The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between several dimensions of religiosity and marital functioning among married couples living in the Western New York area. Participants were 111 individuals from one Evangelical Christian church. A scale, Integration of Biblical Principles, was developed and tested for this study. Several aspects of religiosity were found to be correlated with marital functioning, but integration of Biblical principles had the strongest association. Regression analysis determined number of years married, belief construct, and integration of Biblical principles were the best predictors of marital functioning. As hypothesized, the integration dimension of religiosity, or application, is the best predictor of marital functioning compared with other religiosity variables tested. Implications for refinement of the Integration scale and for the usefulness of the study results are discussed.
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASPECTS OF
RELIGIOSITY AND MARITAL FUNCTIONING AMONG EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS

A Thesis

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In Christ alone
I place my trust
And find my glory
In the power of the cross
In every victory
Let it be said of me
My source of strength
My source of hope
Is Christ alone.
(Michael English)

Genesis 50:19-20
All – ways.
Chapter 1
Introduction

“Christian life lends stability to marriage because its principles and values naturally produce harmony between people. When put into action, Christian teaching emphasizes giving to others, self discipline, obedience to divine commandments, conformity to the law, and love between a husband and wife” (Dobson, 2001, p. 310).

Principles that Christians are commanded to follow are found throughout the Bible. Many Christians believe that if these principles are applied to everyday living, the result will be blessings and a more fulfilled life including their marriages.

Given this basic Christian belief, it could be assumed that the marriages of people within this faith would be well functioning. However, one survey of randomly selected respondents indicated that over 50% of Christians polled had divorced (Rosberg, 2002). This begs the question: are people integrating their faith-based principles into their marriage? Could Christian individuals simply be saying they believe these principles and not really building their marriage on this foundation? Many couples could believe these principles, but not actually apply them to their marriages. Or perhaps, these Christian couples might not know what the principles are, or might not know how to integrate them into a marital relationship.

It has been asserted that “the interface between marriage and religion has been conceptualized and studied primarily ‘from a distance’ ” and that “a clearer and more compelling understanding of marriage and religion is needed and may emerge by looking more closely at the intersection of these two spheres” (Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, Swank, Scott, Emery, & Rye, 1999, p. 322). In line with this assertion, this thesis investigates the relationships among various dimensions of religiosity and marital functioning within a sample of born-again Christians.

Baucom contended “a wide body of empirical investigation in various domains demonstrates that cognitions and emotions do not always parallel behavior. Given that a major function of religion is to promote broad worldviews and value systems, differentiating between these internal religious phenomena and religious behavior is vital” (2001, p. 653).
Although religiosity is associated with more conservative divorce attitudes, over time, it does not predict marital satisfaction or stability (Baucom, 2001). As Booth and Johnson (1995) plainly stated, religiosity affects attitudes but not behavior.

An empirical question addressed in this thesis is whether marriages that are thriving are ones that believe and practice Biblical principles. Studies have shown that simply attending church services does not lead to improved marital relations, enhance marital happiness, or decrease conflicts (Booth & Johnson, 1995). However, religious faith and practice does strengthen marriages (Snarey & Dollahite, 2001). Biblical principles for marriage are much more diverse in nature than simply attending a church service. A discussion of these principles, explained throughout the Old and New Testament of the Bible, is undertaken in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Warren (cited in Dobson, 1998) indicated that 5 out of 10 people divorce and only one or two of those five that remain married will achieve true intimacy. If the practice of Biblical principles within a marriage results in more positive marital functioning and thus true intimacy, the key for decreasing the divorce rate might be found. This quantitative study will seek to answer questions such as: Within the born-again Christian population, are the couples who are integrating more Biblical principles into their marriages, the couples with better functioning marriages?

“Christian” is used to describe a broad spectrum of people as well as beliefs, many of which change from group (denomination) to group. This study focuses on one specific sub-set (born-again Christians) with similar beliefs. Further research could be done with other sub-sets or denominations aiming to see if results are similar or consistent with the results of the sample chosen for this study.

Born–again Christians is a term used to describe individuals who have followed five steps outlined in the New Testament of the Bible, culminating in “receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.” This is further explained in Chapter Two of this thesis. This particular group, born-again Christians, was chosen because of the group’s vocal support of strong Christian marriage but whose divorce rate is comparable with the divorce rate of secular marriages. The researcher’s interest in why this is the case prompted this study for further investigation.

**Theoretical Model**

Symbolic interactionism provides insight for how people both individually and jointly make sense of their social worlds and construct lines of action based upon images of self, shared symbols, and taking the role of the other. Hennon, Peterson, Korb, and Kempf (2004) noted the
difficulties of casting research in the realm of religion in a theoretical light. However, the focus of symbolic interactionism on self concept, sense making, and constructing joint lines of action (i.e., socially situated action) within socially defined situations seems pertinent for use in framing the purpose and results of this thesis project. Consequently, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two will be framed by symbolic interactionism and the results reported in Chapter Five will also be cast within this framework.

Purpose of this Study

There are three main objectives for this project. First, the above noted research question seeks to answer whether or not the couples who are integrating more Biblical principles into their marriages are the same couples with better functioning marriages. This question will be answered by conducting a study of married born-again Christians. The sample is of born again Christians attending Bible study groups sponsored by one Evangelical Christian church in an area of Western New York. However, for the question to be answered, an instrument to measure the integration of Biblical principles into marital practices first needs to be established. While there are many measurements of religiosity, these instruments tend to be generic in nature and/or highlight beliefs rather than Biblical based practices. An instrument to measure the integration of Biblical principles into the marriages of Evangelical Christian becomes an important tool. Thus a second objective for this project is the creation of an instrument to operationalize the extent of integration of the identified principles into a marriage, specifically a measurement device that is appropriate for the identified population of interest. A third objective is to cast the analysis within the theoretical frame of symbolic interaction theory in a manner that can help provide a social scientific context for interpreting the results so that they can advance both the scientific study of religion and marriage, as well as provide good information for lay and religious interventionists who wish to strengthen marriages.

Importance of this Study

There are many potential contributions of this study. One is the initial development of a measurement technique to ascertain the extent of integration of Biblical principles into marital practices. Such an instrument can be further refined and employed in other research. Second, the study can contribute to answering the empirical question of the potential relationship between the integration of these principles in a marriage and the degree of marital functioning. A third potential contribution is confirmation for current leaders in Christian ministry or family life
education that their work is beneficial and can help families grow and thrive, as well as suggestions for how to improve what they are doing and why it is important. Fourth, this research will also help close a gap in the current literature in distinguishing the difference between belief and practice of the set of principles outlined in the Bible. And fifth, this study can add to the knowledge base in family science where there is currently a dearth of theoretically driven research concerning the marital life of Evangelical Christians.

Summary

In this chapter the case is made for the importance of investigating the relationship between integrating Biblical principles into a marriage and marital functioning, as well as the need for the initial development of an appropriate instrument for measuring the integration of these principles. The use of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical frame for contextualizing the study and the results is highlighted. The next chapter will explore the literature currently existing in this area of study, develop a theoretical model for the study, list and discuss the primary Biblical principles regarding Christian living, and report the hypotheses for empirical investigation.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Hypotheses

Most Americans consider themselves to be religious (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank, 2001). While realizing that religion is playing a salient role in family relationships, there has been little research on the topic in comparison to other family related topic areas (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003; Polzin, 2006). “There has long been a need, on the part of researchers in family studies, to investigate the possible relationships that exist between religion and the family” (Anthony, 1993, p. 97). Baucom (2001) suggested that researchers typically choose areas of study that interest them. He boldly asserted that psychologists are generally less religious than are the general population and this might explain the lack of research in the area of family relationships and religion.

Berardo wrote, “for a variety of reasons, studies of the relationship between religion and the family have lagged behind most other areas of family scholarship” (as cited in Anthony, 1993, p. 97). Heaton (1984) also maintained that there should be more attention given to the level of involvement in organized religion and how that could influence marital satisfaction. As noted by Butler, Stout, and Gardner (2002), the spiritual realm of relationships has been comparatively neglected in marriage and family research. A few studies have focused on global correlations between religion and marriage (Butler et al., 2002). However, influences of religion on more specific elements of marriage are needed. Snarey and Dollahite (2001) identified a problem in much of the literature on religion and the family: the use of single-item, or global, measures of religious variables, which ultimately yield weak and inconsistent findings. Looking at marital satisfaction through the lens of specific religious components could possibly give researchers a better understanding of how religious and marital satisfaction relate to one another (Mahoney et al., 1999). This thesis investigates, within a sample of born-again Christians, the relationships of various dimensions of religiosity and their influence on marital functioning.

The rationale often given for conducting research on religion and family life is the scarcity of existing work in the area. The research that has been done in the religion and family studies area has looked at if religion affects marital functioning, stability, or satisfaction. The findings have resulted in an overwhelming “yes” for many different aspects (Sullivan, 2001). What is needed
is further investigation into how religion affects marital functioning, or the process by which this takes place (Sullivan, 2001).

Researchers have often had a difficult time integrating the social sciences and religious studies (Wendel, 2003). Each area has its own distinct and decidedly separate literature and standards. Because the two fields are so different, Wendel suggested that researchers who tackle the issues of religion and behavioral science are best suited when they have been trained in both fields. Methods for studying the two fields focus on correlation rather than on integration (Wendel, 2003). Research in the family science field pertaining to religion has often been empirically driven, rather than theory driven (Sullivan, 2001). There is no unifying theoretical framework for the two areas of study and this makes theory driven research more difficult (Snarey & Dollahite, 2001).

When studying religion within the social sciences’ paradigm, issues arise such as with the definitions used to describe religion and spirituality, and how each are demonstrated behaviorally or otherwise. The definitions are often ambiguous (Polzin, 2006). Religion often refers to an extrinsic and organized idea. When the word spirituality is used, the writer often is referring to an intrinsic value system and personal experience (Wendel, 2003). However, the definitions of these terms and how they are measured vary across studies. Additionally, the operationalization of variables such as religion, spirituality, and religiosity must be clear, empirically relevant, and used in other studies in order to create a clear and concise body of knowledge. Lewis (2006) argued that religiosity is usually measured as a characteristic of individuals. While the term family religiosity is sometimes used in research, it has not been well defined or operationalized.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the extent of religiosity of an individual was frequently operationalized by a one or two item measure (Mahoney et al., 2001). Questions concerning frequency of church attendance or denominational affiliation were asked. In fact, 83% of studies of religion published in journals in the past 20 years have used this type of scale (Mahoney et al., 2003). Goldscheider and Goldscheider (as cited in Call & Heaton, 1997) considered that an individual’s religious experience includes his or her church affiliation, participation in services, beliefs in religious teachings, and personal spirituality. Glock and Stark (1965) conceptualized religion as being five dimensional: ideological, intellectual, ritualistic, experiential, and consequential. Hennon and his colleagues suggested a sixth dimension was necessary: integration. Integration is a construct referring to the manner in which Christian principles and
articles of faith become integral to a person’s self-identity and a couple’s daily experience within their relationship. Integration is the process of actualizing the other dimensions of religiosity within one’s daily life so that both the nature of relationships and the persons involved are defined by these dimensions.

The behaviors and beliefs that factor into the application of religion, in terms of living by Biblical principles, are diverse in nature. No single dimension can describe the effect of involvement in a religion or its effects on marital stability (Call & Heaton, 1997). Guidelines for such areas as gender roles, self-sacrifice, forgiveness, conflict resolution, and sexual relations are included in Biblical principles that are the application of beliefs (Mahoney et al., 2003). Commitment to marriage under all circumstances is included within these principles, including bad health, financial difficulty, and family trials (Mahoney et al., 2001).

The areas studied concerning religion and marital functioning are often framed by issues of religious homogeny. Religious homogeny typically refers to the degree in which partners believe and practice the same faith tradition. However, such studies often reveal that the marriage is simply homogenous, and does not disclose how much that particular religion is integrated into the marriage (Mahoney et al., 1999).

