



# July 6, 2025

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**BIG IDEA** – The simplest, smallest change, made over time, can make the **biggest impact on our relationships**.

**Scripture Focus** – And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. **Philippians 4:8 NLT**

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Our new series, A Better Us, kicks off this week with a focus on relationships—specifically, how to do them well. We're starting with marriage, but the same principles apply to close family, friends, and even church relationships. After all, we're the body of Christ—the family of God—and how we live, love, and lead like Jesus matters.

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Marriage was the second-best decision I have ever made in my life.

Jesus was first!

I would have blown it if I had not listened to God to trust him and have faith that he could truly change my life. I almost lost my chance at marrying the most amazing woman in the world, having our children and the life we share together today.

**MARRIAGE & RELATIONSHIPS** – share the same principles.

In relationships it's the simple, small change that can make a big difference. And oftentimes small mistakes or regularly using the wrong little word at the worse time adds up to a big disaster.

Doing and saying small things well, make a big difference.

We don't want to be married; we want to be happily married.

I was listening to a [podcast](#) just yesterday where I heard a Jaime say, "I just had convinced myself; I'm just going to have to learn to be unhappy."

Two small words of commitment makes a marriage work, "I DO."

**Part of our wedding ceremony included a powerful phrase that I did not really understand when I was 21 years old.** Frank, my pastor and father-in-law to be said,

**“guard her heart, so that no word or deed of yours shall cloud her heart with grief, or dim her eyes with tears.”**

“Never dim her eyes with tears?” I have dimmed her eyes with tears to many times to count.

Hurtful words and poorly timed humor at the other's expense can be like a thousand tiny paper cuts that ends up causing permanent damage to our marriage partnership.

We can hurt each other in so many ways; by our words, our behavior, even our thoughts and attitudes!

Marriage is not a merging of two perfect people: **it's a miraculous cooperation of two broken people uniting together in God's grace.**

**What keeps us together, how do we become a “a better us.”**

Having a ONE HEART MARRIAGE.

The authors of the book and hosts of a [marriage workshop](#), A Better Us, Doug & Cathy Fields say, **“The one heart marriage is a marriage game changer!”**

**How we view marriage and how we view each other as well as how we treat each other makes the difference between success and failure in our relationships.**

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**I put this in most of my marriage ceremonies:**

**Marriage is a contract with a specific COMPETE clause, that's right, I said it's a competition. It's an all-out race to the bottom, to out-serve, out-give, out-do each other in love. It's a competition of mutual submission.**

**A contract that says:**

**If I lose, we lose**

**If I suffer, we suffer**

**If I succeed, we succeed**

**If I go broke, we go broke**

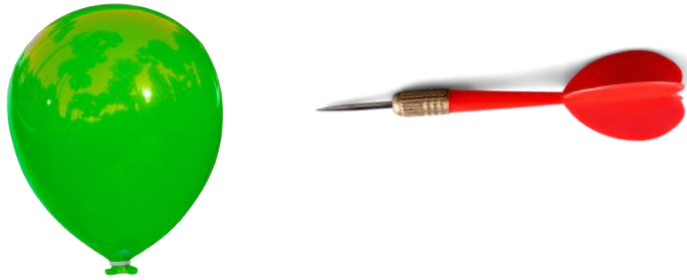
**If I get rich, we get rich**

**“In a one-heart marriage, when I hurt my life-mate's heart, I'm actually hurting mine too.”**

**Positive: When I enhance, enrich or build my life-mate's heart, I enhance, enrich or build up my own heart. When I bless, I am mine as well.**

**We are on the same team.**

When one throws a dart at the other, it is believed that it hurts just the individual.



**But in a relationship -**

**BOTH individuals take the hit and both are damaged.**

We have these deeply engrained scripts written on how they relate to one another.



