently confronts them: you are zealous, but you are missing the point. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
- **Romans 10:5–8** — Righteousness is not something you have to climb up to or reach down to retrieve. The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. Salvation has already been brought close in Christ.
- **Romans 10:9–10** — If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. The pattern is simple: believe it deeply and live it openly.
- **Romans 10:11–13** — “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” There is no Jew or Gentile, no insider or outsider; this is for everyone. The same Lord is Lord of all and is rich to all who call on Him.
- **Romans 10:14–17** — People cannot believe truth they have never heard. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Truth has to be received before it can be believed, and believed before it can be lived.

- **Romans 10:17** — “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Faith grows when people continually hear and receive the truth about Christ; not opinions, philosophy, emotions, culture, or human wisdom, but God’s revealed truth.
- **Genesis 2:24** — “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The covenant identity of marriage is not “two individuals negotiating;” it is one flesh, one team, before God.
- **Ephesians 4:2–3** — “With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Unity is something humble people work to keep, not something proud people stumble into.
- **Philippians 2:3–4** — Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Each one is to look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. This is “we-first” in two verses.
- **Galatians 5:22–23** — The fruit of the Spirit, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, is what the Holy Spirit produces in those who walk with Him. These are not willpower; they are fruit.
- **James 1:19–20** — “Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” Self-control at the “B” step of the ABC tool is not optional; it is what protects love from being scorched by reaction.
- **Proverbs 18:2** — “A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.” Pride wants to be heard; humility wants to understand. Knowledge starts with listening to God and to your spouse.

The Big Picture

Class 1 anchored your marriage in a personal relationship with Christ. Class 2 named that relationship as a covenant established by God and held together by sacrifice and commitment. Class 3 showed that love is grown, not found, by adding virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love to your faith. Choosing Us picks up where those classes leave off and gets very practical. If faith is the foundation, covenant is the structure, and love is the finished fruit, this lesson asks the daily question that determines whether any of it actually shapes your home: in this moment, will I choose me, or will I choose us?

The world around you is loud, and almost all of its loudness is the same word: “me.” Me-first shows up through advertising, entertainment, social media, workplace culture, and even our own pride and hurt. That mindset forces us into a battle with everyone else around us, and the battlefield it creates does not stop at the door of your home. The truth is the same: there is a spiritual battle being waged against your marriage, and being ignorant, passive, or turning a blind eye to it will not protect what God has built. You must fight for your marriage, and you fight by growth.

Growth in marriage happens as you intentionally build on faith through daily choices. As you choose virtue, aligning your actions and speech with what you say you believe as a Christian, you face one foundational decision: where will I get my knowledge? Romans 10 confronts every “try-harder” religion of effort and performance and points us to Christ. Paul tells the Romans to stop trying to make themselves righteous through religion or pride and instead hear the truth, believe it, speak it, and live it, because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” You fight with knowledge; you fight with the truth. The practical tool this lesson leaves in your hands is the ABC model: an Activating event happens, your Beliefs about that

event drive your response, and the Consequences are the emotions and behaviors that follow. The event does not determine the outcome, your beliefs do. When faith, virtue, and knowledge govern your beliefs, the Holy Spirit produces the fruit that lets you respond with self-control, kindness, grace, love, and unity instead of anger, defensiveness, withdrawal, or criticism. Choosing Us, every day, is how a strong marriage is actually built: not on two people getting their way, but on two people choosing unity over themselves, every single day.

