

Integration of Faith and Theory

You and me forever: Marriage in light of eternity

Daylyn Bhavsar-Padilla

Alliance University

Dr. Julio A. Orozco

Marriage and Family Counseling: Foundations Spring 2023

March 2, 2023

1 Corinthians 7:29 says, "The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none" (English Standard Version Bible, 2016). Is this a substantial and meaningful passage? It was quoted by the authors of *You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity* (You & Me Forever) as " Influential and motivating" biblical passage to write this book" (pg.114). The book's title sends insights into the thoughts and feelings of a strong bond in faith lead marriage. From an at-glance perspective, the quoted Bible doesn't seem to fit in a book with such a title. Co-authored by Francis and Lisa Chan, *You and Me Forever: " Marriage in Light of Eternity"* reflects the idea that we must think beyond this world regarding marriage. It highlights that marriage is not just about our time on Earth but that eternity awaits us. The Chans indicate that Christian matrimony is powerful not only for the benefit of the couple but for God's mission for people in this world. The book stimulates readers to prioritize their marriage by acknowledging their responsibility as individuals and a couple and living out a biblical marriage.

The writers strategically use each section to address specific themes related to marriage. This work is unique because its concepts are written to be readable and enlighten whether the reader is married or single. Another section of the book explores couples' challenges in marriage, such as communication issues, conflict, and the temptation to prioritize personal happiness over serving God. The writers offer practical advice on overcoming these challenges and strengthening the marriage. An identified theme is the importance of a Godly Marriage. This area emphasizes how a marriage can reflect God's love for the world. The authors encourage couples to prioritize their relationship with God and to seek to love and serve each other as Christ loves the church. It focuses on putting God first in the union and seeking to serve Him together. The final identified section theme is the use of marriage for God's purposes via discussing the importance of serving God together. An example mentioned was of a couple that, without knowing, planned to separate once their child left for college. The wife began a nonprofit to help victims

of human trafficking her husband grew passionate about the mission. The couple remained together without realizing it after their child moved out, but their marriage became stronger than ever. The example shows how a couple uses their marriage to make a difference in the world. It encourages couples to pursue God's calling for their lives and to use their marriage as a platform to share the gospel and make disciples.

"You and Me Forever" is a Christian book that approaches marriage from a biblical perspective. It emphasizes the significance of setting God first in the union and utilizing marriage to serve God. The book focuses on helping individuals and couples see their marriage in the context of eternity and how they can work together to fulfill God's purpose. On the other hand, the text "Foundations of Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling" presents different theories and modalities for counseling couples, marriages, and families. It covers foundational and advanced topics of critical importance to student counselors and therapists seeking to work in family settings. The textbook provides an overview of different approaches and techniques. While both books offer insights and guidance for couples and families, they approach the topic differently. "You and Me Forever" emphasizes the importance of a godly marriage and using the marriage to serve God via a Christian lens. In contrast, "Foundations of Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling" presents different approaches and techniques that counselors can use to help couples and families overcome challenges. Family and couples counseling offers a complex interplay of various factors inherent to each individual, the dynamic interplay between each person's issues, and the outside influences that shape behavior. Foundations of Couples, Marriage, and Family Counseling helps readers understand the past/current concepts and techniques from proven theories. Moreover, examine the current realities of family, diversity, culture, and systemic contexts.

Counselors should be mindful of ethical considerations when using religious or spiritual perspectives in counseling.

According to the ACA Code of Ethics, the following sections should be considered.

C.2. Professional Competence C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Whereas multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse client population.

C.2. Professional Competence C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education,

C.7.b. Development and Innovation When counselors use developing or innovative techniques/procedures/modalities, they explain the potential risks, benefits, and ethical considerations of using such techniques/procedures/ modalities. Counselors work to

minimize any potential risks or harm when using these techniques/procedures/modalities.

training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Whereas multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse client population.

C.7. Treatment Modalities C.7.a. Scientific Basis for Treatment When providing services, counselors use techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation.

