

CHALLENGE:

Ask God to help you believe that He is both able & willing to change you and change your marriage.

Do not focus on your spouse's need to change but yours.

Be committed to God's glory more than anything else (more than even your comfort and happiness)

By faith – agree with God and submit your life to His good Word. Trust that God will be faithful to His Word as you obey Him by faith.

THE GOAL: Marriage is a good gift from a good God *when* you are willing to work out the gospel towards one another by faith.

### SETTING THE STAGE

FACTS: Many of us thought that we were spirit-filled, Jesus-loving people...then we got married.

FACTS: Marriage is the single hardest relationship to actually walk by the Spirit.

THE LIE: We (subtly) believe that marriage is the one place where carnality gets a pass. The one place that we are free to be the "real" me. The one place that we can sin without consequence.

THE TRUTH: Marriage will only fulfill God's design when you are actually submitting to Him by faith (i.e. walking by the Spirit // working out the gospel // life on God's terms).

### A GOSPEL SATURATED MARRIAGE

THE GOSPEL FOR EVERYTHING: We must begin to see and understand the gospel as the Bible does.

**PHILIPPIANS 1:27** – Only let your manner of life be *worthy of the gospel* of Christ.

**EPHESIANS 4:1** – I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, *urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling* to which you have been called.

**COLOSSIANS 1:6** – the gospel which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you

THE GOSPEL: Not just given so that you could get right with God. The gospel is given so that you can live right for God (by faith).

THE GOSPEL: Is more than a message that gets you into heaven – it is the power of God that fuels the entire Christian life.

## GOSPEL IMPLICATIONS FOR MARRIAGE

### GOSPEL IMPLICATION #1: FORGIVENESS IS A GOSPEL PRODUCT (FOR MARRIAGE) | EPHESIANS 4:32

- **COMMAND:** Forgive one another (simple enough)

BEHIND THE SCENES: the only reason we need to exercise forgiveness is because we get sinned against

- **FOUNDATION:** The foundation all Christian forgiveness is found in the gospel
- **APPLICATION:** Forgiveness is not just a command to be obeyed in Christian marriage – forgiveness is a product of the gospel for Christian marriage.

### GOSPEL IMPLICATION #2: HUMILITY IS A GOSPEL PRODUCT (FOR MARRIAGE) | PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

- **COMMAND:** Work out a christ-focused, gospel-enabled humility.

NEGATIVE DEFINITION: doing nothing (which means nothing) out of selfish motivations or having self at the center (conceit) AND not looking out for my own interests (which is what I do naturally in the flesh)

POSITIVE DEFINITION: doing everything (which means everything) counting others (perspectives, opinions, desires) as more important than myself AND looking to the interests of others (doing that which is truly good for them, even when it comes at a great personal cost).

- **FOUNDATION:** Christian humility is rooted in both the example of Christ & the power of Christ
- **APPLICATION:** a Christ-like, gospel-enabled humility is essential for Christian marriage.

REAL TALK: Instead of trying to subtly conform my spouse to my image – gospel-saturated humility compels me to lay down my life for their good.

## TABLE DISCUSSION RULES

- No throwing your spouse under the bus
- Embrace the gospel of no condemnation – we are all fellow strugglers on the road to glory.
- Be willing to listen well, ask good questions, and bear one another's burdens.

## TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does believing & applying the gospel actually give us hope for our marriage?
2. What gospel implications are you not believing and applying in the context of your marriage? Would would change if you did?
3. TAKE HOME QUESTION: Do you actually believe that the gospel is able to change your marriage? If you're struggling to believe that the gospel is actually to transform your marriage, spend time reading and praying through Ephesians 1:19-20.

## Forgiveness and Reconciliation

### Intro: The Importance of Forgiveness

Jesus' death on the cross is at the heart of right relationship with God and one another

We need the gospel because sin is toxic

Forgiveness is at the heart of healthy relationships - Eph. 4:31-32

We must forgive or God won't forgive us - Matt. 6:9-15

### What is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is letting go of a debt because sin harms - Matt. 18:21-35

Understanding how much God forgave us is the key to us forgiving - Matt. 18:21-35

All sin is ultimately against God and realizing that puts sin in perspective - Psa. 51:4

### What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is restoring a relationship

The goal of reconciliation is for both parties to see what happened as God does

We can forgive without someone being sorry, but reconciliation deals with the sin

Reconciliation is a priority to God - Matt. 5:23-26

### Reconciliation Requires Repentance

God wants us to bring our sin to the light and confess it - 1 John 1:9

True repentance is sorrow over and turning from my root idolatry

True repentance has genuine sorrow because it sees sin as God does - 2 Cor. 7:8-11

Repentance reconciles because now both parties are united in seeing the sin as ugly

### Conclusion: Gospel Change

We need the power of the gospel to forgive and we need it to repent and reconcile

Let's forgive before we deal with each other's sin, so we do so out of love and care

Let's seek to be the first to forgive and the first to repent because we love mercy

### Questions:

Where am I not applying the gospel of forgiveness towards my spouse and in what ways am I actually holding their sin against them?

