

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD: - WK 1 - SEEK GOD
PLAY THE VIDEO OF THE COUPLES?

Welcome to those one line with us today and as well those here in the sanctuary! We are starting a brand new five week teaching series called:

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD! - a spin from Life ChurchTv/ Groeschel

INTRODUCTION:

A. We have a two fold purpose:

1. To try to invest in the lives of those of you that hope to get marriage one day and give you some tools on the FRONT SIDE OF MARRIAGE that will help prepare you a a godly marriage.
2. And for those that are already married what we want to do is look at FIVE COMMITMENTS that I believe with all of my heart that if you make these COMMITMENTS and KEEP THEM you will LITERALLY FAIL PROOF your marriage.

B. Let's start off asking this question:

1. Ladies -When you were a little girl, how many of you dreamed of getting married one day, with the perfect wedding, then your husband carry you over the threshold of your perfect house, loving you, and you even named your children long before you EVEN MET your husband?
2. Men: Was that your dream also? Probably not exactly! but you did dream of coming home at night to an orderly home, smell of roast beef cooking, (even though your wife was getting home at the SAME TIME as you), she was always looking good, smiling and SAYING YES!

HOW MANY WOULD SAY it is NOT EXACTLY working out the way you expected? So there are always expectations about what marriage is going to be like and then when the marriage doesn't meet our expectations, there are all sorts of let down, disappointments, hurt, pain anger, divorce and such.

C. In fact, some ask the question? Is it even possible to have a great marriage?

1. The answer is **EMPHATICALLY YES - BUT it is NOT LIKELY if you do what everybody else is doing.**
2. **Because if you just look at the statistics say about 50% of the marriages that start will not make it, - The tragedy is that even the younger you are, the less likely your marriage is to make it.** And of those 50% or so that do make it, the vast majority of them are **miserable, don't really have any intimacy, they're just sticking together for the sake of the kids and so the odds are really stacked against us IF YOU DO WHAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES!**
3. **I ask you - what other significant area of your life are you satisfied with 50% odds against you? For instance:**
 - a. **If you found out eating the same cereal would give you a 50% chance of getting cancer, would you keep on eating it?**
 - b. **if you found out the investment that ALL your \$ was in had a 50% chance of failing, would you leave your \$ there?**
4. **I DON'T THINK YOU WOULD! I believe you would eat a different CEREAL and would find a SAFER INVESTMENT - you would not be satisfied with a 50% chance of success or failure.**

But in society today - you can't get a drivers license without taking a class and then a comprehensive exam of your comprehension in driving. BUT YOU

CAN GET A MARRIAGE LICENSE FOR \$15.

So we want to invest in some marriage - and if you are not married, I pray that you will do things differently than the world, - do them God's way - married by a pastor, because we're not making a legal agreement ONLY but a SPIRITUAL COVENANT WITH A HOLY GOD AND ASKING GOD TO HELP US - GIVE US THE KIND OF MARRIAGE THAT HE WANTS US TO HAVE.

Normally - I Rebecca take you John, to be my husband, to have to to hold, from this day forward. For better or for worse, sickness, and in health, forsaking all others, being faithful to you as long as we both shall live, SO HELP ME GOD!

NOT EVERYONE USES THOSE VOWS TODAY, CHOOSING TO SAY THEIR HEART BUT THE POINT IS THAT COMMITMENT IS BEING MADE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

I love the "to have and to hold" gives me HOPE - because it tells me "no matter if I messed up before, struggled, crossed a line, nevertheless from this moment forward things are different and here is my commitment to you before God from this day forward! better or worse, sickness or health, rich or poor - We will forsake all others and be faithful to each other as long as we both shall live -

SO HELP ME GOD! That is usually said as a declaration but I BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE SAID AS A REQUEST!

WHY? Because we need God to help us honor His covenant we have entered into together.

So here are the 5 commitments we will study:

- 1. This week - SEEK GOD**
- 2. Week 2 - FIGHT FAIR**
- 3. Week 3 - HAVE FUN**
- 4. Week 4 - STAY PURE**
- 5. Week 5 - NEVER GIVE UP**

Let's say it together: These are tools to keep your marriage from failing.

- I. The problem is a lot of people are not seeking God before marriage they are seeking a spouse.**
 - A. And so the guy goes out and meet the girl, and she looks good and she smells good and he thinks - This must be the ONE! Or the girl - thinks "He is so sweet, and he talks and talks and talks - and surely I have met the ONE because WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE IS TO BE REALLY FULFILLED YOU HAVE TO FIND THE ONE! CULTURE TEACHES US something TRUE - to really be fulfilled in life you have to find the ONE - the problem is - another person is not the ONE, GOD is your ONE and your SPOUSE is your TWO!**

- Now this is one of the most important foundational principles about having any relationship continue - God is your ONE!
- In fact, when Jesus was asked, What is the most important commandment,? He didn't say "Love your spouse with all of your mind , all of your soul all of your heart and all of your strength. When Jesus was asked "What is the most important commandment,? He essentially said God is your ONE, Make HIM your ONE, Matthew 22:37 "He replied "love the Lord your GOD with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind - This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself". God is your ONE and your spouse is your TWO.

