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# Marriage and Religion: The Effect of Religious Study Materials on Marital Happiness

Rose E M Zell

*Olivet Nazarene University*, rzell@olivet.edu

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MARRIAGE AND RELIGION: THE EFFECT OF RELIGIOUS STUDY MATERIALS

ON MARITAL HAPPINESS

By

Rose E. M. Zell

Honors Scholarship Project

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

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<u>Kent R. Olney</u> Scholarship Project Advisor (printed)	<u>Kent R. Olney</u> Signature	<u>3/15/2013</u> Date
<u>CHARLES W. CARRISON</u> Honors Council Chair (printed)	<u>Charles W. Carrison</u> Signature	<u>4/26/13</u> Date
<u>Pamela S. Greenlee</u> Honors Council Member (printed)	<u>Pamela S. Greenlee</u> Signature	<u>4/26/13</u> Date

Rose E. M. Zell

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To Dr. Kent and Mrs. Beth Olney,  
For investing in me, revealing to me through  
your wisdom how much God cares about  
marriage, and inspiring the spark for  
marriage and family therapy  
within me

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to assess the impact of marital enrichment materials on marital happiness. In addition, the study attempted to determine if gender or number of years married made a difference in regard to the impact on marital happiness. The participants consisted of 56 New Life Christian Church members (28 male and 28 female) who comprised 28 married couples. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control or the experimental group. Every participant took a pre-test survey designed to assess marital happiness across ten different variables. Then the experimental group completed the *Love Talk* study by Les and Leslie Parrott over the course of eight weeks. At the end of the eight weeks, all of the participants took a post-test survey identical to the pre-test survey. It was hypothesized that participants in the experimental group would see a significant increase in their marital happiness after participating in the study, while the marital happiness for participants in the control group would remain the same over the eight weeks. A 2 X 2 Factorial Analysis of Variance was conducted on these data and a significant effect was found on some but not all of the ten marital happiness variables for participants in the experimental group. These results show that marital happiness is positively affected by marital enrichment materials.

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an important institution that benefits society as a whole and promotes a better culture in which to live. Therefore, it is important that individuals pay attention to the trends in marriage and divorce rates and make it their mission to promote marriage and reverse the negative trends that have been occurring in America over the past fifty years.

One way that healthy marriages can be accomplished is by encouraging couples to invest valuable time in their relationship with their spouse. Marital enrichment materials, such as books, workbooks, and study groups are assumed to improve marriages. This study was designed to test just how effective studies like this are at improving one's marriage. More specifically, Les and Leslie Parrott's *Love Talk* book and workbooks were evaluated on how effective they are in improving marital happiness.

There are many different types of marital enrichment materials available to couples, and it is important to know whether the information in these books and studies is truly helping marriages. In addition, studies like this are beneficial because they can also show if a given book is hindering the growth of a relationship or damaging it further, which would be the opposite of its intended effect. This study, as well as other studies designed like it, have the potential to reveal which marriage materials are the most beneficial and which are lacking.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The social institution of marriage has changed drastically as the world has developed (Blankenhorn, 2007; Marquardt, Blankenhorn, Lerman, Malone-Colón, & Wilcox, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2010). There are two main models of marriage that have been followed: the institutional model was dominant prior to the 1970s, and the de-institutionalized model has prevailed since the 1970s (Olney, 2011). The institutional model is based on two partners having a work-mate relationship with one another. Marriage was necessary for survival, both individually and generationally. In other words, marriage promoted personal health because it was a partnership in which the couple worked together to meet basic survival needs. Also, marriage was necessary to have children and thus carry on the family name. This type of marriage was based on a sacrificial system where the needs of others were put above the needs of the individual in order to grow and sustain the family as a whole. It was understood that marriage was a fixed and stable relationship in which “‘til death do us part” literally meant that death was the sole causative factor for terminating a marital bond.

The de-institutionalized model grew in popularity after the 1970s. Its focus was very different from the previous model of marriage. The purpose of marriage was to find love, or more specifically a soul-mate, to complete and meet individual wants and needs. The focus turned inward towards oneself; the individual’s needs started to be placed above the needs of the family as a whole, and the goal of marriage was for personal growth and happiness (Whitehead, 1996). Because of this shift, when people

were unhappy in their relationship, it only seemed logical that it be possible to dissolve the marriage for the benefit of oneself and to try again with a different partner. Thus, marriage became flexible and easily disbanded. People married out of convenience and likewise divorced for the same reason. The core foundations of marriage were lost because the entire focus was transferred to the individual's desires (Olney, 2011; Whitehead, 1996; Wilcox, 2009).

Divorce rates have risen in the past fifty years, and subsequently marriage in general has suffered. The divorce rate has steadily increased since 1960; it reached its peak in the early 1980s and since has declined slightly. However, as of the 2010 U.S. Census the rate is still double that of 1960 (Marquardt et al., 2012). The percentage of first marriages intact for 20-59 year olds was 61.2% as of 2008, a decrease from 77.4% in 1970 (Institute for American Values, 2009). In other words, the statistical probability of divorce for first time marriages is nearly 40 percent. With the increase in divorce rates, there has also been a noticeable increase in the percentage of adults who are putting off marriage altogether. Singleness has become more common in America. Specifically, in 2008 over 40% of adults twenty and older were single; 23% were never married (Pew Research Center, 2010). In 1970, the percentage of adults ages 20-54 who were married was 79% and only 20% of adults were single (Institute for American Values, 2009). This means the percentage of single adults in America has doubled since 1970.

All of these statistics point to the fact that marriage has declined in America through rising divorce rates and the increasing likelihood that people will not marry at all. But the question is: Why should society care? More specifically, why should

Christians care? The core reasons for why marriage should be a social concern are found in the Bible. First, marriage is the Biblical pattern for normative human relationships. God created marriage as the first social institution; it was the first act he performed after creating man (Genesis 2). Throughout the Bible, marriage was the act by which people moved from childhood into adulthood. Time after time the pattern was that one left his or her parents and started a family with a husband or wife. Marriage was seen as beneficial because it created new families and helped move individuals into the next stages of life. The same holds true today.

Marriage is affirmed in the Bible by Christianity's major leaders, specifically Jesus and Paul (e.g., Matthew 19:1-9; Ephesians 5:21-33). It is important to note that Jesus and Paul were both single and yet they still affirmed the value of marriage in society. Author Debbie Maken goes so far as to note that "[a]ll of the single characters in the Bible [insist] that marriage is the rule, and singleness the exception by express calling" (2006, p. 34). Paul emphasizes that marriage is a metaphorical picture of Christ's relationship with the church (Ephesians 5:32). The intimacy that occurs between two people united in marriage who then live together mirrors Christ's love and desire for the church (Keller, 2011). Furthermore, Paul affirms God's vision of marriage found back in Genesis (Ephesians 5:31; cf. Genesis 2:24).

Social research indicates that marriage is still beneficial to society today. This is illustrated by the work of social scientists Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher (2000) who, among others (e.g., Marquardt et al., 2012; Stanton, 1997), note that marriage benefits not only married couples and families, but also single people because it strengthens the

economy, supports community health, and provides a safe environment for the next generation.

Each of these benefits has been highlighted in the social science literature. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) reveals that married households are less likely to be in poverty than are single-parent households. Specifically, female-headed households (29%) are nearly six times more likely to be in poverty than are married households (5%). David Blankenhorn, in his classic book *Fatherless America* (1995), discusses the importance of fathers and intact families to children and their communities. Communities are healthiest when fathers are present and active in their children's lives. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services delivered a report to Congress pointing out that children are much less likely to suffer abuse or neglect when they live with their married, biological parents. The study consisted of over 10,000 participants over a two-year period, resulting in a 455-page report that revealed the safest environment for a child is with his or her married parents (Sedlak et al., 2010). All of these studies indicate that marriage contributes to thriving social life.