Looking at joint religious activities, or practice, gives a better picture of the integration of religion in a marriage, and homogeny within the marriage. Joint religious activities can include:

…informal behaviors such as prayer together, talking about how to live out God’s will, discussing personal spiritual issues or God’s role in the marriage as well as more formal religious experiences such as attending church and religious education classes, engaging in religious rituals, or attending retreats together. (Mahoney et al., 1999, p. 323)

Joint religious activity gives couples the opportunity to participate in shared values. Increased involvement in these activities is likely to increase marital satisfaction and other benefits from the relationship, as well as decreasing conflict. These mutual religious opportunities facilitate intimacy and provide the couples with more support, both internal and external. A study by Mahoney and colleagues (1999) found that better marital functioning was associated with marriages where joint religious activities are practiced and each individual views his/her marriage as having spiritual significance. Joint religious activities also decreased the presence of verbal aggression and stalemate strategies in handling marital conflict. These marital characteristics were less consistent when only one spouse demonstrated religiousness.
Religious Participation

Religious participation has shown to have positive outcomes in many areas on an individual level. Areas include the ability to maintain a job, a decrease in the consumption of alcohol, and a decrease in abusive behaviors (Booth & Johnson, 1995). Given that participation in religion can positively affect an individual, does it also positively affect marital functioning? In fact, some aspects of religious participation have shown the opposite. Couples who increase their church attendance rarely have an increase in marital satisfaction (Booth & Johnson, 1995). However, as argued above, religiousness cannot be measured on a one or two item scale. Church attendance alone does not mean that Biblical principles are being followed.

An important reason for religious participation on a family level is that religious groups could encourage participants to recognize the value in family, and people could view their involvement in the religion as a way to strengthen that family bond (Booth & Johnson, 1995). Religion also offers couples theologically grounded guidelines for handling marital conflict when it appears (Mahoney et al., 2003). Religion can create a bond between spouses that enhance marital satisfaction and strengthen marital intimacy. “Recently, scientific research has backed up what common sense has been telling us for years; mainly, that tending to the spiritual dimension of marriage is what unites couples in unbreakable bonds. Marriage thrives when its soul is nourished” (Parrott & Parrott, 1995, p. 132).

It is possible that religious practice could be an “intrinsically oriented religiosity” (Anthony, 1993, p. 107). The term intrinsically motivated refers to people who live their faith on a consistent basis and are selfless in nature. Having this characteristic in a marriage would, understandably, provide a healthier environment for the relationship (Anthony, 1993). Many marriage counselors agree that a give and take mentality contributes to marital functioning. The less egocentric a marriage, the more relational harmony the couple will experience. This is in contrast to individuals focusing on what they can get out of their marriages (Anthony, 1993).

One study, conducted by Anthony (1993), showed that couples who are extrinsically motivated in religion had the lowest level of marital satisfaction compared to their intrinsically motivated, indiscriminately antireligious or non religious, and indiscriminately proreligious counterparts. According to the definitions used in Anthony’s study, extrinsically motivated religion was characterized by the practice of religion in order to fulfill one’s own personal need or motives, rather than a pursuit of closeness to God. Indiscriminately pro-religious individuals
were supportive of anything religious without clear boundaries of their own motives, and indiscriminately anti-religious individuals were opposed to anything related to religion (Anthony, 1993). Anthony proposed that intrinsically motivated people were practicing a “higher form” of motivation and were “living out their faith” (p. 9).

The family studies research literature typically does not distinguish between belief and practice of any given religion. It seems that the researchers assume that if individuals or married couples believe a certain set of principles, they in turn adhere to and live by those same principles. Baucom (2001, p. 653) argued, “understanding this differential relationship between religiosity and cognitions/emotions versus behavior is critical for developing reasonable models of the role of religious functioning in couple and family life.” Therefore, research to distinguish these two concepts or dimensions of religion and to test whether one without the other (or in combination) has a positive impact on marital functioning would appear to have the potential to advance the field of study.

Gap in Literature

Much of the literature fails to consider the religious homogeneity of marriages in relation to marital functioning (Call & Heaton, 1997). Although one spouse may practice a religion, the other spouse may be committed to the practice of another religion. It is also possible that two individuals can adhere to the same religion, but differ in the degree each demonstrates the various dimensions of religiously, especially the extent to which religion is integrated into his or her life. Two spouses practicing different religions or the same religion in different ways may not contribute to a well-functioning marriage; in contrast, homogenous beliefs and practices may be an important variable that can increase both partners’ sense of satisfaction in their marriage. An individual’s religious commitment might be necessary, but not sufficient, to change the course of a marriage.

Theoretical Model

Symbolic interaction theory is a framework used for examining specific situations and events through the perspective of the individual. A central tenet of this theory is that individuals are constantly striving to give meaning to their social situations, with the intent to create order and mutually understood interaction. A particular event cannot be fully comprehended by others unless understood from the perspectives of the individuals involved (White & Klein, 2002).
While each individual assigns certain meaning to a situation or object, family units also assign meanings to situations (Hildenbrand & Hennon, in press).

Within each family, there are roles that each individual enacts. Competent role-playing is a significant aspect for the family functioning well as a unit. For each role that an individual enacts, there are associated role expectations placed on that individual, both by self and by others within the group (White & Klein, 2002). The clearer the role expectations, the increased ease (typically) with which the individual can enact the role. Role expectations are learned through socialization and the sharing of symbols. Symbols, including language, are shared understanding among a group of interactors. If symbols, meanings, or role expectations are not shared, then there is increased probability for role strain or role ambiguity.

An assumption of symbolic interactionism is that humans attach values to objects, interactions, statuses, and the like (Rose, 1962). The degree of value ascribed is related to the motivation to secure the object (physical or social) or participate in the activity. Highly valued things are sought after. To appreciate why people act, it is important to know what they value.

Another assertion of symbolic interactionism is that individuals have “selves,” or a self-conception (identity) derived through social interaction and socialization (White & Klein, 2002). One comes to define her- or himself as a certain kind of person with identified values, goals, skills, knowledge, personality, traits, and behavioral tendencies. This sense of self is a component that helps determine what things are valued and what lines of action are taken.

For any given situation, an individual can be introspective and consider what he or she should do. That is, in a given situation, the individual socially situates self relative to others. A coherent self-identity, competence at role-taking (or precise understanding of the statuses and expectations of others in the social situation), and clear understanding of one’s role expectations facilitates this process. The resulting definition of the situation gives guidance to what everyone involved is expected to do. The more precisely the definition of the situation is shared among those people involved, the more ease with which interaction can transpire. Shared symbols and values can facilitate role-playing and interactional competency.

This theoretical model can be useful in understanding the place Christianity holds in a given family, and the resulting behaviors. Christianity is not a list of “dos and don’ts,” but it does provide its followers with guidelines and expectations for living out the faith. The Bible supplies information on how each role in the family is to be played for the healthiest family functioning.
In order for a family to live by these guidelines, they must know what they are. Importantly, these symbols (information) must be shared and relatively equally valued. The more articulated the individual definitions of the situation (or the sense of “what is going on here and what is everyone expected to do?”), the greater the likelihood of smooth interaction and movement toward shared goals.

While this theory asserts that each spouse assigns her or his own meaning to given situations and objects, the Bible helps provide this meaning for those who follow the Christian faith. That is, spouses who hold self-conceptions of being a Christian, who share the value of Christianity, who seek guidance from the Bible, who have socialized each other as to role expectations, who are competent at role-taking, and who share definitions of the various family situations, ought to interact in a manner that facilitates achievement of desired goals. If a Christian lifestyle and a marriage based on Biblical principles, the achievement of salvation, living in grace, and the like are jointly valued, then with the use of this theoretical model it is predicted that there would be shared understandings of role (e.g., family, gender) expectations and desired goals for the marriage, and thus better marital functioning.

To further elaborate the model, the following conceptualizations are incorporated. Assuming that religiosity has five dimensions (Glock & Stark, 1965), each should be related to marital functioning if the life style of a Christian marriage is desired. The ideological dimension involves the strength of the beliefs held and from where they are derived. In this case, it is assumed that born-again Christians derive their beliefs from a literal interpretation of the Bible. Certain Biblical principles are learned from close scriptural reading, the reading of and listening to others’ interpretations of the Bible and the derivative understanding of these principles, and socialization of each other through discussions, modeling, and holding each other accountable for their beliefs and actions. The end result can be a set of relatively shared and valued understandings of the principles and the underlying beliefs. It is anticipated that born-again Christian married couples would closely share the degree of beliefs and the values that are assigned to these beliefs.

This dimension would seem the foundation for the others. Without the ideological, the other aspects of religiosity would appear to be weakly held or only superficially displayed. This is one aspect of how intrinsic and extrinsic religious motivation comes to determine one’s actions. Are actions designed to further the goals that help create an integrated self conception as a “truly”
religious person, to achieve goals based on other understandings of “who one is” (self-conception)?

The intellectual dimension encompasses the cognitive and considered views of religion. For example, the acceptance or rejection of the story of creation and the reality of miracles, the placing of religious truth above or below other forms of truth, and general knowledge of the Bible (such as the ability to list the various Gospels, Disciplines, or principles; understanding the relationships among Biblical characters; or a chronology of Biblical events). The importance of this dimension might lie in the cognitive foundation it provides for interpretation of the meaning of life and situations, the credence given to claims and counter-claims offered by both the secular and religious worlds, and the ability to discuss rationally the importance of religion in daily life. It is assumed that the more such knowledge and views are shared by a couple, the greater the rewards of discussing religion and its importance for married life.

The ritualistic dimension includes how people display their religious convictions and interact in a religious context. It includes both public and private actions, individually or jointly with others. Examples would include reading the Bible and praying either alone or with others, participating in Bible study groups, attending religious services and/or events, partaking in the Sacraments and other representations of following a religious life, and the value placed on ceremonies such as church (that is, religious) weddings and baptisms.

From the theoretical model being developed here, it is assumed that the more one understands the role expectations and values the experiences, the more competently one can enact the role and be motivated to do so. Opportunities for joint participation result from having common definitions of the situations, clear role expectations, and a sense of self that motivates one to participate. In some cases, the motivation for participation might be more extrinsically driven, such as wishing to appear to be religious or to please others, such as one’s spouse. More intrinsic motivations should accrue from having a sense of self that fully encompasses the life of a Christian and the desire to fulfill closely held personal values based on the ideological aspects of religiosity. To better understand the actions of people participating in ritualistic activities, knowledge of the sense of self and the goals pursued would be necessary.

How one experiences his or her religion is on the experiential dimension of religiosity. Examples include feeling close to God, believing that life has a certain purpose, having confidence and a sense of security in the face of death, providing a manner for interpreting one’s
own existence and that of others, making sense of events such as illness or accidents, and having faith or putting confidence in the things hoped for and being certain about things that cannot be seen or understood through science.

The experiential aspects of being a born-again Christian lead to paradigms for interpreting social life and offer a worldview for framing events and consequences of events. If couples feel (or strive to be) close to God, believe life and existence has purpose, and have faith that what they value is important, then this definition of the situation should give guidance to their marital life. It would seem that certain goals would be sought that non born-again Christians would not seek, that the meaning ascribed to the marriage would be different than the meaning ascribed by secular couples, and that the everyday reality of marital interactions would be interpreted through achieving a closer relationship with God.

Such experiential aspects of living a born-again Christian marriage should be different from the experiential reality of non born-again Christians, including the interpretations of events and their meaning, the reasons for the events, and the longer-term consequences of events. Having a shared vision of faith in God and a shared knowledge of the meaning for one’s existence and the role one is to play would, theoretically, lead to married couples valuing and striving for similar goals and giving similar definitions to the causes and consequences of marital events (e.g., illness, temptation, financial difficulties, divorce of relatives, premarital pregnancies). Such shared meaning should relate to less marital conflict and doubt about the purpose and future of the marriage. Likewise, it should facilitate role-taking and competent role interactions.

