

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Don't Kill Your Marriage| Matthew 5:31-32, 19:1-9 Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: Compare Biblical love to our cultural concepts and discuss how to apply it to our relationships.

Sermon Refresher: Marriage is created by God, but our view of it has been corrupted by our cultural views of love.

Icebreaker: When you hear the word "marriage", what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Transition: Many of us have negative beliefs about marriage because of the way that we have been hurt by sinful choices of either ourselves, our parents, or others. Let's discuss God's design for marriage and how important it is to have a Biblical view of love in all our relationships.

Discussion:

1. Read Matthew 19: 3-6 out loud.

Matthew 19: 3-6

"And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

- i. According to this passage, what is God's design for love and marriage?

The essence of love and marriage is commitment, not feelings.

- ii. How is this different than the way our culture views love and marriage?

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iii. How have you felt the effects of divorce in your life?

2. Read Deuteronomy 7:6-8 out loud.

- i. According to this passage, God didn't love the Israelites because they were powerful and could give him anything in return. He loved them because he *chose* them and *made a vow* to them. How does this challenge our view of love?
- ii. What assumptions have you held about love that are self-centered? What selfish needs are you sometimes tempted to meet through the people you love?
- iii. Share a time when someone loved you when you weren't very attractive or loveable.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 out loud.

- i. In this passage, Paul gives us a list of qualities that characterize Biblical love. Which ones tend to come easier to you? Which ones are harder?

Because we live in a broken world, no one except Jesus can ever love perfectly. No matter what our sin and selfishness is, there is forgiveness in Christ. He is the one who loves us perfectly and meets our every need. Let us pray that God would give us grace to say no to our selfish desires and to look to the interests of others.

Sharing and Prayer: Share one person in your life who is difficult for you to love right now. Share one practical way that you can love that person this week.