

# NewSpring Church – 21 Day Challenge

## Husband & Wife

The purpose of this 21-day devotional is for married couples to grow closer to Jesus and closer together. Some of the devotionals will be simple to apply and some areas will be difficult and heavy. As a church we want to encourage you to make the effort to work through all 21 days with your spouse, answer the questions, and set aside time to talk together about what you read and what God teaches you. There may be days where it is awkward or uncomfortable, but having a healthy marriage takes work and it is worth it. Believe that God can renew your marriage and you can grow closer to your spouse than you have ever been. There is no such thing as a perfect marriage, but if we allow Jesus to work on our hearts and be the center of our union, our marriage can be more than we ever hoped for or imagined.

### **God's Creation**

#### **Genesis 1:1; Genesis 2:18-25**

Genesis 1 starts by telling us that God created all things and gave purpose to everything he made. If we do not believe that God created us with purpose, then our view of marriage will be skewed. God designed the concept of marriage. He intended it to be between one man and one woman choosing to love and serve each other in a lifetime commitment. God is for marriage and He loves it because He designed it. If He created and designed it then we need to seek His wisdom as we seek to have great marriages.

Because God is the ultimate designer of marriage, we can experience the characteristics of God in our marriage. Read through chapters one and two of Genesis together and take time to appreciate the intricate detail of God's creation. Our God who created the sun, the mountains, the ocean, also created man and ordained marriage. Shouldn't we take everything to him and ask him what is best for our marriage? How can we return to God's design?

Take some time now to pray together, ask God to teach you what his design for marriage is. Specifically, ask God what his plans are for your marriage.

How does God's design for marriage differ from our culture's definition of marriage? What defines the way you speak and interact with each other? Are your interactions in marriage driven more by scripture, the way you were raised, or cultural norms? If God created marriage how does that change the way we should treat each other?

## **God's Redemption**

**Genesis 3; Psalm 34:22**

You may be feeling overwhelmed or hopeless by everything that's wrong in your marriage. The good news is that God not only designed and created marriage, but He has a plan to redeem it. Adam and Eve's marriage was not exactly perfect. Because they disobeyed God, sin entered the world and a curse was placed on humanity. Adam and Eve deserved to be wiped off the earth for what they had done. But God searched for the couple in the garden, found them, made coverings for their body, and set a plan in motion that would save the world from sin. Jesus is the way to salvation and a restored marriage. In Genesis we see that God is a God of second chances, redemption, and hope when all seems lost.

Every one of us has made mistakes in marriage. There has never been a perfect marriage and never will be. When two sinful and selfish people come together to live in the same place, it can seem more like a battlefield than a life of adventure and romance. Whether you think your marriage is on the brink of disaster or you think your marriage is healthy, there is room for improvement.

Ask God for a fresh start to your marriage. He is ready to meet you where you are. Will you commit to praying with your spouse and growing together? Write down a time you can study this devotion and read scripture together every day.

What do you think your next step in marriage is?

Is there one specific area or a specific action you would like to improve this week?

If God made your marriage anew, from scratch, how would He want it to look?

How would you want to talk to each other?

## **Make Jesus the Center**

### **Matthew 6:33**

Marriage is tough. Placing two people together with different backgrounds, beliefs, personalities, and preferences without Jesus as the unchanging center practically destines a marriage to failure. Jesus is that important. It's not enough to say, "Yeah, we're Christians." In order for the marriage relationship to endure, our connection to Jesus must be dynamic.

Jesus has to be the center of your life before He can be the center of your marriage. Until Jesus is the center of our life and our number one treasure, everything else will be out of line. When did you give your life over to Jesus? Share your story of salvation with your spouse.

If you have never given your life to Jesus you can do that right now! Revelation 3:20 says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." Jesus can forgive your sins and be the Lord of your life right now if you ask him to.

Here is an example of what you might pray:

Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. I ask You to forgive my sins, meet me here, and rescue me. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and You are the Savior of the world. Help me turn from sin. Lord Jesus, come into my heart, control my life now and forever. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Answer these questions together:

Why do you think the divorce rate among Christians is no different than among non-Christians?

Do you believe that marriage is sacred?

How are you doing in your personal walk with Jesus?

Have you been reading in your bible lately?

What have you been reading?

What is God teaching you right now? Share this with each other.