**These scripts are so deeply embedded that we don't realize how often we use them to bring hurt to each other's heart – thus bringing hurt into our heart as well.**

**When we are not in sync, not together or having a two-heart marriage everything is difficult.**

**Every decision, every word spoken, every glance, is bigger and harder than it should be.**

**You can't have a healthy marriage with a wounded heart. In fact, we can't have healthy relationships with a wounded heart.**

**The better your husband or wife's heart, the better your heart is as well.**

**We all struggle with insecurity, not having enough, success, comparison and being respected. And of course, SIN! Marriage does not fix any of these, and neither can our best friends.**

**Jesus made the direct correlation between the love and commitment of a husband and wife associated with permanence – lasting a lifetime!**

**But in doing so, he also described what it takes to make marriage successful – a commitment to ONE HEART.**

**Matthew 19:6 No longer two but one flesh.**

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘**For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh**’ ? So they are **no longer two, but one flesh**. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” **Matthew 19:4-6 NIV**

The Apostle Paul had no trouble picking up on this theme of marriage both being **a picture of our commitment to each other as husbands and wives** as well as **our commitment to each other as the body and bride of Christ!**

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” – Ephesians 5:25*

**This is why I believe that the same principles that work in marriage, also work in singles and divorcees – because they work in all of our relationships.**

*“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” – 1 Corinthians 1:10*

**These are three behaviors to help us in both our marriages if you are married, but also in our relationships if you are single, or divorced.**

**These principles show up in the following behaviors.**

## **COMMITMENT TO ONE HEART BEHAVIORS**

- **Uniquely Together: Despite Differences**
  - Couples, even friends are often not just **opposites**, they are **oppositional!**
  - I knew Robin and I were different but **wow in every way possible** we were **opposite** and often **oppositional** of each other! At times it was interesting, even funny, but it became almost impossible to agree and get on the same page. **Our marriage counseling advice: Dr. Fred Greeves didn’t we’d make it.** Friends of Ashley Woolridge, Pastor and Author told him, “**one of the greatest gift wedding gifts God gave us was a full-length mirror called Your spouse.**”
  - I found this same principle to be true among my longest and best friends of 35 years. I just had lunch with Sean Azzaro last week, former youth pastor of Life Center in the early 90’s. I could not stand the guy when he first came on staff. He was brash, loud and highly opinionated! He was also a gifted musician and an amazing leader. He is still the iron God

**sent to sharpen my soul skills! We are extremely opposite, but I need and love him in my life.**

- Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. **Romans 12:4-5**
- But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. **1 Corinthians 12:18-20**

- **Hurting Together: Navigating Difficulties and Hurts**

- **The ONE HEART principle of marriage also translates well into the unity of the Church, the body of Christ.**
- **Doing life in my 20's, 30's, 40's, and 50's, I cannot imagine what I would have done without my best and most faithful friend – my wife. Each season brought highs and lows, surprises and challenges. But in each of those decades that are now past, I know and have experienced one absolute truth – I WAS NOT ALONE.**
- **But also, in each of those seasons, I had and still have precious friendships, most all of them from within the Church, who are closer to me than my own extended family. They carried me through life's worst moments and celebrated with me at the highest moments.**
- **So Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2**

- **Honoring Each Other by Choosing to See with Positivity.**

- It is a continual challenge to believe and hope for the very best in my wife as well as each of you! To practice assuming positive intent in my marriage and relationships!
- It takes a huge effort, especially when faced with what I call sideways comments from some in our church or **when one feels they need to tattle on one of the sheep in the fold!** We must resist it, we must kick it out of my mind – because those things **stick** and **fester**, leaving an **opportunity to come between us and another brother or sister**. We don't just have to fight for unity, we also have to fight for positivity in believing in each other.
- So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. **1 Thessalonians 5:11**
- **Pollyanna Glad Game** – The story by **Eleanor H. Porte** writing a book entitled Pollyanna. **The game consists of finding something to be glad about in every situation, no matter how bleak it may be. It originated in an incident one Christmas when Pollyanna, who was hoping for a doll in the missionary barrel, found only a pair of crutches inside. Making the game up on the spot, Pollyanna's father taught her to look at the good side of things—in this case, to be glad about the crutches because she did not need to use them.**

- Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. **Philippians 4:8**

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## Communion

**A look back, a look forward.**

**Communion is a command of Remembering & Refocusing on things that matter.**

Jesus and his closest friends experienced the beauty of the last supper just before the worst 12 hours of trauma together. And, the secret meeting on Sunday evening when Jesus spoke to them and said, "[Peace be with you.](#)"

They experienced **both** together.

The picture of the Church is 12 hearts becoming one. **Then, one heart moving forward.**

**The last supper, the last night before the suffering and death of the savior, would be the catalyst to becoming one - unity, moving forward together.**

**It's what Jesus asks of us today, commitment not to scatter, but to continue to gather.**

**Communion is a command of coming together.**

**The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian church said,**

"For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**" In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. **Do this in remembrance of me** as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NLT**

"So, my dear brothers and sisters, when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other." **1 Corinthians 11:33 NLT**

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**Can we commit to coming together where a hundred hearts become one?**

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# SCRIPTURES

## **Matthew 19:4-6 NIV**

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## **Ephesians 5:25**

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

## **1 Corinthians 1:10**

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

## **Romans 12:4-5**

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## **Philippians 4:8**

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## NOTES



**Pollyanna** – playing the “**Glad Game.**”

In the early 1900s, American author **Eleanor H. Porte** wrote a book entitled Pollyanna. Porte and others would write sequential books, and a couple of movie adaptations were also made. In this storyline, **Pollyanna is an immeasurably optimistic girl with the personality that could cheer an entire town. Her father teaches her to play "The Glad Game."**

Pollyanna Whittier, an eleven-year-old orphan who goes to live in the fictional town of Beldingsville, Vermont, with her wealthy but stern and cold spinster Aunt Polly Harrington, who does not want to take in Pollyanna but feels it is her duty to her late sister Jennie. **Pollyanna's philosophy of life centers on what she calls "The Glad Game", an optimistic and positive attitude she learned from her father. The game consists of finding something to be glad about in every situation, no matter how bleak it may be. It originated in an incident one Christmas when Pollyanna, who was hoping for a doll in the missionary barrel, found only a pair of crutches inside. Making the game up on the spot, Pollyanna's father taught her to look at the good side of things—in this case, to be glad about the crutches because she did not need to use them.**



**Questions to ask one another**

Use the following viewing guide to help you follow along and take notes as you watch the teaching video for Week 1.

**There's no such thing as a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage...**

**...but there's always hope for a \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Sometimes, just a small \_\_\_\_\_ can make a big difference.**

**That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24 NIV).**

**In a One-Heart Marriage, when I hurt my spouse's \_\_\_\_\_ I'm actually hurting mine, too.**

**When I \_\_\_\_\_ my spouse's heart, I'm blessing mine too.**

**You can't have a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage with a wounded heart.**

**Your marriage requires two hearts to commit to a \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage.**



Sometimes, just a little \_\_\_\_\_ makes all the difference.

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### **30 Powerful bible verses about the church being the bride of Christ.**

Many Christians do not know what this means. The church, as the bride of Christ, is a beautiful metaphor found throughout the Bible, illustrating the deep connection between Jesus and His followers. Just like a husband cherishes his wife, Jesus loves the church with an everlasting love. This relationship reflects qualities like devotion, commitment, and intimacy. As we explore these verses, let's meditate on the significance of our union with Christ and how it embodies God's incredible love for us. Through this understanding, we can deepen our faith, recognizing our essential role in God's plan and the importance of coming together as His people.

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."* – **Ephesians 5:25**

*"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."* – **2 Corinthians 11:2**

*"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."* – **1 Corinthians 1:10**

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