Since marriage is an important institution that benefits society as a whole and promotes a better culture in which to live, it is important that individuals pay attention to trends in marriage and divorce. The promotion of healthier marriages may be a way to reverse the negative trends that have been occurring in America over the past fifty years. Therefore, a significant emphasis among marriage advocates has become how they might effectively improve and strengthen marriage relationships. One way this has been accomplished has been through the use of a variety of marital enrichment

materials. One study, researching the “efficaciousness” of marital enrichment programs, found that four of the reviewed programs were found to be efficacious, and three were found to be possibly efficacious, when reviewed using empirically supported treatment criteria. The study relied on the American Psychological Association's definition wherein efficacious treatment was described as one “found effective in two randomized control [studies] conducted by two different teams of researchers” (Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner, & Miller, 2004, p. 528). In addition, a review of marital enrichment programs that was published in 2003 revealed that these programs result in improved communication skills and satisfaction with the relationship (Halford, Markman, Stanley, & Kline, 2003). Noller and Feeney (1998) also found that a couple's marital satisfaction is influenced by communication patterns, and the reverse is also true -- namely, communication patterns are influenced by satisfaction.

Another recent study looked at how personal expectations influence marital quality. Research indicates that expectations play a significant role in whether a marriage enrichment program is successful (Dixon, Frousakis, & Schumm 2012). Other studies have looked at the effects of various interventions on helping those in troubled marriages (e.g., DeMaria, 2005; Goddard, Marshall, Olson, & Dennis, 2012; Navidian & Bahari, 2013). The majority of previous research has focused on identifying general guidelines for marital educators to utilize rather than empirically testing the effectiveness of specific marital enrichment programs (Jakubowski et al., 2004). This current study is an attempt to extend this line of research, turning the attention specifically to testing the effects of one marital enrichment study on marital happiness.

Testing whether marriage curricula have a positive effect on marriages can help couples and professionals find appropriate resources to improve marital quality. Utilizing empirically-tested materials hopefully will increase confidence in the abilities of marital enrichment materials to improve the marital relationship. If that is the case, all society will benefit. The institution of marriage is practical and foundational for the health of society. Therefore, studies of this nature have tremendous value to marriage educators, service providers, and couples.



## METHODS

### **Participants**

Thirty heterosexual married couples, a total of sixty participants, from New Life Christian Church in Morton, IL, volunteered to participate in the experiment. Their ages ranged from early twenties to sixties. This demographic will be discussed in greater detail in the results section. The participants were randomly assigned to either the control or the experimental group. During the course of the experiment, two couples (meaning four participants total) withdrew from participating in the experimental group. Thus, at the end of the experiment, there were thirty participants (fifteen couples; fifteen men and fifteen women) in the control group and twenty-six participants (thirteen couples; thirteen men and thirteen women) in the experimental group, totaling fifty-six participants.

### **Apparatus and Materials**

The experimental group completed the study *Love Talk* by Les and Leslie Parrott (see Appendix A). These study materials consisted of one *Love Talk* hardcover book, one *Love Talk Workbook for Men*, and one *Love Talk Workbook for Women* per couple. All of the participants also took a survey, designed by the researcher and adapted from Azrin, Naster, and Jones's "Reciprocity Counseling" article (see Appendix B).

## Procedure

The design of the experiment was a 2 X 2 Mixed Factorial Design. The experiment analyzed a between-groups factor, comparing the control group and the experimental group, and a within-subjects factor, comparing the pre-test and the post-test. Figure A is a representation of this research design.

*Figure A: Design of Experiment 2 X 2 Mixed Factorial*

		Between Groups	
Within Subjects		<i>Control</i>	<i>Experimental</i>
	<i>Pre-Test</i>		
	<i>Post-Test</i>		

As indicated above, all participants were randomly assigned into either the control group or the experimental group. The participants in the control group took the pre-test and the post-test survey eight weeks apart. The participants in the experimental group also took the pre-test and the post-test survey eight weeks apart, and during the eight weeks between the two surveys they completed the *Love Talk* study (see Appendix C). The problem addressed in this study concerned the relationship between marital happiness and participating in religious marital enrichment materials. The participants volunteered to participate in the research study, signed informed

consent forms, and then all took identical surveys through SurveyMonkey.com within one week. The *Love Talk* materials were distributed to each couple in the experimental group, and participants worked through the weekly assignments with their spouse in their own home. After eight weeks, all of the participants—from both the control and experimental groups—completed the post-test survey on SurveyMonkey.com within one week.

## RESULTS

Overall comparisons along the between-groups factor (control versus experimental group) and within-subjects factor (pre-test versus post-test) were conducted and analyzed, but the main focus of the study was to analyze the interaction between the two factors.

The survey rated couples on ten different contributors to marital happiness. The survey indicator "General Happiness" was important to look at because it measured participants' overall happiness with their marriage. Secondly, the survey indicator "Communication" was important to look at because the marital enrichment information in the *Love Talk* books specifically targets communication strengths and weaknesses within the marriage relationship.

Table 1 displays the mean happiness ratings as a function of condition and pre-versus post-test. Table 2 displays the ANOVA summary for simple effects of within-subjects (pre- versus post-test), between groups (experimental versus control condition), and the interaction across the ten variables. Variables that are significant and discussed below are in boldface in Tables 1 and 2. The first statistically significant interaction is across the social activities variable. The probability value for this interaction is .038 (Table 2). The trend for the means across the within-subjects and between groups factors, as seen in Table 1, is that the scores for the experimental group between the pre- and post-tests increased significantly, and the scores for the control group between the pre- and post-tests decreased slightly. The second statistically

significant interaction is across the communication variable. That this interaction is significant is especially important because the marriage enrichment study materials, while meant to impact all areas of a marriage, were directly addressing issues of communication in marriage. The probability value for this interaction is .001 (Table 2), which is highly significant. The means for the control group between the pre- and post-tests decreased slightly, and the means for the experimental group between the pre- and post-tests increased significantly, from 6.846 to 8.038 (Table 1). The third statistically significant interaction is across the sex variable. The probability value for this interaction is .028 (Table 2). The means for the control group between the pre- and post-tests increased slightly, and the means for the experimental group between the pre- and post-tests increased significantly, 6.846 to 8.000 (Table 1). The last statistically significant interaction is across the academic and professional progress variable. The probability value for this interaction is .046 (Table 2). The means for the control group between the pre- and post-tests decreased slightly, and the means for the experimental group between the pre- and post-tests increased significantly.

The means across the personal independence variable were marginally significant (.076, Table 2). The means for the control group between the pre- and post-tests decreased slightly, and the means for the experimental group increased from 8.115 to 8.654 (Table 1), which is not a large enough increase to be statistically significant but is enough to be marginally significant. The last general interaction that needs to be looked at is across the general happiness variable. The probability value for this interaction is .175 (Table 2), which is not statistically or marginally significant.

However, when we observe the means in Table 1, we see that there was an increase in mean scores for the experimental group between the pre- and post-tests, from 8.231 to 8.500 (Table 1), and a slight decrease in mean scores for the control group between the pre- and post-tests, from 8.367 to 8.233 (Table 1). Even though these mean differences are not statistically significant, there was a slight increase in general happiness scores for the experimental group but not the control group. It is important to note that for all of the above interactions, the significant increases were in the expected direction. In other words, the means for the experimental group between the pre- and the post-tests across the different variables discussed above all increased from the pre-test to the post-test.

