

THE MARRIAGE DEVOTIONAL

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CHAPTER 1

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME



BRING IT HOME


- Trace back through the period of time before you two were brought together. What moves did God make to put you in each other's path? What people or situations did He rearrange to bring you into a serious relationship?
- Which of those moves were happy and fun at the time? Which of them felt terrible but led to good ultimately?
- How would you describe your trust level with God right now? Knowing that He has brought you two this far, how does it make you feel to know that He will also be with you on the potentially hazardous and slippery road ahead?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “Looking back to our early days, I’m so glad we stuck together when _____, and we could have split. What was God doing in our hearts in those days?”
- “In my story with you, I think God’s smallest move to rearrange people in the dollhouse with the biggest impact was _____.”
- “Considering things we’d wished we’d known back then, a simple way we can keep looking to God to follow His moves going forward might be _____.”

CHAPTER 2

GOD CARES ABOUT MARRIAGE



BRING IT HOME


- Why is it easy to forget that God cares about marriage? What does considering this simple fact reveal to you about your relationship with your spouse?
- Have you ever subscribed to the “you complete me” idea of marriage? Is that something you’ve believed in the past, or have you ever found yourself acting that way? How did that happen?
- What’s the difference between complementing and completing each other—both in general and for you and your spouse? How does God make it possible for you and your spouse to complement each other rather than trying to complete each other?

GOD WAS THERE

- Together list some of your marriage milestones—big events, accomplishments, ups and downs, and turning points. You can think in terms of eras—in the past season, year, or however far back you two go.
- For each marriage milestone, go back and acknowledge that God was there, that it was just as big a deal for Him. God cares about each and every facet of your relationship! He celebrates these things with you, and He is also with you in the tears—every part of it. How does remembering God's presence in your marriage change the way you store these milestones in your hearts?

CHAPTER 3

MARRIAGE: THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME



BRING IT HOME

- How might the idea of being on the same ship—not separate battleships—change the way you and your spouse have disagreements?
- Think about the idea of your sexual union in marriage growing, deepening, maturing, and enriching over time as you give to each other. What might you do to ensure things are going in this direction?
- What do you think about the idea of marriage being an example of Jesus' love for the church, His bride? What does this kind of love look like in your marriage? In what ways could you grow in this?

OPERATION VULNERABLE

- Plan a date night where you do an activity neither of you have ever done before—one that comes with a learning curve. It might be some kind of dance or sports class, or something crafty or creative.
- As (or after) you try the new thing and mess up, talk about what it means to be imperfect and vulnerable, and discuss the kinds of things that make you feel that way.
- Observe how you try to protect yourself in new or uncomfortable situations, and then relax in the company of the person you can be vulnerable and real with.

CHAPTER 4

PRACTICE HIS PRESENCE



BRING IT HOME


- Since God fills the space you create for Him, how can the two of you create more space in your lives for Him on a daily basis?
- In what areas would you dare to invite God into your marriage? Small ones? Big ones?
- In what ways have you been defined by the skeletons in your closet or dysfunction in your life? In your marriage? How is God calling you out of that?

REMINDERS

- Use your phones to start a new memory-habit of looking up. Set a new background screen, set some reminders, a recurring timer, or even stick something to your phone case to prompt you to recognize the presence of God. You can respond with something simple:
- I know You're with me.
- I invite You into _____.
- Thank You for being here.
- After you do this for a while, answer this: How does this change how your day goes?
- Send your spouse reminders of your presence in their life too. Send texts, voice memos, or pictures to remind each other throughout the day, "I'm thinking of you" or "Hey, you're hot and I love you."

CHAPTER 5

A MARRIAGE THAT WORKS



BRING IT HOME

- What is the most important work you and your spouse are doing behind the scenes in your marriage? Where could you grow?
- How is it a relief to know that feelings go up and down but commitment and hard work bring rewards? How have you seen this in your relationship?
- What work are you two doing right now to “make” yourselves a great husband or wife?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “You may not think I notice, but I see how you _____ behind the scenes. This is what a difference it has made: _____.”
- “I appreciate you and how you _____, and I love when you _____.”
- “Sometimes I get a little passive about working on our marriage when _____.”
- “Three active things we could do this week to work on our marriage are _____.”

CHAPTER 6

BE THE ONE



BRING IT HOME

- Did you ever believe in the concept of finding “the one”? Has that belief or disbelief affected your journey toward marriage and your commitment to your spouse?
- Do you feel like you are becoming “the one” God made you to be? Are you getting closer? At a standstill? Going backward? Write down your thoughts.
- Do you truly believe that if you put God first, “all these things will be given to you as well” in your marriage? If so, how can you continue toward that goal? If not, what are your worries?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “When I look at you, I see you becoming the one God has called you to be in _____.”
- “I see growth in your life in this area specifically: _____.”
- “I would describe the kind of person I feel called to be as _____.
How is my progress in getting there?”
- “I have felt God personally growing and changing me as an individual through the process of our marriage in this way: _____.”

CHAPTER 7

TO THE BRIM



BRING IT HOME

- What is the scariest thing for you and your spouse to run low on? Gas? Phone charge? Toilet paper? Coffee? What might the things you stock up on and run out of a lot in your home say about what's important to you on a daily basis?
- When have you felt like you were running on fumes in your relationship? What were the circumstances? How did that “bare minimum” manifest itself in your interactions?
- How can you pour more into your relationship “jar” during good times that will help you when you're running low like that again?

DO A TASTING

Have you ever been to a wine tasting? What about a “coffee cupping” or tea ceremony? Check out something like this locally if it’s offered, or look up online how to do one together. As you do, you might be surprised to learn the background of what goes into the water to make the magic: the plants that are nurtured, leaves and fruit that are carefully harvested, artisanal processing, dedication, craftsmanship, and time that creates the liquid you have in your cup. Learn to taste differences in quality and variety, and discover what you like most. After you enjoy that together, maybe your next sip at home will remind you of all that went into it—and what can come from pouring that kind of dedication into your marriage too.

CHAPTER 8

GIVE MOSES A PINK SLIP



BRING IT HOME

- When do you and your spouse most often feel the need to keep score in your relationship?
- What would happen if you wiped the slate clean today?
- If Jesus shows up where He's invited, what can you do to invite Him into your relationship more often, even in the everyday details?

THE PINK SLIP

- Try keeping track of every time you want to let Moses run the show by keeping score with a tooth for a tooth. ("They do this, so I'll do that.") Jot it down.
- Now, turn each item on your "scorekeeping" list on its head. For every ungracious exchange that goes through your mind, hand your spouse a slip to redeem for a kind, selfless action on your part. (Or just do it without the paperwork!) It may seem crazy to fight "fairness" with selflessness and grace, but that's what Jesus does. And it just might result in miracles.

