

SMALL GROUPS

Key Scripture

Genesis 2:22-24 - "Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Main Takeaways

1. The Power of Pursuit

- The Hebrew word "united" (debak) means to pursue hard, cling, adhere with affection and devotion
- Marriage requires continuous pursuit, not just a one-time commitment
- We can't be lazy in any area of life and expect improvement—especially in marriage

2. Three Practical Actions to Close the Gap Between Intentions and Actions:

A. When you think something good, SAY IT

- Men: Pursue her with words of affection (non-sexual)
- Women: Pursue him with words of affirmation

- Use the formula: "I love you because..."

B. When you think something special, DO IT

- Don't let good intentions remain just thoughts
- Close the gap between thinking and doing
- Remember: Points expire at midnight—start fresh each day

C. When you want something different, BE IT

- Stop complaining about what your spouse isn't
- Focus on what the Holy Spirit wants to grow in you
- Lead by example

3. The Jacob Principle

Jacob worked 7 years for Rachel, married her, then worked another 7 years—he continued working for his bride after he already had her.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. What stood out to you most from this sermon? Why?
2. Pastor Mack said, "Getting divorced because you ran out of love is like selling your car because you ran out of gas." How does this analogy challenge common thinking about marriage struggles?
3. Read Genesis 2:24 together. What does it mean that the word "united" implies continuous pursuit rather than a one-time event?

Personal Reflection

4. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current level of "pursuit" in your most important relationships? What has contributed to that rating?
5. Which of the three practical actions (say it, do it, be it) is most challenging for you personally? Why?

6. Pastor Mack mentioned that "somewhere along the line, the pursuit stopped." Can you identify when or why pursuit may have decreased in your relationships?

Application & Growth

7. For married couples: What are some specific ways you pursued each other when you were dating that you've stopped doing? Which one could you restart this week?
8. For singles/those dating: What principles from this message can help you build a strong foundation for a future marriage?
9. The sermon emphasized that men should lead spiritually in the home. What does healthy spiritual leadership look like in practical, everyday terms?
10. Discuss the difference between words of affection (for wives) and words of affirmation (for husbands). Why might this distinction matter?

Going Deeper

11. Read Hebrews 3:13. How can daily encouragement protect against hearts becoming hardened? Share an example of when someone's encouragement made a difference in your life.
12. The pastor said, "If grass looks greener somewhere else, it's time to water your own yard." What are practical ways to "water your own marital yard"?
13. Forgiveness was mentioned near the end. Why is forgiveness so crucial to healthy relationships? What's the difference between forgiving and forgetting?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

Option 1: The Daily Encouragement Challenge

- Every day this week, speak one specific word of encouragement/affection/affirmation to your spouse or someone important to you

- Use the "I love you because..." or "I appreciate when you..." formula
- Journal how it impacts your relationship

Option 2: Do Something Special

- Think of something you used to do when dating/early marriage that you've stopped doing
- Schedule it and do it this week—no excuses
- Examples: surprise date, favorite meal, love note, small gift, quality time activity

Option 3: Be the Change

- Identify ONE thing you wish was different in your relationship
- Instead of complaining about it, BE that thing yourself for one week
- Example: Want more romance? Be more romantic. Want more spiritual leadership? Lead spiritually.

Option 4: The Forgiveness Step

- If there's unforgiveness in your heart toward your spouse or someone else, take steps toward forgiveness this week
- This might mean a conversation, a letter, or simply releasing it in prayer

Accountability

- Share with the group which option you're choosing
- Exchange contact info with one accountability partner to check in mid-week

Prayer Focus

Pray together for:

- Marriages in the group that need healing and restoration
- Singles and young adults preparing for future marriages
- The courage to pursue relationships with intentionality
- Hearts willing to forgive and be forgiven
- Men to step up as spiritual leaders in their homes

- The Holy Spirit to work in each person individually rather than focusing on changing others

Personal Prayer Prompts:

- "Lord, show me where I've stopped pursuing..."
- "God, help me to say/do/be what I've been thinking..."
- "Father, heal the hurt in my relationship with..."
- "Jesus, make me the spouse/friend/parent You've called me to be..."

Closing Thought

Revelation 2:5 - "Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first."

To get what you once had, you must do what you once did.

For Next Week

- Continue your chosen practical application
- Read 1 Corinthians 13 and reflect on how it describes love in action
- Be prepared to share one success or challenge from implementing this week's commitment

Additional Resources

- Check out the sermon video on the church website/YouTube
- Consider joining or starting a couples small group
- Look into marriage enrichment resources or Christian marriage books
- Schedule a date night this month—no phones, just connection