Another suggested dimension of religiosity is integration (Hennon et al., 2004). This dimension references the action necessary to make religiosity a lived everyday reality. In this case, these actions include making Christian principles, articles of faith (beliefs), rituals, the results of experiencing religion and the like integral to a person’s self-identity and a couple’s jointly negotiated daily experience within their relationship. Integration is the process of actualizing the other dimensions of religiosity within one’s daily life so that both the nature of relationships and the persons involved are defined by these dimensions. In this thesis, the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale, consisting of Christian principles identified by Lewis (2000), operationalizes this dimension of religiosity. A focus of this thesis is the possible difference between beliefs and actions, specifically actions beyond church attendance or other Christian rituals, on marital functioning.
The consequential dimension refers to the outcomes expected or encountered. Simply stated, if one believes in a certain set of religious principles, has a specific intellectual understanding of what it means to be born-again, participates in appropriate religious rituals, experiences one’s faith and spirituality in a meaningful way, and integrates these aspects of life into a purposeful whole, then one ought to expect certain consequences of doing so.

Couples who are born-again and integrate Biblical principles that are components of the other dimensions of religion into their marriage would theoretically expect different marital outcomes (e.g., daily and long term, amount of satisfaction and healthy functioning) than would other couples. Other consequences of adhering to particular theological tenets or participating in organized religion could include the timing and reason for sexual intercourse, number of children conceived, actions concerning abortion or same-sex unions, food choices, methods of achieving health care, acceptance of particular family roles and power hierarchy, and other behavioral choices (e.g., cheating, domestic violence, choosing to act in a loving manner toward one’s spouse even when upset, and striving to work through marital conflicts and how they are resolved).

From a theoretical standpoint, couples who hold shared conceptions of self as born-again and who give meaning to life and its events from a perspective derived from shared faith and religion would likely be able to take the role of the other and thus socially situate themselves in a manner allowing engagement in joint courses of action designated for achieving meaningful and valued goals. Born-again couples that share conceptions of religion and highly value its importance would, theoretically, be motivated to incorporate Biblical principles into their marriages and thus achieve harmonious definitions of the situations and clarity of role expectations. If one or the other of the spouses holds a different self identity, gives meaning to life and events differently than does the spouse, and/or defines situations in a manner that is in discordance with the spouse, then role taking and role playing might be stressed. Less marital harmony could be a consequence.

Among non born-again couples, different meaning given to life and events based on different socialization and self-conceptions should lead to different consequences of situated action. This is not to mean that only born-again Christians can achieve well functioning marriages. Certainly, there are many paths to this end. However, when couples agree as to values and means to reach desired ends, then achieving these goals may become easier. Theoretically, the Biblical
principles pertaining to living a virtuous life and having a harmonious marriage, when shared by couples, ought to help them achieve this goal.

Application of the Theoretical Model to this Study

Within this study, the focus is on possible within group differences. With a relatively homogenous sample, the effects of different pathways to healthy functioning marriages cannot be deciphered. However, some important theoretical questions can be answered empirically.

First, does adherence to shared values and role expectations lead to achieving the desired outcome of a well functioning marriage? Given the acceptance of the place of harmonious family life in the hierarchy of values espoused by Evangelical churches, a well functioning marriage is assumed to be a desired goal of married couples. As a thing of value, the couples should be motivated to achieve it. Given the theology ascribed to, the pathway to this goal should be through the integration of defined Biblical principles in the marriage. The knowledge of these principles or theology comes from socialization into the ways of a particular culture, in this case Evangelical Christianity. As a culture, there are proscribed values and norms, as well as institutionalized methods for conducting joint action and achieving the valued goals. Consequently, it is assumed that many of the born again Christians in the sample will have a well functioning marriage.

Failure to find that most couples in the sample have well functioning marriages could be for two reasons (other than methodological). One, the theoretical reasoning is incorrect and there is no empirical basis for a set of religious views and actions to be causal in marital outcomes. Second, with the value placed on marriage and its scrutiny by those involved, respondents might believe that their marriage has not yet reached the apex of functioning desired. While objectively the marriage is well functioning, the spouses might believe that it has not yet achieved its valued optimal performance. A related problem could also occur. Given the value placed on good marriages and the circumstances under which the questionnaires will be completed, it is possible that a strong response bias will result, with respondents indicating better functioning marriages than they are in actuality.

A second premise is indicated. While all five previously identified (Glock & Stark, 1965) dimensions of religiosity should be interrelated and deterministic in the variance found in the consequence dimension, it is hypothesized that the dimension contributing to explaining the most variance in the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (the measure of the dependent variable or consequence)
will be an additional dimension that has been theoretically developed (Hennon et al., 2004) and empirically operationalized for this thesis research. This dimension is labeled “integration,” meaning using the ideological and intellectual dimensions of religiosity to guide the actual application of the Biblical principles to marital life. Based on the review of literature, it is understood that ritualistic religious activities such as church attendance do not explain marital outcomes. Likewise, general knowledge or intellectual religiosity appears relatively unrelated to marital outcomes in a direct fashion. While the ideological or belief dimension can be highly correlated with, and thus the foundation for, other dimensions, it would seem that its role in marital functioning would be more basic and necessary for the actual integration of Biblical principles. However, it seems from previous research that beliefs alone do not guarantee good marriages. Beliefs must be put into action by actually integrating Biblical principles with one’s marriage. Experiential meaning appears to be theoretically related to outcomes, as how one experiences one’s faith or religion should be influenced by, as well as influence, one’s marriage. While integration might be somewhat similar to experiential, for this model it is kept conceptually distinct. Integration of religion, or in this case Biblical principles, is likely similar to what might be termed the practice of one’s religion, if by practice the ritualistic aspects are not included (other than aspects such as praying together), but rather the acting out of one’s religion on a daily bases. A consequence of integration of Biblical principles is hypothesized to be a better functioning marriage. Not tested in this thesis research, but based on the tenets of symbolic interaction theory, is the conjecture that experiencing the consequence of a good marriage should motivate couples to pursue even better integration of principles to achieve more of what they define as a valued social object.

Biblical Principles in Marriage, From a Christian Point of View

The weakest marriages are those that are not concerned with the welfare of others and who have selfish motives (Anthony, 1993). Hansen (1987) suggested that an individual’s religiosity should affect that individual’s marital interactions. According to many Christians, there are principles set out in the Bible upon which people are instructed to form their marriages:

Christian life lends stability to marriage because its principles and values naturally produce harmony between people. When put into action, Christian teaching emphasizes giving to others, self-discipline, obedience to divine commandments, conformity to the law, and love between a husband and wife. (Dobson, 2000, p. 310)
Many Christian family counselors, psychologists, and educators insist that building a foundation on Biblical principles will ensure a growing vitality in the home (Rainy & Rainy, 2002). Researchers who have examined couples married for at least two decades have found that the most important practice and quality were a faith in God and spiritual commitment (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). “Religion provides couples with a shared sense of values, ideology, and purpose that bolsters their partnership. Marriage is closer to the nature of God than is any other human experience” (Parrott & Parrott, 1995, p. 136). Dobson (1998) concisely summarizes the position of many Christians when he states, “The family was God’s idea and he does not make mistakes” (p. 19).

**Biblical Principles Outlined**

As one individual said, “To me, it would be like being inside a room with no air, not to have God in a marriage” (Robinson, 1994, p. 211). Some individuals in long-term marriages have attributed their marital success to holding steadfast, in practice, to their beliefs in the sanctity of marriage (Kaslow & Robison, 1996). In this section, Biblical principles that can be integrated into a marriage are noted. Indicators of each principle’s integration are discussed in Chapter Three.

**Prayer.** A key element in forming a Biblically based marriage, according to many, is prayer between spouses and within the family (Dobson, 1998; Parrott & Parrott, 1995; Rainy & Rainy, 2002). Parrott and Parrott (1995) stated, “Andrew Greenley surveyed married people and found that the happiest couples were those who pray together. Couples who frequently pray together are twice as likely as those who pray less often to describe their marriages as being highly romantic” (p. 145).

Butler, Stout, and Gardner (2002) found that there were statistically significant effects in marriages where couples prayed on a regular basis. In fact, prayer decreased negativity, contempt, hostility, and emotional reactivity. These couples also experienced an increase in the understanding of their partner’s perspective, partner empathy, an increase in self-change as compared to a partner-change focus, and an increase in experience of couple responsibility for reconciliation and problem solving. Additionally, these authors reported that prayer could enhance communication within a relationship and help an individual focus on self-change opportunities rather than focus on the partner’s need for, and areas of, change. Robinson (1994)
also found that prayer assisted with communication and helped strengthen commitment, provided moral guidance, and helped in decision making.

Prayer can be introduced to the marital relationship in many ways and for many reasons (Butler et al., 2002). It can be used as prevention to influence actions that diminish destructive behavior. Prayer can be used to extinguish conflict as it is escalating. Lastly, prayer can be used to repair a relationship or work toward the reconciliation of a relationship.

Scripture reading. Dobson (1998), founder of Focus on the Family, completed an informal study with 600 individuals within 300 marriages. He discussed with them concepts and methods that have worked in their home to make their two-decade marriages work. The number one concept they cited was developing a Christ-centered home. This concept has many applications, including developing a meaningful prayer life, depending on the Bible for solutions, giving to others, self-discipline, obedience to divine commandments, conformity to the laws of man, and love and fidelity between husband and wife. Each of these concepts has Biblical backing.

Similarly to the participants cited in Dobson’s informal study, Rainy and Rainy (2002) agreed that Scripture reading as a couple is an important ingredient in living in a marriage based on Biblical principles:

It’s a tragedy that although most Christians today express a deep fondness for Scripture, they are apparently failing to feast on the Word. Researcher George Barna reported early in 2001 that fewer than four of ten born-again Christians read the Bible on their own in a typical week. (p. 40)

Rainy and Rainy (2002), founders of the organization *FamilyLife*, found a similar statistic to be true:

…a *FamilyLife* survey conducted in churches throughout the United States shows that two-thirds of couples only occasionally—if at all—read or discuss the Bible together. Just 15 percent of couples discuss the Bible several times a week or more. (p. 41)

The following are a list of Biblical principles a Christian family should exhibit, as outlined by Lewis (2000).

**Strong, supportive, and honest communication.** Communication is discussed in the Bible in Ephesians 4:29 (New King James Version). It states, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”
Good and constant communication was also a component that Dobson (1998) found, with his
300 couples, which could bolster a marriage. There are several more references to this idea in
the Bible, including the idea of speaking what is right and true (Proverbs 8:6-8), speaking the
truth in love and not harshly (Ephesians 4:15, 4:29), being quick to listen and slow to speak
(James 1:19), not lying (Exodus 20:16), and not gossiping (Proverbs 26:20). Dobson (1998, p.
66) gave this advice as application of good communication: “change what can be altered, explain
what can be understood, teach what can be learned, revise what can be improved, resolve what
can be settled, negotiate that which is open to compromise, and accept what can’t be changed”
(p. 66).

The idea of having good communication skills to promote a healthy marriage is not only
found in the Bible. Many researchers focus on the healthy effects of communication in
relationships.

Share common faith and practice. The Bible emphasizes having a common faith and
practice in 2 Corinthians 6:14 where it purports, “Do not be unequally yoked together with
unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion
has light with darkness?”

Parrott and Parrott (1995), in opposition to what has been suggested by others (cf. Booth &
Johnson, 1995), reported that attending church together increased couples’ chances of staying
married for life, and that churchgoers feel better about their marriages than do those who do not
worship together. Daily practice of the same beliefs can have an impact on other seemingly
associated areas of a marriage. For example, there is a connection between couples praying and
sex within that marriage. Parrott and Parrott (1995) reported that the frequency of prayer within
a marriage can predict marital satisfaction. They also indicate that married couples who pray
together are 90 percent more likely to report higher satisfaction with their sex life than couples
who do not pray together. Rainy and Rainy (2002), based on surveys taken at their FamilyLife
conferences, indicated that fewer than eight percent of all couples pray together regularly. They
also estimated that fewer than three percent of all Christian couples have daily prayer together.
Matthew 18:19-20 discusses the concept that prayer does work: “Again I say to you that if two of
you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in
heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of
them.”
Agreement on key values. “Can two walk together, unless they agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Rainy and Rainy (2002) identified this unified agreement as “setting the course.” They encouraged couples to decide what their “we-will-die-for” values are, when they first establish their marriage: “The first step is to define together the “we-will-die-for-these” values in your family. You both need to agree on these so that you can answer an important question: What do we want to live for as a family?” (p. ?). This is addressed in the Bible in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Practice love and mutual appreciation. In 1 Peter 3:7 it is written that “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” Gary Chapman (1995) stated, “At the heart of mankind’s existence is the desire to be intimate and to be loved by another. Marriage is designed to meet that need for intimacy and love” (p. 21).