CHAPTER 9

BEEF UP THAT MARRIAGE ACCOUNT



BRING IT HOME

- What rough times have earned you and your spouse interest in your relationship? What did you earn from choosing to stick it out together?
- How has your relationship “matured” over time? The past year? The past month? What can you enjoy about each other now that you didn’t when you were just starting out?
- Honestly, how do your “accounts” look now in your marriage? Empty? Full? What might change if you paid as much attention to your relationship accounts as you do to your real-money accounts?

SPIN THE BOTTLE

Stumped on what to do for a fun date night? Mark six numbers in a circle and spin a bottle, or draw a number out of a hat—and whatever number you get, plan a date around that theme:

1. *Have a different food adventure.* Try a new restaurant or prepare a different kind of food at home.
2. *Do something artistic or crafty.* Go back to your elementary school days and break out the Elmer's glue, craft paper, and popsicle sticks. Maybe make it a challenge for all you competitive ones out there.
3. *Go outdoors.* Take in the fresh air together with an easy walk or something a little more active.
4. *Get cozy at home.* But plan it like a date night! Hire a babysitter if you need to, or enlist your kids to serve you a candlelit dinner. (It actually could work. We've done that twice, and the house didn't burn down.) Also, at-home dates make it more convenient for lovemaking.
5. *Wild card.* Get crazy with something you *really* wouldn't normally do. Indoor sky diving, arcade, ballroom dancing, skeet shooting, roadside attraction, axe throwing . . . Expand your adventure-date horizons.
6. *Mystery destination.* Just get in the car or start walking toward town with no plan, and see what happens. (We just felt the planners say, "Heck no," under their breaths, but, hey—live a little!)

CHAPTER 10

KNOW YOUR WORTH



BRING IT HOME

- What do you think of the list of things that God wants for your marriage? Do you find that hard or easy to believe? Why?
- In what situations do you find yourself most easily forgetting the value of your marriage (maybe work stress, finances, health issues, etc.)? What can you do to prepare for these situations and remember God's grand design for you as a couple?
- Have you noticed the devil, like a shark, swimming around your marriage? In what ways does the Enemy and the world try to undercut the value of a God-centered marriage?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “My biggest hope for our marriage right now is _____.”
- “What’s priceless about us as a couple is _____. What’s priceless about you is _____.”
- “If I could take any action to protect us from the things that cause us to forget the value of our marriage, it would be _____.”

CHAPTER 11

TOGETHER IS BEST



BRING IT HOME

- How do you and your spouse typically approach conflict?
- When has a resolved conflict made your marriage stronger?
- How could becoming braver about conflict be a strike against the real Enemy?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “The fight I remember most clearly in our relationship is _____.”
- “The best part about making up was _____.”
- “I most realize that we’re better together than we are apart when _____.”
- “This is how my parents would fight or not fight: _____.”

FILL UP WITH THE GOOD STUFF



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “My go-to spiritual junk food is _____. I tend to turn to it when I’m _____ (tired, stressed, hungry, etc.).”
- “For me a healthier, better alternative to fill that craving would be _____ because my heart is really hungry for _____.”
- “I love it when I see you filling up on the good stuff through _____. How can we encourage each other to fill up on what nourishes our sex life and spiritual lives?”

CLEAN UP ON AISLE FIVE

- Who says a grocery store trip can't be a date? Head out to your market together and grab some delicious, healthy snacks (maybe try something new). Or if you're strapped for time, raid your pantry and make some popcorn (we like garlic salt for seasoning, and we add Milk Duds).
- Then sit down with your snacks and share some ideas on how you can help each other by making your relationship a safe place. Be honest, laugh, and have fun.

CHAPTER 13

PLANT A GARDEN



BRING IT HOME

- Where is your marriage garden thriving and flourishing? What's a specific example in everyday life?
- Where is your marriage garden dry and full of weeds? What little foxes tend to gnaw at what you're trying to accomplish?
- How can you help each other keep Jesus in the center of your lives individually? How can you keep Jesus in the center of your marriage?
- What's a way you've resolved to tend your marriage garden?
- What is your vision of a flourishing marriage?

A FOX A DAY

Let's get some of the foxes out of the garden before they destroy everything in sight. The great thing about starting small is that it gets easier and easier as we go.

Identify five little things you want to keep out of your marriage. If some things that come to mind are uncomfortable, that is totally normal. Here are a few examples:

- The fox of spiritual dryness. If you're skipping daily time with the Lord and in His Word, that will show up over time. Encourage each other in your personal time with Jesus.
- The fox of scheduling conflicts/confusion. It seems like such a simple thing, but even little bits of communication go a long way! Take a step in syncing your calendars and having a conversation or text about your schedule or things coming up.
- The fox of constant media. Consider your own consumption of media of all kinds. You might try taking a break, turning off the TV, putting your phone down and looking each other in the eyes. Maybe more hand-holding and laughing and making out.
- After you spend some time dealing with these issues, answer this: How does taking care of these little things give you hopeful momentum?

CHAPTER 14

TO THE RIGHT, TO THE LEFT



BRING IT HOME

- When do you feel uncomfortable about being observed by your spouse? Why?
- How can you support each other in your failures and shifty moments, so there will be no reason to hide?
- How does it feel to be constantly watched by a God who is for you?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “A good aspect of the fact that God is constantly watching is _____, because that means _____.”
- “I’m a little freaked out that God is constantly watching because _____.”
- “One way God’s constant observation of me has changed me for the better is _____.”

CHAPTER 15

SEX ON OUR MINDS



BRING IT HOME

- What were your thoughts about sex growing up?
- What are your thoughts about sex now?
- Is there anything you want to talk about regarding your sex life?

GET IT ON

- Read *Married Sex* by Gary Thomas and Debra Fileta.
- Try something new in your sex life. (Examples: If you only have sex at night, try a morning delight. Or if you only have sex in bed, try the laundry room. Or try sleeping naked.)
- Make a lovemaking playlist. It definitely adds to the vibe.
- Have fun and laugh!

CHAPTER 16

BUILDING A FIRE



BRING IT HOME

- How has your understanding and knowledge of each other grown over the years as you've "practiced the violin"? How about recently?
- Have you ever thought about the connection between prayer and your sex life? How can you tie those together more?
- What do you need to guard yourselves against to protect, honor, and cherish sex within your marriage? What kinds of attitudes? What kinds of media? What else?

START IN THE KITCHEN

- Pick a day this week and start “building your fire” at breakfast.
- Prepare a special breakfast together and resolve to keep in touch throughout the day with kindnesses.
- If you know your spouse’s love language, do those things.²
- Send loving texts (even if it’s from the next room).
- Sexy texts work too.
- Remember and reflect on what your spouse loves. Give them little infusions of joy all day long.
- And at the end of the day, see how much better it is to give than to receive as you get in some good practice.