C.7.c. Harmful Practices Counselors do not use techniques/procedures/modalities when substantial evidence suggests harm, even if such services are requested.

"You and Me Forever" may have a place in couples counseling. As it offers great insight in developing a strong self that will make for a amazing wife/husband. Never the less there are some general considerations that a providers should take into account when using religious or spiritual views in counseling. Providers should ensure that they are sensitive to clients' beliefs. In addition, counselors should have the required competence and training to include religious or spiritual philosophies in counseling. Furthermore, they should be aware of the potential impact of religious or spiritual views on clients and should have the skills to guide these issues in a way that is compliant and effective. It is important to obtain informed consent from clients before incorporating religious perspectives in counseling. Finally, if a counselor deems that they are not capable or comfortable using religious/spiritual perspectives they should refer clients to a counselor who is better equipped to fulfill their needs.

The work by Francis and Lisa Chan can widen clinicians' perspectives when working with couples in several ways. The book highlights the spiritual dimension of marriage and emphasizes the importance of putting God first in the union. This viewpoint can broaden clinicians' perspectives by helping them understand how clients' religious or spiritual beliefs may impact their relationships and how to integrate these beliefs into the counseling process. The eternal component encourages viewing their relationship in the context of eternity and using their marriage to serve God and fulfill His purposes. This spiritual measurement can widen counselors' perspectives by enabling them to understand how their beliefs may influence clients' values and priorities. They are allowing for the incorporation of the afterlife into the counseling process. The book emphasizes the importance of serving others and using marriage to impact the world positively. This component can help understand the clients' sense of purpose and help set goals in their treatment plan. Lastly, the writers explore common challenges that couples encounter in marriage, such as lack of communication and discord. This addition to the toolbox can enlarge clinicians' knowledge by equipping them with spiritual insights and strategies to address these challenges.

Although the book has a valuable perspective on marriage, there are also some potential challenges. The writers present an exclusively Christian view, which may limit its usefulness in counseling couples from diverse religious or cultural backgrounds. The perspectives may not be applicable or relevant to couples who do not share these beliefs. The focus is primarily on marriage's spiritual and eternal dimensions. It may not address some practical or psychological issues that couples may face, causing a limited scope. While these strategies may be helpful, the Chans propose simplistic solutions to complex relationship issues, such as communication and conflict resolution. Solutions must be more sufficient to address complex or deep-seated problems in a relationship. The text presents some traditional gender roles in marriage, which may not apply to couples with different beliefs about gender

roles in marriage. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the need for more empirical evidence to support their strategies, which may limit their credibility or effectiveness in counseling couples.

As a person of Christian faith and clinician, it is essential to understand the intersection of faith and mental health. It can be helpful for Christian clinicians to explore how their faith informs their approach to mental health and consider how they can integrate their faith into their clinical work in a respectful and appropriate way for clients. To help navigate ethical dilemmas that may arise in clinical practice, the development of a solid ethical foundation. A foundation grounded in faith and professional standards of practice will minimize ethics violations. Personal spiritual practices can be a source of self-care. Christian clinicians may find it helpful to engage in personal spiritual practices, such as prayer or meditation, to help them stay centered and grounded in their faith as they care for their clients.

Overall, "You and Me Forever" offers a biblical perspective on marriage and practical advice on how to build a strong, godly marriage that honors God and fulfills His purposes. It is a valuable tool that can be presented without imposing religious beliefs. The writers accomplish the goal of sharing faith in way in which is relatable to different genders, and all relationship statuses.

References

Capuzzi, D., & Stauffer, M. D. (2015). *Foundations of couples, marriage, and family counseling*. John Wiley & Sons

Chan, F., & Chan, L. (2014). *You and me forever: Marriage in light of eternity*. San Francisco, CA: Claire Love Publishing.

ESV Bible: Youversion. YouVersion | The Bible App | Bible.com. (n.d.). Retrieved March 30, 2023, from <https://www.bible.com>

2014 code of ethics. indd [PDF]. (2014). <https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>