Group Discussion Questions

- The lesson says, “You are in a battle for your marriage every day.” Where have you been treating your marriage like something that just happens, instead of something you defend and grow on purpose?
- Name some specific sources in your life telling you that you are all that matters or that you should always put yourself first. What are they actually feeding into your beliefs about your spouse?
- The lesson warns that being ignorant, passive, or turning a blind eye to the battle will not protect your marriage. Where have you been passive about a fight you actually need to engage, and what would it look like to fight for your marriage on purpose?
- Romans 10 confronts people who are “really trying hard” but missing the point. Where in your marriage have you been trying really hard in your own strength instead of trusting what God has already provided in Christ?
- Faith comes by hearing the word of God, not opinions, philosophy, emotions, culture, or human wisdom. Which of those five voices has been the loudest in your marriage decisions lately, and what would it look like to let Scripture be louder?
- Walk through the ABC model out loud with a recent conflict. What was the activating event, what did you believe about it, and what consequences did those beliefs produce? Where could faith, virtue, and knowledge have changed the belief?
- Ellis named irrational beliefs that often sound like “my spouse must always understand me” or “if this happens, it is awful.” Which of those musts, shoulds, demands, or absolutes has quietly been ruling you, and what biblical truth could replace it?
- The big idea says a strong marriage is not built on two people getting their way, but on two people choosing unity over themselves, every single day. What is one tone, one reaction, or one habit where you most need to make that choice this week?

Closing Challenge

- Sit down with your spouse and read 2 Peter 1:1–11 and Romans 10:9–17 out loud. Talk about one place you have been trying really hard in your own strength and one place you want to start letting truth lead instead.
- Name your loudest “me-first” voice (a screen, a habit, a workplace pressure, a hurt, a feeling) and decide together how you will turn its volume down this week. Less input from that source; more input from God’s Word.
- Walk through the ABC model on one recurring conflict. Write out the Activating event, the Belief that has been driving your response, and the Consequences it has produced. Then write the biblical belief you will choose next time, and the fruit you are asking the Holy Spirit to produce in you.

- Pick one “we-first” response (self-control, kindness, grace, love, unity) and practice it this week, especially when emotions push the other way. Define one concrete action that proves it (for example, lower your tone in conflict, listen fully before defending, serve when you do not feel like it, let go of being “right”).
- Make one small identity shift in how you talk and think. Stop framing things as “me vs. you” and start framing them as “us vs. the problem.” Use the word “we” on purpose this week.

Personal Action Steps

- Read 2 Peter 1:1–11 slowly, twice. In your own words, write out what God has already given you (verses 1–4) and what you are called to add to your faith (verses 5–7). Ask the Holy Spirit which quality He is asking you to grow next.
- Read Romans 10:1–17 in one sitting. Underline every place Paul confronts “trying really hard” and every place he points back to Christ. Write one sentence about what this passage changes for you in your marriage.
- Audit your inputs. List the top voices feeding your beliefs right now (people, podcasts, social feeds, songs, shows, websites, even self-talk). Choose one voice to turn down and one biblical input (a passage, a teaching, a book, a psalm) to turn up this week.
- Practice the ABC tool every day for the next seven days. When something happens with your spouse and you feel the heat rise, pause and silently name the Activating event, the Belief you are about to act on, and the likely Consequence. Then ask: “What does God’s Word say is true about this situation?” before you respond.
- Hunt your musts, shoulds, and absolutes. For one week, listen for the irrational beliefs Ellis named (“my spouse must,” “things should always,” “if this happens, it is awful,” “I cannot stand this,” “if they disappoint me, they do not care”). Replace each one with a biblical belief you can actually say out loud.
- Pray every morning for your spouse by name and ask the Holy Spirit to produce in you the specific fruit you most need that day, self-control, kindness, grace, love, or unity. Name the one most likely to be tested.
- Choose one “identity shift” practice. For seven days, refuse to think “me vs. you” in your marriage and replace it with “us vs. the problem.” Notice how your tone, body language, and words change when your team-mate is no longer your opponent.

Memory Verse

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” — Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

Main Themes

Theme 1: The Daily Battle — Me-First vs. Us-First

Marriage exists in a culture that constantly preaches “me first.” Advertising, entertainment, social media, workplace culture, and our own pride and hurt all whisper the same message: you are all that matters, your needs come first, your rights matter most. That mindset forces us into a battle with everyone around us, and the battlefield it creates does not stop at the door of your home. Make no mistake: there is a spiritual battle being waged against your marriage, and it is real. Being ignorant, passive, or turning a blind eye to it

will not protect your marriage. Spiritual maturity faces the fight, names what is happening, and refuses to let “me” quietly run the house. You must fight for your marriage, and you fight by growth.