## **Marriage is a covenant**

**Psalm 40:11; Deuteronomy 7:9; 2 Timothy 2:13**

Our culture is full of broken promises and failed contracts. A contract is a legal relationship in which two parties bind themselves together with certain terms and conditions, exit clauses and performance requirements. In other words, a contract says, "you do this and I'll do this." If either party fails to keep their end of the bargain, the contract is null and parties separate, usually with some predetermined compensation.

Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. A covenant is a promise in which two people bind themselves together to love each other unconditionally no matter what. In a covenant, there is no escape-clause. God's unconditional faithfulness to us shows us He is a God of covenant promises. In turn, this is how we should act toward our spouse.

God will never bail on us, even if we mess up. Jesus radically saved us and proves His love and faithfulness to us. He saved us while we were still sinners and opposed to God therefore, nothing can separate us from His love. He will always keep his promises to us. Thank God He deals with us through a covenant relationship and not a contract based on our actions.

Our marriage covenant must mirror God's unconditional, unshakeable covenant He's made with us through salvation. Until we understand God's purpose and plan for our marriage, we will never be successful the way God defines success. By understanding marriage as a covenant and choosing to love our spouse unconditionally, we can be successful and fulfilled in marriage.

Do you know that God is not going to ever walk out on you?

Is your marriage a covenant or a contract? Why?

How can you show faithfulness to your spouse every day?

Take a moment to talk through your wedding vows together. What promises and commitments do you need to renew?

## **Affair-Proof Marriage**

**2 Samuel 11:1-2; Matthew 5:27-30; Ephesians 6:10-18**

Marriage is a battle and the battle is against Satan. He would love nothing more than to see your marriage fail and for both of you to be miserable. Many times we fight each other when instead we should be fighting together to protect our marriage. Are you willing to commit to take every precaution necessary to protect your marriage? Examine your lifestyle and confess your struggles and temptations to your spouse. When we are honest with our spouse about our struggles, we can help each other. Remember you are fighting on the same team.

King David is an example of how easy it is to ruin a marriage with one bad decision. Read his story in 2 Samuel 11. In order for David to see Bathsheba bathing, he had to walk close to the edge of his roof. What kinds of behaviors lead to affairs? Where are we walking on the edge? How can we stay away from the edge?

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away"? What kinds of things can you remove from your life that will help your marriage? Our mentality shouldn't be, "How close can I get to the edge without falling off?" Rather, we should be thinking, "How close to Jesus can I get?"

Plan a date night to discuss the following questions with your spouse.

What defenses have we been given against attacks from the enemy?

What is your biggest struggle or temptation? What can I do to help you?

What are your greatest needs?

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## Love Me

**John 15:12; 1 John 4:7**

Everyone gives and receives love in different ways. If I love my spouse in a way she doesn't understand or receive, she will be frustrated and feel unloved. In turn, I will feel my effort is not being appreciated and become angry. Let's say I come home, wash the dishes, clean the house, and take out the trash. All along my wife is sitting on the couch waiting for me to come, sit, and talk. We want the same thing but approach it from completely different perspectives.

Gary Chapman introduced this concept of love languages in his bestselling book, [The Five Love Languages](#). The book helps couples identify how they each receive love. Understanding your spouse's love language will prevent major miscommunications. This is a great book for couples to read together and discuss.

The 5 love languages are:

- Words of affirmation
- Quality time
- Receiving gifts
- Acts of service
- Physical touch.

Take a moment and think about your love language and write it down. Ask your spouse about their love language.

What are some practical ways this week to speak your spouse's love language? Are there any recent attempts to show love to your spouse that missed the mark?

How do you need to change your approach?

## **Be Proactive**

### **Proverbs 31; Proverbs 8:6**

Marriage takes work. As you are proactive and put in the effort, your marriage will become a testimony to the grace of God. It takes patience, understanding, and love; both of you giving 100% to the other.

List some ways that both of you can be proactive in your marriage? How can you both improve meeting each other's needs?

Emotional and Physical needs:

Check your top five...

\_\_\_ Conversation

\_\_\_ Financial Support

\_\_\_ Recreational Companionship

\_\_\_ Sexual Fulfillment

\_\_\_ Honesty and Openness

\_\_\_ Attractive Spouse

\_\_\_ Admiration

\_\_\_ Domestic Support

\_\_\_ Affection

\_\_\_ Family Commitment

Share with your spouse.