*Table 1*

*Mean Happiness Ratings as a Function of Condition and Pre- versus Post-Test*

		Control	Experimental	Overall
Household Responsibilities	Pre	7.167	7.654	7.410
	Post	7.600	8.615	8.108
	Overall	7.383	8.135	
Rearing Children	Pre	7.867	8.115	7.991
	Post	8.400	8.500	8.450
	Overall	8.133	8.308	
<b>Social Activities</b>	Pre	<b>7.267</b>	<b>7.269</b>	7.268
	Post	<b>7.133</b>	<b>8.115</b>	7.624
	Overall	7.200	7.692	
Money	Pre	6.567	6.885	6.726
	Post	6.933	8.000	7.467
	Overall	6.750	7.442	
<b>Communication</b>	Pre	<b>6.700</b>	<b>6.846</b>	6.773
	Post	<b>6.500</b>	<b>8.038</b>	7.269
	Overall	6.600	7.442	
<b>Sex</b>	Pre	<b>6.633</b>	<b>6.846</b>	6.740

	Post	<b>6.700</b>	<b>8.000</b>	7.350
	Overall	6.667	7.423	
<b>Academic &amp; Professional Progress</b>	Pre	<b>7.733</b>	<b>7.538</b>	7.636
	Post	<b>7.600</b>	<b>8.462</b>	8.031
	Overall	7.667	8.000	
<b>Personal Independence</b>	Pre	<b>7.933</b>	<b>8.115</b>	8.024
	Post	<b>7.800</b>	<b>8.654</b>	8.227
	Overall	7.867	8.385	
Spousal Independence	Pre	7.533	7.846	7.690
	Post	7.700	8.462	8.081
	Overall	7.617	8.154	
General Happiness	Pre	8.367	8.231	8.299
	Post	8.233	8.500	8.367
	Overall	8.300	8.365	

Table 2

*ANOVA Summary for Simple Effects of Within-Subjects (Pre- versus Post-Test), Between Groups (Condition), and the Interaction*

		f-Observed	df	MSE	Probability	Eta Squared
Household Responsibilities	Pre v. Post	10.282	1;54	1.318	.002	.160
	E v. C	2.987	1;54	5.264	.090	.052
	Interaction	1.474	1;54	1.318	.230	.027
Rearing Children	Pre v. Post	3.873	1;54	1.515	.054	.067
	E v. C	.195	1;54	4.334	.660	.004
	Interaction	.102	1;54	1.515	.751	.002
<b>Social Activities</b>	Pre v. Post	2.406	1;54	1.471	.127	.043
	E v. C	1.093	1;54	6.179	.301	.020
	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>4.543</b>	<b>1;54</b>	<b>1.471</b>	<b>.038</b>	<b>.078</b>
Money	Pre v. Post	9.975	1;54	1.534	.003	.156
	E v. C	1.729	1;54	7.724	.194	.031
	Interaction	2.546	1;54	1.534	.116	.045
<b>Communication</b>	Pre v. Post	6.029	1;54	1.137	.017	.100
	E v. C	2.400	1;54	8.236	.127	.043
	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>11.870</b>	<b>1;54</b>	<b>1.137</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.180</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Pre v. Post	6.467	1;54	1.604	.014	.107

	E v. C	2.184	1;54	7.297	.145	.039
	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>5.131</b>	<b>1;54</b>	<b>1.604</b>	<b>.028</b>	<b>.087</b>
<b>Academic &amp; Professional Progress</b>	Pre v. Post	2.330	1;54	1.864	.133	.041
	E v. C	.438	1;54	7.062	.511	.008
	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>4.170</b>	<b>1;54</b>	<b>1.864</b>	<b>.046</b>	<b>.072</b>
<b>Personal Independence</b>	Pre v. Post	1.188	1;54	.962	.281	.022
	E v. C	1.349	1;54	5.542	.251	.024
	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.266</b>	<b>1;54</b>	<b>.962</b>	<b>.076</b>	<b>.057</b>
Spousal Independence	Pre v. Post	3.585	1;54	1.188	.064	.062
	E v. C	1.310	1;54	6.138	.258	.024
	Interaction	1.180	1;54	1.188	.282	.021
General Happiness	Pre v. Post	.215	1;54	.598	.645	.004
	E v. C	.023	1;54	5.096	.879	.000
	Interaction	1.887	1;54	.598	.175	.034

Table 3 shows the mean happiness ratings as a function of condition and pre-versus post-test, separated by gender. Table 4 shows the ANOVA summary for simple effects of within-subjects (pre- versus post-test), between groups (experimental versus control condition), and the interaction, separated by gender. It is interesting to compare the males' and females' overall mean scores and probability values across the ten variables so as to observe any differences between the two genders. Variables that are significant and discussed below are in boldface in Tables 3 and 4.

The first statistically significant interaction is for females across the money variable. The probability value for this interaction is .038 (Table 4). The probability value for this interaction for males is .993 (Table 4). These statistics are interesting because, while scores for the money variable significantly increased for females in the experimental group, from 6.308 to 8.077 (Table 3), the mean scores for the money variable for males in the experimental group did not significantly increase at all. In



order for statistical significance to be achieved, the probability value must be .05 or less, but the probability value for males was .993 (Table 4), nowhere near the statistically or marginally significant range of probabilities. The second statistically significant interaction is for females across the communication variable. The probability value for this interaction for females is .000 (Table 4), which indicates that it is very statistically significant. The probability value for males is .229 (Table 4), which is neither statistically or marginally significant. The mean scores for females in the experimental group increased across the pre- and post-tests from 6.000 to 7.615 (Table 3). The mean scores for males in the experimental group also increased across the pre- and post-tests, but it was not statistically or marginally significant. It is interesting to note, however, that the males' communication ratings in the experimental group were higher overall (8.462, Table 3) than the females overall (6.808, Table 3). So even though the females' communication scores significantly increased but the males' scores did not, the males rated communication in their marriages higher overall (across the pre- and the post-tests) than the females did. The last statistically significant interaction is for females across the academic and professional progress variable. The probability value for females is .008 (Table 4), which indicates that it is highly statistically significant. The probability value for males is .943 (Table 4), which is nowhere near the statistically or marginally significant ranges. The mean scores for females in the experimental group increased across the pre- and post-tests from 6.846 to 8.308 (Table 3). The mean scores for males also increased, but not enough to be statistically or marginally significant.

A marginally significant interaction exists for females across the household responsibilities variable. The probability value for females is .087 (Table 4), which indicates that it is marginally significant. The probability value for males was neither marginally nor statistically significant at .756 (Table 4). The mean scores for females in the experimental group increased across the pre- and post-tests from 6.923 to 8.538 (Table 3), and the mean scores for males increased very slightly but not enough to be significant in any way. A second marginally significant interaction exists for males across the social activities variable. The probability value for males is .057, and for females .505 (Table 4). The mean scores for males in the experimental group increased across the pre- and post-tests, from 7.385 to 8.231 (Table 3), and the mean scores for females increased slightly but not enough to be significant. The next marginally significant interaction is for females across the sex variable. The probability value for females is .089, and for males .165 (Table 4). The mean scores for females in the experimental group increased across the pre- and post-tests, from 6.769 to 8.077, and the mean scores for males only increased from 6.923 to 7.923 (Table 3). While they both increased, only the females' scores increased enough to be marginally significant. It is also interesting to note that the females in the experimental group rated lower on their sex scores than males during the pre-test, but then they rated higher than males on the post-test. The last variable that it is significant to look at due to its relevance to this study is the general happiness variable. The probability for males and females was neither statistically nor marginally significant, but the females' probability value of .118 was of greater significance than the males' probability value .601 (Table 4). Males in the

experimental group were overall generally happier with their marriages than the females, with an overall mean of 8.500 for the males across the pre- and post-tests and an 8.231 for the females across the pre- and post-tests (Table 3), but the probability value for the females was closer to statistical significance than the males because the means for the female control group across the pre- and post-tests decreased from 8.733 to 8.333 (Table 3). Once again, it is important to note that all of the significant probability values discussed above were significant in the expected direction, thus supporting my hypothesis. In addition, in all but one of the above-mentioned categories, that being the social activities variable, women were the ones with the significant values while the men's scores were not significant. The opposite was true for only the social activities variable in which the men's scores were significant but the women's scores were not.

