



Week Four

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here. Help us to hear from you today. We want to be open to what you have for us today.

Talk It Over

This series has been all about looking at the three areas of life we are designed to love in and live in — upward with God, inward with ourselves, and outward with others. This week we looked specifically at how this truth and cycle can play out in our marriage.

- Tell us about a marriage you deeply respect.
- Without sharing any names or giving too many specific details, tell us about a marriage you have observed that you know wasn't healthy.

Read Our Theme Verse For This Series: 1 John 4:19 (NIV)

The big idea of this series is that we can re-engage upward, inward, and outward best by understanding we are loved by God first and foremost. It's God's love for us that sets the stage for us to love him, love ourselves, and love others well. His love is the starting point of all other love; his love sets the pace for everything else. Jesus taught that the point of life is love. It's a love that moves upward to God, inward to ourselves, and outward to other people. The key to life and relationships is learning how to love, and re-engaging with God helps us re-engage a marriage.

- Growing up what were a few key lessons did you learn from your parents marriage.
- What benefits or good things come to a marriage when both parties know they are loved by God first and foremost?

Read Ephesians 5:21-25 (NIV)

- What are some of the general expectations, goals, and desires people walk into marriage expecting?
- Based on what we read this verse, in our own words, what are some things we should expect?
- If you are married, what is the hardest part of marriage to you? If you are single and end up deciding to pursue marriage, what parts of marriage do you think would be hardest for you?

Read Galatians 3:26-29 (NIV)

If we decide to get married, the Bible invites us to commit to a long-term growing marriage. There are seasons when you will have to make painful choices to grow a healthy marriage. Without being open to our own transformation, healing, growth, or pruning, we risk missing out on what God invites us into or we risk losing the good we have. Avoiding the choice to grow is easier in the short term, but costly in the long term. Growth takes effort, intentionality, investment, and ownership. Growth implies action.

- Tell us about a time you wanted your spouse or someone else to change, but God invited you to change.
- If you are married, in what ways have you changed for the better since you have been married?
- If you are single, who are the people in your life that know you so well that they naturally invite you into deeper healing and growth?
- What are some ways you feel the need to grow this season?

Read Romans 12:10 (NLT) and Philippians 2:2,4 (NLT)

Throughout the Bible, God’s people are encouraged to serve. God extends his love and goodness to his people, and he desires for his people to extend love and goodness to others. This idea of service is key to marriage.

- Growing up did anyone model this sort of commitment to service for you? Tell us about what you saw that modeled this or didn’t.
- What are some ways your spouse or closest friends serve you?
- What are some ways you serve your spouse or closest friends?

In this next section, we will looking at a few more verses than normal. As we look at these different verses, look for patterns, themes, and ideas that jump out to you:

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, John 15:4-5 (NLT), Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) and John 1:12

My relationship with God empowers my decision to re-engage. You don’t “perfect” your way into relationship with God. You believe he loves and accepts you, and then you choose to receive his love. It’s from that place you than able to access a power and love from Holy Spirit. Learning to love upward fills you with power to love inward and outward. This isn’t about guilt and condemnation. God are eager to help us and heal us.

- What about these verses or the idea shared above jumps out to you the most?
- What choices can you make to better connect with God’s love this season?
- What big takeaways did this week’s message and group time spark in you?

Closing Prayer

God, help us to say ‘yes’ to your love and to help us give your love to others freely. Soften us to you and to the key people you have placed in our life. Help us to transform more and more into people who reflect all the good that you are. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group connect in friendship and grow faith.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don’t feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith for your specific group.

Spend some time praying about your group, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance regarding your specific group.