CHAPTER 17

BRINGING SEXY BACK



BRING IT HOME

- Are *honor* and *sex* synonymous in your marriage? If not, why not? How could you and your spouse get to that place?
- What changes when you think of your spouse as immortal?
- How do you exalt and value each other through your sex life? Is there any way you might be undermining this or need to redirect?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “Here is how I see God’s image in you: _____.”
- “One way you have honored me that I remember and cherish is _____.”
- “Some ways we can protect sex within our marriage from dishonor or disrespect might be _____.”

CHAPTER 18

LOOK UP, CHILD



BRING IT HOME

- What has caused childlike wonder in you recently? Like looking up at the moon or catching snowflakes, what do you want to reclaim wonder in on a daily basis?
- When you think of the way kids look up to their parents or other adults, what aspect of that do you most want to replicate in your relationship with God?
- Think back to when you were a kid. If you had known then that you'd end up with the person who is your spouse, what would have caused you delight and wonder about them?

WHEN I WAS A KID...

Reclaim a little of that childlike posture with your spouse by doing something together that kids like to do. Maybe it's going for a walk and picking up cool rocks, leaves, or bugs. Or coloring. Or playing paddleball, pickleball, or a game. Or eating Popsicles. Whatever it is, keep it simple, and just enjoy each other's company for a while like a couple of kids. As you do, look for Jesus in your spouse. What do you see that brings you wonder?

CHAPTER 19

BAGGAGE ON BOARD



BRING IT HOME

- What do you wish hadn't been recorded in your little black box? In your spouse's?
- In what ways would it be revolutionary to believe that the blood of Jesus covers your past?
- How would remembering God's grace and forgiveness fizzle the Enemy's condemnation on a day-to-day basis for you?

UNPACK IT

Think about this statement: “Of the divorces you know about, is it possible that those marriages ended because of things the spouses did before they met each other? It could be that things they hoped would stay buried—habits, debts, relationships, decisions—did not.”

Wouldn't it be nice to unpack some of that baggage right now?

- Take a moment to pray together, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and asking Jesus to soak your heart in His forgiveness and atonement.
- Reveal to each other one or more things you did before you met—baggage that might try to unbury itself.
- Pray for each other, bringing each thing to Jesus and declaring His power to heal.
- Resolve that these things will not bring you down: strategize ways to keep the Enemy from bringing these things back up in your marriage by continuing to turn to God.
- If you feel you've opened a can of worms that just keep coming out, visit a qualified and certified counselor to help you work through these things together and claim Jesus' victory.

CHAPTER 20

NO COMMAND-Z



BRING IT HOME

- Okay, let's go for it. What painful loss are you mourning most in your marriage right now?
- How have you worked through the grief of the consequences of your past? How have they shown themselves in your daily lives?
- How do you view the possibility of flourishing right where you are, amid the consequences? What might that look like?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- "One way I see you living with regret is _____. But I want to help you flourish. How can I do that?"
- "This week, let's try planting a righteous seed or two and change what we can. Some little changes we could make in the midst of one of our regrettable situations are _____."
- "Is it possible that we could give comfort to others in ways we couldn't without those regrettable experiences? Those people are _____."

CHAPTER 21

ROGAIN FOR YOUR SOUL



BRING IT HOME

- Where would you start to “make the devil pay for what he has taken away”? In what ways can you two shine brighter for having struggled?
- Where might you have lost hope in your marriage? What does it mean that Jesus can replenish it and cause stubble to grow from the rubble?
- Where has trust possibly dwindled in your marriage? What might happen if you offered it to God for healing?

GET BACK UP

- Share with your spouse some ways you’ve fallen, where you’ve gotten back up or will vow to get back up. These can be individually or in your marriage.
- What does getting back up look like in these instances? How can you lean on God’s strength and power to invite something good to grow there?

STAY HUMBLE AND SHOW HONOR



BRING IT HOME

- How do you think your parents' relationship affected your view of marriage? In what positive ways? In what negative ways?
- What is one thing you'd want to repeat in your marriage that you learned from older generations? And one thing you definitely want to avoid?
- Is honoring your parents/elders built into the structure of your marriage? How can you infuse more humility and honor into those relationships?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “I tend to dismiss my parents/elders in matters of _____.”
- “When I think about building on the shoulders of those who came before us, I’m grateful for the way they _____, so we can have a leg up.”
- “When I think about the challenges that came from both of our upbringings in the way we view marriage, I’m so glad we’re aware of _____, so we can do things like _____ to overcome.”

CHAPTER 23

HONOR ROLL



BRING IT HOME

- What would happen if you tried to analyze when you are moody or angry versus times when you are in a good mood? How do humility and pride tie in to those situations?
- In your life and in your past, how have you seen pride destroy intimacy? How have you seen humility build intimacy?
- How does God treat those who admit they are sinners and ask for mercy? How can He work with them, as opposed to a prideful person?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “When have you felt honored by me?”
- “When have you felt dishonored by me?”
- “What are three humble things I could do to get on your honor roll? What can we do together to get on God’s honor roll?”

HOW TO SPELL *HUMILITY*, PART I



BRING IT HOME

- What does humility look like in your life currently? What about your spouse's life?
- How is a healthy soul the same as a humble soul?
- How could you reclaim meekness as strength under control? What would that look like for you?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “A specific time you’ve impressed me with your humility is _____. That made me feel _____.”
- “A specific time that understanding, someone putting themselves in my shoes, has made a big difference to me is _____. It mattered because _____.”
- “When you and I are having a disagreement, how can we signal each other to try understanding and seeing things from the other’s point of view? How can we change course in those tense times?”

HOW TO SPELL *HUMILITY*, PART 2



BRING IT HOME

- When do you find yourselves veering off the road of humility? What is usually the cause? What makes you pull toward pride? Busyness? Tiredness? Something else?
- If humility doesn't come accidentally but intentionally, what actions can you take to keep your hands on the humility wheel?
- When we know each other well, it's easy to think we know it all. What can you do to start listening to each other's hearts instead of assuming?

THE ASK-ME GAME

Set aside some time, at a meal or just sitting cozily on the couch, to ask each other some intentional questions.

- Beforehand, separately assemble twenty “deep” questions each. (You can use Google for this—try things like the *New York Times*’ “36 Questions That Lead to Love”¹ or BetterHelp’s “25 Questions to Get to Know Someone Deeply,”² and jot down any questions you don’t really know the answers to for your spouse.) Make sure your questions are open-ended and not yes-or-no, and avoid questions that could cause a conflict.
- Take turns asking questions, and for each answer, ask two follow-up questions about what your spouse said. It may help to repeat back to them what they’ve shared in the process. Don’t weigh in with your opinion unless they ask you to.
- As you wrap up or have dessert, do a postmortem. What was hard about listening and asking questions? What worked? What didn’t? What did you like? What felt odd?

