

# Small Group Discussion



## **Marriage & Family Fitness** **A Fitness Plan for Life** **Genesis 2:18-24**

According to the 2006 U.S. Census Bureau and other sources:

- 85% of the U.S. population with marry at least once
- People marrying today have a 50% chance of divorcing
- 40% of first-time marriages end in divorce
- 60% of second remarriages end in divorce
- 73% of third or more remarriages end in divorce

### **DISCUSSION STARTER:**

- *Are your parents still married? Did they have a period of struggle during their marriage?*
- *Is it a realistic expectation that your marriage should last for a lifetime? Why or why not?*
- *What is the importance to you of determining your position on the permanence of marriage before marriage?*

### **The Foundation of a Great Marriage...or any relationship!**

Marriage and family counselors conclude three things that contribute to marital failure:

- 1) Ongoing, **unresolved conflict** – an inability to effectively resolve disagreement or make decisions together.
- 2) Lack of **communication** – an inability to share their hearts with one another.
- 3) Lack of **commitment** – an inability to remain faithful to their marriage vows.

How are these three characteristics learned before marriage?

*Discussion Leaders: Help your group think through how their parents helped or hurt them growing up with a model of resolving conflict, communication or commitment. Other ways we learn this is in early friendships, extra-curricular activities, media, teachers....*

### **READ: Genesis 2:18-22**

**As a group, make some observations on what God is teaching us about marriage from Genesis 2:18-22.**

- ✓ *God said that loneliness was not a good thing.*

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- ✓ God gave Adam the assignment of naming the animals to discover his loneliness (every animal had a partner, but not Adam)
- ✓ God formed Eve from Adam's side to communicate: partnership, compatibility, soul-to-soul nature of relationships.

## Genesis 2:23-24

Let's take the four steps necessary for a growing relationship and discuss how these apply to any relationship.

### LEAVE

*For this reason a man will leave father and mother.*

- What stops a marriage relationship from growing when one of the couple's parents are too available to cover for financial mistakes, or listen to conflicts, etc.?
- How does a couple choose to leave their parents at marriage?
- Why do you think God focuses on the need of a man to leave his parents rather than the wife?
- Who were Adam & Eve's parents?.....Hhmmmmmmmmmm

### CLEAVE

*And be joined to his wife...*

- What optional things do individuals tend to cling to instead of one another? Eric mentioned things like - children, career, hobbies and interests, family, friends, finances, and the hurts from our past.
- When we choose to begin a relationship with someone, what kinds of things do we do to connect with that person?

### BECOMING

*The two are united*

Just as we leave our home and start living on a new level financially, we begin marriage on a lower level of relationship and build. Review the four levels of relationships.

- 1) Spring – The early years of marriage is a time of discovery. We move from seeing only the positive about one another to discovering areas of difference and trying to change one another.
- 2) Summer – Activity begins to increase, children may become part of the family, mortgages get bigger, careers become more demanding, life can be incredibly busy. Stress increases and is necessary to prepare each individual in the marriage for transformation.
- 3) Autumn – The marriage is maturing and becoming more established. Our focus shifts from one another to other more pressing issues.

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- 4) Winter – Marriage goes through another season of adjustment when children leave the house creating a new environment for the couple. This can be an extremely exciting stage in marriage but sadly more and more marriages are dissolving at during the season of winter. I remind couples often that you don't just wake-up one morning to discover your marriage failed – it's been failing for some time. You just got the memo.
- If your parents had a time of struggle in their relationship, what stage of marriage were they in?
  - How do all relationships reflect these stages?
  - What stage is your marriage in today?
  - What adjustments do you need to make to successfully make your transition?

## **ONE** *united into one*

Notice that oneness is both a process and a product. You never really arrive at oneness, humans are complex enough so that you are never done. When the other three are active, oneness is the result.

- What are some characteristics of a couple that are becoming one? Or, what does oneness look like?
- Does oneness mean that the differences are gone? Why or why not?