Common goals and interests. “Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Philippians 2:2).

Lewis (2000) said that when couples have common goals and interests they have more incentive to spend time together. This can ultimately bring the couples closer together.

Negotiate solutions to crisis. “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

In speaking about negotiation, Lloyd (1987) said, “A key aspect of positive communication is the ability to express differences and negotiate conflict effectively (p. 290).

Regular sexual intercourse. “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Corinthians 7:4-5).

Along with this, the Bible gives guidance about pre-marital sex and extra-marital sexual relations. Pre-marital sex is forbidden in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. It is described as a sin against God and an individual’s body. The body is also described as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Here, it seems that preparing for a Biblically based marriage starts before an individual is united in marriage. Dobson (1998) cited Morris and Joy as indicating that sexual abstinence is related to the process of bonding. Sexual abstinence before marriage is important for proper bonding. If
this is not followed, it weakens the institution of marriage and undermines the stability of the family.


**Make sacrifices for the family’s good.** In Philippians 2:3-4, it is reported, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of your look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Dobson (1998, p. 62) suggested, “this one verse contains more wisdom than most marriage manuals combined. If heeded, it could virtually eliminate divorce from the catalog of human experience.”

**Exhibit trust among family members.** “The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain” (Proverbs 31:11). Dobson’s (1998) second finding showed that among the 300 marriages he examined, those that were successful exhibited a committed love. Committed love is expressed in the Bible in John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Dobson (2000, p. 310) proclaimed, “when newlyweds are deeply committed to Jesus Christ, they enjoy advantages over families with no spiritual dimension.”

Of the variables examined in a study by Clements and Swensen (2000), commitment to one’s spouse was the strongest and most consistent predictor of marital quality. Commitment had an affect on decreasing marriage problems and increasing the expression of love and dyadic adjustment. Many studies done throughout the 1970s and 1980s have all found that commitment is an important variable in a stable marital relationship (as cited in Clements & Swensen, 2000). Commitment can enhance the sense of safety in intimate relationships (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). Similarly, commitment parallels a sense of security, which, when felt, can contribute to partners acting in a way that is only shared in a safe environment (Stanley, et al., 2002).
Secular view of the family vs. Biblical view. There are significant differences between a marriage that is based on Biblical principles and one that is not. Garland (1999) discusses this by stating:

Marriage in the lives of Christians presents special challenges. For Christians, there is more to marriage than being able to stick it out, or even being companions who are happy together a for a lifetime. Christians face the challenge of living Christ like lives through their marriages. “Success” cannot be measured on scales of marital satisfaction or happiness alone but is dependent on the degree to which partners “lose their lives in order to save them.” The challenge is not to find personal happiness but to give of oneself to another. (p. 532)

There are several examples directly in the Bible. For example in Philippians 2:3-4, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Garland (1999) discusses several problems with the secular idea that hard work and commitment alone will result in longer lasting marriage. The first is that many people who have failed marriages have done everything they knew to salvage their relationship. Second, this idea ignores the imperfection of persons, who can only rely on God’s grace to release them from unsuccessful attempts to perfect themselves and their relationships. A Biblical view regards humans as unable to function on their own: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 15:5). Lastly, the idea of hard work and enduring through a marriage is problematic because of the implication that a marriage is the result solely of the actions and attitudes of the partners themselves.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are based on the literature reviewed, the theoretical model being developed, and the Biblical principles reviewed that should theoretically be valued by born-again Christians. The hypotheses will be tested using bivariate and multivariate analysis.

Hypothesis 1. People who integrate more Biblical principles into their marriage have a better functioning marriage. This will be tested using Pearson’s correlation, observing the relationship between the extent of integration of Biblical principles as operationalized for this thesis (Integration of Biblical Principles Scale) and the score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). The Integration of Biblical Principles Scale is developed for this thesis. The Integration of
Biblical Principles Scale is based on components of healthy families and marriages as conceptualized by Lewis (2000), based on his list of principles, from the Bible, for healthy family functioning. Lewis specified that these components overlap with what research on secular families demonstrated were indicators of healthy family functioning. These principles are listed above, and encompass components other than those dimensions conceptualized by Glock and Stark (1965).

Hypothesis 2. People who more often read the Bible and pray with their spouse will be those who integrate more of the other Biblical principles into their marriages. This hypothesis investigates the relationship among the integration of Biblical principles. It is believed that joint Bible reading and prayer are the two most important principles, at least as found in other research. The hypothesis is that those couples performing these acts will also be more likely to integrate other principles into their marriages. This will be tested using Pearson’s correlation, observing the relationship between the score on an author-constructed Devotion Scale and the score on a modification of the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale. The modification is the scale that remains after extracting the two items that became the Devotion Scale. These two questions address joint prayer and Bible reading. The relative strength of the correlations between the Devotion Scale, the modified Integration Scale, and the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale with the score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale will also be observed.

Hypothesis 3. While Devotion (i.e., spouses together praying and reading the Bible) is predictive of better marital functioning, the strength of the relationship will be lower than will be the strength of the relationship between Integration of Biblical principles and the DAS score, a measure of marital functioning. This hypothesis will be tested by observing the empirical correlation between both Devotion and Integration of Biblical principles with the DAS score. A stronger correlation between Integration of Biblical principles and the DAS score will be considered as supportive of this hypothesis. The reasoning for this hypothesis is that Devotion alone is not as important as the integration of many Biblical principles in establishing a better functioning marriage.

Hypothesis 4. People who score higher on the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale will score higher on the God and Sexuality Scale. As discussed in this thesis, the Bible provides Christians with clear boundaries related to pre-marital, marital, and extra-marital sexuality, that followers are expected to live by. These tenets include the importance of giving one’s partner
authority over her/his own body. Therefore if an individual has a high score on the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale, it is expected that this individual will also score high on the God and Sexuality Scale, because how one conducts himself/herself sexually is within the set of principles in the Bible. Observing the empirical correlation between the scores on the God and Sexuality Scale and the Integration of Biblical Principals Scale will test this hypothesis. A positive and statistically significant correlation will be considered support for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5. People who score higher on each aspect of religiosity will have higher functioning marriages. Five variables are used to measure different aspects of religiosity: Belief Construct, Religious Activities, Steps of Salvation, God and my Marriage, and Integration of Biblical Principles in Marriage. The prediction is that each dimension is correlated with the total score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in the expected direction. Pearson’s correlation will be employed for testing this hypothesis. All dimensions of religiosity measured will require statistically significant and positive correlations with DAS for this hypothesis to be fully supported.

Hypothesis 6. The various aspects of religiosity, in combination, will explain a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable, the total score of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The dimensions are Belief Construct, Religious Activities, Steps of Salvation, God and my Marriage, and Integration of Biblical Principles in Marriage. It is predicted that by using multiple regression analysis, entering each score from the religiosity measures (i.e., predictor variables measuring some aspect of religiosity), a statistically significant amount of variance will be explained in the dependent variable; if so, this will be considered as support for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7. While each aspect of religiosity contributes to explained variance in the scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Integration of Biblical principles will be the best predictor variable. It is anticipated that integration will, when in combination with the other scales measuring aspects of religiosity, explain the most variance in marital functioning in the multiple regression analysis. This prediction is based on the theoretical arguments made earlier in this thesis, that action (i.e., integration) is more important than is any other dimension or aspect of religiosity with respect to better marital functioning.
Summary

This chapter reviewed existing literature covering the topic of religiosity and marital quality. Aspects of religiosity that appear to be either related or not related to marital quality were noted. The various dimensions of religiosity were reviewed, and a theoretical model was suggested that integrates the dimensions of religiosity with explanations provided by symbolic interactionism. The Biblically based Christian principles in marriage were explained. These include: prayer, Bible reading, trust, communication, agreement on key values, satisfaction with sexual intercourse, strength of belief, closeness to God, gender roles, respect, sacrifice, negotiation skills, mutual appreciation, and activities within the relationship and individually. Finally, hypotheses were stated. The next chapter reviews the methodology for this study.
Chapter 3
Methodology

This study is an analysis of self-report data collected from married adults attending an Evangelical Christian church. This chapter reports the methodology and methods.

Procedures and Sample

Procedures

The researcher arranged the distribution of questionnaire packets to married couples that attended small-group Bible studies sponsored by the church chosen as the sampling site. The group leaders were encouraged to obtain enough packets to give to members of their group. Each packet contained two questionnaires (one each for the husband and wife), each with its own consent letter and self addressed stamped envelope (see Appendix A). Participants filled out the questionnaire at their own leisure, apart from their spouses, and mailed it back to the researcher.

This procedure was approved by the pastors of the participating church. The researcher had previously contacted the pastors and explained the purpose of this study. The researcher distributed the packets on two Sunday mornings before, between, and after church services.

Participants

The participants were those who attended small-group Bible study sponsored by one church in Western New York. One hundred seventy packets (340 questionnaires) were distributed to the Bible studies group leaders. Of the questionnaires distributed, 111 were returned, a return rate of 33%. It is not known if all packets were distributed, nor how many group members attended the Bible studies during the time the packets were distributed. It is also not known how many of the Bible studies group members were currently married. The questionnaires were numbered such that each in the same packet could later be matched. The husband and wife of each couple were thus matched through a number code. The researcher was able to distinguish the husband’s questionnaire from his wife’s because each was instructed to fill out different items among those numbered 38–40. Of the 111 questionnaires returned, 104 (93%) were from couples where both the husband and the wife completed the questionnaire; that is, 52 couples returned questionnaires. One male and six females returned questionnaires but their spouse did not.

The sample (\(N = 111\)) consisted of 53 men and 58 women. The sample was 96% Caucasian with a modal age of 50–59. Respondents ranged in age from 18–89. The respondents’ mean years of marriage was 21.86 with a standard deviation of 11.85. The range of years married was
from 1–56. The majority (69%) of the respondents were in their first marriage. There was an average of 2.34 children (SD = 1.37) with a range of 0-6 children. The modal household income was $75,000–$100,000 with a range from below $15,000 to over $150,000. Education ranged from less than high school to professional degrees with the mode being having some college experience (see Table 1 for sample characteristics). Using a six-item measure of salvation (items 44–49 in questionnaire), 109 respondents (98%) are classified as born-again Christians (see below for how this was operationalized). Table 2 shows the correlations among demographic variables and also the demographic variables and the dependent variable of this study (DAS).

Table 1
Sample Characteristics (N = 111)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean/Mode (SD)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years married</td>
<td>21.86 (11.85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>2.34 (1.37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present age</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>41.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household range of income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born-again</td>
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</table>
### Table 2
Correlations among Demographic Variables and DAS

<table>
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 # years married</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 First marriage?</td>
<td>-0.245**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 # of children</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.192*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Age</td>
<td>0.764***</td>
<td>0.201*</td>
<td>0.155</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Income</td>
<td>-0.062</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Education</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 DAS</td>
<td>0.171*</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05. ** ≤ .01. *** ≤ .001. One-tailed test.

Several limitations of this sample have been identified. First, it was obtained via a purposeful sampling technique of mostly born-again Christians and does not include a diverse group of people. However, denominational differences were not a variable in this study. Ascertaining the linkages among theoretical variables and the development of a measurement of the integration of Biblical principle into a marriage were the purposes of the study. The findings can be replicated and the measurement tool refined through additional research. The lack of representativeness of the sample, therefore, should not prohibit achieving these purposes. A second limitation is that the sampling procedures did not allow for including people who might be less religious, belong to different denominations, or who use a text other than the Bible. Comparisons among such groups could therefore not be made in the analysis, and results do not have the ability to be generalized to any group other than to born-again Christians. Likewise, it was not possible to determine if marital functioning is influenced by factors other than religious beliefs and practices.

