

BETTER Together

BETTER TOGETHER, PART 1: 25 YEARS

You may not have it all together, but at least pastors have it all together, right? In this message, Chris & Kim Edmondson talk openly about the struggles and tough seasons they've come through in their marriage. Things haven't been nearly as easy as they thought they would be, but they've been worth it.

BIG IDEA: **Love is a decision, not an emotion.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

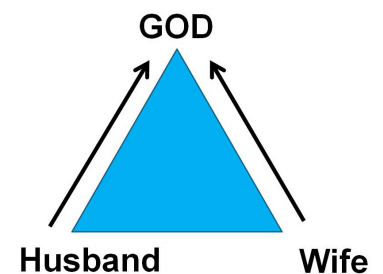
1. What was your parent's marriage like? What did you learn about marriage watching them (for better or for worse)?
2. What did you think marriage would be like (BEFORE you got married)? If you're not married, what surprises you about the reality you see in other people's marriages?
3. What are some of the problems caused by seeing love as an emotion? Read through Jesus' teaching in John 13:34-35 before you answer the question.
4. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Matthew 22:37-39.*

Jesus 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." Matthew 22:37-39

5. Was there a time when you put a relationship with another person ahead of your relationship with God? If so, how did it affect your relationship with God?
6. If someone, who didn't know you, observed all of your daily activities last week, what would they conclude are your top priorities?
7. Prior to being married, the most important human relationship is with our parents. Have your priorities changed in your life after being married. If so, how?
8. Have you ever seen a couple that never really left their home of their parents—either emotionally, financially, or relationally? Describe their relationship with their spouse. Do you think their relationship with their spouse is hindered or helped by their never really leaving?
9. For those that are not married, describe which relationships are top priority in your life currently. How are those relationships impacting your life right now?
10. Read Ephesians 5:18-6:5. For those with children: Have you ever found yourself saying, "We'll have time for one another when our children are grown. Right now, it's all about the kids"? How can you change your schedule to better prioritize your marriage relationship?
11. God's order is: *God, spouse, children, job. God, spouse, children, job.* How does the world turn that upside down? Is God's priority list upside down in your family?
12. Read Matthew 6:33.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
Matthew 6:33

13. Are there specific changes you believe God is calling you to make so that he remains your number one priority? If so, what are they?
14. What part of Chris & Kim's story do you resonate with? Why?
15. What parts of your relationship are alive, and are there any that are perhaps on life support or dead?



MOVING FORWARD

The best place to find resurrection is in a graveyard. In what areas in your marriage (or life) do you need to find resurrection? Of the top 10 practices Chris & Kim embraced to help their own marriage, which choose one or two that you can begin acting on this week:

1. Love is a decision, not an emotion.
2. Put your obedience ahead of your emotions.
3. Don't make tomorrow's decisions based on today's emotions.
4. Fight for each other, not with each other.
5. Pursue and keep dating.
6. Don't make your kids the center of your family.
7. Keep communicating.
8. Keep your relationship with God Strong.
9. Make Divorce never an option.
10. Put your spouse's needs before your own.

If your relationship feels impossible, keep remembering that the power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power at work in you.

WEEKLY READING

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Philippians 2:3-4, Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)