PLEASE PUT ON SCREENS : GOD IS ONE - SPOUSE IS TWO

B. Now For those of you here who are not married but would like to be someday - I pray this would be your driving force of **PLEASE PUT WORDS IN YELLOW BELOW ON SCREEN** your life, Write this down: I will seek the ONE while preparing for my TWO. What we want to do when we are not married above anything else, we want to **HONOR GOD, LOVE GOD, SEEK GOD PLEASE GOD, KNOW GOD, LIVE BY GOD'S SPIRIT** to bring glory to God. When we do that is when we qualify for **MATTHEW 6:33 -"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you"**

- Then while we are seeking the ONE, He is doing something in us and preparing us for the TWO!

DEFINITION OF SEEK - TO TURN THE FACE

- The challenge is so often in our culture today there are are a long of people that call themselves Christians but put off the God thing until later when they think life matters more. So in the meantime, they barhop and live an ungodly life now, knowing that later they gt back down to spiritual business - VERY DANGEROUS
- Pastor Andy Stanley tells a story that really illustrates this well. He said: There was a young girl who was a very committed Christian but when she went off to college she did what a log of students do and gavee in to peer pressure, partying, drinking which turned to drugs and then turned into guy after guy after guy resulting in a very destructive life style. In the back of her mind the whole time was the thought "But I still believe in God - I still want a gold marriage and one day I'm going to do the right thing. but she continued in that lifestyle.
- Then one day she met a guy that was everything she had ever hoped to marry. He was godly, a leader, making a difference, discipling others - She told her mother: I met this guy who is everything I have been looking for - I'm going to kind of make myself available to him. The mother lovingly said - Well sweetheart you need to know a guy like that is NOT looking for a girl like you! And a reverse, for a guy doing!
- BECOME THE TYPE OF PERSON YOU WANT TO MARRY - IF YOU WANT 50/50 ODDS, THEN LIVE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE - BUT IF YOU WANT SOMETHING THAT I DIFFERENT - THEN SEEK GOD TODAY = YOUR MOT-TO - I WILL SEEK THE ONE WHILE PREPARING FOR MY TWO!

II. **NOW FOR MARRIED FOLK - OUR COMMITMENT IS - I WILL SEEK ALWAYS SEEK THE ONE WITH MY TWO.**

Our marriages will never be what God want them to be unless He is One and our Spouse is the TWO - often we get it all mixed up; we try to make our spouse the ONE, Oh you're going to make me happy, your are everything, or we might even put God as the One but then we put our CHILDREN in the number two spot or we put our CAREERS in the Number 2 spot and it doesn't work unless God is the ONE and our Spouse is the TWO.

What we are doing is idolizing the thing that we are trying to make ONE if it is something other than God HIMSELF. We are then putting a lot of pressure on a person who is incapable of meeting the need of being # 1 in our life. Then when they let us down, and they will because they are human, then we demonize them.

“You are not doing right, you are not meeting my needs”!

- A. When they are dating: She is so organized, so driven and so passionate about life - AFTER marriage a while - “She is a control freak, she wants everything her way, she drives me crazy, she nags, nags, nags! IDOLIZE THEN DEMONIZE!
- B. HER: He is so laid back and he comforts me and just so easy going” LATER: He's a bmp on a log, doesn't do anything, not a leader, just sits there and plays video games all day long! Idolize and then demonize!
- C. So what do we need to do? WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO SEEK THE ONE WITH TWO!
- D. But how do we do that practically - many ways: Seek Him together in His Word; worshipping together in the church; leading our children intentionally towards spiritual things, , enjoying the friendship of other people in one of our small groups together! But chances are most people if given a list of four or five things all at one time will do ZERO things - kinda two much - So let's focus on ONE THING - the most important spiritual discipline you can do in seeking God.

III. **There is a book called The POWER OF HABIT - - talks about what the author calls keystone habits. There are certain positive habits that if you do these things they create forward momentum into other good habits. And by the same token -there are negative habits that create forward momentum into other good habits. FOR EXAMPLE:**

EXERCISE IS A KEYSTONE HABIT FOR ME. When I exercise, it CREATES A forward momentum for me NOT to eat junk, then to wear my clear corrects for my teeth then to go to sleep at a proper hour then to drink sufficient water and on it goes for a POSITIVE LIFE STYLE.

When I quit exercising as a habit, I also begin to eat my sweets I quit wearing my clear corrects, I stay up to late and drink to much tea! Failing in that ONE habit creates a negative life style.

So there are certain habits that create lots of forward momentum in your life and certain negative habits that create negative momentum in your life. SO HERE IS A KEYSTONE HABIT I

WANT TO GIVE YOU ABOUT SEEKING GOD THAT IS VERY SIMPLE AND THAT IS TO PRAY TOGETHER EVERY DAY!

