

THIS IS US

Week 2 Leader Guide We Work to Build Strong Marriages

Leader Tip: *Be aware that group members may be sensitive to this topic of discussion. Those who have gone through divorce and/or those who are in or know people who are in a non-heterosexual relationship may get defensive or have their feelings hurt when discussing God's design of marriage. Don't shy away from talking about a touchy subject; just be mindful of the current or previous relationships of your group members and remember to speak lovingly using God's Word as your source of truth. As needed, remind your group members of Romans 8:1-4.*

THE WIN

The group member will evaluate their approach to love, marriage and the role God plays in their marriage by considering applicable Scriptures and provided book/video resources.

1-2
minutes

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

In this week's message we learned that God wants us to persevere in marriage to experience the reward of a life time of faithful love.

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

ASK THIS:

- When you hear the word "love", what comes to mind first: feelings or actions?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CSB

ASK THIS:

- After hearing the Apostle Paul's description of love, does love pertain more to feelings or actions?

DO THIS:

- Have a different group member read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CSB again but substitute "love" and "it" with "Jesus".

ASK THIS:

- How does this contrast with replacing "love" and "it" with your own name?

Say This: In this week's message we learned that marriage is a relationship created by God between one man and one woman for a lifetime. To persevere, we must work to build strong marriages.

Ask This:

- Either off hand or looking online, discuss the differences between a contract and a covenant.
- Some people view love as a feeling and marriage as a contract. If this were true, in what circumstances do couples have the right to backout of the marriage? Why or why not?
- If these same people learned to view love as a chosen action and marriage as a covenant, in what ways would their relationship be impacted?
- Would you agree that covenant marriage requires more work? Why or why not?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Luke 14:12-14 CSB

Say This: Jesus was teaching on humility in this text. He says when you are serving others, do it in a way where you have no expectation to be repaid.

Ask This:

- In what ways do you serve your spouse where when not repaid, you get irritated?
- What could this say about your humility?
- When conflict arises due to unmet expectations, do you lean more towards a contract or covenant marriage mindset?

Say This: In the book *Sacred Marriage*, author Gary Thomas encourages his readers to consider this: "What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?" The book also asks this question: "How can we discover in the challenges of marriage the opportunities to learn more about God, grow in our understanding of him, and learn to love him more?"

Ask This:

- In your marital experience, are your actions motivated more by what makes you happy or by what pleases God?
- What aspects of God's character would you most like your marriage to reveal to the world?
- How can you accomplish this?
- God loves us in spite of our flaws. How does marriage teach us to love our spouse in spite of their imperfections?
- If someone tried to describe your love for God solely by how well you love your spouse, what would they conclude?
- What are 1 or 2 ways you can serve your spouse, strengthen your marriage, and please God?

Watch This: <https://youtu.be/8hTpzngdygs>

Ask This:

- Share your favorite family tradition that you created after "leaving" your family to be joined to your spouse.
- Was this an easy or difficult decision? Why?
- What aspects of your marriage are a good representation of Matthew 19:6? Does this come natural or does it require constant attention?

CLOSING THOUGHT

“The key question is this: Will we approach marriage from a God-centered view or a man-centered view? In a man-centered view, we will maintain our marriage as long as our earthly comforts, desires, and expectations are met. In a God-centered view, we preserve our marriage because it brings glory to God and points a sinful world to a reconciling Creator.” – Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage: What if God Designed Marriage To Make Us Holy More Than To Make Us Happy?*