**Beyond Sunday**

God In The Middle (For Better or For Worse pt 2)

A Sermon Application Guide

This guide is designed to offer a simple tool for those wanting to take the next step with Sunday’s message. You can print this guide to study on your own, or use it in a group and experience transformation together.

Our hope is that the living, breathing words of truth that are revealed to you become a part of your everyday life. In the book of James, we read about a key to living life with God. We are told that if we ask for wisdom by faith then we shall receive it generously from our Father in Heaven. One of the best ways to receive this wisdom is by preparing to receive it. We invite you to pray this prayer prior to the message and starting the study guide:

“*God, thank You for Your truth and wisdom. Help me to see what I need to see, hear what I need to hear, and know what I need to know. Holy Spirit, help me to understand in a way that shows me the Father’s true nature and heart. May this time help me to know You more and become more like Jesus. Amen.”*

**Message Theme**

What does the decision of love look like in marriage?

**Key Concepts/Truths**

God didn’t create marriage to meet all of our needs because He meets all of our needs. We will never be complete without the Lord.

Love is a choice, not a feeling. If you make the right choices, the feelings will come, too.

Love is looking and moving together as one in a unified direction towards God.

A fulfilling and successful marriage is found when you are both looking to God, hungry for God, working to please God, and making God the center of everything you do.

Marriage is not about what you will receive, but it’s about serving the other person.

We must practice the attitude we want to have in our relationships.

Key Verses:

1 Corinthians 7:1-7 • John 15:12-13 • Ephesians 5:22 • Ephesians 5:25

**Which one truth do you already have evidence of in your life today? Ask the Lord for new ways to see even more of it for you and others around you. Write your answers out.**

**Which one truth is the most challenging or least existing in your life today? Why do you think this is? Ask the Lord if there are any beliefs or barriers that are keeping you from believing that particular truth. Write it out.**

**Real-Life Application**

It’s quite common to hear our culture promote and encourage everyone to find their ‘soul mate,’ or ‘the one’ that they will spend the rest of their life with. So often the first image that pops into our heads is a romantic dinner, a diamond ring, and a Valentine’s Day card covered in red hearts and XOXOs.

Here’s the thing though, marriage isn’t always filled with eternal sunsets on the beach. There is an enemy who is trying to convince you of a false idea of a ‘perfect’ marriage, and if it’s not like a romantic comedy then you must have chosen wrong.

God DID design a perfect marriage, and He DID design it in a way that we will find eternal happiness, joy, and fulfillment. It’s not found by gazing into the eyes of our spouse: it’s found by gazing at Him and putting Him at our center.

Marriage is meant to make us more holy and as a result there will be happiness. It’s meant to mature us into better disciples and followers of Christ. It’s meant to make us better reflect and become the image of Christ. It’s filled with hard work, but we can have confidence that He will be faithful to purposely use it for the good of those who love Him.

This week, let’s pursue Him. If you’re single: pursue Him. If you’re married: pursue Him. No matter what, pursue Him, and it will spill over into all of your relationships and everything you do.

**This Week’s Declarations**

Life is released when your words are in agreement with God. Intentionally speaking life and biblical truth out loud is extremely powerful. In fact, you have that very life in the power of your tongue. These words below, when spoken out loud, will cause an acceleration of the reality of God’s words in your life. We encourage you to speak the following with an expectancy to renew your mind and see God’s fullness.

• I will use the Word of God as my guide in every area of my marriage.

• Thank you, God, that you created, established, and work through marriage to better mold me into your image. • God, I choose to put You at the center of everything that I do.

• I will commit myself to pray for, serve, and sacrificially love my spouse just as Jesus loves the church.

• The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. I choose to speak life into my marriage.

• Holy Spirit, help me set myself and my marriage to Philippians 2:3, which says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”

**Greater Things**

We are called to love God and love others. When we keep this as a main focus in life then we approach everything through the lens of love with the desired outcome of strengthening our relationships. Constantly abiding in Him is the only way to make this possible. We will see the greater things in marriage and life when this is the true source of how we live. Father, help us to remain heart to heart with you.

**What’s Next?**

Now it’s time to write down anything that the Lord has spoken to you. Praise Him, thank Him, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you walk this out.

**Scripture References**

**God in the Middle**

**Ecclesiastes 4:12 CSB**

...A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

**Psalms 87:7 NKJV**

Both the singers and the players on instruments say, All my springs are in you.

**Ephesians 5:25 NKJV**

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...

**Romans 5:10 CEV**

Even when we were God’s enemies, he made peace with us, because his Son died for us…

**1 Corinthians 13:4-5 AMP**

Love endures with patience and serenity, love is kind and thoughtful, and is not jealous or envious; love does not brag and is not proud or arrogant. 5 It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong endured.

**John 15:13 NLT**

There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

**Revelation 2:4-5 LEB**

...you have left your first love. ...repent and do the works you did at first

**Hebrews 12:28-13:1 NKJV**

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

**Hebrews 13:1 NKJV**

Let brotherly love continue.

**Proverbs 31:10 NKJV**

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

**Proverbs 31:11 NKJV**

The heart of her husband safely trusts her...

**Proverbs 31:28-29 NKJV**

Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:

Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all.

**1 Corinthians 7:1-7 MSG**

Now, getting down to the questions you asked in your letter to me. First, Is it a good thing to have sexual relations? Certainly—but only within a certain context. It’s good for a man to have a wife, and for a woman to have a husband. Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder. The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to “stand up for your rights.” Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out. Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it’s for the purposes of prayer and fasting—but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it. I’m not understand, commanding these periods of abstinence—only providing my best counsel if you should choose them. Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me—a simpler life in many ways! But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others.

**1 Corinthians 7:5 AMP**

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