*Table 3*

*Mean Happiness Ratings by Gender as a Function of Condition and Pre- versus Post-Test*

			Control	Experimental	Overall
<b>Household Responsibilities</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>7.400</b>	<b>8.385</b>	7.892
		Post	<b>7.867</b>	<b>8.692</b>	8.279
		Overall	7.633	8.538	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>6.933</b>	<b>6.923</b>	6.928
		Post	<b>7.333</b>	<b>8.538</b>	7.936
		Overall	7.133	7.731	
Rearing Children	Male	Pre	8.267	8.308	8.287
		Post	8.400	8.615	8.508
		Overall	8.333	8.462	
	Female	Pre	7.467	7.923	7.695
		Post	8.400	8.385	8.392
		Overall	7.933	8.154	

<b>Social Activities</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>7.333</b>	<b>7.154</b>	7.244
		Post	<b>7.067</b>	<b>8.000</b>	7.533
		Overall	7.200	7.577	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>7.200</b>	<b>7.385</b>	7.292
		Post	<b>7.200</b>	<b>8.231</b>	7.715
		Overall	7.200	7.808	
<b>Money</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>6.400</b>	<b>7.462</b>	6.931
		Post	<b>6.867</b>	<b>7.923</b>	7.395
		Overall	6.633	7.692	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>6.733</b>	<b>6.308</b>	6.521
		Post	<b>7.000</b>	<b>8.077</b>	7.538
		Overall	6.867	7.192	
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>6.400</b>	<b>7.692</b>	7.046
		Post	<b>6.333</b>	<b>8.462</b>	7.397
		Overall	6.367	8.077	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>7.000</b>	<b>6.000</b>	6.500
		Post	<b>6.667</b>	<b>7.615</b>	7.141
		Overall	6.833	6.808	
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>6.333</b>	<b>6.923</b>	6.628
		Post	<b>6.267</b>	<b>7.923</b>	7.095
		Overall	6.300	7.423	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>6.933</b>	<b>6.769</b>	6.851
		Post	<b>7.133</b>	<b>8.077</b>	7.605
		Overall	7.033	7.423	
<b>Academic &amp; Professional Progress</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	<b>7.600</b>	<b>8.231</b>	7.915
		Post	<b>7.933</b>	<b>8.615</b>	8.274
		Overall	7.767	8.423	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	<b>7.867</b>	<b>6.846</b>	7.356
		Post	<b>7.267</b>	<b>8.308</b>	7.787
		Overall	7.567	7.577	
<b>Personal Independence</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	7.400	7.769	7.585
		Post	7.267	8.538	7.903
		Overall	7.333	8.154	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	8.467	8.462	8.464
		Post	8.333	8.769	8.551
		Overall	8.400	8.615	
<b>Spousal Independence</b>	<b>Male</b>	Pre	7.133	7.923	7.528
		Post	7.533	8.769	8.151
		Overall	7.333	8.346	
	<b>Female</b>	Pre	7.933	7.769	7.851
		Post	7.867	8.154	8.010

		Overall	7.900	7.962	
General Happiness	Male	Pre	8.000	8.308	8.154
		Post	8.133	8.692	8.413
		Overall	8.067	8.500	
	Female	Pre	8.733	8.154	8.444
		Post	8.333	8.308	8.321
		Overall	8.533	8.231	

Table 4

*ANOVA Summary by Gender for Simple Effects of Within-Subjects (Pre- versus Post-Test), Between Groups (Condition), and the Interaction*

			f- Observed	df	MSE	Probability	Eta Squared
<b>Household Responsibilities</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	2.335	1;26	.894	.139	.082
		E v. C	2.699	1;26	4.228	.112	.094
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.098</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>.894</b>	<b>.756</b>	<b>.004</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	8.686	1;26	1.628	.007	.250
		E v. C	.797	1;26	6.234	.380	.030
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.159</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.628</b>	<b>.087</b>	<b>.108</b>
Rearing Children	Male	Pre v. Post	.500	1;26	1.356	.486	.019
		E v. C	.049	1;26	4.659	.826	.002
		Interaction	.078	1;26	1.356	.782	.003
	Female	Pre v. Post	3.996	1;26	1.695	.056	.133
		E v. C	.161	1;26	4.202	.691	.006
		Interaction	.457	1;26	1.695	.505	.017
<b>Social Activities</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	1.074	1;26	1.089	.310	.040
		E v. C	.280	1;26	7.063	.601	.011
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.960</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.089</b>	<b>.057</b>	<b>.132</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	1.275	1;26	1.956	.269	.047
		E v. C	.896	1;26	5.744	.353	.033
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>1.275</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.956</b>	<b>.269</b>	<b>.047</b>
<b>Money</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	2.262	1;26	1.326	.145	.080
		E v. C	1.889	1;26	8.269	.181	.068
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.326</b>	<b>.993</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	8.805	1;26	1.639	.006	.253
		E v. C	.194	1;26	7.616	.663	.007

		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>4.796</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.639</b>	<b>.038</b>	<b>.156</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	1.074	1;26	1.601	.310	.040
		E v. C	4.966	1;26	8.204	.035	.160
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>1.520</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.601</b>	<b>.229</b>	<b>.055</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	8.649	1;26	.662	.007	.250
		E v. C	.001	1;26	7.969	.973	.000
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>19.983</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>.662</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.435</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	1.563	1;26	1.941	.222	.057
		E v. C	1.830	1;26	9.602	.188	.066
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>2.041</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.941</b>	<b>.165</b>	<b>.073</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	5.783	1;26	1.369	.024	.182
		E v. C	.404	1;26	5.243	.531	.015
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.122</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.369</b>	<b>.089</b>	<b>.107</b>
<b>Academic &amp; Professional Progress</b>	Male	Pre v. Post	1.010	1;26	1.777	.324	.037
		E v. C	1.015	1;26	5.912	.323	.038
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.005</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.777</b>	<b>.943</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Female	Pre v. Post	1.417	1;26	1.824	.245	.052
		E v. C	.000	1;26	8.374	.990	.000
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>8.115</b>	<b>1;26</b>	<b>1.824</b>	<b>.008</b>	<b>.238</b>
Personal Independence	Male	Pre v. Post	1.016	1;26	1.385	.323	.038
		E v. C	1.270	1;26	7.387	.270	.047
		Interaction	2.048	1;26	1.385	.164	.073
	Female	Pre v. Post	.180	1;26	.587	.674	.007
		E v. C	.192	1;26	3.360	.665	.007
		Interaction	1.155	1;26	.587	.292	.043
Spousal Independence	Male	Pre v. Post	5.276	1;26	1.025	.030	.169
		E v. C	2.159	1;26	6.617	.154	.077
		Interaction	.676	1;26	1.025	.418	.025
	Female	Pre v. Post	.254	1;26	1.385	.618	.010
		E v. C	.009	1;26	5.872	.925	.000
		Interaction	.512	1;26	1.385	.481	.019
General Happiness	Male	Pre v. Post	1.190	1;26	.785	.285	.044
		E v. C	.408	1;26	6.418	.529	.015
		Interaction	.280	1;26	.785	.601	.011
	Female	Pre v. Post	.515	1;26	.409	.479	.019
		E v. C	.319	1;26	4.003	.577	.012
		Interaction	2.609	1;26	.409	.118	.091

Table 5 shows the mean happiness ratings as a function of condition and pre- versus post-test, separated by number of years married. Table 6 shows the ANOVA summary for simple effects of within-subjects (pre- versus post-test), between groups (experimental versus control condition), and the interaction, separated by number of years married. It is interesting to compare the three different groups that span a certain number of years a couple has been married by looking at their overall mean scores and probability values across the ten variables so as to observe any differences between the three groups. Variables that are significant and discussed below are in boldface in Tables 5 and 6.

