

Once Upon A Time

Happily Ever After Series

Week One

Did You Know?

Marriage was instituted by God in the very beginning of creation. Even in the garden, Adam and Eve were living a perfect union between one another, until sin entered into their hearts and the world. Sin changed everything about marriage, and God's original purposes and design were violated by sinful passions and desires. The Bible traces not only the perfect plan of God for marriage, and the destruction of sin into this God-ordained institution, but also the redemption of marriage for God's purposes and destiny! As we study marriage, it is my hope that your marriage will grow stronger and stem the tide of destruction and brokenness that sin wishes to bring into your closest relationship with your spouse. It's time to gear up for battle and prepare to work hard to keep your relationship centered on God's principles so that you might grow with one another into Christ!

Monday, February 4, 2013

Read: Genesis 2:18-25

Discuss: Pastor outlined several intentions God had for marriage that we can see through analyzing this text. What are some take-aways you have found in this passage about the first marriage? List the insights that you have received about marriage from this passage as you have studied it for yourself. How is the marriage God instituted different from cultural expectations for marriage today?

Act: Of those expectations God has in your list, what is one area that you and your spouse struggle within your own marriage? While marriage was instituted perfectly, as we will see tomorrow, sin has marred even marriage. Choose one area with your spouse to begin selflessly working on and obeying God about for this week.

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

Read: Genesis 3:16-21

Discuss: As part of the curse, God changed some key roles and made them more difficult for both men and women. What do you believe the roles of men and women should be within marriage? What are the scriptural evidences for your ideas of these roles? Does Scripture

agree with your ideas, or do you need to find out what the biblical roles for men and women are within marriage?

Act: For each spouse, start the Act segment of today's study by asking one another what the hardest role they fulfill in your marriage is. After each has thought about and given their response, think of three ways in which you can make that burden easier on your spouse. Write down these solutions, and try them in your marriage this week. If they don't work, get more feedback from your spouse and try something else.

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Read: Ezekiel 16:6-16

Discuss: What fascinates you about how God uses marriage here as a positive and redemptive image? What roles does God take on as the husband to Israel? What roles does Israel take on as His wife? What principles are outlined and expected in this passage concerning marriage?

Act: What about your marriage? Is it a positive and redemptive image of God in your world? Do people see your interactions with your spouse and get encouraged that there's hope for relationships, or do you nurture negative witness? Every marriage is part of a person's representation of Christ in this world, part of your evangelistic witness. How spouses treat one another in public shows either Christ's love or something else.

Thursday, February 7, 2013

Read: Hosea 2:14-20

Discuss: How does Hosea react to Gomer? What are his options as a husband to an adulteress? How does Hosea choose to react? Does the Bible teach our actions toward our spouses as choices we make or uncontrolled reactions? Hosea made the choice to love and be faithful to his wife, just as God continues to faithfully uphold His covenant with Israel. Despite the challenges, they demonstrate that even the worst pain of a broken relationship can be mended.

Act: What is the worst case scenario for your marriage, something you don't believe you can forgive or would kill your relationship? Are there several things that could destroy your bond with your spouse? What plan can you put in place to not allow anything to destroy what God has put together between you and your spouse? How strong is your will to remain faithful and to forgive and to heal from the most painful relational wounds?

Friday, February 8, 2013

Read: Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

Discuss: We will be covering this passage in detail in two weeks. For now, the focus is on the imagery of marriage used by Paul to talk about Christ and His Church. In what ways does Christ show His love to the Church? List them. Are there other passages like this one in the Bible? Find and write them down for your own study.

Act: What are three actions you could take to begin to help your spouse become a better person overall? In what areas does your spouse need to grow in your opinion? Write these down and choose one to begin implementing today!

Saturday, February 9, 2013

Read: Revelation 21:2; 22:17

Discuss: The joy and excitement that has been marred by sin from the first marriage is redeemed through passages like these that remind us that marriage has a great origin in being instituted by God. But it also has a great destiny when both spouses work hard with each other to preserve and develop their relationship. Like your walk with Christ, your marriage should be moving forward in growth. As situations occur and trials come your way, they should build your bond of love and trust for one another.

Act: What is the goal of your marriage? What observable results would you like to see as you grow and live life together? What measurable ways can you move toward your goals as a couple? What road will you take? What tools are available to help you achieve those goals? How can you start on that great adventure together today?

Sunday, February 10, 2013

Read: John 17

Discuss: This is our text for Pastor's message this morning about Jesus' prayer for His disciples. As you read through the text, think of two questions that puzzle you concerning prayer and persistence.

Act: If Pastor does not answer these questions, ask him after service to help you understand better this parable.