- A. Some are very giddy right now and happy about this while others are thinking “Oh I don’t want to pray, I get nervous, I don’t know what to say”. I understand all of that - I want to say it is very intimate and bonding to join hands to pray - II Chronicles 7:14 says “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray (DO WHAT) ...pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land. Or WE COULD APPLY IT LOOSELY AND SAY AND I WILL HEAL THEIR MARRIAGE.
- B. **Let’s listen right now to Craig and Amy Groescel of Life Church share how to get started praying.**
1. Let’s highlight one thing they shared. A lot of people say “I just don’t know how to do that” - I know it can sound complicated but I don’t know how couples make it without seeking God and I believe with all of my heart that Satan does not want you to pray together and if you will be faithful in this - maybe just start by praying over the meals, - perhaps you have never done that - just commit that they never we eat we are going to thank God for this and start there.
 2. Or it could be a simple prayer “God bless my spouse today,
 3. Or what works for a lot of couples is to make out a real prayer list., just so you don’t get in the middle of a prayer and get stuck - awkward. Make a list like Needs of your children, Wisdom in decisions you are making, People in your small group who are struggling, Co-workers with sickness, unsaved friends, pray for your country. Just pray thru those things. Text a prayer to mate “praying for your strength or favor on you” or peace for you!

It is a KEYSTONE HABIT that creates an incredible amount of spiritual intimacy! YOU become so aware of God in the midst of you!

Friday morning John started to pray a short prayer with me before he left the house and before you knew it, he took off his coat, we began to sing and concerns that were hidden in our hearts were given to God and God’s peace took the place of the concerns.

So if PRAYING TOGETHER IS A KEYSTONE HABIT THAT CREATE FORWARD MOMENTUM - then watch this, When you pray together regularly chances are more likely you’ll be involved in the church together, more likely to be in a small group - more likely to have people praying for you, more likely to be bringing your children up in the LOVE OF God. The more likely you’ll be to forgive people who about run you off the road, etc.

You will be developing positive, spiritual momentum that helps you in your marriage. And think of this: You are seeking God together and God is answering your prayers and that build your faith.

As well It’s really hard to find with someone that you’re praying with - hard to have an ongoing, I hate you, you are a jerk, the antichrist in person.

It’s hard to pray with them and then watch porn, commit adultery.

Why? You are experiencing consistent spiritual intimacy - it makes you want to serve God, and not be caught in all those things that trap so many people.

And finally, it's really hard to divorce someone that you're seeking God with Isn't it?

So some people might be thinking "This is just too much for me" Well back to the sermon beginning. You can take the odds, 50% chance against your marriage not making it. Or you can just do this Word and say So Help us God, So help us! A REQUEST NOT A DECLARATION!

SO FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, LET'S BE PEOPLE OF PRAYER.

Don't say "I don't know how" - Tell God - We don't know so here we are.

Don't say "It's uncomfortable" - Get over it.

STORY - Went to visit older couple, the wife dying 88 - husband 90. Been married 70 years. Walked into jam-packed hospital room, several generations family members all worshipping as the martyr was about to pass from here to heaven. Feeble 90 year old man opened up the Bible to Psalm 23 and through tears read that to his family and over his wife.

Then all joined hands, he put one hand on his wife's head and committed her to God in heaven, thanked God for 70 years of getting to serve God with his best friend, kissed her and said I'll see you soon: Moments later she slipped from this world into eternity.

Afterwards, I looked at this guy and said, I want what you have, what is your secret. he said man we've messed up so many ways, too many to count. But the one thing we did is we were faithful together in prayer."

Right now - grab hands with your TWO and never stop seeking the One. And if you will CONTINUE TO DO THIS, I BELIEVE THE GOD OF HEAVEN WILL hear your prayers and transform your marriage into everything He wants it to be.

FOR ALL - INITIAL PRAYER

Today Father I pray that Holy Spirit would do a work in all of our hearts. -

1. There are some here today that recognize the way you're living, or doing life, God is not your ONE right now - You may even believe in God as I did growing up but He's not #1 - HE WANTS TO BE - He loved you so much He sent His Son Jesus to the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins, and HAVE A REAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, Right now - Lift your hands and say "That's my prayer! Pray Heavenly Father, forgive me, make me new - be my Savior and LORD - MY ONE IN JESUS NAME!

Married, not married, young, old but you recognize that you haven't really been seeking the ONE as you should in prayer and today you want to make a commitment or a recommitment to be a person of prayer from this day forward - You want to say I commit to seek Him faithfully through prayer - would you lift your hands right now

2. For those who have God for those not yet married, but hope to be one day, I pray they would fall in love with seeking YOU, their ONE as you prepare them for their TWO - Raise Your hands - if you pledge to seek your ONE while waiting on your TWO

3. For those who are married God, I pray that they would commit and always seek the ONE with their TWO. As you have listened today, you have come to realize that you REALLY need God's help in your marriage.

God we are asking you over these next FIVE weeks to bring marriages together, and heal those who are hurting, do miracles where there is very little hope or even NO HOPE. We realize all things are possible with YOU. Help them to make you ONE Grab hands - wherever you are in your relationships - look at each other and say - we are going to SEEK THE LORD!

NEXT WEEK - TIM WILL TEACH US HOW TO FIGHT FAIR!!!!!
ALWAYS SEEK THE ONE WITH YOUR TWO! SCREENS