HOW TO SPELL *HUMILITY*, PART 3



BRING IT HOME

- When have you assumed your spouse could read your mind, and you were surprised when they didn't? What insight could you have given your spouse so they could really understand?
- What can you do to make your marriage a safer space for opening up with insight when you feel misunderstood? What keeps you from doing this?
- Where do you tend to barrel ahead instead of yielding and slowly considering each other? What Slippery When Wet spots do you tend to crash at?

TAKE A TOWEL

This week, separately, write down one way to serve each other with humility every day, and do that thing. You can, of course, literally give your spouse a foot bath or a massage, or take something off their plate that you know they don't like. But the important thing is to do acts of service with a humble heart, not expecting anything in return. At the end of each day, guess what the other person's act was. How does this change the tone in your household?

CHAPTER 27

LEVEL UP



BRING IT HOME

- What is your communication style when you're facing conflict? Do you get tongue-tied? Do the words flow easily?
- How might the two of you accommodate your communication styles? If one (or both) of you struggles, how can you give more space and more grace?
- What are the little tools blinking in the corner of your screen that you've gotten from winning previous "big bad guy fights"? Maybe it's knowledge of each other, ways to diffuse situations, quick solutions, or problem solvers.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “One thing I’ve noticed about your conversation style in a charged environment is _____. Knowing that levels us up because _____.”
- “Something I appreciate about the way you listen and communicate with me is _____. That really helps because _____.”
- “I remember a game-changing communication session when you blew my mind / gave me a revelation by telling me something critical for our relationship: _____. Here’s what that taught me about you/me/us _____.”

BOOSTER SHOTS




BRING IT HOME

- When do you feel like you're playing on opposing teams? What are a few ways you could coach each other and give a game-winning strategy?
- What can you do when you want to tell each other what you need but you don't know what you need? When has that happened? How'd you work through it?
- Has getting stuck in the retaliation mindset ever led you to behaviors you're not proud of? Once the hippocampus (in the brain) gets hijacked, it's all lizard brain, and the prefrontal cortex is not great at making wise relational choices. What are the benefits of doubling down on compensation instead?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “One time that you coached me effectively was _____. I like how that worked. How can I be a better team player in times like this? Coach me, please.”
- “One time that I felt baffled and didn’t know what to do in a conflict was _____. Retroactively, how would you coach me?”
- “The last time I felt like retaliating was _____, because _____. Instead, a good compensation might be _____.”

HEART TENDERIZER



BRING IT HOME

- Individually, try putting yourself in each other's shoes. Try to feel what your spouse must be feeling from what they're going through. Think about what it's like to be married to you right now. What does that reveal? How might that change how you treat each other?
- When's a time you wish you'd bitten your tongue? What happened? Did you have a warning in your spirit beforehand? How can you become more responsive to that sort of wisdom?
- When have you treated each other with tenderness, you to them and them to you? How do you show that to each other most effectively, in a way that touches your hearts?

TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS

Sit down together and recount some times you made each other's hearts pitter-patter. Maybe it was an early date, your wedding, or some sweet moments in the recent past. Describe in detail the picture you're seeing in your mind's eye as you share your memories, and really press into it. Stir up those mushy feelings. They can be fuel for tenderizing your heart. Do this regularly to keep things nice and soft, and sympathy will be easier to access.

CHAPTER 30

EYE CLINIC



BRING IT HOME

- When have you experienced a plank-in-the-eye situation, when one of you showed up for a hard conversation with the explosive combo of Mentos and Diet Coke? How could that have been avoided?
- What would the ideal scenario for a “hard conversation” be for you? How would you work together to set it up?
- What good could come right now from considering how you might be letting the other person down? How can you continually do this and broach this in conversation, to keep the planks out of your eyes?

VISINE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

- Arrange a hangout at a café or at home, wherever you can give each other a good stare and find the beautiful. One of you go first: “I find it beautiful about you that _____.” And then take turns. See if you can build off each other and keep the beautiful things going.
- Try to leave the conversation with at least three things you can encourage about each other in the coming week.
- Whenever your spiritual eyes start getting red and agitated, and you start getting annoyed by the negative in your spouse, haul out the eye drops and choose to see the beautiful.

CHAPTER 31

LUCKY IN LOVE



BRING IT HOME

- Explain a time when you've felt overwhelmed by how lucky you were. What did that feel like?
- Talk about how it feels to go hunting for something and to finally get it (could be actual hunting, shopping, or anything that you need patience to look for).
- When you look at the two of you, how do you see two people's rough edges smoothing each other out in conflict? How is that something to feel lucky about?

A GAME OF LUCK

- Grab a pair of dice, pack of cards, or a spinner from a board game. Whoever rolls, casts, or spins the highest number gets to tell the other person, "I feel lucky to have you because ____." After a little while, you'll start to realize that the fact you're together is more than just dumb luck. You've been blessed by a God who knows you, and He knows exactly what you need.

AS FOR ME



BRING IT HOME

- Think about the verse, “Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life” (Galatians 6:5 MSG). Does that inspire you to do something different? To do something differently with each other?
- When do you find yourself trying to take responsibility for each other in ways that are solely up to the individual? In what ways can you communicate better, “It’s up to you, babe,” and encourage the other person to do their creative best?
- How are each of you taking personal responsibility for your relationship with God?

INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES

- Separately, come up with a list of three to five principles that are important to you as you walk with integrity in your own life, as a spouse, as an individual, and spiritually, regardless of what's going on with the other person.
- Share those principles with each other.
- Discuss what you observe about your lists. Is there any overlap? Is there any divergence?
- How does understanding each other's main principles help you support each other? How does it help you let go of what is the other person's responsibility? How might this change things in your marriage?

CHAPTER 33

SOUL TRAINING



BRING IT HOME

- When have you seen a certain practice change your body over time? What about inwardly—in your soul? How did it work? How long did it take?
- What would it look like to take annoying situations and look at them as opportunities to “practice patience”? Individually? With each other?
- What godly practices (like worshiping, praying, studying, giving, fasting, pursuing the Spirit) would you like to up your “reps” in? How can you make sure you’re doing something every day to grow in godliness? Remember—godliness has eternal benefits and present benefits in your marriage.

MOVE IT, MOVE IT

Studies show that exercising with your partner makes your relationship stronger.² So this week, test that out. Ride bikes (carefully, please—learn from us!), go jogging, go to the gym, play tennis, shoot hoops together—whatever you both like to do. Notice how sharing the task of exercise changes it and makes it better. How could you share in helping each other build the muscles of godliness going forward?

CHAPTER 34

SOUL GROOMING



BRING IT HOME

- What's your favorite kind of physical hygiene? What do you put the effort into when it comes to hair, skin, etc.?
- What about your favorite kind of soul hygiene? What kind of activities recharge you and refresh you?
- What makes your soul ready to face the world?
- What's the difference between a day when you do soul grooming and a day when you roll out of bed and get going without it? How does one or the other affect your interactions? Your decisions?
- What might happen if you whipped out the timer and decided to spend as much time on the inside as on the outside for a day? What are the benefits of this? Disadvantages?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “When you’ve had a chance to treat your soul right and get it ready for the day, I notice about you that _____.”
- “My bare minimum, quick grooming routine for my physical self is _____. My bare minimum, quick grooming routine for my soul on a rushed day is (or might be) _____.”
- “Like we organize our bathroom and getting-ready areas to function for us, some ways we could arrange our home to accommodate soul grooming might be _____. How can we help each other do what we need to do to treat ourselves right?”

