



THE WIN

The group member will demonstrate comprehension of God's plan for marriage by crafting a 3-5 minute talk encouraging couples to seek Christ and stay married and then constructing a list of Scriptures that can serve as a daily reminder to live in the Spirit.

*1
minute*

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

SAY THIS:

In the message this week we learned the God has plan for marriage relationships. Fortunately, God's plan does not leave husbands and wives to simply figure this out. Instead, God has directed husbands to love their wives as themselves, and wives to respect their husbands. Sounds easy right? Not quite.

*3-5
minutes*

WARM UP

SAY THIS:

The media, for better or worse, spend a lot of energy following the lives of celebrities.

ASK THIS:

Who is some celebrity couples that were perceived by the media to be happy only to break up? In your view, what about them portrayed them as happy?

SAY THIS:

Celebrities are not the only ones who are experts at managing an image. We do it often, sometimes every day. Let's take a look at the Scriptures from this week's message and explore these a bit more.

*35-40
minutes*

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

HAVE SOMEONE READ:

Ephesians 5:33

ASK THIS:

- As you attempt to be obedient to Paul's instruction to husbands and wives, what causes you to struggle most?
- Why do you think the struggle is so tough for you?
- What is your typical response to your struggle? Does it solve the problem or deepen it?

SAY THIS:

The message this week taught us the meaning behind 'loving our wives' and 'respecting our husbands,' but we realize that it's not as easy as we want it to be. The struggle is real and sometimes ugly. Yet, in Christ we have a hope to get through the day and make it to tomorrow. But what about the husbands or wives that have given up? They've thrown in the towel and decided that life would be better if they ended the relationship. What once seemed like a great idea (joining lives together) now seems like a nightmare. I wonder if our understanding of God's plan for marriage might help them.

DO THIS ACTIVITY: (For gender only groups break up into groups of 2 and assign groups as either representing men or women)

Leader Tip: This exercise could be powerful for your group. The exercise is designed for group members to demonstrate their understanding of the sermon content. Additionally, the emotions it could conjure up could be overwhelming to those who have experienced divorce. As a leader, be sensitive to group members who have experienced divorce. If they seem to withdraw or react negatively towards the exercise, allow them to sit out and just watch. We never want to push someone into something they do not want to do.

Split up into men and women (2 groups. If each group is larger than 7 people, create 4 groups)

Here is the scenario:

You have been asked to deliver a 3-5 minute talk to a room full of couples on the brink of divorce. (None are in abusive relationships). The event organizers have made a specific request that you include in your talk, a biblical case for marriage, the reality of struggle, and hope that only Jesus can provide.

Men: As a group, write a 3-5 minute talk that includes everything the event organizers have requested. You will be speaking to the husbands in the room. Feel free to search the Internet, use personal examples, scripture verses, movie quotes, poems etc.

Women: As a group, write a 3-5 minute talk that includes everything the event organizers have requested. You will be speaking to the wives in the room. Feel free to search the Internet, use personal examples, scripture verses, movie quotes, poems etc.

After 20 minutes of group time have each group deliver their talk to the room. (This person can read directly from their paper if desired. They can deliver it as a group or break it up in sections or whichever way else that works for them.)

After all groups have delivered their talk, spend some time processing the experience.

ASK THIS:

- How easy or difficult was this exercise for you? Why?
- What emotions did you feel as your group was crafting your talk?
- Did you find yourself struggling for something to write or struggling to limit your writing?
- Do you feel you have provided a strong case for couples or do you think it needs some improvement?

SAY THIS:

As we wind down our time let's position ourselves to succeed in our struggle. Often times we have great intentions to overcome our marriage struggles. If left untreated we may find ourselves in that room of couples we just encouraged to not give up. We intend to move in the direction of progress, health, and happiness. In his book, *Pathway to Progress*, Andy Stanley states direction not intention determines our destination. We must move in the direction we want to go if we ever want to arrive at where we want to be. As an extra challenge this week let's get back in our groups and do 1 final activity.

ACTIVITY:

Instructions:

Men: we are to love our wives as Christ loved the Church.

Women: we are to respect our husbands

Create a list of Scriptures that your group can take home and put on their mirror, refrigerator, or somewhere else visible to remind them of the traits they should display daily. Feel free to use the Internet, Bibles etc.

Hint: A great way to categorize your list is to use the fruit of the Spirit (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Self-Control – Galatians 5:22)

3-5
minutes

**DIGGING DEEPER**

For a great sermon series on marriage check out iMarriage by Andy Stanley. It's been posted on youtube. You can check it out at <https://youtu.be/G-Z-WeQkYKk>