**Variables**

*Operationalization of Dependent Variable*

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976; see Appendix B) was used to measure marital functioning. The DAS includes 32 items and is a highly reliable scale. Spanier reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .96 for the scale, an alpha reported in other studies (Anthony, 1993).

Items on the scale have different possible responses. Items 50–64 were answered using a Likert-type scale ranging from 5 = *Agree* to 0 = *Always disagree*. Items 65–71 were answered...
using a Likert-type scale ranging from $0 = \text{All the time}$ to $5 = \text{Never}$. Item 72 used $4 = \text{Every Day}$ to $0 = \text{Never}$. Item 73 was answered from $4 = \text{All of them}$ to $0 = \text{None of them}$. Responses to items 74–77 were $0 = \text{Never}$ to $5 = \text{More often}$. Items 78 and 79 were Yes / No responses. Item number 80 was answered on a continuum with $0 = \text{Extremely Unhappy}$ to $6 = \text{Perfect}$. Finally, item 81 ranged from $5 = \text{I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does}$, to $0 = \text{My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going}$.

Each respondent’s scores on the DAS items were summed and a total score determined. Total scores could range from 0-151. The Cronbach’s alpha for the DAS for the sample in this study was .8922.

*Operationalization of Independent Variables*

**Belief Construct.** Belief Construct is a measure of one of five dimensions of religiosity as purposed by Glock and Stark (1965), that is, the ideological dimension. The original scale, found in Robinson and Shaver (1973), was developed based on items meeting the Guttman criterion of unidimensionality. Robinson and Shaver indicated that the sub-scales, such as ideological, can be used separately, that the scale appears to be a “relatively good measure of general religiosity” (p. 650), and that the belief or ideological dimension was most highly correlated with the other dimensions, which indicated that it is the central component of religiosity.

A modification of the original sub-scale for the ideological dimension was used in this study. Belief Construct was operationalized by the answers to items 9–14 of the questionnaire. Each response matching what was considered a traditional religious response was coded with a score of 1 and all other responses to that item coded as 0. In the questionnaire (Appendix B), an asterisk next to the response indicates the more traditional view of religion. (The asterisks did not appear on the version distributed to the participants.) Responses to the items were summed, with a higher score indicating a more traditional Judeo-Christian religious belief system. Preliminary scale analysis indicated that item 14 did not fit well with the other items. This item, therefore, was eliminated from the scale. The highest possible score on this 5 item scale was 5, the lowest 0. For the sample used in this study, the scale mean was 4.75 with a standard deviation of .8787. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale demonstrated an internal consistency reliability coefficient of .9209.
Religious Activities. A scale developed for this study consisting of 4 items (15–18 of the questionnaire) sought to measure the extent to which respondents carry out certain activities deemed important for living a religious life. This is a second dimension of religiosity as proposed by Glock and Stark (1965), namely ritualistic. Responses to the items were summed, with a higher score indicating a more traditional view of religion. As shown in the questionnaire in Appendix B, a participant’s response of Usually reflects my behavior was considered most consistent with a literal interpretation of the Bible, a value the researcher considered to be one held by the sample studied, and was therefore coded with a value of 3. A response of Sometimes reflects my behavior was given a value of 2. A participant’s response of Does not reflect my behavior was coded as 1. Possible scale scores ranged from 4–12, with a higher score indicating participation in more activities. Cronbach’s Alpha (.6771) for this scale demonstrated weak internal consistency reliability. The mean score was 11.18 with a standard deviation of 1.323.

Integration of Biblical Principles. An instrument created by the researcher attempted to measure the integration of Biblical principles in a marriage. No similar instrument is apparent. Instrument items were based on ideas found in the Bible, which is what born-again Christian followers use as their reference, and as summarized by Lewis (2000) (see Appendix B, items 19–43). The instrument was pre-tested and wording of items changed based on comments from those completing the pre-testing. This instrument is intended to measure aspects of the integration dimension of religiosity, as conceptualized in this study.

Integration of Biblical Principles attempted to ascertain the extent to which respondents have actually integrated the targeted Biblical principles into their marriages. Integration of Biblical Principles Scale is composed of items 19–43 in the questionnaire. All items measure the extent to which respondents integrate the various Biblical principles into their marriages. That is, the scale asks if the items reflect the behavior of the respondent. For most items a response of Usually reflects my behavior was considered the “best” response (in terms of theoretical consideration of what an “ideal type” marriage based on the integration of Biblical principles would be like) and therefore coded with a value of 3. A response of Sometimes reflects my behavior was coded as 2, and a response of Does not reflect my behavior was coded as 1. Items 20, 31, 33, and 34 were reverse coded. Items 38–40 were answered only by male respondents while items 41–43 were answered only by female respondents. These items identified roles that each partner possibly played within the marriage. Based on the ideal type Christian marriage,
these items were coded as 1 = Yes or 0 = No. These items were then summed to form a measure of roles played in marriage, ranging from 0 to 3 with a higher score indicating a higher degree of integration of Biblical principles in terms of roles played in the home. The score was then included with the scores on the other items operationalizing integration of Biblical principles. Responses to all items were summed, with a higher total score indicating behavior reflecting more integration of the Biblical principles into one’s marital life. The lowest possible score on this scale was 20, indicating no Biblical principles being integrated in the marriage, while the highest possible score was 60, indicating the greatest possible integration of Biblical principles as measured. Cronbach’s alpha (.8089) for this scale demonstrated the extent of internal consistency reliability. For the sample used in this study, the scale mean was 50.10 with a standard deviation of 4.815.

**Devotion.** Two items from the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale were used to measure Devotion, or the degree to which respondents reported they participated in joint prayer with their spouse and also read the Bible with their spouse (items 28 and 29 in questionnaire). These items were summed to obtain the score on the devotion scale, which could range from 2–6 with higher score indicating more joint devotion. For this sample, the mean was 4.16 with standard deviation of 1.269; the alpha was .7089.

**The modification of Integration of Biblical Principles Scale.** This scale consists of two questions removed from the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale addressing joint prayer and Bible reading. This two question scale became the Devotion Scale. For the sample in this study, the mean score was 47.94 (SD = 4.113) with a range of possible scores from 18 to 54. The alpha obtained was .7928.

**Salvation.** Items 44–49 of the questionnaire used in this study measured if the respondent defined him or herself as born-again. Based on Evangelical Christian theology, a person can only be “born again” if she/he has accepted Jesus Christ as his or her personal Lord and Savior and has proceeded through the other five steps of salvation, seeing growth in her/his life as a result in this process. Given that all six steps must be completed, the status of born-again was measured as follows: All six items must be marked as yes by the respondent to be categorized as born again, with any other response pattern coded as not born again. This is a categorical variable used to distinguish two groups of respondents in the sample: Born Again Christians and Not Born Again. Given the nature of the sample, it was anticipated that few if any respondents
would be coded as Not Born Again. The scores on the scale as a continuous variable, considered as steps to salvation, are used in some analysis. The sample’s mean was 5.96 (SD = .2993) with a possible range from 0–6. Due to two items having no variance, the alpha for this scale is not meaningful.

**God and Marriage.** The degree to which participants viewed God as part of their marriage was measured with the God and Marriage Scale, a constructed measure for this research. These are items 82–94 in the questionnaire. The 7-response Likert scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 7 (*Strongly Disagree*). Items 92–94 were reverse coded so that a higher score represented an answer more consistent with considering God as part of one’s marriage. For this scale, the lowest possible score was 13 and the highest possible score was 91. This scale focuses on one dimension of religiosity, experiential. A higher score represented individuals experiencing God as more intimately involved in their marital relationship. Cronbach’s alpha reliability for this scale is .9442, showing that there is good scale internal consistency. The sample’s mean score was 83.31 (SD = 9.29).

**God and Sexuality.** Questionnaire items 95–102 measured a person’s view of God as a part of sexuality in a marriage. This is an eight-item Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*, with a mid-point of *Neutral*. Items were coded so that a higher score represented answers more consistent with those of someone who holds fast to the ideals posited in the Bible. Within the conceptualization of this study, this scale measured an aspect of the consequential dimension of religiosity. Possible scores ranged from 8–56. Cronbach’s alpha (.8420) for this scale demonstrated internal consistency reliability. The mean score for the sample was 46.40 with a standard deviation of 8.32.

Table 3 contains the central tendencies, standard deviations, and actual range of scores for the variables used in the analysis. Table 4 shows the Pearson product moment correlations among the variables.
Table 3
Descriptive Information for Scales Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief Construct</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.9209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious activities</td>
<td>11.18</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.6771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>52.10</td>
<td>4.815</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.8089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical principles</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.7089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devotion Integration</td>
<td>47.94</td>
<td>4.113</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>.7928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>.2993</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.2331a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God &amp; marriage</td>
<td>83.31</td>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86.00</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>.9442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God &amp; sexuality</td>
<td>46.40</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.8420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAS</td>
<td>123.70</td>
<td>11.707</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>123.79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>.8922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Two items in the scale had no variance; alpha reflects 4 items.

Table 4
Correlations among Scales Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Belief Construct</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Religious activities</td>
<td>.595***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Integration Biblical principles</td>
<td>.382***</td>
<td>.418^</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Salvation</td>
<td>.484***</td>
<td>.246**</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 God &amp; marriage</td>
<td>.754***</td>
<td>.632***</td>
<td>.635***</td>
<td>.357***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 God &amp; sexuality</td>
<td>.517***</td>
<td>.442***</td>
<td>.475***</td>
<td>.199*^</td>
<td>.687***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 DAS</td>
<td>.284***</td>
<td>.152^</td>
<td>.547***</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.415***</td>
<td>.303***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001. One-tailed test. + close to .05 (.056) ~ close to .05 (.061). ^ = close to .01 (.018).

Analysis

Analysis was conducted using the SPSS statistical package. The series mean, mode, or median, as appropriate, was inserted for missing data for all variables. Hypotheses for the study were tested using correlation and regression analysis. Preliminary analysis indicated that the only demographic variable with a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable
was number of years married. This variable was thus entered during the first step of the regression analysis, with the theoretical predictor variables entered in a second step. ANOVA and other statistical techniques indicated that gender and race/ethnicity did not relate in a statistically significant manner to the dependent variable. Race/ethnicity also did not have a significant relationship with any scale used in the analysis. Gender did have a statistically significant relation with religious activities, with females participating in more activities. These results indicated only one regression model was deemed necessary rather than multiple models based on gender or race/ethnicity of the respondents. However, multicollinearity problems prevented direct testing of Hypotheses 6 and 7. Instead, multiple tests were preformed to determine which set of variables explained the most variance in the dependent variable while avoiding multicollinearity.

Summary
This chapter reviewed the methodology used in this study. The sample was described and variables were identified to measure four of the five dimensions of religiosity as proposed by Glock and Stark (1965). The operationalization of the variables were explained and Cronbach’s alpha reliability for each scale was reported, as were other characteristics of the scales. The next chapter will cover the hypotheses that were tested and will also investigate the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale as a new scale developed for this thesis.
Chapter 4

Results

The hypotheses for this study were tested using correlation and multiple regression analysis, a statistical strategy used to assess the extent to which the predictor variables influenced marital functioning in expected directions. The results of the hypothesis testing are reported in this chapter. Table 5 shows the Pearson product-Moment correlations for variables used in the analysis.

Table 5
Correlations among Variables Used in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic / Scales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 # years married</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Belief Construct</td>
<td>.150+</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Religious activities</td>
<td>.127`</td>
<td>.595***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Integration Biblical principles</td>
<td>.131^</td>
<td>.382***</td>
<td>.418***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Salvation</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.484**</td>
<td>.246**δ</td>
<td>.148~</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 God &amp; marriage</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.754***</td>
<td>.632***</td>
<td>.635***</td>
<td>.357***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 God &amp; sexuality</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.517***</td>
<td>.442***</td>
<td>.475***</td>
<td>.199#p</td>
<td>.687***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 DAS</td>
<td>.171*</td>
<td>.284***</td>
<td>.152ö</td>
<td>.547***</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.415***</td>
<td>.303***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Only the statistically significant with DAS demographic variable is included.

