

Covenant Commitment #2

Growing in our Love for the Family

GOAL OF THIS SESSION

To remind ourselves of God's good design for marriage.
To equip you with a simple tool to use in your marriage that will help you become a better team.
To invite you to plan a time to use that tool in the next 3 weeks.

Biblical, Practical, Actionable

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is God's good plan to unite **1 man** and **1 woman**.
together as **1 flesh** for **1 lifetime**.

Three S's in Marriage

1. SIN : *Two biggest threats to your marriage are **SIN** and **SELF**.*

Sin - anything we think, do or say that breaks God's law or dishonors him.

Self - when we make our marriage ONLY about ME. My desires, my preferences, my goals instead of 'US'. Remember, marriage is a TEAM, a one flesh union.

2. SANCTIFICATION : *God's plan for your marriage are **HOLINESS** and **HAPPINESS**.*

BUT you won't have one without the other and you won't have happiness without holiness as your #1 priority.

One of God's purposes in your marriage is your sanctification. Your marriage is part of God's plan to bring about your Christ-likeness. The journey you are called to.

3. SPOUSE : *Your Spouse is a Gift from God on your journey of sanctification.*

Your marriage is the place that your spouse sees the worst of you. Your weaknesses. Your worst days. Yet because marriage is a life-long covenant it is also the singular safest place. A place where God has created and called each spouse to love one another.

The Goal is NOT to change each other - the goal is to support one another. To work as a team to help one another grow. Marriage is not a race you finish individually, the goal is to cross the finish line together.

Marriage works like sanctified sandpaper. Each spouse very different, very imperfect, but called to pursue Christ individually and together.

TEAM - together everyone achieves more and while this is cheesy, it is true. Marriage is not 2 people playing solos. It is 2 people seeking to play in harmony together.

GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

God gets glory when two very different and very imperfect people **fight for** their marriage instead of **fight about** their marriage.

You will either FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE or FIGHT ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE

So how can you FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE?
Let's look at Colossians 3:12-14

Three Ways to Fight for your Marriage

Colossians 3:12-14

[12]Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13]bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14]And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (ESV)

Make a point that the motivation here is God's choosing, God's love so we then...

vs 14 LOVE

Proactively seeking to serve, encourage, and meet the needs of your spouse - not based on how you feel, or how they perform, but out of desire to love others in the same way God has loved you.

Gospel motivated love.

Think of this as what you are planting in the marriage garden.

vs 13 FORGIVE

You are commanded to forgive your spouse, not hold a grudge, and not allow bitterness to grow in your heart. To forgive and forget - is there a specific issue in your marriage that keeps coming back up, or is there an issue to address?

Ask for forgiveness. Give forgiveness.

Do not refuse to forgive your spouse. Choose to forgive and not hold on to a grudge.

Gospel motivated forgiveness.

Think of this as weeding the marriage garden.

Learn to say "I am sorry, please forgive me." The sooner you do, the less damage will be done.

Humble yourself - go to your spouse and ask forgiveness for your part.

vs 12 & 13 FORBEAR

Bearing with one another is to endure or forbear. To willingly, patiently, gently choose to deal with differences, weaknesses, and challenges by choosing to show grace and NOT POINTING IT OUT, NOT MAKING COMMENTS, CRITICIZING, NOT CHOOSING TO COMPLAIN TO THEM OR TO OTHERS.

Good marriages are **INTENTIONAL not ACCIDENTAL.**

Fighting for your marriage is **PRO-ACTIVE.**

Fighting about your marriage is **REACTIVE.**

ACTIVITY: INDIVIDUAL GROWTH

A Look at SIN and SELF

What unhealthy or sinful patterns or behaviors are you willing to work on so that your marriage can be all that God designed it to be?

ACTIVITY: LOVE AND NURTURE

Do you know what your spouse needs from you most? How do they feel loved? Have you ever asked them? Are you being intentional to provide for those needs? Do you have built in routines into your schedule that seek to love your spouse well?

ACTIVITY: FORGIVE AND FORGET

When was the last time you asked your spouse if you could talk together about something they had done or said that really hurt you?

Is there something specific you and your spouse need to address in your marriage right now?

Do you have a way to have these conversations?

Do you need help from River of Life with these conversations?

ACTIVITY: FORBEAR AND NOT FUSS

What specific habits, preferences, ways of doing things will you choose to forbear? Do not write these down or share them with your spouse, this is between you and God.

What specific things are you choosing to NOT make an issue. They're not sin, they are perhaps frustrating, likely preferences or habits, ways of doing things.

To forbear and not fuss - What are you going to choose to overlook in love without complaining.

ASSIGNMENT

When will you and your spouse meet to FIGHT for your marriage?

In the next week, schedule a time to have one of the following:

1. Exchange your plans to Grow - Share with your spouse the areas you would like to work on. Invite them to share how these patterns or behaviors have affected them
2. Discuss what makes you feel loved and appreciated - Ask your spouse what you specifically might do in order to love them well.
3. If you need to Forgive and Forget use the 'Rules of Engagement' Tool.

Rules of Engagement Tool

the Do's and Don'ts of communication

1. Ask permission to share. *Can I talk to you about or*
2. Speak about yourself, your feelings, your emotions, how you perceived the situation...
DO NOT speak for the other person.

Speaker

State the specific situation or circumstance as clearly and simply as you can.

Goal:

- Share my feelings
- Share my thoughts

DO NOT:

- Accuse - of trying to purposely or intentionally do something
- Attack - use this as a chance to point out their weaknesses
- Assign Motives
- Bring up the Past

Listener

Listen, by giving your complete and undivided attention.

Goal:

- To love your spouse by listening
- To seek to understand
- To ask clarifying questions

DO NOT:

- Defend yourself or others
- Disagree
- Try to explain or give evidence

Response - I am sorry if made you feel that way.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

BOOKS / DEVOTIONALS

Tim Keller - *The Meaning of Marriage, The Meaning of Marriage Couples Devotional*
John Piper - *This Momentary Marriage*

MARRIAGE PREPARATION / CURRICULUM

SYMBIS - Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts

RIVER OF LIFE

Elders
River Group Leaders
Mature Couples
Biblical Counseling - *we will work to find solid biblical counselors to help you build your marriage on Christ.*

BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Christian Counseling and Education Foundation - <https://www.ccef.org/>

WEBSITES

Focus on the Family - <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

The BIG Five

5 Conversations Every Couple MUST HAVE

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Finances
- Sexual Intimacy
- Time Together
- Rules of Engagement

6 HABITS THAT WILL DESTROY MARRIAGE

1. Pride
2. Angry Words
3. Criticism
4. Contempt
5. Defensiveness
6. Stonewalling