The only statistically significant interaction is for the married 6-15 years group across the communication variable. The probability value for this interaction is .031 (Table 6). The probability value for the 0-5 years group is .055 (Table 6), which means it is marginally significant. The probability value for the 16-45 years group is .387 (Table 6, which is not significant and indicates that there was no interaction between the variables for this group. The means for communication for the experimental group in the 6-15 years category increased from 7.417 to 8.667 from the pre- to post-test (Table 5). This was a significant increase. The means for communication for the experimental group in the 0-5 years category increased from 6.625 to 8.375, which was marginally significant (Table 5). It is interesting to note that communication scores were significantly improved for couples in the experimental group and who have been married for 15 or less years, but not for couples who have been married 16-45 years. The means for communication for couples who have been married 16-45 years did

increase, from 6.000 to 6.333 (Table 5), but the increase was neither statistically nor marginally significant.

The next marginally significant interaction is for the married 6-15 years group across the sex variable. The probability value for this interaction is .074 (Table 6). The next probability value closest to marginal significance is .190 for the married 0-5 years group (Table 6). The probability value the furthest from any significance is .463 for the married 16-45 years group (Table 6). The means for sex for the experimental group in the 6-15 years category increased from 7.750 to 8.500 (Table 5). While the probability value for the interaction for the married 0-5 years group was not significant, their means across the experimental group, from 6.250 to 8.250 (Table 5), did increase more than the increase for the married 6-15 years group. In addition, the 0-5 years group had the highest scores for sexual satisfaction in their marriages across both the control and experimental groups. Lastly, the couples in the 16-45 years group had the lowest overall means across all variables in their sex ratings. This indicates that this group is the least satisfied with their sexual experiences in marriage, as well as that the study materials impacted the experimental group in the 16-45 years category the least out of the three categories. The next marginally significant interaction is for the married 0-5 years group across the spousal independence variable. The probability value for this interaction is .070 (Table 6). The probability values for the 6-15 years group (.671, Table 6) and the 16-45 Years group (.873, Table 6) are neither marginally nor statistically significant. The means across the experimental group for the married 0-5 years group increased from 7.500 to 8.375 (Table 5). The means across the experimental group for the married 6-15



years group, 8.083 to 8.833 (Table 5), increased slightly but not significantly, and the means across the experimental group for the married 16-45 years group remained the same on the pre- and post-test (7.833 to 7.833, Table 5). It is also interesting to note that, when the trends across the probability values are observed for the three groups across the personal independence variable and then compared to the probability values for the three groups across the spousal independence variable, the change in satisfaction levels between the three groups are reversed. In other words, for the personal independence variable, couples in the 6-15 years and 16-45 years groups had probability values closest to statistical significance, while couples in the 0-5 years group had a probability value much higher than any sort of significance. However, when looking at spousal independence, couples in the 0-5 years group had a marginally significant probability value, while couples in the 6-15 years and 16-45 years groups had probability values much higher than any sort of significance. This indicates that satisfaction with their personal independence was impacted greater throughout the study for couples married 6-15 and 16-45 years in the experimental group and less for couples married 0-5 years in the experimental group. But this trend is flipped for the spousal independence variable: satisfaction with their spousal independence was impacted greater throughout the study for couples married 0-5 years in the experimental group and less for couples married 6-15 and 16-45 years in the experimental group.

There were no statistically significant differences between the three groups across the general happiness variable, but an interesting trend can be observed when

the means for this variable are looked at. The overall means for the 0-5 years group and the 6-15 years group are higher than the overall means for the 16-45 years group. This indicates that, in general, couples married 0-15 years are happier with their marriages than couples married 16-45 years.

*Table 5*

*Mean Happiness Ratings by Number of Years Married as a Function of Condition and Pre- versus Post-Test*

			Control	Experimental	Overall
Household Responsibilities	0-5 Years	Pre	6.875	7.625	7.250
		Post	7.375	8.875	8.125
		Overall	7.125	8.250	
	6-15 Years	Pre	6.200	8.000	7.100
		Post	7.100	8.917	8.008
		Overall	6.650	8.458	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.167	7.000	7.583
		Post	8.167	7.667	7.917
		Overall	8.167	7.333	
Rearing Children	0-5 Years	Pre	7.750	8.125	7.938
		Post	8.375	9.000	8.688
		Overall	8.063	8.563	
	6-15 Years	Pre	7.200	8.583	7.892
		Post	7.800	8.333	8.067
		Overall	7.500	8.458	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.500	7.167	7.833
		Post	8.917	8.167	8.542
		Overall	8.708	7.667	
Social Activities	0-5 Years	Pre	7.750	7.500	7.625
		Post	6.875	7.875	7.375
		Overall	7.313	7.688	
	6-15 Years	Pre	5.900	6.917	6.408
		Post	6.200	8.333	7.267
		Overall	6.050	7.625	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.083	7.667	7.875

		Post	8.083	8.000	8.042
		Overall	8.083	7.833	
Money	0-5 Years	Pre	7.875	7.500	7.688
		Post	7.750	8.125	7.938
		Overall	7.813	7.813	
	6-15 Years	Pre	4.100	6.500	5.300
		Post	5.200	8.083	6.642
		Overall	4.650	7.292	
	16-45 Years	Pre	7.750	6.833	7.292
		Post	7.833	7.667	7.750
		Overall	7.792	7.250	
Communication	0-5 Years	Pre	<b>7.625</b>	<b>6.625</b>	7.125
		Post	<b>7.375</b>	<b>8.375</b>	7.875
		Overall	7.500	7.500	
	6-15 Years	Pre	<b>5.300</b>	<b>7.417</b>	6.358
		Post	<b>5.200</b>	<b>8.667</b>	6.933
		Overall	5.250	8.042	
	16-45 Years	Pre	<b>7.250</b>	<b>6.000</b>	6.625
		Post	<b>7.000</b>	<b>6.333</b>	6.667
		Overall	7.125	6.167	
Sex	0-5 Years	Pre	<b>7.250</b>	<b>6.250</b>	6.750
		Post	<b>7.875</b>	<b>8.250</b>	8.063
		Overall	7.563	7.250	
	6-15 Years	Pre	<b>5.900</b>	<b>7.750</b>	6.825
		Post	<b>5.500</b>	<b>8.500</b>	7.000
		Overall	5.700	8.125	
	16-45 Years	Pre	<b>6.833</b>	<b>5.833</b>	6.333
		Post	<b>6.917</b>	<b>6.667</b>	6.792
		Overall	6.875	6.250	
Academic & Professional Progress	0-5 Years	Pre	7.375	7.625	7.500
		Post	7.750	8.250	8.000
		Overall	7.563	7.938	
	6-15 Years	Pre	7.300	7.583	7.442
		Post	7.000	8.833	7.917
		Overall	7.150	8.208	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.333	7.333	7.833
		Post	8.000	8.000	8.000
		Overall	8.167	7.667	
Personal Independence	0-5 Years	Pre	8.250	8.250	8.250
		Post	8.500	8.375	8.438
		Overall	8.375	8.313	