When my spouse sins against me, do I forgive them before I try to address their sin OR do I address their sin out of anger with a desire to make them pay?

What hinders me from doing the hard heart work of repenting over the root of my sin and then truly reconciling with my spouse?

**TAKE HOME:** Is there anything I need to repent of, confess, and reconcile with my spouse?

## True Love

### Intro: True Love is from God

All true love is from God and flows from the cross - 1 John 2:5; 4:19

### True Love Sees as God Sees

Forgiveness and reconciliation are foundational since sin is what blocks love

Remember who God has made each other in Christ - 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30-31

We were covered in filth, but God cleansed us and made us holy - Zech. 3

We are becoming who we already are in Christ - 1 John 3:2-3

So we need to see each other with spiritual eyes - 2 Cor. 5:16

Love looks past our imperfections - Song of Solomon

### True Love is Affectionate

God's love to us is affectionate - Zeph. 3:17; Hos. 11:8

The definition of love is to cherish - agape love

God's love is not merely emotional, it is committed and faithful

Jesus' love was affectionate and compassionate - John 11:5, 33-36; Luke 7:13

### True Love is Sacrificial

Jesus showed the true selfless nature of love - John 13:1-5, 13-15, 33-34; 15:12-13

True love comes from abiding in Christ and in His love - 1 John 4:16

### Conclusion: Gospel Change

Our nature is to lower the bar on love, but the gospel empowers us to truly repent

We need to look at ourselves first and deal with our own self-focus and lack of love

True selfless love isn't transactional, we don't love for what we get out of it

But the gospel empowers us to truly love and live like Jesus

### Questions:

How am I doing in viewing my spouse as a loved, forgiven, righteous, child of God and seeing the beauty of what Christ is doing in them?

How am I doing in terms of my gospel-like affection for my spouse? Am I cherishing my spouse as Christ cherishes me?

How does continually being reminded of the gospel produce stability in my affection so that my love isn't based on flaky emotion or circumstances?

**TAKE HOME:** How am I doing in the daily practice of laying down my life for my spouse? Am I joyfully serving and sacrificing for them as Jesus did for me OR when I serve my spouse am I keeping a record and comparing my service to theirs? Am I willing to repent of this self-centered and selfish love?



BE CAREFUL: We are all prone to use spiritual sounding words to walk in the flesh (but looking spiritual on the outside)

DEFINITION: Mercy is not getting what we deserve OR mercy is not getting what could or should be coming to us.

SAD REALITY: Mercy is that thing we want from others but we do not give to others (in the flesh)

## BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

### #1: GOD IS MERCIFUL WITH YOU | MATTHEW 18:21-27

- THEOLOGY: At the blazing center of God's nature & God's gospel is that the reality that God is merciful.
- APPLICATION: The Christian life is one of owning on the daily just how much we need God's mercy.

### #2: YOU GET TO BE MERCIFUL | MATTHEW 18:28-35

- THE SAD TRUTH: Human nature – we delight in being given mercy but we suck at giving mercy.
- APPLICATION: Forgiven people must forgive! Mercied people must show mercy!
- BE CAREFUL: God is not interested in selfish theologians.

## MERCY FOR MARRIAGE

### #1: MERCY FOR SIN

- THE LIE: I'm merciful, just not to my spouse.
- NEVER FORGET: Even in a Christian marriage, you are married to a sinner.
- THE CALL: *be merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful* (Luke 6:36)

**PROVERBS 19:11** – Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense

**LUKE 6:27-28** – “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

**ROMANS 12:21** – Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:6-7** – Love...does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- **GOSPEL MERCY:** calls & compels you to be merciful to the every day, native sins of your spouse.

## #2: MERCY FOR WEAKNESS

- **NEVER FORGET:** Because of sin, we are all weakened by the flesh (Psalm 103:14)
- **IN THE FLESH:** we are quick to point out the weaknesses of our spouse
- **THE SAD TRUTH:** When we fail to have mercy on our spouse, we are revealing that we don't think we need mercy (even mercy for weakness).
- **THE GOSPEL:** Remembering just how much mercy God has and is showing me enables me to show mercy towards my spouse.

## TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4. In the context of marriage, why must I continually remember the mercy that I receive from God on the daily?
5. What is one context in your marriage where you know God would have you show mercy towards your spouse (for sin or weakness)?
6. Practically – what would it look like for you to show mercy to your spouse in the above area?
7. How might a culture of gospel-motivated mercy change your marriage (remember – mercy for sin and mercy for weakness)?