



Our culture puts a lot of emphasis on picking wisely when it comes to marriage, but couples quickly learn that marriage is a lifetime of choices that determine health and happiness. This series will explore the big decisions that followers of Jesus must regularly make to build a marriage that thrives.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Rick began by noting that *“This pandemic has revealed that some couples are barely married.”* How has proximity during this time been both a blessing and a challenge for relationships? Follow up: Share one practical thing you’ve done to combat this.

2 *Most marital conflict is “what I want versus what you want.” For us the most important question is “What does God want?”* Why is that so significant to know as we explore the topic of marriage? Follow up: *Marriage is a lifetime of decisions to say yes to one thing and no to another. And the most important is to choose die over my.* **Read Mark 8:35.** Why is this principle important for every relationship -- especially marriages?

3 YOUR MARRIAGE needs the gospel. *A Christian worldview affirms that we are doing life as married and single believers in a world that is broken and marred by sin.* How can reminding yourself of the gospel help you to live out God’s design for marriage? Follow up: Why is the authority of Scripture an important thing to remember as we focus on the topic of marriage?

4 JESUS SAYS... the institution of marriage will last. *Jesus had a high view of marriage.* **Read Matthew 24:37-39.** What stands out to you from this passage? Follow up: Rick mentioned that *“no culture has found a better solution for aloneness, for intimacy,*

and for a stable child-rearing environment than God’s gift of faithful, monogamous marriage.” In what ways have you seen this to be true? In what ways does our culture often go against this view?

5 JESUS SAYS... God wants our marriages to last. *Jesus views divorce as a concession, not as a command.* **Read Matthew 19:3-10.** Why is remembering that marriage is intended to be a permanent institution essential for pursuing God’s design for marriage? How can keeping this in mind help you through difficulties in marriage?

6 JESUS SAYS... a married disciple will be “last.” *A disciple of Jesus is the first to choose to be last.* **Read Mark 8:34.** Why is self-denial such a core value for followers of Jesus and how can doing so make marriages better? Follow up: In what ways are most marital problems actually a “kingdom problem?”

7 THE GOSPEL needs your marriage. *Our marriages are billboards for Jesus’ relationship to his bride, the church.* **Read Ephesians 5:31-32.** What do these two verses tell you about the ultimate purpose of marriage? Why is it significant to remember that *“our marriages have a bigger goal than our mutual happiness”* and how does that remind you that the gospel needs your marriage? Follow up: What is one thing you can put into practice this week to make your marriage and other relationships better?

