**Case Study Analysis: Paul and Diane**

Paul and Diane have been married for five years. It is the first marriage for both spouses. Currently, Paul is a successful CPA with a prestigious accounting firm in Manassas. He has been with the company for nearly 10 years and is next in line for a senior management position that will be opening soon due to a retiring colleague. Diane teaches English at a local high school. She has been teaching for the past eight years since completing her master’s degree.

They closed on their first home two years ago, taking a 30-year mortgage. However, Paul would like to pay off the mortgage in the next 15 years due to the uncertain real estate market and sluggish economy. Both of them really enjoy being on and around the water and recently purchased a small boat to use whenever they could. After meeting at a Christmas party, their relationship seemed like a whirlwind romance. They immediately started dating and married six months later and both of them were content with their careers and life in general. They started attending a new church about three years ago and looked for ways to be more involved. Diane volunteers with children’s ministries and Paul has started helping out with youth related activities and meetings.

As the school year is coming to an end, Diane has begun to think more about having children and starting a family. She turns 33 this year and did not want to wait too much longer. Her family is “dropping hints” about grandkids and she knows her biological clock is ticking. When she mentioned her thoughts and that she was considering not teaching during the next school year, according to her, Paul “went ballistic.” He said that they had already committed to paying off the mortgage and the new boat. When Diane suggested that they sell the boat and could manage with a lower budget, Paul just became more frustrated and angrier. Last week, he made the comment that he was not even sure if he still wanted to have any children. Besides, he reasoned, their involvement with children and the youth group gave them both plenty of meaningful time with children.

Diane believes that Paul has become too accustomed to their two-income lifestyle and that his parent’s messy divorce when he was nine still “scares” him about raising their own family. The negative reaction from Paul has devastated Diane and has led to several very heated arguments, which have now spilled over to other parts of the relationship. Every time Paul wants to discuss the matter, he says that she just, “cries and gets emotional and angry,” while Diane claims that Paul, “leaves the house to be with his buddies or sulks in front of the television all night.” Their love life has been almost non-existent for several months now. Last week, Diane confessed her questioning the fact that they got married too soon and did not really know each other well enough. Church leadership has asked them both to take a time-out and work on the marriage. Although somewhat reluctant and defensive, they have both agreed to talk with a counselor.