MONEY MATTERS



BRING IT HOME

- How would you describe your “money rhythms” of earning, spending, saving, tithing, investing, etc.? Are they healthy? Do you communicate openly about them? Could they be healthier in some areas?
- How do the two of you approach money differently?
- In the area of finances, do you see any potential slippery patches that need a stronger grip? How might you invite the Holy Spirit into those areas?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “Since we’ve been married, one thing I’ve noticed or learned about myself regarding the way I handle money is _____.”
- “One money habit that I brought into our marriage that I’d like to change is _____. How can we ask the Spirit’s help in this?”
- “When we look at our bank statements, knowing that our treasure goes where our hearts are, it seems to me that our hearts are going _____.”

CHAPTER 36

THE GENEROUS LIFE



BRING IT HOME

- How do you each receive love? In what ways do you differ or overlap? (If you haven't yet, it could be super helpful to take a love language quiz!)
- How would you describe the levels of generosity and attentiveness in your lives right now? When have they been at their highest?
- How good are you at listening to each other? When do you feel really listened to? When do you know your spouse is not listening? And what about the other way around—when do you find yourself engaged or not engaged in listening?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “I feel really loved and seen when _____. And I feel unseen and overlooked when _____.”
- “Things I think you might enjoy, or things that I could do to bless you, might be _____. Can you correct me and guide me to what would make a difference for you?”
- “A few small notices or attentive actions that might make a huge difference for me are _____.”

CHAPTER 37

**I WILL
FOLLOW HIM
WHEREVER
HE MAY GO**



BRING IT HOME

- Aside from saying “I do,” what kinds of big-leap risks have you taken in your life? In your marriage? When have you decided, “I’m in”? What happened?
- If you got out of bed each morning, looked at each other, and said, “I will go with you,” what would you be saying yes to? What effect would that kind of resolve have on what you accomplish together?
- Is God asking you to take any risks, big or small? How could you come to a place of saying, “I will go” to wherever He is leading you, not knowing what’s ahead?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “Someone I admire who took a big risk is _____. Here’s why I find them inspiring: _____.”
- “Metaphorically, where are you going in faith? Where could you use some company? How can I come with you? When you go to _____, I will go.”
- “In the past I’ve felt God leading me to _____, and I said yes even though I wasn’t sure. Here’s how that worked out: _____.”

CHAPTER 38

IN THE SAME WAY



BRING IT HOME

- How does knowing each other's weaknesses help you compensate and calibrate for each other in marriage?
- In what ways do the two of you meet in the middle, where one of you is weak in an area and the other is strong?
- What would it look like to imitate Jesus' attitude of submission, to "live for heaven's sake" in your marriage? In what situations would that be hard? Easy?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- "You are a like a Lamborghini/Ford F-150 in that ____."
- "I am super relieved that you can help compensate for me in the area of ____, because _____. Thank you for being the stronger partner there."
- "When we're both separately getting closer to Jesus, I can tell a difference in our relationship because _____. Thanks for meeting me in the middle."

CHAPTER 39

THE S WORDS



BRING IT HOME

- When you study each other and discover what's in the other person's heart, the dreams and purposes your spouse wants to release, how does that link up with submitting to each other in bringing that about? How can you better follow each other's lead to help each other thrive in that way?
- What tends to happen when you have a "tie" in your decisions? When the two of you vote differently? How does that go down?
- If you were going to "outdo each other in honor and in honoring Jesus as the head"—submitting, serving, and studying—what kinds of things would you do? How would you start the healthy competition?

TIEBREAKER


Agree on a process to implement next time there's a tie. Here's an example:

1. Pray about the issue separately and together.
2. Search your own heart, using the three S's.
3. Search Scripture.
4. Get counsel.
5. Come back together and be open to compromise.

Write out your process and tack it to the fridge or somewhere you'll see it. You could even print it out and sign it. The next time you come to an impasse, see how well the three S's work in action.

CHAPTER 40

STUDY UP



BRING IT HOME

- When you were young, was there someone you “studied” to learn how to be an adult? What made you pick them? Why were they your role model?
- What kinds of attributes would belong to a couple you’d want to study?
- What are your thoughts on counseling? How have you witnessed or experienced an internal healing from the “study” of it by a professional?

BUILD YOUR CURRICULUM

Fire up your interwebs to help you identify subjects of study together:

1. *In the Bible.* Identify and list couples in Scripture you want to know more about and discover what made them tick, what commentaries say about them, and what their motivations and decisions were.

2. *In your life.* List some couples you're interested in being like, and maybe even those you want to avoid turning out like. Take notes on them. (Don't worry about being a creeper.) If you have a chance, ask if you can interview them and see what advice they have to give.

3. *Each other.* If you're not seeing a counselor, research and write down names and contacts for some qualified, certified counselors in your area. That way you have them on hand. Identify some personality tests you can take to study each other as well, such as Enneagram and StrengthsFinder. It's about as close as you can get to an instruction manual on your spouse.

CHAPTER 41

WHAT WAITING LOOKS LIKE



BRING IT HOME

- What does waiting look like in your marriage right now?
- Do you naturally worry when you wait? Where does this lead your mind?
- Do you naturally worship when you wait? Where does this lead your mind?
- What does it look like for you to plead with the Lord for a desire in your heart like Isaac did? In your spouse's heart?

PRAY THESE VERSES

- This week, write down Isaiah 40:28–31 and put it in a place where you both will see it every day.
- Ask God to increase strength in your hearts individually and together.
- Pray together as you wait for what God wants to do in your lives.

CHAPTER 42

YOU ARE SEEN



BRING IT HOME

- How would you describe your season of life? Individually? Together in your marriage?
- Pause for a moment and reflect on the fact that God sees you right now—in this very moment, despite what has happened and what is happening. How does it feel to be seen?
- What do you think Jesus sees when He looks at your marriage?

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

What calendar season are you in? Any holidays close to you? Sit down together and name your season according to where you are. Maybe it's the Summer of Adventures. Or the Fall of Recovery. Or the Winter of Mourning. Whether it's happy or sad, name your season, commemorate it, and decide what ceremonial action works for it. Maybe it's raising a glass, having a meal, summiting a mountain, or tossing something into a lake to float away. As you find what's beautiful in the season, discuss what it means to know you are looked at with love, right now, by the God who sees you both.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR OTHER



BRING IT HOME

- When you think of the Adam and Eve story, do you identify at all with God's means and materials of creation? Do you find it odd? Troubling? Amazing? Strangely truthful or accurate? How have you engaged with the story in the past?
- Do you believe that God is still building you and your mate with the same level of excitement and care He took in building Adam and Eve? How could you consider your marriage part of that "building"?
- Consider the significance of your other: How does God seem to be blending their gifts and strengths together with yours to make something even more beautiful? How is the Master Builder at work in you two?