* p ≤ .05, ** ≤ .01, *** ≤ .001. One-tailed test. + = close to .05 (.056); * = close to .05 (.092) z = close to .05 (.085) p = close to .05 (.056); ~ = close to .05 (.061) φ = close to .01 (.018); δ = close to .001 (.005).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1. People who integrate more Biblical principles into their marriage have a better functioning marriage. This was tested using Pearson’s correlation, observing the relationship between the extent of integration as operationalized for this thesis (Integration of Biblical Principles Scale) and the score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976). A higher score indicates more integration of principles; a high score on the DAS indicates a greater extent of dyadic adjustment, or marital functioning. The Pearson correlation between Integration
of Biblical principles and DAS was .547, significant (one-tail) at the .001 level. This significant correlation demonstrates support for Hypothesis 1.

**Hypothesis 2.** People who more often read the Bible and pray with their spouse will be those who integrate more of the other Biblical principles into their marriages. This hypothesis investigates the relationship among the integration of Biblical principles. It is believed that joint Bible reading and prayer are the two most important principles, as has been demonstrated in prior research. The hypothesis is that those couples performing these acts will also be more likely to integrate other principles into their marriages. This was tested using Pearson’s correlation, observing the relationship between the score on an author-constructed Devotion Scale and the score on a modification of the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale. The modification is the removal of the two items addressing joint prayer and Bible reading, which become the Devotion Scale. The strength of the relationship between the Devotion Scale and the modification of the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale is $r = .466$, significant at the .001 level. This finding offers support for Hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 3.** While Devotion (i.e., spouses together praying and reading the Bible) is predictive of better marital functioning, the strength of the relationship will be lower than will be the strength of the relationship between Integration of Biblical principles and the DAS score, a measure of marital functioning. This hypothesis was tested by observing the empirical correlation between both Devotion and Integration of Biblical principles with the DAS score. A stronger correlation between Integration of Biblical principles and the DAS score was considered evidence supportive of this hypothesis. The reasoning for this hypothesis is that Devotion alone is not as important as the integration of many Biblical principles in establishing a better functioning marriage.

The relative strength of the correlations between the Devotion Scale, the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale, and the modified Integration Scale with the score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was calculated (see Table 6). As seen in Table 6, the correlation between the Devotion Scale and DAS was statistically significant, but not as strong as the association between the Integration Scale, or the modified Integration Scale, and DAS. The two correlations of the versions of the Integration Scale with DAS were virtually identical. These findings indicate that reading the Bible and praying with one’s spouse was related to integration of other Biblical principles into one’s marriage, but that this alone was not as predictive of better
marital functioning as was integration of more Biblical principles into one’s marriage. These findings, consequently, lend support for Hypothesis 3.

Table 6
Correlations among Selected Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Modified Integration Scale</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Devotion</td>
<td>.446***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Integration of Biblical Principles</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 DAS</td>
<td>.548***</td>
<td>.301***</td>
<td>.547***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05. ** ≤ .01. *** ≤ .001. One-tailed test.

**Hypothesis 4.** People who score higher on the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale will score higher on the God and Sexuality Scale. As discussed in this thesis, the Bible is clear on issues of sexuality, providing Christians with guidelines related to sexuality which they are expected to live by. These tenets include the importance of giving one’s partner authority over her/his own body. Therefore if an individual had a high score on the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale (a measure of the consequential dimension of religiosity), it was expected that this individual would also score high on the God and Sexuality Scale (also a measure of the consequential dimension of religiosity), because how one conducts himself/herself sexually is within the set of principles in the Bible and should have consequences for marriage. Observing the empirical correlation between the scores on the God and Sexuality Scale and the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale tested this hypothesis. A positive and statistically significant correlation was considered to be support for this hypothesis.

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation between the two scales was .475, significant at the .001 level of probability. This correlation provided support for Hypothesis 4, as it indicated that people in the sample who integrated Biblical principles to a greater degree into their marriages also believed that God is a part of sexuality in a marriage.

**Hypothesis 5.** People who score higher on each aspect of religiosity will have higher functioning marriages. Five variables were used to measure different aspects of religiosity:
Belief Construct, Religious Activities, Integration of Biblical principles, Steps of Salvation, and God and my Marriage. The prediction was that each aspect of religiosity was significantly correlated with the total score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in the expected direction. Pearson’s correlation was used for testing this hypothesis. All dimensions of religiosity measured required statistically significant and positive correlations with DAS for this hypothesis to be fully supported.

As shown in Table 5, bottom row, the DAS was correlated in the expected direction with the five scales used for testing Hypothesis 5. However, only three scales were correlated in a statistically significant manner: Belief Construct, Integration of Biblical principles, and God and my Marriage. The correlation (.152) with Religious Activities approached statistical significance. The correlation (.060) with Steps of Salvation, however, did not approach statistical significance. The strongest correlation with the DAS was Integration of Biblical principles (.547), followed by God and my Marriage (.415), and Belief Construct (.284). Given that three aspects of religiosity were strongly associated with better functioning marriages, a fourth was associated, and a fifth was not, only moderate support for Hypothesis 5 was indicated.

**Hypothesis 6.** The various aspects of religiosity, in combination, will explain a significant amount of variance in the dependant variable, the total score of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The dimensions are Belief Construct, Religious Activities, Integration of Biblical principles in Marriage, Steps of Salvation, and God and my Marriage. It was predicted that by using multiple regression analysis, entering each score from the religiosity measures (i.e., predictor variables measuring some aspect of religiosity), a statistically significant amount of variance could be explained in the dependent variable; if so, this would be considered as support for this hypothesis. The results of this will be discussed along with hypothesis 7 below.

**Hypothesis 7.** Whereas each aspect of religiosity contributes to explained variance in the scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Integration of Biblical principles will be the best predictor variable. It was anticipated that integration would, when in combination with the other scales measuring aspects of religiosity, explain the most variance in marital functioning in the multiple regression analysis. This prediction was based on the theoretical arguments made earlier in this thesis, that actual action (i.e., integration) is more important than is any other dimension or aspect of religiosity when better marital functioning is concerned.
Because number of years married was correlated with the DAS, it was entered first in a hierarchal multiple regression. Multicollinearity problems, however, prevented direct testing of Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7. Several multiple regression analyses (19 in all) were performed to determine which set of variables explained the most variance in the dependent variable while avoiding multicollinearity. The results of what emerged as the best model are shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Dyadic Adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictive Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized coefficient</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient (β)</th>
<th>Collinearity statistics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of yrs. married</td>
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<td>.093</td>
<td>.171⁹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1 summary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
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<td>R Square change</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of yrs. married</td>
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<td>.080</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.971/1.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.161</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.844/1.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Biblical principles</td>
<td>1.229</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.505***</td>
<td>.849/1.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Correlation R</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square change</td>
<td>.285***</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>.295***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ⁹p = .072; ***p < .001.

The hierarchal regression analysis demonstrated that the combination of number of years married, Belief Construct, and Integration of Biblical principles were the three best predictive variables and explained approximately 30 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, dyadic adjustment (adjusted $R^2 = .295$; $F (3, 107) = 16.366, p < .001$). These results provided tentative support for Hypothesis 6 and 7, as two aspects of religiosity combined with the number of years married explained a statistically significant amount of variance in the dependent variable, and the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale was the best predictor variable. These results thus provide support for the idea advanced in this thesis that behavior (integration) is more predictive of good marital functioning than is attitude or ideology, or ritualistic activity.
Integration of Biblical Principles Scale

Based primarily on Lewis’s (2000) list of ten characteristics that define a healthy family, the researcher developed the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale. The original scale was pre-tested and some of the wording was changed based on suggestions. The final scale used in this research had a Cronbach’s alpha of .7940 (standardized item alpha = .8089) that indicated a highly reliable instrument. The split-half correlation between forms of the scales was .6188 with an equal-length Spearman-Brown reliability of .7645. Further reliability analysis indicated that the scale was reliable with males (alpha = .8314, mean = 52.23, SD = 5.23) and females (alpha = .7514, mean = 51.98, SD = 4.44), married 24 years or less (median and being 55% of sample; alpha = .8118, mean = 51.54, SD = 5.14) and married 25 years or more (45% of sample; alpha = .7585, mean = 52.79, SD = 4.34), and born-again Christians (score of 6 on salvation scale and representing 98% of sample; alpha = .7942, mean = 52.167, SD = 4.80). The scale also appeared to have face and content validity. Concurrent validity was difficult to assess, as there appeared to be no other scale measuring the same integration dimension of religiosity.

The researcher conducted some exploratory factor analysis to identify related scale items and thus possible subscales based on the different set of principles identified around which the scale was built. This was done because the scale was newly developed and both reliability and validity needed to be established. The initial factor analysis led to some items from the Integration Scale being removed and a few items from the God and my Marriage Scale and God and Sexuality Scale being included in a subsequent factor analysis test. Further analysis included consideration of the correlation of individual items with the total scale as well as how well items loaded on the factors extracted. The results lead to the decision to exclude all the items from the two additional scales as well as two items (33 and 34) from the original Integration Scale, and to then conduct further testing of the revised scale. This analysis (Principal Component analysis with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization) lead to the identification of six factors or possible subscales, with each items having factor loading coefficients of at least .400 (see Table 8). These factors are as follows.
Table 8
Factor Loadings for a Subset of Items on the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration Item</th>
<th>Factor 1 God focused relationship</th>
<th>Factor 2 Unity</th>
<th>Factor 3 Sacrifice</th>
<th>Factor 4 Devotion</th>
<th>Factor 5 Unconditional love</th>
<th>Factor 6 Traditional roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>.537</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>.724</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>.644</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>.810</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>.696</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>.610</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>.447</td>
<td>.597</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>.821</td>
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<td>.612</td>
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<td>.596</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.787</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factor loadings greater than .400 are shown.

Table 9
Analysis of Revised Integration of Biblical Principles Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability</th>
<th>Correlation with DAS</th>
<th>Correlation with item 80 of DAS</th>
<th>Correlation with item 81 of DAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1- God Focused Relationship</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td>.329***</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.228**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2- Unity</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td>.381***</td>
<td>.198*</td>
<td>.457***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3- Sacrifice</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>.323***</td>
<td>.327***</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4- Devotion</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td>.301***</td>
<td>.176*</td>
<td>.061*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 5- Unconditional Love</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.351***</td>
<td>.263**</td>
<td>.263**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 6- Traditional Roles</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>.324***</td>
<td>.292***</td>
<td>.254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All items excluding 33 &amp; 34, and factor 1 &amp; 4.</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>.482***</td>
<td>.381***</td>
<td>.389***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Integration of Bible Principles Scale</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.507***</td>
<td>.313***</td>
<td>.341***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Biblical Principles Scale</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.547***</td>
<td>.357***</td>
<td>.327***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Item 80 is a measure of the degrees of happiness in the respondent’s relationship and item 81 asks the respondent to indicate the statement that best describes how she/he feels about the future of the relationship.

