

# 2021 Community Groups

## WEEKLY GUIDE

### September 12<sup>th</sup>

Pastor Aaron launched a new series this week titled "Fantasy Marriage". Whether you are single, divorced, widowed, married for 1 year or 50 years, this series reminds us of the relational perspective needed for our lives to flourish. Pastor Aaron challenged us to identify where our image and thoughts of marriage come from. Have we been shaped more by pop culture (The Bachelor, Hallmark Channel, or Soap Operas) or our observations of what we perceive to be healthy or unhealthy marriages in our friend groups? Or, do we look to Genesis 1:27 and the capstone of God's creation (man and women) and Genesis 2:24 where we see God's design for man and woman in the context of marriage as "they become one flesh?"

Single or married, let this sink in...Our marriages are designed to point to and honor Christ and the way He loves the Church...His Bride...Us.

### Ice Breaker:

- What the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
- When you die, what do you want to be remembered for?
- 1 thing to lament about COVID and 1 thing to Celebrate?

### Community Prayer:

Lord, we open our study this week and invite you in. We pray that we will continue to grow in relationship with each other as we seek a deeper relationship with you. We pray that our response and reflection on this study will glorify You. May we live out our faith that others may be directed to you. Forgive us for failing to obey you in the past, and help us as we allow the Holy Spirit to live His life through us this day and the days to come; in Jesus' Name, Amen.

### Opening Questions

1. What has informed your view of love up to this point in your life (your family, Hollywood, internet, etc..)?
2. How does that influence the way you interact with your spouse?
3. As a single person, what does the idea of marriage look like to you?

### EXPLORATION

Read the passages below...what can you learn about what it means to follow Jesus from these passages? (Have someone read from their bible)



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Start in the very beginning:

### **Genesis 1:27**

4. What does it mean to you to know that you were "created in the image of God?"
  - a. How can you connect your personal traits to the Image of God? (e.g. your creativity, your humor, your intelligence, your ability to love, etc...)
5. God calls you His masterpiece...like the Picasso Pastor Aaron mentioned. Do you see yourself as a masterpiece? Do you find it challenging to accept God's view of you in this context?

### **Ephesians 2:10**

6. What does it mean when this passage says "God prepared in advance for us to do?" Remember, He is talking about work and that doesn't always mean a paid vocation.
7. The work you do is good. Are you able to find ways to honor God with that work? How can you point others to the Glory of God in what you do?

### **Genesis 2:24**

8. What meaning do you apply to these words in this passage?
  - a. Leaves
  - b. United
  - c. One-Flesh
9. "United" doesn't always mean alignment or unity...sometimes it's bumpy. What encouragement can you take from God's design around marriage that helps you get through the bumpiness?

### What about Jesus?

The Pharisees tried to challenge Jesus on the idea of marriage and Jesus went back to the original design in Genesis...He reaffirms the creation account.

### **Matthew 19:4**

10. What can you take away from the idea that Jesus references creation to deal with those trying to distract Him from the truth?

In reading **Ephesians 5:25-31** we see that even Paul reaffirms the design for marriage in Genesis and then he reminds us to love your wife as you love yourself and wives must respect her husband.

11. What are things we can do to love and respect each other within the context of marriage or relationships and what would that do to the growth of that relationship?



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Christian marriage is a submission competition. A race to the back of the line – Andy Stanley

12. What does this passage say to you?
13. How does it direct our behaviors and attitudes when compared to the way Jesus loves the church?

The Bible begins and ends with a wedding

**Revelation 19: 7** *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory(honor)! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) 9 Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

### Parents' Corner

In this week’s message Pastor Aaron emphasized the fact that marriage should have a place of high esteem for followers of Christ (Heb. 13:4). Unfortunately, popular Western culture often dismisses, distorts, or downplays the importance of a healthy marriage. It can also be difficult for parents to speak to their kids about marriage if they aren’t married, are divorced/separated, or feel like theirs isn’t in a healthy place. However, it’s important to begin speaking to kids about marriage at an early age to give them the biblical view of marriage, while also addressing the difficulties of marriage.

Discuss these three questions, but don’t forget to consider how this might be applied by parents in different situations such as married and still together, divorced with split custody, or single parent with no involvement from another parent (parent is out of the picture or deceased). Each of these presents specific challenges.

1. What is the image of marriage that teenagers might get if they only listen to popular culture?
2. How can parents instill a biblical view of marriage in their students as they grow up in light of our current culture? What challenges might single parents face and how can they overcome these?



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3. How can parents uphold the ideal of marriage while also being honest about the struggles and challenges married couples face? How can parents model forgiveness and reconciliation to their children?

4. How can I/we uphold the importance of marriage, while also teaching our/my kids that it's ok to be single as well? (The Apostle Paul as an example.)

### THE TAKEAWAY

- The best thing you bring to your marriage/single life is your own personal transformation
- Your marriage/singleness is a sign and symbol of your love for Jesus
- The climax of Creation is a Wedding and the culmination of all history is a wedding
- There is more at stake than just your marriage or singleness... they are a witness and sign for the gospel and eternity is what's truly at stake here.

### Homework

#### Honor marriage:

- Pray this week for 5 marriages and 5 single friends....tell them, text them, let them know you are praying for them.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

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