Wives affirm your husband, trust him to lead, and have confidence in him.

Husbands praise your wife, serve her, and show her you are trustworthy.

Why is it so essential to be positive to and about your spouse?

Husbands, affirm your wife's beauty. What kind of encouragement and affection does she want or need?

Ask her how you can serve her.

Wives, what kind of encouragement or affirmation would be helpful to your husband? Ask him what you can do to serve him.

## **Sacred Love**

**Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:31-33**

When something is sacred we automatically treat it differently. Think of the times when God met with someone. They would always respond with reverence by falling on their face, taking off their shoes, and worshipping. We should respond similarly when we think of our marriage. Instead of viewing marriage as typical or mundane, we should view it as mystical; something God fashioned and formed just for us. We don't treat sacred things with apathy or disdain. Instead, we respond in reverence, giving thanks to God.

Marriage is a gift from God. He created marriage for His glory and our holiness. Paul describes marriage as a picture of Jesus' relationship with the church. It is a sacred thing that can't be adequately described with words. People should look at your marriage and see love, service, sacrifice, and a deep, growing relationship.

When is the last time you treated your marriage as if it was something sacred?

Do both of you honor marriage and your marriage specifically?

How do you speak about your marriage to others?

Do you make it a priority to set aside time just for each other?

Marriage is a sacred thing. Do your actions reflect this reality?

How can you honor marriage better?

How can you honor your spouse better?

## **Choose Love**

### **1 Corinthians 13**

Love is often described as a feeling. While it is true that love is a feeling, it is also much more. Feelings are inconsistent, so certain in one moment and completely uncertain in the next. Feelings come and go. This morning you felt tired but after a cup of coffee you felt wide awake. Feelings are fleeting but love is a rock. Love is continuous; present day after day no matter how circumstances change. God loves us in this way and we are called to love our spouse in this way.

Describing love as a feeling leads to uncertainty. God is love and there is absolutely no uncertainty in Him. Scripture says He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Shouldn't love be the same?

Many couples say they fall out of love with each other and believe the lie that there is no future for their marriage. Scripture teaches us that love is a choice. Feelings of love are a part of marriage, and just like all others they will come and go. When we choose to love our spouse we are more likely to feel "in love". The more we practice serving our spouse and affirming our spouse, the more likely the tingly feel-good part of love will continue.

No matter how dead or stuck your marriage feels, Love never fails. You may feel unsure, nervous, or doubtful but remember feelings change and love does not. Make the effort to choose love this week. Ask God to bless your efforts to honor his word and watch your marriage grow.

Write out each of the traits for love listed in 1 Corinthians 13.

How can you practice each one this week?

## **Conflict**

**Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32**

How should we deal with conflict in marriage? We will never find success in our marriage by placing our needs and desires ahead of our spouse and when we try to do that, conflict rears its ugly head.

Our relationship with God and those around us are negatively affected by our selfish desires. The pieces designed to work in harmony will eventually destroy one another as they compete for their own wants and desires. Your spouse is on your team and you want to move in the same direction following after Jesus.

God uses Marriage like sand paper to scrapes us and clean us up. He removes anything in our heart that is selfish and ungodly. Conflict does not have to end in hurt feelings and silent treatments. In fact, conflict is necessary in a healthy marriage. How we handle the conflict will determine if we are becoming more like Jesus.

Why does God hate divorce? As a team, can you make a commitment to never speak of divorce? If it divorce is something God hates, shouldn't we hate it as well? We can honor God and strengthen our marriage by not talking about divorce or considering it as an option.

Next time there is a disagreement, come back to discuss your differences when both of you have a chance to calm down and get over hurt feelings. Never begin a sentence with unfair fighting words like "You always..." or "You never..." Take time to pray together and ask Jesus to help you come to an agreement.

What is God scraping off of your heart right now?

What character trait or action does He want to expose?

Ask your spouse to help you as you become more like Jesus.

## **Conflict in Expectations**

### **Philippians 4:19**

Conflict will occur in marriage when we place expectations on our spouse to meet needs only Jesus can meet. We must never insist that our spouse fill emotional, physical or spiritual needs that only God can fill. Until Jesus fills our emotional, physical and spiritual needs as only He can, we will find it difficult to place our expectations on our spouse in proper perspective. We will always feel empty and unsatisfied. These feelings cause conflict in marriage and will often lead to hurt feelings.