*p ≤ .05. ** ≤ .01. *** ≤ .001. One-tailed test.
The correlation of the two split-half forms of the Revised Integration of Biblical Principles Scale was .5468, with an equal-length Spearman-Bowman coefficient of reliability of .7070. Additional analysis indicated the revised scale was reliable for both males and females (males = .8488, standardized item alpha = .8587; females = .7517, standardized item alpha = .7440), married 24 years or less (median; 55% of sample; alpha = .8173 with standardized alpha of .8193, mean = 46.59, SD = 4.75) and married 25 years or more (45% of sample; alpha = .7873 with standardized alpha of .8094, mean = 44.92, SD = 4.09), and born-again Christians (score of 6 on salvation scale and being 98% of sample; alpha = .8077 with standardized alpha of .8210, mean = 47.26, SD = 4.66).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the hypotheses posed for this thesis and the results were reported. Strong support was found for the first four hypotheses and tentative support for the remaining three. Reliability and validity analyses were presented for the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale, including preliminary factor analyses and other indicators of how the scale might be revised. Chapter Five will summarize the findings from the hypothesis testing and integrate them with the literature reviewed in this thesis, with Symbolic Interaction theory as the frame of reference.
CHAPTER 5

Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which integrating Biblical principles into one’s marriage impacts marital functioning. The current literature regarding this topic primarily covers how individuals’ beliefs and religious rituals or activities impact their marital satisfaction. This study employed Glock and Stark’s (1965) five proposed dimensions of religiosity: ideological, intellectual, ritualistic, experiential, and consequential. A sixth dimension suggested by Hennon et. al. (2004), integration, was tested for this thesis. The gap in literature regarding the integration of a particular set of beliefs was apparent. In order to study this, however, an instrument needed to be created to explore the integration of identified Biblical principles.

There were three main objectives for this thesis research. The first objective was to create an instrument that could measure the degree to which Biblical principles were integrated into the marital relationship. The Integration of Biblical Principles Scale was developed. The Biblical principles included in the instrument were primarily from a list designed by Lewis (2000); thus there may be other principles just as important, but not included. The instrument that was created showed very good internal consistency reliability, face validity, and content validity. Because this instrument was empirically tested with a limited sample, more work needs to be done to further validate the results. Therefore, the instrument that was created should be fine-tuned and tested further to see if other principles should be included or excluded as part of a comprehensive list of important Biblical principles that lead to improved marital functioning. The six possible sub-scales which resulted from the factor analysis can also be investigated further to explore their individual relationship with marital functioning.

A second objective of this research was to test several hypotheses concerning the relationship of religiosity with marital functioning. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) was selected as the means to measure the dependent variable, marital functioning, due to its good reliability and wide spread use in research concerning marriage. Seven hypotheses were tested. Results show that the more individuals integrate Biblical principles into their marriage, the greater is the degree of marital functioning. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the literature on religion and marital functioning has not investigated the role of integration of a set of beliefs in relationship to the functioning of a marriage. Therefore, this hypothesis was exploratory in
nature and not based on existing literature or research. The high correlation (.547) indicates that integration is strongly associated with better marital functioning.

Another expected result is that individuals who pray with their spouse and read the Bible more frequently are more likely to integrate Biblical principles into their marriage (Hypothesis 2; correlation of .466). It is possible that these two principles, Bible reading and prayer, which comprise the Devotion Scale (also constructed for this research), could be seen as disciplines that require more time and effort than do the other principles. Therefore, it may be possible that individuals who participate in these Devotion Scale items have already mastered integration of the other principles and these two activities, Bible reading and prayer, could represent greater commitment. These activities may be the result of participating in other Bible related practices.

Although both the Integration of Biblical principles and Bible reading and prayer have a strong and positive relationship with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the strength of the relationship between Integration of Biblical principles and the DAS is greater than the relationship between prayer and Bible reading and the DAS (Hypothesis 3). This indicates that there are many Biblical principles that are important. These principles, in combination with one another, have the greatest impact on positive marital functioning.

The positive relationship found between the Integration of Biblical principles and believing God is part of the sexual union in marriage is consistent with Christian literature (Hypothesis 4). Much of the Christian literature on marriage suggests that the Bible offers guidance to couples on the topic of sexuality. As expected, those couples with a higher degree of Biblical principle integration indicate they are more likely to view God as having a part in their sexual union (correlation of .475).

A somewhat unexpected result of this study is that not all the individual aspects of religiosity, on their own, are directly correlated with marital functioning (Hypothesis 5). Results show that only the Belief Construct, integration of Biblical principles, and viewing God in my marriage have a statistically significant impact on marital functioning (Religious Activities and Steps of Salvation were not significantly associated with DAS). Of these, the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale had the strongest correlation. The differences in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation were discussed earlier in this thesis. Participating in religious activities could be categorized as extrinsic motivation. Based on the literature (Anthony, 1993), individuals who are extrinsically motivated have the lowest level of marital functioning, while actively
integrating Biblical principles into one’s marriage could reflect intrinsic motivation and continuous practice.

The Steps of Salvation Scale is a set of questions concerning an individual’s journey and commitment to the Christian faith. Other than the final question on this scale, these questions do not probe into an individual’s continuous action or practice. This may explain some of the reason no significant correlation is found with this variable and marital functioning.

Finally (Hypotheses 6 and 7), as expected, results of this study indicate that while various aspects of religiosity (combined with length of marriage which is also correlated with the DAS) contribute to marital functioning, the Integration of Biblical principles is the best predictor variable. The best combination of variables in the regression analyses is number of years married, Biblical Belief Construct, and Integration of Biblical principles. Multicollinearity problems prevented direct testing of all variables at once. Consequently, multiple tests were conducted to determine the model most predictive of variance in the DAS.

Given that the empirical results offer evidence for the importance of integrating Biblical principles into one's marriage, one is forced to ask how to integrate these principles. It seems that integration would require an individual or couple to be active or intentional in their pursuit of this goal. The very act of integrating implies that someone would be active. For example showing kindness or demonstrating love, even when a spouse is not being “lovable,” requires someone to be intentionally thoughtful in her/his reaction to that spouse. Forgiving a spouse is another example of intentional integration. Forgiveness requires the injured party to be deliberate in their willingness to forgive the spouse who wounded him/her.

Church leaders can encourage their church members that attending church and participating in services should not be a Sunday activity only. They can explain to members that the lessons being taught should have everyday application. Developing church programs that focus on what the Christian life “looks” like, in everyday life, would also be beneficial for those desiring greater integration. Church leaders should encourage individuals to ask questions of themselves, such as “how can I live this lesson out?” and “How will I allow this lesson to impact my life?” This would help to make the transition from the cognitive domain to integration smoother, allowing individuals to make what is being taught part of their self-identity.
The third main objective of this project is to cast the research within the theoretical frame of symbolic interaction theory. The aim is to provide a social scientific context for the research and interpretation of the results, to both advance the scientific study of religion and marriage as well as provide a theoretical foundation for lay and religious interventionists who wish to strengthen marriages. This theoretical frame is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, where it is noted that individuals strive to give meaning to their social situations, as this creates order and allows for competent interaction. While each individual assigns meaning to a situation or object, family units also assign meanings to situations (Hildenbrand & Hennon, in press).

Within each marriage and family, there are roles that each individual enacts. Competent role-playing allows the marriage and/or family to function well as a unit. For each role, there are associated role expectations developed both by self and by others (White & Klein, 2002). The clearer the role expectations, the increased ease with which individuals can enact the role. Role expectations are learned through socialization and the sharing of symbols. Symbols, including language, are shared understanding among a group of interactors. If symbols, meanings, or role expectations are not shared, then there is increased probability for role strain or role ambiguity. One interpretation of the results of this study is that individuals (and by extension, couples) who have a clear understanding of the expectation that Biblical principles are to be integrated into one’s married life, can then enact this role in a manner that increases marital functioning.

Also discussed in Chapter Two is the assumption that humans attach values to objects, interactions, statuses, and the like. The degree of value ascribed is related to the motivation to secure the object (physical or social), participate in the activity, or play the role. To understand why people behave in their marital roles as they do, it is important to know what they value. The empirical results of this study show that a large proportion of the sample values both a deep sense of religiosity and a well functioning marriage. The theoretical framework thus suggests this motivates these individuals to pursue these statuses. This requires a certain degree of intentionality and intrinsic motivation. This motivation, along with clear role expectations, can thus be seen as contributing to a strong empirical association between aspects of religiosity, especially integration of Biblical principles, and the consequential well-functioning marriage.

Another assertion of symbolic interactionism is that individuals have “selves,” or a self-conception (identity) derived through social interaction and socialization (White & Klein, 2002). One comes to define her self or him self as a certain kind of person with identified values, goals,
skills, knowledge, personality, traits, and behavioral tendencies. This sense of self is a component that helps determine what things are valued and what lines of action are taken. A “self” that is religious and values this and a good marriage, should be one that then considers these aspects when involved in specific socially situated interaction (such as with a spouse).

For any given situation, a spouse can be introspective and consider what he or she should do. That is, in a given situation, the individual socially situates self relative to others. A coherent self-identity, competence at role-taking (or precise understanding of the statuses and expectations of others in the social situation), and clear understanding of one’s role expectations facilitate this process. The resulting definition of the situation gives guidance to what everyone involved is expected to do. The more the definition of the situation is shared between spouses, the more ease with which interaction can transpire. Shared symbols and values can facilitate role-playing and interactional competency. Spouses thus sharing the symbols (and value) of integration of Biblical principles into their marriage would, theoretically, be well placed to do so. In situations such as after an argument, for example, the introspection and consideration of what they should do based on the value of integration of Biblical principles, theoretically motivates the spouses to forgive each other. Likewise, the spouses sharing the importance of integration of principles should be competent in joint Bible reading and prayer.

Symbolic interaction theory appears useful in understanding the place Christianity holds in a given marriage, and the resulting behaviors. As discussed in Chapter Two, Christianity is not a list of “dos and don’ts,” but rather provides guidelines and expectations for living out the faith. The Bible supplies information on how each family role is to be played for the healthiest Christian family functioning. Spouses must know and share these guidelines in order to live by them. Importantly, the symbols (guidelines and the meaning assigned) must be shared and relatively equally valued. The more articulated the definition of the marital situation and the importance of intentionally integrating Biblical principles (or the sense of “what is going on here and what is everyone expected to do?”), the greater the likelihood of smooth interaction, movement toward shared goals, and a better functioning marriage.

While this theory asserts that each spouse assigns her or his own meaning to social situations and physical objects, the Bible helps in providing this meaning for those who follow the Christian faith. That is, spouses who hold self-conceptions of being a Christian, who share the value of Christianity, who seek guidance from the Bible, who have socialized each other as to
role expectations, who are competent at role-taking, and who share definitions of the various family situations, ought to interact in a manner that facilitates achievement of desired goals. If a Christian lifestyle and a marriage based on Biblical principles, the achievement of salvation, living in grace, and the like are jointly valued, then with the use of this theoretical model it is predicted that there would be shared understandings of role (e.g., family, gender) expectations and desired goals for the marriage, and thus better marital functioning. The methods used in the data analysis presented in this thesis allow only for understanding the relationships among self-held values, self-reported practices, and self-report of marital functioning. The extent of spouses jointly holding the same religious values, the actual practices carried out, and some “objective” (or at least mutually agreed upon) level of marital functioning have not been ascertained. The data set, however, does include information from both members of many couples. Exploring the similarities and differences among spouses within the same marriage can be a possible future research endeavor.

One must also note that in the data collected in this study, 69% of the respondents were in their first marriage. Further research could be done looking at the differences in individual’s integration of Biblical principles in their first marriage versus an individual’s second marriage and impact that that has on marital functioning. Results could show that the lack of integration in a first marriage could have contributed to its downfall, while their second marriage is perceived as higher functioning because of greater integration.

Another research possibility that could extend the use of symbolic interactionism for interpreting the influence of religiosity on families would be investigating the integration of Biblical principles into the family as a unit, including the parenting of children, and the impact that has on child autonomy, social competency, and family functioning.

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations in this research study. One of these limitations was the size, and relatively homogeneity, of the sample used. This study was conducted with almost all self-identified Evangelical born-again Christians. This was a purposeful sampling technique. Given that the questionnaire was distributed in a church setting, participants may have had a bias toward answering the way that they did. Further research should be done with a broad range of people who have a varying set of beliefs. The instrument to measure the integration of Biblical principles was also developed from a born-again Christian perspective, and tested on this
relatively homogeneous sample. While the Integration of Biblical Principles Scale appears to have both validity and reliability, and shows promise as a good predictor variable for marital functioning, it should be further refined and tested with different samples including with people of various degrees of religiosity.