	6-15 Years	Pre	7.200	8.167	7.683
		Post	7.300	9.000	8.150
		Overall	7.250	8.583	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.333	7.833	8.083
		Post	7.750	8.333	8.042
		Overall	8.042	8.083	
<b>Spousal Independence</b>	<b>0-5 Years</b>	Pre	<b>7.125</b>	<b>7.500</b>	7.313
		Post	<b>6.875</b>	<b>8.375</b>	7.625
		Overall	7.000	7.938	
	6-15 Years	Pre	<b>7.100</b>	<b>8.083</b>	7.592
		Post	<b>7.600</b>	<b>8.833</b>	8.217
		Overall	7.350	8.458	
	16-45 Years	Pre	<b>8.167</b>	<b>7.833</b>	8.000
		Post	<b>8.333</b>	<b>7.833</b>	8.083
		Overall	8.250	7.833	
General Happiness	0-5 Years	Pre	8.500	8.250	8.375
		Post	8.500	8.750	8.625
		Overall	8.500	8.500	
	6-15 Years	Pre	8.200	8.750	8.475
		Post	8.100	8.750	8.425
		Overall	8.150	8.750	
	16-45 Years	Pre	8.417	7.167	7.792
		Post	8.167	7.667	7.917
		Overall	8.292	7.417	

Table 6

*ANOVA Summary by Number of Years Married for Simple Effects of Within-Subjects (Pre-versus Post-Test), Between Groups (Condition), and the Interaction*

			f- Observed	df	MSE	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Household Responsibilities	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	4.573	1;14	1.339	.051	.246
		E v. C	6.231	1;14	1.625	.026	.308
		Interaction	.840	1;14	1.339	.375	.057
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	4.511	1;20	1.995	.046	.184
		E v. C	6.515	1;20	5.475	.019	.246
		Interaction	.000	1;20	1.995	.985	.000
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	1.471	1;16	.604	.243	.084
		E v. C	.773	1;16	7.188	.392	.046
		Interaction	1.471	1;16	.604	.243	.084
Rearing Children	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	6.720	1;14	.670	.021	.324
		E v. C	.759	1;14	2.634	.398	.051
		Interaction	.187	1;14	.670	.672	.013
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	.128	1;20	2.616	.725	.006
		E v. C	2.167	1;20	4.623	.157	.098
		Interaction	.753	1;20	2.616	.396	.036
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	4.155	1;16	.966	.058	.206
		E v. C	1.691	1;16	5.133	.212	.096
		Interaction	.704	1;16	.966	.414	.042
Social Activities	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	.455	1;14	1.098	.511	.031
		E v. C	.171	1;14	6.563	.685	.012
		Interaction	2.846	1;14	1.098	.114	.169
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	3.456	1;20	2.325	.078	.147
		E v. C	4.603	1;20	5.879	.044	.187
		Interaction	1.462	1;20	2.325	.241	.068
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.333	1;16	.667	.572	.020
		E v. C	.102	1;16	4.906	.754	.006
		Interaction	.333	1;16	.667	.572	.020
Money	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	.523	1;14	.955	.481	.036
		E v. C	.000	1;14	4.848	1.000	.000
		Interaction	1.178	1;14	.955	.296	.078

	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	8.030	1;20	2.445	.010	.286
		E v. C	11.941	1;20	6.375	.002	.374
		Interaction	.261	1;20	2.445	.615	.013
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	1.938	1;16	.867	.183	.108
		E v. C	.436	1;16	5.388	.519	.027
		Interaction	1.297	1;16	.867	.271	.075
<b>Communication</b>	<b>0-5 Years</b>	Pre v. Post	2.471	1;14	1.821	.138	.150
		E v. C	.000	1;14	5.429	1.000	.000
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>4.392</b>	<b>1;14</b>	<b>1.821</b>	<b>.055</b>	<b>.239</b>
	<b>6-15 Years</b>	Pre v. Post	3.884	1;20	.929	.063	.163
		E v. C	21.068	1;20	4.035	.000	.513
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>5.352</b>	<b>1;20</b>	<b>.929</b>	<b>.031</b>	<b>.211</b>
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.016	1;16	.862	.901	.001
		E v. C	.577	1;16	12.737	.459	.035
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.790</b>	<b>1;16</b>	<b>.862</b>	<b>.387</b>	<b>.047</b>
<b>Sex</b>	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	6.906	1;14	1.996	.020	.330
		E v. C	.138	1;14	5.674	.716	.010
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>1.895</b>	<b>1;14</b>	<b>1.996</b>	<b>.190</b>	<b>.119</b>
	<b>6-15 Years</b>	Pre v. Post	.329	1;20	1.016	.573	.016
		E v. C	17.740	1;20	3.616	.000	.470
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.549</b>	<b>1;20</b>	<b>1.016</b>	<b>.074</b>	<b>.151</b>
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.844	1;16	1.992	.372	.050
		E v. C	.276	1;16	11.305	.606	.017
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.565</b>	<b>1;16</b>	<b>1.992</b>	<b>.463</b>	<b>.034</b>
Academic & Professional Progress	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	1.341	1;14	1.491	.266	.087
		E v. C	.113	1;14	9.991	.742	.008
		Interaction	.084	1;14	1.491	.776	.006
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	.792	1;20	3.109	.384	.038
		E v. C	1.995	1;20	6.125	.173	.091
		Interaction	2.108	1;20	3.109	.162	.095
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.237	1;16	.937	.633	.015
		E v. C	.305	1;16	6.563	.589	.019
		Interaction	2.133	1;16	.937	.163	.118
Personal Independence	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	.278	1;14	1.013	.607	.019
		E v. C	.007	1;14	4.335	.934	.001
		Interaction	.031	1;14	1.013	.863	.002
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	2.918	1;20	.814	.103	.127
		E v. C	3.313	1;20	5.854	.084	.142
		Interaction	1.801	1;20	.814	.195	.083
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.012	1;16	1.138	.913	.001
		E v. C	.002	1;16	6.680	.964	.000

		Interaction	2.063	1;16	1.138	.170	.114
<b>Spousal Independence</b>	<b>0-5 Years</b>	Pre v. Post	1.190	1;14	.656	.294	.078
		E v. C	.672	1;14	10.460	.426	.046
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>3.857</b>	<b>1;14</b>	<b>.656</b>	<b>.070</b>	<b>.216</b>
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	4.638	1;20	.919	.044	.188
		E v. C	3.458	1;20	3.875	.078	.147
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.186</b>	<b>1;20</b>	<b>.919</b>	<b>.671</b>	<b>.009</b>
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.026	1;16	2.115	.873	.002
		E v. C	.258	1;16	5.385	.618	.016
		<b>Interaction</b>	<b>.026</b>	<b>1;16</b>	<b>2.115</b>	<b>.873</b>	<b>.002</b>
General Happiness	0-5 Years	Pre v. Post	.778	1;14	.643	.393	.053
		E v. C	.000	1;14	4.571	1.000	.000
		Interaction	.778	1;14	.643	.393	.053
	6-15 Years	Pre v. Post	.065	1;20	.423	.802	.003
		E v. C	2.149	1;20	1.828	.158	.097
		Interaction	.065	1;20	.423	.802	.003
	16-45 Years	Pre v. Post	.144	1;16	.867	.709	.009
		E v. C	.617	1;16	9.930	.444	.037
		Interaction	1.297	1;16	.867	.271	.075

## DISCUSSION

The present study examined the impact of marital enrichment materials on ten variables of marital happiness. Before the experiment was conducted it was hypothesized that couples in the experimental group, meaning those that participated in the eight-week marital enrichment study, would have a greater increase in marital happiness as indicated by their pre- and post-test scores than couples in the control group, meaning those that did not participate in the eight-week marital enrichment study. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the two variables that would show this significant difference in marital happiness would be the communication variable and the general happiness variable.