Personal Reflection

- Where in your marriage have you been quietly losing ground because you have not been treating it as a battle worth fighting?
- Where does “me-first” still quietly hold too much power in your marriage, and how does it usually show up in your tone, your choices, or your reactions?
- What is one outside source whose volume you need to turn down in order to protect your marriage from constant me-first input?

Theme 2: How to Fight — Growth Through Faith, Virtue, and Knowledge

You do not fight a spiritual battle with willpower; you fight by growth. Growth in marriage happens as you intentionally build on faith through daily choices. Faith is the foundation: you already believe in God and His Word. Virtue is the next step: choosing to align your actions and your speech with what you say you believe. And once you commit to virtue, you face a foundational decision: where will you get your knowledge? You must choose to always gain it, and because faith is your foundation, you go to God and His Word for knowledge and truth. Faith is the foundation, virtue shapes behavior, and knowledge shapes direction. When those three are in place, the Holy Spirit produces the rest, self-control that shapes reactions, perseverance that shapes endurance, godliness that shapes priorities, kindness that shapes connection, and love that shapes the whole covenant.

Personal Reflection

- Where have you been hoping your marriage would just grow on its own, instead of building on your faith with intentional, daily choices?
- Name a recent moment where your actions or speech did not match what you say you believe as a Christian. What virtue choice would have made your faith visible at home in that moment?
- Where are you currently sourcing your knowledge about marriage, conflict, roles, or your spouse? Is it primarily God’s Word, or primarily something else?

Theme 3: Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God

When Paul wanted to confront a “try-harder” religion of effort and performance, he spoke directly to the believers in Rome. They lived with religious pressure, cultural confusion, pride, ethnic division between Jews and Gentiles, and performance-based thinking by the Pharisees. Paul confronts all of it. Verses 1–4 of Romans 10 say, “You are really trying hard, but you are missing the point.” Verses 5–8: “You do not have to climb up to God.” Verses 9–10: “Believe it deeply and live it openly.” Verses 11–13: “This is for everyone.” Verses 14–17: “People cannot believe truth they have never heard.” Then Paul lands the verse Crosspointe wants you to memorize: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Faith grows when people continually hear and receive the truth about Christ; not opinions, philosophy, emotions, culture, or human wisdom, but God’s revealed truth. You fight with knowledge; you fight with the truth. Choosing to add virtue to your faith and fueling it with knowledge does more than build your faith. It produces the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Personal Reflection

- Where in your marriage have you been “really trying hard” but missing the point because you have been building on effort instead of on Christ?
- Of the five voices Paul confronts (opinions, philosophy, emotions, culture, human wisdom), which one most often out-shouts Scripture in your decisions about your marriage?
- What is one practical way you can put yourself in front of God’s Word more often this week, knowing that faith comes by hearing?

Theme 4: The ABC Tool — Beliefs Shape Consequences

In the 1950s, Albert Ellis developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), one of the earliest forms of cognitive behavioral therapy. At its core, REBT teaches that our emotions and behaviors are shaped less by events themselves and more by the beliefs we attach to those events. The most common version of his model is the ABC framework. “A” is the Activating event, something that happens, like criticism, conflict, disappointment, rejection, or financial stress. “B” is your Belief about the event, what you tell yourself about what just happened, and this is the most important part of the model. “C” is the Consequence, the emotional and behavioral result, things like anger, shame, anxiety, and bitterness, or patience, understanding, and healthy communication. Ellis warned that emotional suffering often comes from rigid, extreme beliefs, especially musts, shoulds, demands, and absolutes: “my spouse must always understand me,” “things should always go my way,” “if this happens, it is awful,” “I cannot stand this,” “if someone disappoints me, they do not care.” These thoughts produce emotional escalation, unhealthy reactions, and relational conflict. The remedy is to replace irrational beliefs with realistic, healthy thinking. Instead of “this is unbearable,” REBT teaches “this is difficult, but I can handle it.” Instead of “they should never fail me,” REBT teaches “people make mistakes, and we can work through them.” This is, in secular language, exactly what Peter is telling us in 2 Peter 1:1–11. We have the tools from God, and we know the path forward to change from the inside out.