Another limitation to consider is the low return rate of questionnaires, which was 33% of those distributed. There could be several reasons for this. One reason could have been an individual’s feelings regarding their current marital functioning. Negative feelings may have contributed to non-responses while individuals who had more positive feelings regarding their marriage may have been more likely to return their questionnaire. This ultimately could have affected the results of this study. Another reason for a low return rate could have been the method of distribution. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher in a church setting. Some individuals may have felt apprehensive to be seen getting questionnaires for fear of a perceived stigma, while others may have been more eager to obtain questionnaires. This too, may have biased the sample for this study. A third possible explanation for the return rate is that it is calculated based on the number of questionnaires distributed to group leaders and then returned by those completing the questionnaires. However, it is not known how many people actually attended the Bible study groups, if the questionnaires were actually distributed, or how many people attending the study groups were married.

Implications

There are several implications for the results of this study. First, the literature review itself sheds light on the need for more research to be done with married couples in regards to the degree to which their religious beliefs have been integrated into their relationship, not simply their belief construct or religious activities. This study has opened the door for further research to be done on the area of belief and principles integration, thus focusing on how attitudes can guide action.

This study also gives church leaders quantitative evidence that teaching the application of a set of beliefs is perhaps more important than just teaching the beliefs themselves. The findings of this study, while limited, should be encouraging to church leadership and counselors in showing that, in striving to teach Biblical application, their work is not done in vain. Because the integration of these principles was the strongest predictor of better marital functioning, it shows that their work can help marriages thrive.
Lewis (2000) himself agrees that many of the principles addressed in his book are qualities that both secular and religious writers alike encourage marriages to be built on. The difference, however, is the motivation behind doing so. In light of the results shown here, family life educators, church leaders, researchers, and individuals can be challenged to consider the importance of building a marriage on Biblical principles and the everyday application of them within their spousal roles.
Appendix A

Dear Participant,

My name is Laurie Korb and I am graduate student at Miami University.

You are invited to participate in a study on the integration of Biblical principles in a marriage and on marital satisfaction. I ask that you complete a questionnaire about the Biblical principles you feel you have integrated into your marriage and your level of satisfaction within your marriage. I am completing my master thesis in Family and Child Studies and the information will be used for this purpose. Your answers will be completely anonymous, as you will return them in an envelope that is self-addressed and stamped with only my return address on them. I will have no way of knowing who is sending them back; your name will not be associated with your questionnaire in any way. You will notice that there is a letter at the top of the questionnaire. This will, in no way, indicate who completed that questionnaire; it is simply for the purpose of being able to match spouses’ questionnaires with each other.

Answering the questionnaire should take approximately 45 minutes or less. Your participation is voluntary and you may cease from completing the questionnaire at any time or refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you experience any additional discomfort after responding to any of the questions in this study, you will be allowed to cease your participation and I will suggest that you speak with someone who could further assist you.

A benefit of this study is it will help in understanding more about how integrating Biblical principles within a marriage impacts marital satisfaction. It will also help to further the study of being able to measure Biblical principles in a marriage.

Both husband and wife need to fill out separate questionnaires and they should not be filled out together. Included with the questionnaires are two separate envelopes to mail your responses back. This will allow your answers to remain confidential; your spouse will not see the answers you have selected. By returning your survey to me you are authorizing consent to participate in my research study.

If you have further questions about the study, please contact Laurie Korb at 716.491.7718 (laurie.korb@gmail.com) or Dr. Charles Hennon at 513.529.2323 (HennonCB@MUOhio.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, call the Office of Advancement of Research and Scholarship at Miami University at 513.529.3734 or email humansubjects@muohio.edu.

Thank you for your participation. I am very grateful for your help and hope that this will be interesting for you. You may keep this letter.

Sincerely,

Laurie L. Korb, CFLE- Provisional
Miami University Graduate Student
Appendix B

This questionnaire should to be completed individually (without your spouse) and placed immediately in the self addressed stamped envelope provided upon completion, and returned. Please complete the questionnaire and return it by July 28, 2007.

Demographic Information

1. Please indicate how many years have you been married? _________________________

2. Is this your first marriage? Yes _________ No _________

3. How many children do you have? _________________________

4. What are the ages of your children? _________________________

Please circle the number corresponding with your answer to the following questions:

5. What is your present age?
   1. 18-29
   2. 30-39
   3. 40-49
   4. 50-59
   5. 60-69
   6. 70-79
   7. 80-89
   8. 90-99

6. What is your race/ethnicity?
   1. White/Caucasian
   2. Hispanic
   3. African American/Black
   4. Native American/Indian
   5. Asian
   6. Other _________________________

7. What is your household’s range of income?

   1. below $15,000
   2. $15,000-$30,000
   3. $30,000-$50,000
   4. $50,001-$75,000
   5. $75,001-$100,000
   6. $100,001-$125,000
   7. $125,001-$150,000
   8. above $150,000
8. What is your highest degree earned?

1. Less than High School
2. High School Diploma
3. Certificate program
4. Some college
5. Bachelor’s degree
6. Master’s degree
7. Professional degree (e.g., law, MD)
8. Doctorate degree

People have different beliefs. Following are six statements. Please indicate your personal belief about each by circling letter corresponding with the answer that best describes your belief.

Belief Construct

9. Which of the following best expresses your view of the Bible?
   a. *The Bible is God’s Word and all it says is true
   b. The Bible was written by men inspired by God, and its basic moral and religious teachings are true, but because writers were men, it contains some human errors
   c. The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good men, but God had nothing to do with it
   d. The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is of little value today

10. Which of the following statements most clearly describes your idea about the Deity?
    a. I am an atheist
    b. I am not quite sure what I believe
    c. The so-called universal mysteries are ultimately knowable according to the scientific method based on natural laws
    d. I believe in the worth of humanity but not in a God or Supreme Being
    e. I believe in a power greater than myself, which some people call God and some call Nature
    f. *I believe in a Divine God, creator of the Universe, who knows my innermost thoughts and feelings, and to whom one day I shall be accountable

11. Do you believe in eternal life?
    a. *Certainly True
    b. Probably True
    c. Uncertain
    d. Probably False
    e. Certainly False

12. Do you believe that the world will come to an end according to the will of God?
    a. No, I do not believe this
    b. I am uncertain about this
    c. *Yes, I believe this
13. The Bible provides me with answers to all the important problems in my life.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree somewhat
   c. Agree somewhat
   d. *Strongly agree

14. Do you feel it is possible for an individual to develop a well rounded religious life apart from the institutional church?
   a. *No
   b. Uncertain
   c. Yes

**Religious Actions**

The following are four common religious activities. Please read each one and consider the extent to which the statement reflects your behavior.

1 = usually reflects my behavior
2 = sometimes reflects my behavior
3 = does not reflect my behavior

On the line, place a number 1, 2 or 3 indicating your behavior.

____ 15. I pray daily

____ 16. I attend worship services

____ 17. I tithe 10% of my income

____ 18. I am obedient to divine commandments

**Integration of Biblical Principles**

Below are some possible ways people respond to situations. Read each one and consider the extent to which the statement reflects your behavior.

1 = usually reflects my (our) behavior
2 = sometimes reflects my (our) behavior
3 = does not reflect my (our) behavior

On the line, place a number 1, 2, or 3 indicating your behavior.

____ 19. I look out for the needs of my family members before my own, no matter what the cost to me in terms of money, time, energy, or my own desires.
20. I show love toward my spouse based on my mood at the time.

21. When my spouse and I don’t see eye to eye on an important issue, we negotiate and reach a mutually satisfying compromise.

22. I trust my spouse completely.

23. Regardless of what challenges we face in our marriage, I feel committed to remaining married.

24. I am honest with my spouse.

25. I believe my spouse would describe me as being a kind person.

26. I speak to my spouse with love when he/she is acting unlovable.

27. When it comes to making decisions and looking for guidance, my spouse and I both seek God’s guidance.

28. My spouse and I pray together.

29. My spouse and I read the Bible together.

30. When my spouse and I have gone through tough times as a couple, we have grown closer to God and each other as a result.

31. I do not think before I speak to my spouse and often regret what I say.

32. When my spouse inadvertently does or says something that hurts me, I don’t hold a grudge and forgive my spouse before he/she asks for it.

33. When my spouse intentionally does or says something to hurt me, I hold a grudge and do not forgive him/her before he/she asks for it.

34. I am not satisfied with the regularity of sexual expression within my marriage.

35. I follow God’s will when making decisions related to my family.

36. I strive to make my marriage a reflection of Christ’s relationship with the Church.

37. My spouse and I participate in church activities outside of Sunday morning services.
**Husbands only:** please answer number 38 - 40. **Wives only:** please answer number 41 - 43. Answer with Yes or No.

**Husbands:**
38. I am the head of our home. Yes No
39. My wife respects me. Yes No
40. My wife is a good nurturer of our family. Yes No

**Wives:**
41. I view my husband as the head of our home. Yes No
42. I respect my husband. Yes No
43. My husband is a good protector of our family Yes No

**Salvation**

People have different views about religion and salvation. Please answer the following in the manner that best reflects your behavior.

44. I admit I am a sinner Yes No
45. I recognize and believe that I cannot save myself Yes No
46. I have accepted that Jesus is the only one who can save me Yes No
47. I have repented of my sins Yes No
48. I have asked Jesus to be my personal Savior Yes No
49. I have grown in Christ and see a difference in my life. Yes No
**Dyadic Adjustment Scale**

I am interested in learning more about marriages. Please take the time to read the following numbered items and circle the answer to each in the way that represents your marriage.

Most persons have disagreement in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Almost Agree</th>
<th>Occasionally Disagree</th>
<th>Frequently Disagree</th>
<th>Almost Disagree</th>
<th>Always Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50. Handling family finances</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Matters of recreation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Religious matters</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Demonstrations of affection</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Friends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Sex relations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Philosophy of life</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Aims, goals, and things believed important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Amount of time spent together</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Making major decisions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Household tasks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Leisure time interests and activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Career decision</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 65. How often do you discuss or have your considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 66. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 67. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 68. Do you confide in your mate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 69. Do you ever regret that you married?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 70. How often do you and your partner quarrel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 71. How often do you and your mate “get on each other’s nerves?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 72. Do you kiss your mate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every Day</th>
<th>Almost Every Day</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 73. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58
How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>More often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. Laugh together</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. Calmly discuss something</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77. Work together on a project</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometime disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Circle 0 for yes or 1 for no)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78. Being too tired for sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79. Not showing love</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80. The dots and numbers on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point (3) “happy,” represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot or number which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exremely Unhappy Fairly Unhappy A Little Unhappy Happy Very Happy Extremely Happy Perfect

81. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Circle the one number corresponding to your view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can’t do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
0 My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

God & Marriage

Some people believe that God is a part of their marriages, and others believe differently. For each numbered item please indicate the extent to which you feel each is true regarding your marriage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82. God is present in my marriage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. My marriage is a reflection of God’s will.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. My marriage is an expression of what a good relationship with God is to be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. I experience God through my marriage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86. My marriage reflects what God wants for a marriage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. My marriage is influenced by God’s actions in our lives.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. My marriage is a holy bond.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. My marriage represents God’s presence in my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. My marriage follows the Bible and what it teaches.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
91. My marriage follows the teachings of my church. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
92. My marriage is a legal arrangement not influenced by God. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
93. My marriage reflects my idea of what a marriage should be, but is not based on any relationship with God. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
94. My marriage does not reflect the teachings of my church. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Sexuality in Marriage**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95. God is part of the sexual union between two married people</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. God is present during sexual intercourse between two married partners.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. In a marriage, sexual intercourse is connected to God’s will.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. Sexual intercourse between married partners is an expression of spirituality.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99. Sexual intercourse is an important part of married life, but it doesn’t have much to do with God.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
100. In a marriage, sexual intercourse provides spiritual meaning.  

101. The mystery of God’s love is apparent in sexual intercourse between two people who are married.  

102. Religious/spiritual beliefs do not influence sexual behavior in my marriage.  

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. You have made a great contribution to the advancement of understanding marriage and relationships!
References