The hypothesis regarding the differences across the pre- and post-tests between the experimental and control groups was partially supported. Not all of the ten variables measuring marital happiness were statistically significant between the two groups. The social activities, communication, sex, and academic and professional progress variables showed a significant difference across the pre- and post-tests between the experimental and control groups. This means that the group that participated in the marital enrichment study significantly increased their scores on these four variables more than the control group did. The other six variables did not show a significant difference between groups. This is a very positive indication for the study because it shows that the study materials chosen did have a positive impact on certain measures of marital happiness of the couples involved, specifically four of the ten



marital happiness variables. In addition, the hypothesis that the communication variable would be positively affected was supported. This is especially relevant to this study because it shows that the marriage materials, which were written and designed to help couples with their communication skills in their marriages, are successful at achieving what they were intended to achieve. The skills and tactics taught in the study materials have a positive impact on communication in marriage, as shown in the statistical results.

In addition to comparing the control and experimental groups, the data were also split to compare males and females in order to assess any differences between the genders. The interesting finding with this is that all but one of the variables that were statistically significant after the gender split analysis was done were significant for females but not for males. Females showed statistical or marginal significance for the household responsibilities, money, communication, sex, and academic and professional progress variables while men did not show statistical significance for any of the above variables. In addition, the only variable that men showed statistical significance on was the social activities variable. These results are potentially helpful to the future design of marital enrichment materials. Future research may want to focus on discovering existing marital enrichment materials that will specifically help men improve their marital happiness. If those materials do not exist, creating new studies designed for men should be considered.

The data were also split along "number of years married" categories to assess whether there were differences between couples who have been married less years

versus those married more years. The results from comparing the three groups were varied and therefore not many coherent conclusions can be drawn, but one important variable to discuss is the communication variable. Communication was statistically significant for couples married 6-15 years, but it was not statistically significant for couples married 0-5 years or 16-45 years. Further research should be done to assess more differences between couples married less years versus those married more years and how different marital enrichment studies impact their marital happiness, respectively.

This study suggests that churches and individual couples utilize the *Love Talk* books by Les and Leslie Parrott in order to improve their marital happiness and communication. The current research shows that these study materials have a significantly positive impact on some aspects of marital happiness and communication. It is clear from this study that marital enrichment materials have the potential to benefit couples looking to improve their relationship.

Some further research that can be conducted in response to the current study would be to replicate this exact study with couples outside of New Life Christian Church. This would help to better evaluate the impact of marital enrichment materials on couples' marital happiness because it would enlarge the pool of participants used, thus expanding the diversity and background of participants. Since all of the participants in the study came from one church, it is relatively safe to assume that they all share some similar characteristics, such as religious views and socioeconomic backgrounds (because they all live in the same affluent town or surrounding towns). While not every couple is

identical to every other couple on these demographics, they most likely are comparable. Expanding the research pool to other churches, areas of the state, or even outside of the church would allow the results to be more generalizable to the whole population. In addition, another helpful follow-up study would be to use other popular marital enrichment study materials with this same research design in order to assess their impact on marital happiness and improvement. Any number of studies currently available could be tested.

One confounding variable within this research design that could have affected the results is the pre-test, post-test design. When participants do a pre-test followed by an identical post-test later in time, the researcher runs the risk of receiving data that are inaccurate due to certain biases that can occur. For example, participants might rate themselves higher on a certain variable on the post-test because they cognitively understand they are being assessed on the differences in their scores between the pre- and post-test and therefore assume they must have improved between the two tests. Or perhaps a participant remembers what he or she answered on the pre-test and the post-tests answers are then influenced by the previous response. The likelihood of this bias having a significant impact on the results is slim, but it is still important to note that the results from this study could be due to an outside factor or due to the bias discussed above.

One unforeseen factor that may have influenced the results and, therefore, could have posed as a possible confounding variable is the fact that during the eight weeks this study was conducted, New Life Christian Church attendees heard a sermon

series on marriage and sex. The researcher was unaware of this sermon series until after the study was well underway. Couples who attended church weekly and/or participated in the marriage small groups offered by the church received extra marital encouragement during this time period. This means that couples in the control group, designed not to be receiving any additional marital enrichment materials, possibly were gaining meaningful input from another source. On the other hand, it is important to note that all of the participants attended New Life Christian Church on a regular basis. Therefore, both the experimental and control groups would have had equal access to the marital sermon series that was preached. Since differences in marital happiness ratings were found between the two groups, however, these differences were likely the result of the marital enrichment material given to the experimental group because the sermon series was presumably heard equally by both groups. However, the sermon series could account for why some of the variables were not statistically significant; the control group's marital happiness ratings may have risen more than anticipated due to the input of the 8-week sermon series.

It is also important to discuss uncontrollable variables that will always be present when a study is conducted over time and not every aspect of participants' daily lives are able to be controlled. Since this study was conducted over eight weeks and the participants lived their normal daily lives during this time, their relationships with each other and scores on their post-tests could have been affected not only by the *Love Talk* materials but also by any books they read, TV shows they watched, extended or immediate family complications that arose, or marital arguments that may have

occurred. These confounding variables aside, the statistically significant results do support the use of marital enrichment materials, specifically the *Love Talk* study, as a means to enhance one's marital happiness.

Another issue to be addressed is whether the difference in marital happiness was the result of this particular book or just the result of simply focusing on one's marriage. Results indicate that the use of the *Love Talk* marriage curriculum and the intentional focus on improving one's marriage make a positive difference. It is uncertain if this is the result of the specific material that was used or of the attention given to the marriage in general. Perhaps future study could be done that compares additional groups, each of which uses a different marital enrichment book, in order to compare the effects of the curriculum on marital happiness with a control group as a stabilizer. In this way, a researcher could isolate whether the specific *Love Talk* curriculum made the difference or whether any attempts at improving one's marriage has the same results.

In summary, the major implications of this study are that marital enrichment materials have a positive impact on marital happiness and should be used to improve marriages within the church and beyond. In addition, further studies should be conducted to assess materials other than *Love Talk* in order to measure their effectiveness as well.

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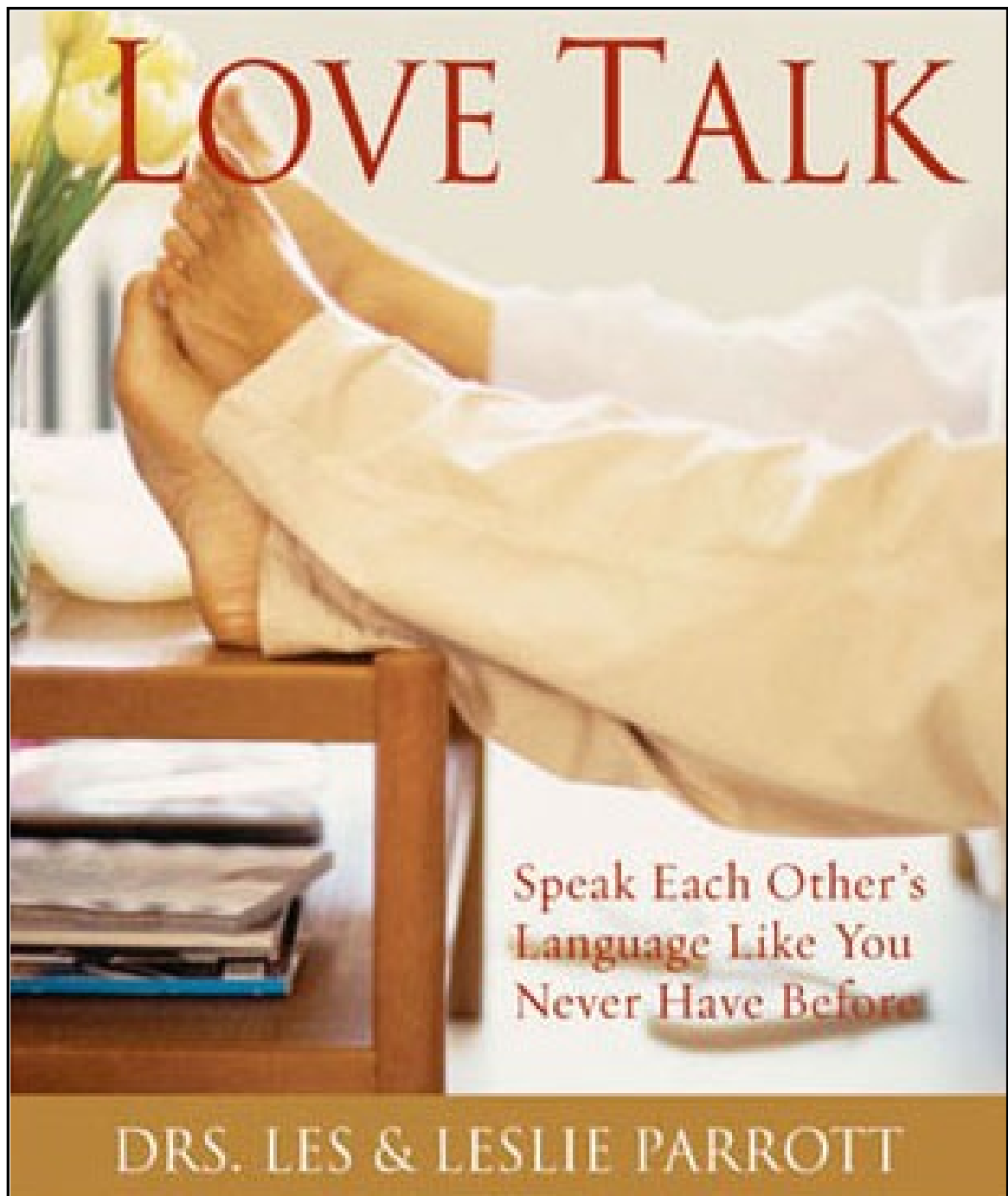
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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

