

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you believe are God’s top two or three preferred outcomes from healthy marriages?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: *What is God’s intention for marriage? It begins at Creation:* “This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates. The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. “At last!” the man exclaimed. “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken from ‘man.’” This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame. **Genesis 2:4-25 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How does reading the history of Creation challenge your assumptions about the world?

“The two are united into one” – why is this important?

What encouragements can husbands and wives take from this account?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for preserving the record of Creation so that we can get a glimpse into your heart for the world, animals, humanity and marriage. Help me to appreciate your design and plan!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What comes to mind when you think of the word, “divorce”?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

What does God really feel about divorce? Jesus said, “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.” **Matthew 5:31-32 NLT**

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery. **Hebrews 13:1-4 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

First, we need to understand the sanctity of marriage.

In marriage, the husband and wife are so united physically and spiritually, that the bond reaches right down into their very souls! God is right there blessing the union.

The word “unity” from Genesis 2 implies a sense of firm permanent attachment. It is a picture of how much God wants a marriage to succeed, to last, to grow.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Marriage is one of many important relationships that God has a plan for in the Christian life. We can take pointers from other relationships to build and enhance our approach to having a healthy marriage.

What does it take to do the following? How can you apply each to your marriage?

“Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.”

“Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers...”

“Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.”

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for encouraging husbands and wives to show love, great care and provision, and deep empathy for each other. Help me love deeply and widely as a conduit of your great and enduring love.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who has been a good example to you of a healthy marriage?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord.

So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, “Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. **Ephesians 5:5-33 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

The foundation of a healthy marriage is Jesus. How are husbands and wives supposed to follow Jesus?

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” – how should this permeate the marriage relationship?

What is the difference between conditional and unconditional love? What love does God show?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for teaching me how to truly live and love!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

How would you describe true love? Is it a feeling? An action? Both?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do. In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil." **1 Peter 3:1-12 NLT**

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Our marriages are to be pure and sacred.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How did Peter say that Christian wives of unbelieving husbands would win them to Jesus? Can this approach impact godly husbands as well?

How are Christian husbands commanded to treat wives? What will be hindered if he doesn't treat her with God's love and care?

What aspect of love do you need to work on this week?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for loving me and teaching me to truly love as I have been loved.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What clothes do you enjoy wearing most? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free.

Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. **Colossians 3:1-19 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What are you thankful to God that you have been saved FROM?

What actions, attitudes, and relationships as God saved you FOR?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, teach me to embrace your attitudes and actions so that I can have healthy relationships that reflect your restoration and power!