FROM THE DIRT

Here's a fun idea: Grow something together. Plant a seed or a seedling in some dirt and put it in a window in your home to sprout. Or go to the garden center and pick out something already growing, or even a tree to plant in a special spot.

Get your hands into the dirt together, and bring something green and growing into your life to remind you that God is continually making something out of nothing, and that He breathed life and significance into your "other." As you watch the plant grow, remember that you can grow in purpose and power as you recognize your own significance and the significance of your "significant other."

CHAPTER 44

CHOOSE TO SEE THE GOOD



BRING IT HOME

- How can being an expert on your spouse—knowing the things they love and that make them tick—help you see the king/queen and not the fool?
- Have you asked God how He sees your spouse? What do you think He would say? How might His viewpoint and your viewpoint line up? How might yours be limited?
- How have you found marriage to be a school for character? What's been the hardest or best lesson?

BUILD YOUR EXPERT FILE

Okay, folks—it's time to become the expert. Open your Evernote or memo or get your pen and paper, and start your expert file on your spouse. List their full name at the top. Make your categories. Some might be:

- gifts
- movies/TV shows
- food/drinks
- music
- colors
- people
- clothing brands (add sizes too)
- break-time activities
- ways to blow off steam

The possibilities are as individual as your person. Do a mind dump of everything you know in those categories. Wherever it's looking scrappy, ask some probing questions. It's of course more fun to collect the data organically while seeing what delights them, but a little basic collection for your file couldn't hurt. Keep adding to it! You'll be glad you have it when you're looking for a way to serve, cheer up, or celebrate them.

THE GENERATIONS



BRING IT HOME

- Do you tend to feel an affinity for people in a certain generation over another? Or a disconnect? Why is that?
- What does it change to consider that God sees all people on earth as one generation?
- Consider the mix of older and younger people you spend time with as a couple. How can you work on having a more varied and diverse community? Who could you pursue?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “One thing I’ve learned about marriage and relationships from someone in an older generation is _____.”
- “Something I’ve learned about relationships from someone in a younger generation is _____.”
- “One way we might find some older and younger generational diversity in our mix is _____.”

CHAPTER 46

AIN'T NO FOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH



BRING IT HOME

- Do you truly believe that God actively wants to bless you? Is there any area of your life or marriage where you have just assumed you're not blessed and given up hope?
- If you have resigned yourself to a dry and withered area that lacks in blessing, prosperity, hope, and goodness, why is that? What convinced you that you're not meant to be blessed this way?
- What kind of dirt is the devil trying to throw on you? What would happen if you started digging in this area?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “When I think about other people being blessed by our marriage, I feel _____. How is this a realistic possibility for us?”
- “One blessing that we currently enjoy that could bring life to others is _____. How could we expand there?”
- “What if the very places we feel the most hopeless are the ones where God wants to bring blessing? What would those blessings look like?”

YOUR WELLNESS CHECK



BRING IT HOME

- How can the fact that there is always work to be done in marriage, always something that's not in good shape, and always some maintenance needed, actually free you from guilt in your walk toward a healthier marriage? Does it help to understand that problems are par for the course?
- Are you in the habit of checking the health of your relationship? How do you do it? What might be an impediment to that practice? How can you clear it?
- Over the past few months, how would you describe the pulse or health vibe of your relationship? What have been the ups and downs? How have your needs fluctuated from day to day, week to week?

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

- Just as we schedule a yearly physical, sit down and brainstorm what a yearly wellness check for your marriage would look like.
- Would you go away for a weekend? Rent a cabin? How would you protect your time and nurture yourselves?
- How would you make it fun and cozy?
- What items would you bring to the discussion?
- What kinds of indicators would let you know if you are within your target range for health?
- Check some dates on your calendar, do some research for a get-away or a staycation, and schedule your checkup retreat—maybe for a time after you conclude this devotional. Even once a year, a checkup can stave off decline and keep you on the path to health.

CHAPTER 48

SMELL MY VICTORY



BRING IT HOME

- What kinds of things are you most dreaming of being victorious in right now? As individuals? As a couple?
- If that victory comes from the leadership of Christ—exactly in those areas—how can you start seeking that leadership and relying on Him more?
- Have you ever been in the presence of someone who was filling the room with an amazing spiritual fragrance? What was that experience like? Why do you think they were that way?

THE LORD IS YOUR SHEPHERD

You guessed it: we're going to ask you to memorize Psalm 23. Even if you've memorized it in the past, or if it's been a while, we encourage you to dive into it in a new way.

There are six verses, so maybe you'll want to take one a day this week. Speak them to each other. Write them on notes and stick them around the house. You could try writing them out, repeating them as you exercise or on your commute, and praying them together. At the end of each day, reflect on what each nugget means for you—individually and as a couple—as your Shepherd leads you toward victory.

YOUR FAVORITE PART



BRING IT HOME


- Thinking back through your marriage and when you were dating, what is the most fun you've had in every part? From big moments to little moments, when have you had a great time together? You can go back and separate the time into segments, years, or seasons if that helps.
- Did anyone ever tell you how hard marriage was? Did anyone tell you how fun it was? What about your perception of marriage going in has changed over time?
- What would you say are your top inside jokes? How does your person make you laugh?

COFFEE TALK

Consider inviting a trusted friend couple out for coffee—preferably a pair that seems to have a good time together. Swap some stories. Have a laugh. In the course of your conversation, store up some good times in your memory, and draw from one another's experiences to find good ideas to keep the fun going in the future.

If it's awkward to ask them out on a couple date, try something like, "Hey! We noticed that you guys seem to have such a good time together, and we kind of want to hear some stories about you two and how you met and how you got to be so fun. It'd be great to spend some time with you."

YOU IN FIVE YEARS



BRING IT HOME

- When you worry that the worst will happen, what do you worry about?
- What would it look like to run to Jesus in that situation?
- How does knowing we can rely on Jesus give us strength to hope and plan for the future, even if it is uncertain?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “For me, something that has gone completely contrary to the plans I made in the past is _____.”
- “One way I’d like to strengthen and prioritize my relationship with Jesus is _____.”
- “I have hope for our future, no matter what happens, because _____.”

I WANNA GROW OLD WITH YOU



BRING IT HOME

- If time is making you more of what you are in your relationship, what's it making you into now? What would you like it to make you into as you get on in years?
- Is there a couple in your life you know who wear (or wore) their golden years well, like a crown of glory? What about them do you admire and want to emulate?
- Do you envision things getting more boring for you as you get older, or more fun and exciting? How can you reframe aging as a good thing in your mind?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- “When I envision growing old with you, I look forward to _____. I worry about _____.”
- “When we first met, the thing I used to dream about my future with you was _____. Now, that thing is _____.”
- “As we age, I want to become more of what we are now in the area of _____. I want to invest more in the area of _____.”

