

"The Family - God's Original Small Group" Genesis 2:18-25

Small groups are very important to the church. They provide an environment where we develop community with one another, live out the "one another commandments" (love one another, pray for one another, etc.), study God's Word together...all for the purpose of growing in Christ-likeness. The family IS God's original small group, and these small group dynamics should also be happening in our homes. Instead of just "out-sourcing" the spiritual growth of our children to the paid professionals, we need to own the responsibility of intentionally developing our children and seeing God grow them toward maturity. For this to take place, we must first and foremost have strong and Christ-focused marriages. The relationship between a husband and wife is the most important relationship in the family.

Family Defined...

"The basic household unit which provides a person's central relationships, nurture and support."

—Holman's Dictionary

New Testament

-Adoption

-Family of God- the Church

Are small groups important?

What are some of the dynamics that small groups should include?

Do these principles apply to families?

Big Idea...

The most important relationship in the family is the one between the husband and wife.

Until Divorce Do Us Part - *The Eagle* - 10/24/09

"The institution of marriage in the U.S. has steadily declined in strength over the past four decades, according to a report released last month by a panel of scholars and advocates. The U.S. Marriage Index...seeks to quantify marriage in the U.S. in the same way economists use leading indicators to parse the state of the country's economy."

Statistics...

1. 1970 - 90% of children were born to married parents. 2008 - 60%
2. 1970 - 79% of adults between 20-54 were married. 2008 - 57%

3. 1970 - 77% of first marriages remained intact.

2008 - 61%

Why is "marriage index" declining in strength?

Increase in divorce

Increase in out-of-wedlock children

Snowball Effect...

"Every single pathology or problem or difficulty a child can experience - growing up outside of a married-couple home elevates the risk."

"There is no other single force causing as much measurable hardship in this country as the collapse of marriage. It hurts children, it reduces mother's financial security, and it has landed with particular devastation on those who can bear it least: the nations underclass."

Essay: "Why Marriage Matters", *Time* - July 13, 2008

Marriages are at risk!

Satan has a bulls-eye on our marriages!

Marriage "Context"

- Creation Account (Gen. 1:1 ff.)
- "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26)
- Problem - "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18a)
- Solution - "I will make him a helper, suitable" (Gen. 2:18b)

"She shall be called **woman**, because she was taken out of **man**" (Gen. 2:23)

- Man - "*Ish*" (Hebrew)
- Woman - "*Ishah*"
 1. Helper - term of honor
 2. Suitable - corresponding to; perfect complement

God's plan for marriage is oneness; Satan's deception is isolation.

Four Steps to Marital Oneness...

1) Independence - from parents

Leave "to abandon; to leave behind; complete separation of all former ties to form a new relationship"

2) Commitment - to each other

Cleave

- "cling to; be united to; keep close to"
- "a figurative expression of loyalty and affection in a close, physical proximity"
- Other usages: skin to bone; hand to sword, scales to fish

3) Intimacy - with each other

One Flesh "complete unity; complete identification in community of interests and pursuits"

One Man + One Woman = Marriage Union

One Flesh

PROGRESSION...

1. Spiritual
2. Emotional
3. Communicational
4. Physical

"Husbands and wives, recognize that you have become ONE FLESH. If you live for your private pleasure at the expense of your spouse, you are living against yourself and destroying your joy. But if you devote yourselves with all your heart to the holy joy of your spouse, you will also be living for your joy and make a marriage after the image of Christ and His church."

—John Piper in *Desiring God*, p. 178.

4) Transparency- with each other

What value do you place on your marriage/future marriage?

How does your daily life reflect these values?

Resources:

1. Family Life
www.familylife.com
"Weekend to Remember"
San Antonio - Nov. 13 & 20
2. Focus on the Family
www.focusonthefamily.com
3. Christian Counseling
bradevans@grace-bible.org
4. Join a Small Group
www.grace-bible.org

Real Life Applications...

Basic

1. Date - with spouse
2. Prayer - with family
3. Act of Kindness

Advanced

1. Read Bible - with family
2. Service - together as a family

Our marriages are to visibly demonstrate Christ's love relationship with His Bride, the Church.

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (Rev. 19:7-8)

The most important relationship in the family is the one between the husband and wife.