What are some of our needs that only Jesus can meet? Practically how can you take those to God and trust him to supply what you need?

If both of you are looking to Jesus first to fill you up, you are able to serve each other more effectively. When we focus on our relationship with Jesus as the most important thing in our life, He will supply what we need. God is able to meet your needs and your spouse's needs so that you do not look to each to provide what you don't have. There will no longer be emptiness in your marriage but you will feel the fullness that comes from being satisfied in Jesus. It is healthy to meet each other's needs and serve each other; it is not healthy to expect your spouse to be Jesus.

In what areas do you ask your husband or wife to do more than they were called to do?

What needs can be effectively met by your spouse?

## **Listen**

**James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13**

To succeed in marriage and build intimacy with our spouse, we must listen well. Our natural instinct is to speak first and listen later. By making the effort to listen first, we can improve communication, minimize conflict, and increase intimacy. When a person feels their ideas are heard, feelings of love and commitment in a marriage dramatically improve. However, when one feels shut out and unheard, they slowly pull away and feel isolated.

Do either of you feel shut out or isolated? Do you think your ideas are heard? Take time to talk about it with your spouse now.

For men it can be difficult to listen and discuss feelings and needs. All of us can improve in this area. Listening does not come naturally; it must be intentionally practiced. In the end, we have to ask ourselves, do we want a great marriage or do we enjoy status quo.

Listen for feelings and emotions of your spouse without trying to fix any problems. Many times we listen in problem-solver mode. We look for quick fixes and easy solutions. We may think this helps our spouse. Actually, it makes our spouse feel we don't care and we don't want to hear them talk. Listen to hear, not to solve. Men, your spouse does not need all their problems fixed. They want to be understood. Women, be patient with your husband. Help him to listen by deciding when to share feelings and when to wait until later.

Do you take the time to hear your spouse? Do you attempt to understand their feelings and their point of view? When is the last time both of you sat down together and shared your intimate thoughts, fears, and hopes? Do that now. Ask questions and engage fully in what your spouse has to say.

## **Integrity**

### **Proverbs 10:9**

Integrity is doing what you say you will do. When we over-promise or break our word to our spouse, there is a slow erosion of trust. What would happen if we committed to complete integrity in our speech? When we say we're going to do something, we do it. We speak positively and refrain from gossip and negativity. We say "no" up front instead of giving less than 100% effort. We speak truth in love to those around us. Our tongue can destroy or encourage. What if we spoke with integrity in our marriage?

Integrity requires honesty with your spouse. In a healthy marriage, there are no secrets. Have you kept secrets from your spouse? Freedom flows from honesty. Peace and freedom come when your spouse knows your shortcomings and mistakes but loves you anyway.

Many people are afraid to tell their spouse about the temptations and struggles that they face. Dealing with the short term discomfort of the truth eventually makes a marriage stronger. Encourage each other right now to be open and be honest. Let today be a new day in your marriage beginning with complete honesty and integrity.

It is important to listen with understanding during this time. Your spouse may confess something that hurts you. Do your best to listen. Allow Jesus to heal your hurt even if it takes time. Since we are all human, it is likely that the roles will reverse at some point. In that moment, you'll be glad that you extended grace.

How does integrity in our speech develop healthy expectations in marriage?

How do small breaches of integrity, such as saying you'll arrive at 5 and showing up at 5:30, slowly erode other's confidence in you? When can saying "no" be a sign of spiritual maturity?

## **Hope with Me**

**1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 3:20; Hebrews 11:1**

Saying, "I have hope" is powerful. It means one can envision future possibilities and desired outcomes. In marriage, hope is critical. When our marriage is not all that it could be, we must have faith that one day, through Christ, our relationship will become all it should be. We must hope and we must hope together. Despite negative circumstances and feelings of frustration, we must hope. We can hope for our marriage to get better because through Christ all things are possible.

God has a plan for the future of your marriage. You have hopes and dreams for your marriage but God has plans. When things seem difficult or not worth it, God shows us marriage can be more. Do you believe God's plan for your marriage is bigger than you could have ever imagined? What is God doing in your life that is beyond what you expected?

