



Discussion Guide | Week 4: It's About Forgiveness, Not Compatibility | June 7, 2020

OVERVIEW Sometimes when a couple files for divorce, they do on the grounds of something called “irreconcilable differences.” The idea is that no one in particular is at fault in the marriage, but there are fundamental compatibility issues that will prevent that marriage from being successful. However, Christian marriage is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person. The math of Christian marriage is: $1 \text{ Sinner} + 1 \text{ Sinner} = (\text{Conflict})^2$. When two broken & selfish people enter into a marriage, they will fight & let one another down. This is a sin issue, not a compatibility issue. And sin requires forgiveness. Make no mistake: Behind every divorce is a series of refusals on the part of at least one spouse to forgive. For the Christian, we have no alternative but to “forgive as the Lord has forgiven us.” Forgiveness & repentance are vital to the success of any Christian marriage.

KEY VERSES Romans 12:10, 21; Romans 3:9b-12, 23-24; Psalm 55:12-14; James 5:16; Romans 15:7; Colossians 3:13; Hebrews 12:15

REMEMBER Pastor Brad opened his message by lamenting the murder of George Floyd. This horrible incident has ignited a passionate debate about the racism that remains in our country. So far, how have you been engaging in that debate? Have you had the chance to talk to co-workers, neighbors or family members about it? Share what that’s looked like for you.

REFLECT On a scale of 1 to 10 – with 1 being “I can let go almost immediately” and 10 being “It takes a lot of time and effort” – how difficult is it for you to let go of a grudge? How has that tendency to choose bitterness over forgiveness affected your relationships, for good & bad? Explain.

RESPOND In what ways might your history, fears, or insecurities be obstacles to assuming the best of your spouse? What will it take to overcome those obstacles so that you can learn to fight as friends rather than enemies? Explain.

REAL LIFE Brad shared 3 things that every Christian marriage must have: 1) Repentance & Prayer; 2) Acceptance; and 3) Forgiveness. As you think about your own marriage which one of those 3 thinks is Jesus challenging you to focus on this week? What’s a practical step that you can take in order to pursue it intentionally starting right now? Share.

PRAYER During his message, Brad challenged all of us who follow Jesus to learn to pray publicly. To some of us, that sounds pretty intimidating. But when we’re willing to do so, it’s a powerful gesture to those praying with us. So in light of that, who’s willing to close our group time in prayer tonight?

NOTES

Total Depravity = “At my core, I’m not basically good. And you’re not, either.”

Marriage = An unconditional commitment to an imperfect person.

- The Math of Marriage = $1 \text{ sinner} + 1 \text{ sinner} = (\text{Conflict})^2$
- Therefore, we must learn to fight as friends, not enemies (i.e. – respect).

Every Christian marriage must have:

1. Repentance & Prayer (James 5:16)
2. Acceptance (Romans 15:7)
3. Forgiveness (Colossians 3:13)

The alternative to forgiveness = Bitterness. (Hebrews 12:15)