UPWARD, FORWARD, ONWARD



BRING IT HOME

- When have you felt the difference between just looking at and seeing Jesus, and truly knowing and following Him? What did that shift look like?
- Of all the advice and guidance and marriage strategy you've gathered from going through this book, what seems the most daunting? How does it make you feel to know that a close relationship with Jesus is the only thing that makes these things work?
- Where in your marriage do you most hope to invite in Jesus' supernatural power to change and transform?

YOUR FIVE-YEAR PLAN

After everything you've discovered and been through together in this process, sit down with your notes and discuss your hopes for the next five years.

- What wisdom do you hope to apply?
- What changes will you implement?
- What adventures do you want to go on?
- What do you want to create?
- How do you want to serve?
- What do you want to enjoy?
- Who do you hope to be together as a couple?
- What difference do you hope to bring to the world?
- How do you pray that God will grow you?
- What will you keep in your back pocket as you proceed with caution down marriage roads that you know are dangerous and slippery?

Be bold, be brave, and maintain a prayerful closeness to Jesus in this process. As you have been with Him, His power, hope, and stability will begin to appear in your future.

REMEMBERING
REQUIRES
LOOKING BACK.

REMEMBER HOW
GOD HAS BEEN
FAITHFUL TO YOU.

THERE'S NO BETTER
WAY TO BUILD YOUR FAITH
FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR
MARRIAGE.

**GOD CARES
ABOUT
MARRIAGE.
AND HE
CARES ABOUT
YOURS.**

AFTER ALL, HE
INVENTED IT!

AND HE HAS
MORE IN STORE
FOR YOU.

NOTHING HIDDEN,
NOTHING SHAMEFUL,
NOTHING SECRET

VULNERABILITY IS THE KEY TO INTIMACY.

TO KNOW AND
FEEL KNOWN IN THE
TRUEST WAY

THE THINGS
BEHIND YOU ARE
NO MATCH FOR
THE ONE WHO IS
WITH YOU.

"NEVER WILL I LEAVE YOU;
NEVER WILL I FORSAKE YOU."
HEBREWS 13:5

THE TRUTH IS:

**GREAT MARRIAGES
ARE MADE, NOT BORN.**

A SUCC(ESSFUL MARRIAGE IS SPELLED W-O-R-K.

GOD'S HEART FOR
US, IN ~~ALL~~ OF LIFE,
IS THAT WE WOULD
PUT HIM FIRST AND
SEEK HIM FIRST IN
EVERYTHING.

SEE WHAT GOD CAN
DO WITH A HEART
THAT SEEKS HIM FIRST!

WE CAN HAVE AS
MUCH FROM JESUS
AS WE WANT.

AND FROM
MARRIAGE

IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH
WE'RE WILLING TO POUR IN.

HE WILL COME INTO
ANY SITUATION WHERE
HE'S INVITED.

IF YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE BOTH ~~ALLOW~~
JESUS TO BE IN CHARGE IN YOUR SOULS AND
IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP, HE WILL LEAD YOU TO
A NEW AND BETTER WAY.

**YOU WILL BE ABLE
TO ENJOY THE
RICHES OF YOUR
MARRIAGE TO THE
EXTENT THAT YOU
INVEST IN IT.**



NO INVESTMENT
IS TOO SMALL.

STAY THE
COURSE AND
MAKE REGULAR
DEPOSITS.


YOU TAKE
CARE OF THE
INVESTING, AND
LET GOD HANDLE
THE GROWTH.

THE GOAL
IN MARRIAGE
IS TO COME
THROUGH THE
OBSTACLES AND
STRUGGLES
AND STORMS
TOGETHER.

YOUR MARRIAGE WILL BE EVEN MORE
~~BEAUTIFUL~~ BECAUSE OF THE HARD
WORK YOU BOTH DID TO GET THERE.

DON'T STOP DOING THE
SIMPLE THINGS TO KEEP
YOUR MARRIAGE GROWING.

YOU MIGHT THINK
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, BUT
GOD LOVES TO WORK
WITH IMPOSSIBILITIES!



**IT IS POSSIBLE
TO LET GOD CHANGE
YOUR MIND
TOWARD INTIMACY
IN MARRIAGE.**



**THE GOAL OF SEX IS
TO GIVE PLEASURE,
NOT TO RECEIVE IT.**



THIS IS THE SECRET TO KEEPING SEX FUN
EVEN AFTER YEARS OF MARRIAGE!

MARRIED SEX
IS BEAUTIFUL, AND
FUN, AND SHOULD
BE VALUED.

THE BIBLE TELLS
US CLEARLY
THAT MARRIAGE
AND SEX ARE TO
BE HONORED.

THERE IS A STRENGTHENING
THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU
LOOK TO JESUS TOGETHER.

WHEN WE LIFT OUR EYES TO JESUS,
WE START TO SEE HIM IN EACH OTHER.

WHEN YOU LOOK FOR
JESUS IN YOUR SPOUSE,
YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND HIM.

YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST,
BUT IF YOU GIVE GOD YOUR
PRESENT, HE WILL BEGIN A NEW
CHAPTER IN YOUR STORY.

WHATEVER BAGGAGE
YOU BROUGHT INTO
YOUR MARRIAGE IS ~~NOT~~
TOO MUCH FOR GOD TO
HANDLE AND HEAL.

AND IT'S NOT TOO
LATE EITHER!

**THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE
FOR A NEW BEGINNING.**

IT MAY NOT BE INSTANT,
CLEAN, OR EASY

GOD CAN WORK
IN THE MIDST OF THE
DYSFUNCTION TO
BRING GOOD THINGS.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY,
TO BRING GLORY TO HIS NAME!

**WE CAN POSTURE
OURSELVES IN
HUMILITY AND GROW
IN COMPASSION.**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO LIVE WITH HUMILITY
AND HONOR TOWARD THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US.

**PRIDE DESTROYS INTIMACY, BUT
HUMILITY UNLOCKS RICH RELATIONSHIP.**

THIS IS A KEY INGREDIENT
OF A HEALTHY MARRIAGE.

IT'S "MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY
OPPORTUNITY" INSTEAD OF
"LETTING THINGS LAND WHERE THEY MAY."

WE MUST BE
INTENTIONAL WITH
HOW WE APPROACH OUR
INTERACTIONS WITH
EACH OTHER.

WISDOM, STRENGTH,
AND INSIGHT ARE A
WINNING COMBO FOR
YOUR MARRIAGE.

INSIGHT MEANS HUMBLY
HELPING OTHERS
UNDERSTAND US BETTER.