Pre-Test Survey:

Please answer all questions honestly on a scale from 1-10, with numbers closer to 1 indicating some degree of unhappiness and numbers closer to 10 indicating varying degrees of happiness. Remember your answers are completely confidential and are not paired with your name. Ask yourself this question as you rate each marriage area: "If my partner continues to act in the future as he/she is acting today with respect to this marriage area, how happy will I be with this area of my marriage?" In other words, state according to the numerical scale (1-10) exactly how you feel today in each of these marital areas. Also try not to allow one category to influence the results of the other categories. The descriptors in parentheses for each question are meant to assist you in thinking about the various parts of the category.

1. Have you read the above introduction paragraph?

- Yes
- No

2. ID Number

- 

**\*Note: Answers to questions 3-12 below were given on a scale from 1-10, 1 being "completely unhappy" and 10 being "completely happy"**

3. Household Responsibilities (distribution of responsibilities, equality of distribution, spouse's performance)
4. Rearing of children (or if no children, happiness with your agreement level with spouse about having or not having children)
5. Social activities (frequency, duration, activities performed)
6. Money (budgeting, amount for savings, spending)
7. Communication (frequency, feeling understood or misunderstood, type of communication)
8. Sex (frequency, location, type, level of comfortableness, level of intimacy in public and private)
9. Academic/occupational progress of spouse (job location, procrastination, salary, amount of time spent on it)
10. Personal independence (amount of access to money, decision-making, time alone or with friends)
11. Spousal independence (amount of time spend with friends, on personal hobbies, spouse is too possessive or independent/not possessive or independent enough)
12. General happiness in the marriage and with your spouse
13. How many years have you and your spouse been married?
  - 0-5 Years
  - 6-15 Years
  - 16-25 Years

- 26-35 Years
- 36-45 Years
- 46-55 Years
- Over 55 years

14. Number of previous marriages for you:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

15. Number of previous marriages for your spouse:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

16. What year were you born?

- 

Post-Test Survey:

Please answer all questions honestly on a scale from 1-10, with numbers closer to 1 indicating some degree of unhappiness and numbers closer to 10 indicating varying degrees of happiness. Remember your answers are completely confidential and are not

paired with your name. Ask yourself this question as you rate each marriage area: "If my partner continues to act in the future as he/she is acting today with respect to this marriage area, how happy will I be with this area of my marriage?" In other words, state according to the numerical scale (1-10) exactly how you feel today in each of these marital areas. Also try not to allow one category to influence the results of the other categories. The descriptors in parentheses for each question are meant to assist you in thinking about the various parts of the category.

1. Have you read the above introduction paragraph?

- Yes
- No

2. ID Number

- 

**\*Note: Answers to questions 3-12 below were given on a scale from 1-10, 1 being "completely unhappy" and 10 being "completely happy"**

3. Household Responsibilities (distribution of responsibilities, equality of distribution, spouse's performance)
4. Rearing of children (or if no children, happiness with your agreement level with spouse about having or not having children)
5. Social activities (frequency, duration, activities performed)

6. Money (budgeting, amount for savings, spending)
7. Communication (frequency, feeling understood or misunderstood, type of communication)
8. Sex (frequency, location, type, level of comfortableness, level of intimacy in public and private)
9. Academic/occupational progress of spouse (job location, procrastination, salary, amount of time spent on it)
10. Personal independence (amount of access to money, decision-making, time alone or with friends)
11. Spousal independence (amount of time spend with friends, on personal hobbies, spouse is too possessive or independent/not possessive or independent enough)
12. General happiness in the marriage and with your spouse
13. How many years have you and your spouse been married?
  - 0-5 Years
  - 6-15 Years
  - 16-25 Years
  - 26-35 Years
  - 36-45 Years
  - 46-55 Years
  - Over 55 years
14. Number of previous marriages for you:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

15. Number of previous marriages for your spouse:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

16. What year were you born?

- 

17. How much of the book study did you complete? (Estimate to the best of your ability)

- 0 %
- 1-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-99%
- 100%
- I was not assigned to the book study group, I am in the survey-only group

18. Do you have any comments about the marriage study and your participation in it?

- 



## APPENDIX C

### Schedule of Readings and Events for *Love Talk* Research Study

Week 1: October 7-13

Read Prologue, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 (Pages 13-36)

Do accompanying workbook assignment (Exercise 1-4)

Week 2: October 14-20

Read Chapters 3 and 4 (Pages 37-59)

Do accompanying workbook assignment (Exercise 5-8)

Week 3: October 21-27

Read Chapters 5 and 6 (Pages 63-79)

There is no accompanying workbook assignment for this week

Week 4: October 28-November 3

Read Chapters 7 and 8 (Pages 81-94)

There is no accompanying workbook assignment for this week

Week 5: November 4-10

Read Chapters 9 and 10 (Pages 95-110)

Do accompanying workbook assignment (Exercise 9-11)

Week 6: November 11-17

Read Chapters 11 and 12 (Pages 111-135)

Do accompanying workbook assignment (Exercise 12-15)

Week 7: November 18-24

Read Chapter 13, Chapter 14, and Epilogue (Pages 137-162)

Do accompanying workbook assignment (Exercise 16-20)

The link to the second survey will be emailed to you on Sunday, November 25.

Complete the survey by Saturday, December 1.

**\*Helpful Study Hints\***

1. You and your spouse have a couple different options about how to complete the study. One option is to read the chapters individually (remembering to keep the book in a common location since you are sharing) as well as complete your workbook assignments individually. You can then talk about what you are learning throughout the week or set aside a bit of time each week to discuss it. Another option is to set a larger portion of time each week to read the chapters out loud together and pause to complete the workbook assignments as you go.
2. It is important that you stay on schedule and complete all of the assignments on time. Each week's assignment of reading and workbook exercises should not take more than an hour per week, so please be sure to find time in your schedule to complete the assignments. If you do not complete the assignment one week, you should complete it the next week along with that week's assignment.