



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

MARRIAGE

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 5

October 11, 2020

Bottom Line: Falling in love is easy; staying in love takes work.

Icebreaker: Who was your elementary school crush? What was so fascinating about them? How do you think a real live marriage would have worked out?

Key Verse: *You must keep on loving with all of your heart.* 1 Peter 1:22 CEV

The key to staying in love is not finding the right person. It is finding someone who is committed to becoming the right person while you work to become the right person. It is about making love a verb. God places all of our relationships in our lives to teach us what it means to intentionally lay our life down for someone. There are four decisions you must make, acting on them consistently, to make any relationship work: **LISTEN**. This is the most important skill in building relationships. You can't love people without listening to them. There is a difference between hearing and listening. Listening means you also hear what the other person *isn't* saying. It means empathy: putting yourself in the other person's shoes. **ACCEPT**. In marriage you have two imperfect people coming together. That is true in every relationship. Acceptance is being willing to take someone as they are, including their personal quirks. Of course you will have to practice forgiveness for hurts that will certainly come. Jesus hasn't given us what we deserve, and we can't do that to others either. The sooner you decide to forgive and accept, the better off you will be. **BE HUMBLE**. Humility is essential because it is what is behind every unselfish act. Humility doesn't keep score. It considers others' needs before your own. Humility is the great litmus test for pride in our lives and for how well we love. Pride is self-deceiving—everyone can see it in us but us. Are we humble enough to ask our spouses how they truly feel about our unselfishness in the marriage? That says something. **LOVE GOD—WITH ALL YOUR HEART**. We can't effectively listen, accept, and forgive or humble ourselves until we have first made the decision to love God with all we are. Most of us try to get the horizontal relationships right and then work on our vertical relationship with God. It will never work in that order. God is where your strength and wisdom for the rest comes from. We need to relisten to our own voices. Listen to the vows we made as we married. They are commitments to "keep loving with all our hearts," as Peter urges. In your relationship today, no matter how difficult it is, embrace the discomfort. Resolve it, don't run from it. This is where the satisfaction will be found.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

The key to staying in love is finding someone who is committed to becoming the right person while you work on becoming the right person. Reflect/Discuss. How will you know?

If you are married, how did creating healthy relationships prior to marriage help the health of your marriage? If you are single, how can developing health in your current relationships help you?

Which of the four keys do you do best? Which is hardest for you? Why?

How would you describe the difference between hearing and listening? Between empathy and sympathy?

Sometimes healing comes by just listening! How has that happened for you?

Resentment is the unhealthiest emotion. Discuss.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

If you can't accept and forgive, resentment will grow. What is the difference between accepting and forgiving? Why are both essential?

Humility is behind every unselfish act. There is no issue in your life that humbling yourself won't resolve. Agree/Disagree? Discuss.

Jesus said the two most important things in life are loving God with all your heart and loving others as you love yourself. Connecting consistently with God is the most powerful thing you can do to strengthen your relationship. Have you experienced this? Share.

God takes opposites and puts them together, creating something new and different. But too often, before you get married opposites attract—then they attack. What suggestions do you have for thriving in spite of your differences?

What do you learn about love from the life of Jesus?

NEXT STEPS

1. Recommit to your marriage if you are married. Commit to being the best you can be in all your relationships if you are not married.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 every day. Put your own name in place of the word “love.”
3. Pray daily for Jesus to help this become true of you.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Falling in love is easy; staying in love takes work.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Proverbs 18:13

Tuesday: Romans 15:7

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Friday: 1 Corinthians 13:11

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)