

## SAVE THIS MARRIAGE

### **A REALITY CHECK:**

1 Corinthians 7:28, 32-35; Ephesians 5:21

- Marriage will have its **challenges**.

### **FOR HUSBANDS:**

Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 3:7-9; Proverbs 30:21-23; Song of Solomon 2:8-13

- ① Servant leadership includes **sacrifice** and **gentleness**.
- ② Your wife needs you to **pursue her**.

### **FOR WIVES:**

Ephesians 5:22-23; Philippians 2:1-11; Proverbs 31:10-12, 28-31

- ① Be careful with your **extra conditions**.
- ② Your husband needs your **respect**.

### **FOR MARRIAGES:**

1 Corinthians 13:1-8; Proverbs 18:1-2; Romans 12:9-16; Genesis 2:23-24

- ① **Selfishness** is a poison.
- ② Healthy conflict resolution has **boundaries**.
- ③ Trouble comes whenever your marriage is not **a top priority**.

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 2, 2008

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**Special Note About this Week's Topic of Marriage:** This week's homework and Growth Group discussion is designed to be helpful for all of us regardless of our marital status. For those who are not married, it could be helpful in preparing for a possible future marriage or providing insights for aiding relationships with family and friends.

**QUICK REVIEW:** Looking back over your sermon notes from *Save This Marriage*, what was most challenging, helpful, or interesting to you?

## MY STORY

1. Is there a couple whose marriage you especially respect or admire? What characteristics of their marriage do you admire?
  
2. Can you think of any expectations or assumptions about marriage you had that you later discovered were inaccurate? Where do you think these expectations came from?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. The first few chapters of Genesis tell the story of the creation of marriage. Although written more than 3000 years ago, the principles found there are still relevant to marriages today. What insights about marriage do you learn from Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 2:18-25?

### Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

[27] So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

[28] God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." [NIV]

### Genesis 2:18-25

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

[19] Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. [20] So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. [21] So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. [22] Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

[23] The man said,  
"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,'  
for she was taken out of man."

[24] For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

[25] The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. [NIV]

What steps did God go through before bringing Adam & Eve together? Why do you think He used that process?

How would you summarize why God created marriage?

2. We read in Colossians 3:14 that love is the quality that produces unity in all of our relationships including marriage. The best description of love is found in

1 Corinthians 13. As you read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, replace the word "love" with your own name. Now take a minute to consider how true what you just read is of your relationship with your spouse (or family or good friends).

#### **Colossians 3:14**

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. [NIV]

#### **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5] It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. [6] Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [7] It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

[8] Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [NIV]

Regardless of your marital status, research shows that each of us has a primary "Love Language" (something that tells us, "I'm thinking of you and I care about you"). On the back of this homework is a list of some of the most common "Love Languages." After reading them, answer the following questions

Which one of the six love languages is easiest for you to express? Which is most difficult?

If you are married, which of these do you think your spouse will identify as his or her primary love language? If single, apply the same question to a good friend or family member.

How could understanding these love languages help improve your marriage or other significant relationships?

3. This next question is designed to be discussed by same gender groups. Please divide your group into men and women before discussing them.

**For Men:** This weekend Jesse talked about servant leadership requiring sacrifice and gentleness. In Ephesians 5:25-30 we see Jesus used as the model of servant leadership. Can you think of some examples of what servant leadership as described in this passage would look like in action?

#### **Ephesians 5:25-30**

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26] to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, [27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. [28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- [30] for we are members of his body. [NIV]

What can you learn about a husband's love for his wife from Christ's example of His love for the church?

**For Women:** Proverbs 31 paints the picture of a godly woman. What can you learn about a wife's respect for her husband in Proverbs 31:10-12, 25-30?

#### **Proverbs 31:10-12**

A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
[11] Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
[12] She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life. [NIV]

#### **Proverbs 31:25-30**

She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.  
[26] She speaks with wisdom,  
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.  
[27] She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
[28] Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
[29] "Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all."  
[30] Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. [NIV]

What would the attitudes and actions found here look like in a modern day marriage?

## TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking again at the "Love Languages," is there anything you can do specifically this week to better express your love and concern in the language of your spouse or good friend?
2. Is there anything you'd like prayer for in relation to the topic of marriage?

## Love Languages

**Affirming Words** – Kind words about my accomplishments, behavior, appearance, or personality. "You did a good job...thanks... I appreciate you for..." These words can be spoken or written.

**Time** – Spending time together. "It's not activity but the time together that matters to me." Giving me quality time shows me you value me.

**Gift Giving** – It's the thought and the effort that counts – not the price tag! "The thoughtfulness and time it took tells me that you were thinking about me and that I'm important to you."

**Acts of Service** – Helping me out (cooking a meal, helping in the yard or with a project or assignment). Doing something you know I'd like you to do tells me you noticed and you care.

**Physical Touch** – Long before a child understands the meaning of love, the child feels loved by physical touch. I too feel loved by things as simple as a hug or a hand on the shoulder.

**Sharing My Interests** – Taking the time to get into my world and learn about my interests (even when they aren't high on your list). This tells me you love me enough to try and understand my world.

- Adapted from research on languages of love by Gary Chapman and Justin Swihart