

## We will keep Christ in the Center of our Relationship.

Message 2 of 4 in the series, "Tighten the Knot"

### A. A personal relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship we can have.

"...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"  
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

"Yes, **everything else is worthless** when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ."  
Philippians 3:8 (NLT)

"If you want to be my disciple, **you must, by comparison, hate everyone else**—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple."  
Luke 14:26 (NLT)

*Life Application:* People who love Jesus need to only date and marry people who love Jesus.

"**Don't team up with those who are unbelievers.** How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?" 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (NLT)

"...you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror." James 2:19 (NLT)

### B. God uses marriage relationships to make us look a little more like Jesus every day.

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Romans 8:29 (NIV)

#### 1. Through marriage we learn to put others' needs ahead of our own.

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. **Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.** You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had." Philippians 2:3-5 (NLT)

...**submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.** For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord... For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her." Ephesians 5:21,25 (NLT)

#### 2. Through marriage we learn to forgive.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.**" Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

#### 3. Through marriage we learn to endure.

"Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and **endures through every circumstance.**"  
1 Corinthians 13:7 (NLT)

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for **we know that they help us develop endurance.** And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." Romans 5:3-5 (NLT)

### C. God uses marriage relationships as platforms to show others what Jesus looks like.

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27 (NLT)

#### 1. Our neighbors. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

**“Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors.** Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.” 1 Peter 2:12 (NLT)

2. Our kids. “Didn’t the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And **what does he want? Godly children from your union.** So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.” Malachi 2:15 (NLT)
3. Even an unbelieving spouse. “In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. **They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.**” 1 Peter 3:1-2 (NLT)

**D. We only have a few years in this world, so we need to make the most of our marriage relationships.**

**“Marriage is for people here on earth.** But in the age to come, those worthy of being raised from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. And they will never die again. In this respect they will be like angels. They are children of God and children of the resurrection.” Luke 20:34-36 (NLT)

“Lord, **remind me how brief my time on earth will be.** Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is.” Psalm 39:4 (NLT)

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**Connect Group Questions**

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 3:8 & Colossians 3:2-4. Why do Christians believe a personal relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship we can have?
2. Why is it important for people who love Jesus to only date and marry people who love Jesus? (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, James 2:19)
3. What do you think it means to “be conformed to the image of Christ”? (Romans 8:29)
4. Discuss the following ways God uses marriage relationships to conform us to the image of Christ:
  - Through marriage we learn to put others’ needs ahead of our own. (Philippians 2:3-5, Ephesians 5:21-25)
  - Through marriage we learn to forgive. (Ephesians 4:31-32)
  - Through marriage we learn to endure. (Romans 5:3-5, 1 Corinthians 13:7)

Why do you think nearly as many Christians as non-Christians give up on their marriages?

5. How can God use marriage relationships to showing the following groups of people what Jesus looks like?
  - Our neighbors. (Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Peter 2:12)
  - Our kids. (Malachi 2:15)
  - Even an unbelieving spouse. (1 Corinthians 7:13-16, 1 Peter 3:1-2)
6. Read Luke 20:34-36. How does it make you feel to know that people will not be married in heaven? Why do you think God created marriage in the first place? (Genesis 2:21-24)

**Quotations to Consider**

“The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other in an ecstasy of love and delight compared with which the most rapturous love between a man and a woman on this earth is mere milk and water.” CS Lewis

“May the Lord bless your marriage and grant you fulfillment in it. May He fill you with spiritual blessings and love and may He use your marriage to prepare your souls for life everlasting with Him.” A wedding prayer