The bible says that hope and faith are intertwined. No matter what condition your marriage is in, it can get better. Change in our marriage begins with hope. What do you hope to see in your marriage in 5 days? 5 months? 5 years? For that to become a reality we must believe that through faith in Christ, our vision can become a reality. What does God want you to do to make your marriage better?

What are some of your hopes as a couple? Take a moment to write down your hopes.

## **Rely on God**

### **2 Corinthians 1:8-11**

Men and women are different. What an understatement! Women like to talk about feelings; men, not so much. Men go periods of time without thinking about anything; women can't fathom that being possible. She wants to feel beautiful and loved. He wants to be respected. The differences abound.

If God insists that marriages last, why would He make us so different? If we shared the same desires and needs, perhaps marriage would be easier. "Easy" isn't high on God's priority list. It is more important to Him that we realize our need for Him.

The Apostle Paul is not speaking specifically about marriage in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, but his answer explains why marriage can be so difficult at times. Paul knew hard times. Life was complex and difficult, and ministry felt like one hardship after another, "But this happened that [he] might not rely on [himself] but on God, who raises the dead" (v. 9).

Our God has the power to raise the dead. He is wise, gentle, omniscient and mighty. He does not mean for us to do marriage alone. He wants us to surrender our marriages to Him so that we might be all He intends us to be.

What feels dead in your marriage? Do you believe that God can bring that back to life?

If you do believe God is able, are you willing to submit your marriage to Him and allow Him to change your heart first?

What do you need to surrender to God this week?

## Serve

**Ephesians 5:25; Philippians 2:3; Galatians 5:13**

Rick Warren said that successful marriage counseling can be summed up in two words: "Grow Up!" Most of the difficulty in marriage stems from selfishness. The antidote to selfishness is service. Ephesians 5 says men ought to love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.

How can you practically serve and sacrifice for your spouse? Maybe you could get up early and get the kids ready so she can have a quiet time? Could you fix dinner? Could you give a back rub without expecting sex? Over time, an attitude of service and sacrifice will change your marriage for the better.

Marriage isn't meant to be 50/50. Marriage is intended to be 100/100. Ideally, there should be no limit to how we serve our spouse. Often times we expect our actions to be reciprocated or we feel that we deserve better treatment. As a partner in a marriage, have you ever uttered the conditional phrase, "If...then"? Do these statements sound familiar?

"If she would only take better care of herself, then maybe I'd compliment her more."

"If he would just get home from work when he says he will be home, then maybe I wouldn't nag so much."

"If he would just help out more with the house and the kids, then maybe I'll be more in the mood."

"If he wouldn't do so many stupid things, then maybe I'd respect him more."

This mentality is poisonous. It feeds ourselves and excludes our mates. It puts full responsibility on our spouse and let us off the hook. This mindset breeds contempt, resentment and greed. It does nothing to build up a marriage; it only seeks to tear it down.

Read Philippians 2:3 together. These verses and instructions from God don't support the "if, then" mentality. Have you been giving 100% to your spouse? How can you serve your spouse more?

## **Out of Control**

**Proverbs 19:21; Ephesians 5:32**

We struggle to be in control. Often we are so focused on keeping the plates spinning that our spouse becomes just another “demand” to schedule.

Instead of listening, we multi-task. Instead of asking questions, we check off the “to do” list. If there’s anything messy in life, we sweep it under the rug and get back to our list. We never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

The desire for control robs us of the glorious mess. Marriage is our perfect opportunity to grow and love Jesus through our flaws. We must remind ourselves that this marriage belongs to God, not us.

Christ wants surrender. He wants our marriages to show us more and more of our brokenness so that we yield more and more to His wisdom, grace and plan and purpose. The first step toward a joyful, abundant marriage is complete surrender to Jesus Christ.

What are you attempting to control? Do worries keep you from being able to focus? When you and your spouse are talking about life, do you check out and think about other things? Are you trying to control your marriage or are you listening and obeying Jesus? Write down something you can surrender to Jesus this week. How will you do that?

## **Accountability and Encouragement**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 10:25**

Are there couples in your life who inspire you? Do you have married friends who push you to be a better spouse? Do you have married couples in your life who inspire you to be a better spouse because they are pursuing Christ in their marriages and honoring their mates in a way that challenges you?

The Bible speaks of the importance of believers encouraging each other. Following Jesus isn't always easy. We are commanded to encourage, spur on, challenge, and hold accountable other believers in our lives. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul reaffirms this command to the believers, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

It's easier to push ourselves toward godly marriages in the company of others who are doing the same.