Personal Reflection

- When you trace your most recent conflict back through ABC, what was the activating event, and what belief did you actually attach to it?
- Which of Ellis’s irrational beliefs most often hijacks you (must, should, awful, cannot stand, they do not care), and where does it usually fire in your marriage?
- What is one realistic, biblical belief you can rehearse this week to replace the most rigid demand you tend to make on your spouse?

Theme 5: Choosing Biblical Beliefs at the “B”

ABC is helpful for anyone, but for the believer it is far more than therapy. “B” is exactly where faith, virtue, and knowledge are applied. When something happens in marriage (your spouse criticizes you, forgets something important, raises their voice, or withdraws emotionally) the event itself does not determine the outcome. Your belief about it does. Faith anchors you and reminds you, “God is with me, and I have everything I need through Him” (2 Peter 1:3–4). Virtue chooses, “I want to do what is right and honorable before God.” Knowledge asks, “What does God’s Word say is true about this situation?” Together, faith, virtue, and knowledge replace flesh-driven beliefs with biblical beliefs. And when you choose a biblical belief instead of a selfish one, the Holy Spirit produces the character needed to respond. Your consequence changes. Instead of a “me-first” response of anger, defensiveness, withdrawal, or criticism, you experience a “we-first” spiritual response of self-control, kindness, grace, love, and unity. The simple formula is this:

Event + (Faith + Virtue + Knowledge) × Holy Spirit = the fruit of the Spirit, which leads to Christlike consequences. You cannot control every event in marriage, but you can choose what you believe.

Personal Reflection

- When your spouse last criticized you, forgot something important, raised their voice, or withdrew, what did you believe about them in that moment, and was that belief biblical?
- Which of the three (faith, virtue, or knowledge) most needs to step forward in your beliefs the next time you are triggered at home?
- Which “we-first” fruit (self-control, kindness, grace, love, unity) is the Holy Spirit most clearly inviting you to let Him produce in you right now?

Theme 6: From “Me First” to “We First” — Unity as One Team

Choosing Us is not built on big ideas, it is built on small moments: tone in a disagreement, choosing to listen instead of defending, serving when you do not feel like it, and letting go of being “right.” Unity is the goal, not winning. The shift couples need is from “How do I fix this?” to “How do we stay united in this?” Unity grows when selfishness shrinks. There is also an identity shift here. You already know that in marriage you are “one flesh.” This lesson asks you to make that practical: stop thinking “me vs. you” and start thinking “us vs. the problem.” The same Lord is Lord of all, and the same Spirit who saves you is the Spirit who can produce unity in your home. Christ at the center, covenant as the structure, love as the finished fruit, and “us” as the everyday choice; this is what Choosing Us looks like in real life.

Personal Reflection

- Of the four small moments named (tone, listening, serving, letting go of being right), which one most often exposes “me-first” in you, and what would the “us-first” version look like?
- Where has your default question been “How do I fix this?” instead of “How do we stay united in this?”, and what changes if you ask the second one out loud?
- What is one situation right now where you need to stop treating your spouse like the opponent and start treating the problem like the opponent?

The Big Idea

A strong marriage is not built on two people getting their way. It is built on two people choosing unity over themselves, every single day. You cannot control every event in your marriage, but you can choose what you believe. When faith, virtue, and knowledge guide your beliefs, the Holy Spirit produces the fruit that lets you choose “us” over self.

Choosing Us happens when:

- You name the daily battle for your marriage and refuse to be passive about it.
- You fight by growth, not willpower, building on faith with intentional, daily choices.
- You choose virtue, aligning your actions and your speech with what you say you believe.
- You go to God for knowledge, letting Scripture out-shout opinions, philosophy, emotions, culture, and human wisdom.
- You stop the ABC cycle at “B” and choose biblical beliefs instead of musts, shoulds, demands, and absolutes.

- You let the Holy Spirit replace anger, defensiveness, withdrawal, and criticism with self-control, kindness, grace, love, and unity.
- You make the identity shift from “me vs. you” to “us vs. the problem,” and you mean it in your tone, your words, and your actions.
- You choose “us” in the small moments of the day, knowing that small moments are how a strong marriage is actually built.

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