**WHEN WE'RE FIGHTING, WE'RE NOT FIGHTING
AGAINST EACH OTHER. WE'RE ON THE SAME TEAM.**

IF WE CAN MAKE IT THROUGH THAT FIGHT, WE CAN
MAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

**SOMETIMES
WE'VE GOT TO
LOVE EVEN WHEN
WE DON'T LIKE
EACH OTHER.**

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO
START BUILDING UNITY.

UNITY BRINGS
CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH
TO A RELATIONSHIP.

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO SHOW
TENDERNESS EVEN WHEN YOU
DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.

KEEP IT TENDER
AND KEEP IT FRESH.

IT'S A GAME-CHANGER;
IT'S A MARRIAGE-CHANGER;
IT'S A LIFE-CHANGER.

**AS YOU START TO FIND THE BEAUTY IN
YOUR SPOUSE, YOU'LL BE TRAINING YOUR
EYES TO SEE MORE AND MORE OF IT.**



**YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE BOTH YOURSELF
AND EACH OTHER MORE CLEARLY,
IN THE WAY GOD SEES YOU.**

KEEP WORKING
AT YOUR MARRIAGE!

IF YOU ARE
WILLING TO DO
WHAT OTHER
PEOPLE WON'T,
YOU CAN ENJOY
WHAT OTHER
PEOPLE DON'T.

YOU'LL SOON LOOK UP
AT YOUR SPOUSE AND THINK,
HOW DID I GET SO LUCKY?

KEEP
SHOWING
UP!



CONSISTENCY OVER
TIME WILL DO A DEEP
WORK, AND SOON YOU
WILL SEE FRUIT COME
OUT OF YOUR LIFE.



SOMETIMES WITH
SURPRISING ABUNDANCE!

NO ONE CAN
BUILD UP YOUR
FAITH OR YOUR
LOVE FOR GOD
BUT YOU.

AS YOU TAKE TIME TO BUILD UP
YOUR SOUL, YOU WILL BE READY TO BUILD UP
AND ENCOURAGE YOUR SPOUSE.

**WE WILL NEVER GO WRONG
WHEN WE PUT GOD FIRST.**

WE GIVE GOD THE FIRST AND BEST, AND THAT INVITES HIM TO BLESS THE REST.

**GOD HONORS
THE ONES WHO
HONOR HIM.
HE BLESSES
THE ONES WHO
OBEY HIM.**

**AND THAT IS
NEXT-LEVEL LIVING!**

THE GENEROUS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL LIVING AT ITS FINEST.

/

IT TAKES
WORK AND
INTENTIONALITY.

|

IT TAKES
(REATIVITY AND
SACRIFICE.

\

IT TAKES
FOCUS AND THINKING
DIFFERENTLY.


WE WANT TO DO
THINGS IN THE SAME WAY
THAT JESUS DID.

/

**WITHIN MARRIAGE,
THERE IS A GOAL FOR
US TO BE A PICTURE OF
CHRIST'S LOVE.**

CONSENSUS IS THE GOAL!
NOT UNIFORMITY, BUT UNITY!


**BOTH PARTIES IN THE MARRIAGE SHOULD MAKE
IT THEIR GOAL TO SUBMIT TO EACH OTHER,
SERVE EACH OTHER, AND STUDY EACH OTHER.**


**YOU NEVER KNOW
WHAT GOD COULD DO
IN THE WAITING.**

**IT'S USUALLY BEAUTIFUL,
UNEXPECTED, AND MIRACULOUS.** 

WHATEVER YOUR
SEASON, GOD SEES YOU,
AND HE CARES.

IT'S POSSIBLE TO
CELEBRATE WHERE
YOU ARE, EVEN IN
THE PAINFUL TIMES.



DEEP WITHIN
THE ACHE, THERE IS JOY
TO BE FOUND.

WHEN WE CHOOSE TO SEE THE SIGNIFICANCE IN OUR
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS, AND IN OURSELVES, WE WILL EXPERIENCE
THE ~~PURPOSE~~ AND THE POWER GOD WANTS US TO HAVE.

CHOOSE TO
SEE THE GOOD.

BE AN EXPERT
ON THE POSITIVE
THINGS ABOUT
YOUR SPOUSE.

CHOOSE TO
ENCOURAGE.

CHOOSE TO LOVE.



THE CHURCH IS BUILT UP OF
GENERATIONS DOING LIFE TOGETHER.

**THERE'S A WEALTH OF
WISDOM WE CAN
MISS OUT ON WHEN
WE STAY STUCK IN
ONLY OUR AGE GROUP.**

YOU SHOULD HAVE FRIENDS OF
DIFFERENT AGES, BACKGROUNDS, AND CULTURES.



**GOD INTENDS FOR
MARRIAGE TO BE
A SOURCE OF LIFE.**



JUST AS THERE IS WISDOM IN TAKING CARE OF OUR JOBS
AND RESOURCES, THERE IS ALSO GREAT WISDOM IN
TAKING CARE OF THE ~~RELATIONSHIPS~~ GOD HAS GIVEN US.

KEEP ASKING AND DIGGING AND GIVING AND HOPING AND RESPECTING AND LOVING,
AND DOING IT AGAIN THE NEXT DAY, AND THEN THE NEXT DAY.

WE ARE
VICTORIOUS

WHEN WE
REMEMBER
WHO OUR
VICTORY

COMES FROM.

OUR SAVIOR, OUR
KING, OUR SHEPHERD,
JESUS CHRIST

**WE ARE MEANT
TO BEAUTIFULLY
AND VIBRANTLY FILL
EVERY PLACE WITH
THE FRAGRANCE
OF CHRIST.**

IT'S TIME TO RECLAIM THE FUN!

MARRIAGE IS
A GIFT.

MARRIAGE IS
AN ADVENTURE.

MARRIAGE IS A
BLESSING.

LIFE TENDS NOT TO
GO AS PLANNED,
AND IN THOSE
MOMENTS, WE
HAVE A CHOICE TO
TRUST GOD.

WE CAN MAKE THE DECISION TO
TRAIN FOR THE
TRIAL WE'RE NOT YET IN.

NO MATTER WHAT IS TO COME FOR YOU AND FOR
YOUR MARRIAGE, YOU CAN BE STRONGER, KINDER,
HUMBLER, MORE JOYFUL, AND MORE GRACIOUS
AS YOU TRAIN NOW FOR WHAT IS TO COME.

WE CAN DO EVERYTHING
WHEN WE RUN TO JESUS IN
THE SUNSHINE AND THE SHADE.

**IF WE OPEN
OURSELVES UP TO
GOD'S WISDOM,
WE WILL BE RICH
IN THE WAYS THAT
MATTER MOST.**

**AS YOU LOOK TO
THE FUTURE, REMEMBER
IT'S A BRIGHT ONE.**

NOT BECAUSE OF YOU, BUT BECAUSE OF JESUS IN YOU.