Write down the names of couples you know that seem to have healthy marriages. Can you contact one couple this week and get together for dinner or for lunch?

If you had an opportunity this week to sit down with a godly couple, what questions would you ask them? Have you asked these questions to your spouse first?

What is one way you can encourage your spouse this week?

Are you involved in a NewSpring Group? Studying this devotional together is a great first step! What is your next step together? Schedule some time now to continue reading and studying God's word together. Write it down. If you are not in a NewSpring Group go to [www.newspring.cc/groups](http://www.newspring.cc/groups) to get your questions answered and find a group.

## **Intimacy in Marriage**

### **Genesis 2:24-25**

Many people think that intimacy is synonymous with sex. Intimacy is so much more than that.

Adam and Eve shared physical intimacy but we see in scripture a greater picture of their emotional and spiritual intimacy. This is the picture God wants for our marriages too. In this verse we see that Adam and Eve shared “oneness.” Oneness is having complete openness and transparency with your spouse. Scripture says that they were naked and felt no shame. In other words, they were completely transparent with each other in every way and yet there was no fear of rejection and no guilt from the past.

The problem is we all fear rejection. We don't trust easily. In marriage, the challenge is accepting your spouse no matter what. As a spouse we must trust our partner completely. Openness and transparency leads to unbelievable friendship, trust, and respect for one another. It allows us to have hard conversations and speak the truth in love.

What are you struggling with today? What is on your mind? What are you worried about?

Are there any subjects that you have difficulty talking about with your spouse? Why?

Is there anything you need to share with your spouse now? If you are having trouble opening up, that's okay, work on it. The enemy wants to shut you off and control that part of your life. Confession and vulnerability with your spouse leads to peace and freedom in your marriage.

Share these thoughts with your spouse and tackle them together. What baby steps can you take to build trust this week?

True intimacy can come from having painful conversations. Don't be afraid to talk through difficult things and support each other.

## **Companionship**

### **Genesis 2:18-23**

This is the first place in scripture where God said something was not good. It is important to understand that God did not make a mistake here. Adam was created with an unmet need. In other words, God chose to build a unique need into Adam that was not met by God's presence alone. In other words, God had a gift He wanted to give Adam, but withheld it until the perfect time.

So what did God do next? He showed Adam His need and provided for Adam's need.

God created her. The original language says He fashioned her. Ladies, please understand that God made you very special.

Then God presented her. And Adam received her. Here we have the first wedding ceremony in scripture. Adam received her because he trusted God. He trusted that Eve was God's best for him. He didn't know everything about her.

Who was Adam's first relationship with? Who was Eve's first relationship with?

The point in all of this is that they were able to receive each other as gifts from God, not because they had everything figured out, or had all of their questions answered, but because they knew God and trusted Him to provide his best. We must also know God before we can trust Him to give us His best.

God created marriage for us to have companionship, for us to have a best friend to share life with. If you are married, never take for granted the companionship, friendship, and love that you have in the spouse that God has provided for you.

Do you see your spouse as a gift from God? Do you trust God to provide for all of your needs together? How is the companionship in your marriage? How can you build that level of commitment to each other this week?

## **God Glorifying Marriage**

### **Genesis 1:28**

God told Adam and Eve to subdue the earth. God told this first married couple to do more than sit and take up space. They were not created only to consume; God wanted Adam and Eve to make an impact. God has the same desire for our marriages. God's plans are about more than our happiness. To make the impact He has in mind, we must realize that marriage is not all about us.

God designed us to serve Him and for our families to go farther for God together than we could ever go alone.

We must understand that life and marriage is not all about us. It is all about God. When we realize He is the focus many of our problems will evaporate. When we realize He is the focus our marriage will not be about our happiness but about our holiness. What could be more God honoring than two people growing more and more like Jesus every day?

Are we making the impact with our marriages for which we were designed by God? Do we believe that we can bring glory to Jesus by our interactions? We can. If your marriage is strong, are you pouring into another couple? If your marriage is in need of help, are you asking someone to pour into you?

Pray together that your marriage would be strong and that your strong marriage would be a testimony to others of the grace of God in your lives.

Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their work:  
If one falls down,  
his friend can help him up.  
But pity the man who falls  
and has no one to help him up!  
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12