

PREVIEW

- As believers, we are to be known for our relationships.
 - This is a marriage and family series. For those who don't have a spouse, or children, while you may have these relationships later, these principles will work for all types of relationships.
 - Remember: we are all disciples who make disciples, and that includes in every sphere of our lives.
 - Remember: we are also family, and we all can encourage someone else with a shared vision of the home.
 - God is relational; it's His idea.
 - We're created to be in relationship.
 - The game changer? The devil lied, and we believe it.
 - God's response: 4 **Game Changers**. Jesus gives us the truth and the power to live it. (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:35)
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WEEK ONE: FIGHTING *FOR* RATHER THAN FIGHTING *WITH* YOUR SPOUSE

- The warning concerning love: it will not be easy, and for many, it won't last. (See Matthew 24:12-13; Hebrews 12:15)

HOW LOVE DIES

- Face to face, side by side, and back to back imagery. (Ephesians 4:25-27)
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ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN Context: Jesus to His bride, the Church.

Revelation 2:1-7 (NASB95) ¹To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: ²"I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; ³and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. ⁴But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. ⁶Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

CHANGING THE BATTLE LINES: FIGHTING FOR GOD'S DEFINITION OF LOVE

1. NOTICE FORSAKEN LOVE—YOUR FIRST LOVE (vs. 4)

- Forsaken love means we have forsaken the *true meaning* of love. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)
- God wants and deserves love. He wants us to love others.

2. JESUS' COMMAND: *YOU* REMEMBER/CONSIDER...

- ...the heights from which you have fallen.
- ...she/he was a gift.
- ...the battle in your own heart—fighting your flesh and the culture.
- ...surrendering to the Holy Spirit yourself. (Galatians 5:16-18)
- ...taking the speck out of your own eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

3. REPENT, OR ELSE: THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGHT (See Matthew 10:39 and 2 Corinthians 7:10)

- Turn back and do the things *you* did at first. Redo the things *you* did at first.
- This is the first fight—the inner fight in your heart to repent.
- Or else what? Your relationship will die.

RE-DOING WHAT YOU DID AT FIRST: TAKING DOWN YOUR SIDE OF THE WALL (See also Philippians 4:12-13)

- Oftentimes, when we change, the equation changes.
- Other times, we change, but we cannot make someone else change.

Romans 12:16–18 ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

THE GAME CHANGER: YOU CHANGE THE EQUATION BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE FOR YOU.

Romans 12:1–2 ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

NEXT STEPS

- **Humble yourself.** Confess to the Lord your part of the equation. Ask forgiveness from the one you are fighting with (do “your part”).
- **Take action.** Gather support—transparent accountability from godly counsel. Go to (professional) counseling. Interview Christians who have the kind of relationships that reflect Jesus. Start learning—take a class.
- **Stay alert—people drift.** Stay in Christian relationships that guard and feed your perspective of love—life groups.

RESOURCES

February 23rd: Fight Night with Les & Leslie Parrott. Get your tickets, soon!

February 17th: Smart Stepfamily class starts at Post Falls Campus.

Register online for both of these resources at reallifeministries.com/marriageandparenting

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Passages to consider: John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-21 (additionally: 1 Corinthians 13; Revelation 2-15) Note: this may be a good week to break out into men’s & women’s groups.

1. After listening to the sermon, what stood out to you, personally?
2. Take a look at John 13:34-35 and Romans 12:9-21. What do these passages say about relationships? A) What do they say about when relationships are difficult?
3. What has been your experience about how you respond during challenging times of relationships?
4. What helps change the game for you to go from fighting *with* someone to fighting *for* the relationship with someone? B) What can be a roadblock or wall-builder for you?
5. What is God showing you about your part in your relationship with your spouse? Singles: What is He showing you about your relationships?
6. How are you being prompted to respond? Be as real and practical as you can.

Extra: You might check this out: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o30Ps-_8is&feature=youtu.be

Next week: Game Changers (Week 2): From Comparison to Contentment

Passages to prepare: Colossians 3:12-17; Philippians 4:11-13