



(Leaders Guide)

THE WIN

Marriages work best when they operate by God's design. Our goal this week is to reinforce the guidance given in Genesis 2 and 3 and to motivate our group members to operate in their marriage as God designed them to.

Leaders: Do your best to include and modify questions to include Singles who are in your group. God's Word has meaning for all!

3-5
minutes

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

Read this aloud:

In this week's message, our primary text was Genesis 2 and 3. From the passage, we learned three basic setups for the operating system for marriage.

Basic Setup #1: Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. (Gen 2:18; 20; 24)

Basic Setup #2: Men and women have equal standing, but different roles. (Gen 2:7, 15-18)

- God calls men to initiate in loving, leading, and serving
- God calls women to respond in loving, respecting, and helping

Basic Setup #3: We become ONE by leaving, cleaving, and submitting to ONE another as we submit to Christ. (Gen 2:24-25, Matt. 19:4-6, Eph 5:21)

Singles: Seek to become (more like Christ or the Godly person you're looking for) rather than begrudge (the fact that you are single).

Ask: Are there any specific questions you had after hearing the message?

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

As we learned on Sunday, our environment can have a significant influence on the way we approach marriage and relationships.

Activity: Have the men and women stand up together to attempt to dance. Have each man choose a type of dance and each woman choose a different type of dance (instruct partners not to share with each other). On the count of 3, have each person try to lead the other based on the dance that they chose. This should look like total chaos with everyone doing different dance moves!

Make sure to point out that this is the type of “operating system” that our culture often advocates: two people operating independently of each other, battling for their own way, without a clear initiator or responder.

20-25
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

How has our culture, your parents, or other influences impacted the way that you view:

1. The permanence of marriage?
2. Roles of men and women within marriage?
3. The reason for marriage?

Have someone in your group re-read **Genesis 2:15-25**.

In v. 18, God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement.” Merriam-Webster defines **complement** as “something that fills up, completes, or makes perfect.”

Have you thought of the specific ways that God designed your spouse to complete what you may lack to be effective in His service?

Group: Discuss some flaws or weaknesses that you have. How has God gifted your spouse in a way to make you more complete? **Singles:** What are qualities that you tend to look for in relationships with people to complement how God made you?

Group breakout: Divide the group between men and women for this next discussion.

Men: Re-read **Ephesians 5:25-28**

Men: God has created husbands and wives equally, both bearing His divine image. In the text, we see that he designed them for different roles. Note that these roles are designed specifically for marriage, not just any relationship between a man and woman. Husbands are called to initiate in loving, leading, and serving. In this way, men follow the example of Jesus, who loved the church and gave Himself for her. As discussed in Sunday’s message, the “Blue Screen of Death” for man (as seen in Genesis 3) is **passivity**. Jesus was not passive towards His bride (the church), but came into the world to pursue her, rescue her, love her, lead her, serve her, and ultimately give His life for her. He did not wait for His bride to initiate love towards Him; rather He was the initiator, dying for us “while we were enemies” (Romans 5:10).

4. How does Christ embody the attitude and actions of a true husband? How and why do you think our culture resists having this attitude?
5. What are you currently doing to initiate spiritual leadership within your home? Do you struggle most with loving your wife, leading her, or serving her? Is there an area of passivity that you need to confess and repent of? Remember the beauty of the gospel: Christ died for the sin of passivity so there is now no condemnation for those in Christ.
6. What is one new practice that you can initiate in one of these three areas? When are you going to start?

Women: Re-read **Ephesians 5:22-24**

Women: God created wives and husbands completely equal, both bearing His divine image. In the text, we see that he designed them for different roles. Note that these roles are designed specifically for marriage, not just any relationship between a man and woman. Wives are called to respond to their husbands by loving, respecting and helping. In this way, wives provide an example for the entire church, which willingly submits and responds to Christ in everything out of love for Him. Many theologians observe that wives also have the privilege of displaying Jesus, who lovingly trusted and followed the will of His Father, even though he was equally and fully God himself (John 4:34, 6:38, 8:29). As discussed in Sunday’s message, the “Blue Screen of Death” for woman

(as seen in Genesis 3) is **aggression**. Jesus, however, did not “consider equality with God as something to be used to his own advantage” (Phil 2:6).

7. How does Christ’s attitude provide an example for wives? How and why do you think our culture resists having this attitude?
8. How can you emulate this attitude in the way you respond to your husband? Do you struggle most with respecting your husband or with being a helper to him? Is there an area of aggression that you need to confess and repent of? Remember the beauty of the gospel: Christ died for the sin of aggression so there is now no condemnation for those in Christ.
9. What is one new practice that you can initiate in one of these three areas? When are you going to start?

Come back together as a complete group and share some of the takeaways and action items that both the men and women came up with (for those who are comfortable sharing). Ask singles to share something they have learned that impacts the way they view marriage. Pray together that God would give us the grace to change.

3-5
minutes

DIGGING DEEPER

Read this:

Ultimately, the beauty of marriage is that God has designed husbands and wives to be joined together as ONE.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.” (Eph 5:31-32)

The incredible privilege of marriage is that it is the one relationship that God designed to most closely resemble the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. Paul says this mystery is profound! It is the foundation behind God’s “operating system” that marriage works in covenant relationship (not contract), and that both husbands and wives embrace God’s design to complement each other in displaying Christ to the world.

The constant goal for both husbands and wives (as one flesh) should be a posture of mutual submission, “submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Eph 5:21)

Activity: Ask the men and women to stand up and try the dance again. This time, instruct the men to initiate their dance and guide the women to respond to the lead of their partner. Regardless of your dance skills (or lack thereof), see how much easier it is in when we follow the proper “operating system” that God designed for relationships?

CLOSING THOUGHT

This Week:

At home, share the new behavior you discussed in groups with your spouse. If necessary, apologize to your spouse for your passivity or aggression in the past. Make a commitment to start pursuing that new behavior this week if possible. Singles: commit to pursuing a new pattern of behavior as you seek to become more like Christ, regardless of your future plans for marriage. Celebrate the fact that God has counted Christ’s righteousness as our own. Despite our failures, he still embraces us as if we were righteous like Christ!

Spend some time this week reading Revelation 21-22 and meditating on the glorious day when Christ comes back to meet His bride for the biggest wedding bash the universe will ever see.