

## Marriage, Divorce & Singleness

Icebreaker: How did you practice BLESS this week?

Discussion: For group discussion to be fruitful and engaging for everyone in your group, make sure that your discussion groups are not larger than 4 people. If possible, break up into groups of 2 or 3.

Larger Group: (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone
- Introduce the direction for the evening.
  - Read Ephesians 5:31-32 highlight the following
    - The starting place of this conversation is that marriage is God's idea, not humanity's.
    - Our goal is for our human relationships to point to God's covenant relationship with His church.
    - So, let us build our relationships on God's covenant promise: I have loved you, therefore, love one another (1 John 4:11)!
  - A covenant is a promise regardless of performance that benefits the person receiving it. A contract is based on performance regardless of the promise to benefit the person giving it. Which statement describes the relationships in your life?
- Prepare to break into smaller groups

Smaller Groups (20-25 minutes) Give the following instructions and break into small groups (2-3 people).

Have someone read Matthew 19:3-12. Jesus reminds us that marriage is not our idea, but His! Because we didn't design it, it's not ours to tinker with! Marriage is a covenant relationship that is to point us to God's covenant with us!

- Have someone read Matthew 19:4-5. Jesus points back to Genesis 2:24 to indicate that marriage is God's idea that man and woman should be in a covenant ("hold fast") relationship.
  - How does Jesus's teaching contradict your thoughts about and behaviors within marriage?
  - Have someone read Ephesians 5:31-32. What greater reality does marriage point to?
    - How do these Scriptures stretch your ideas about marriage?
    - How do these Scriptures inspire you to view marriage?
- Have someone read Genesis 2:18. God's desire is that man would not be alone! We need companionship! We need a covenant community!
- Have someone read Romans 5:8.
  - When did Jesus commit to love us?
  - What impact does it have on your life when you know someone is committed to you regardless of your performance?

Commented [1]: This is a great question as it presents a clear dichotomy between the two different kinds of relationships that exist.

Commented [2]: I appreciate the clarity of this point as it is most significant. We can easily lose sight of it, so it's worth repeating.

Commented [3]: I wonder if a better question would be, "What does it look like for a husband and wife to function as one?" It's basically the same question, but takes a more direct aim at the issue of husband and wife being one.

Commented [4]: I think I would change this part here. My suggestion would be to add Ephesians 5:31-32 to the first part of the question where people are reading Mt 19:2-12 as well. The reason is that both texts are saying the same thing. I would then add the following questions to my previously suggested question. -"How does a marriage relationship exemplify Christ's relationship with His bride, the Church?" "What needs to change in you for your marriage to be a better reflection of Christ's love for His Church?"

- Have someone read 1 John 4:11
  - Why can we commit to loving each other regardless of how the other performs?
  - What are some ways that this community group can be a covenant community?

Commented [5]: Good stuff here!

Larger Group:

Return to larger group to give summary of your discussion in smaller groups (5-10 minutes)

Allow time to pray for the lost, end with B.L.E.S.S. (10-15 minutes)

Where are group members in the B.L.E.S.S. process? Model for them how to answer briefly, for example:

"I'm praying for \_\_\_\_\_".

"I have been having good conversations with \_\_\_\_\_".

\_\_\_\_\_. "I'm having lunch with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on  
\_\_\_\_\_ (day of the week)."

Closing prayer - (2-5-minutes)