

Talk About It

Small Group Discussion Guide

I Have Questions

Marriage

September 21-24, 2023

Start Talking

What are your favorite fall traditions? Bonus points if it does not involve pumpkin spice.

Main Idea

We are in Week 2 of the teaching series "I Have Questions". Cypress asked 10,000 people what questions weighed on them. This week, we will be taking a look at Marriage. According to the US Census Bureau, the number of households with a mom and a dad was well over 40% in the 1970s but has fallen to under 18% today. Households with a single person has risen to their highest ever at 30%. The divorce rate continues to be around 40% for first marriages and 60-70% for second marriages. And while marriage is not the goal of life, it is a gift and an institution ordained and established by God for our joy and fulfillment when pursued for His glory and according to His design—one man and one woman in a covenant marriage for life. Marriage is hard as two imperfect people come together and try to navigate all of life's challenges together, bringing their prior family histories with them. According to the data, just 1 in 10 marriages "hits the sweet spot" when it comes to being all it was designed to be. So, if that is not your marriage, you are in good company! Let's start exploring and see what God reveals to us today about marriage!

Personalize It

1. What competes for quality time between you and your spouse?
2. When a man and woman are married, they "leave" their prior families to become a completely new family unit. Why is that important to recognize? Were your parents able to recognize it when you were married? If you have married children, were you able to recognize it?
3. One of the keys to a great marriage is great communication. How would a third-party observer rate your communication skills in your home? Are you a stuffer or an exploder? How are each of those responses detrimental to healthy communication?
4. What does it mean to be "yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14)? What is the benefit of being equally yoked? What is the danger of being unequally yoked?
5. What are a woman's greatest needs? What are a man's? Honest self-assessment: how are you at *trying* to meet those needs?

Let's Do It! Commit to a step and live it out this week!

1. Are you seeking validation from your spouse that can only come from Jesus Christ? What can you do to re-direct your thinking so that you are not looking to your spouse to provide what only your Savior can provide?

2. There is incredible relational value and intimacy in learning to pray together with your spouse. Invite your spouse to pray with you daily for a week. There is no formula. Figure out a time, place, and format that works. If you are dating, do the same with your partner. There is a new level of intimacy with one another and with God that awaits!
3. Whether you are married, dating, or may date again, what steps can you take to explore and better understand the other person?
4. Pastor Ken shared several suggestions to help start creating a stronger marriage—forgive well, hold hands, find friends to do life with, invest in the relationship daily, talk to a counselor when needed, and spur one another on. Which area could you begin investing in that could start making an impact in your marriage this week?

Let's Pray

Father, marriage is hard! It is so easy to focus on the kids or work or other activities and leave little or no time for our spouse. The person who once consumed our every thought when we were courting now gets the leftover time if any time at all. Too often the focus is on endurance—just getting through the day—not on joy in the journey together. Open our hearts to what You desire our marriage to be. Help us to love our spouse in the way You designed them to be loved. Show us how to build a life and marriage on You, and how to be a good steward of the most precious earthly relationship in life—marriage to our spouse. Help us to seek their good above our own, their convenience above our own, their needs above our own, and Your glory above it all. We confess that we are too weak to do it alone. So, please strengthen and guide us with Your wisdom so that our marriage can be all that You designed it to be from this day forward until death do us part. Thank You and we love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Scriptures and Notes

Genesis 2:24-25 (NLT)

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

Genesis 3:7 (NLT)

At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Isaiah 26:8 (NLT)

LORD, we show our trust in you by obeying your laws; our heart's desire is to glorify your name.

Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)

The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.

2 Corinthians 6:14 (NIV)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

Ephesians 5:25 (NIV)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Notes

The creation account... not good for man to be alone... created a woman... marriage.

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame. **Genesis 2:24-25 NLT**

1. Leave
2. Cleave
3. Become one
4. In the pursuit of Christ

Genesis 3:7 NLT

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. **NLT Romans 8:1**

Isaiah 26:8 NLT

One of the keys to a great marriage is Great Communication.

Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring satisfaction. The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.

Proverbs 18:20–21 NLT

For those who are dating.... look for values over fun and date to explore more than impress

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:14 NIV

Six Levels, or layers, of communication

1. Information
2. Partnership
3. Conflict resolution

A woman's greatest need is Security.

A man's greatest need is Respect.

4. Connection
5. Personal revelation
6. Intimate

Final thoughts...

Loving well involves forgiving well...

Spur one another on...

Have good friends... to celebrate with and share life along the journey

Always speak well of your spouse in public

Talk to a counselor as needed

Invest and build your marriage daily

Never coast and always keep growing in love... we all have a next step.