



# small groups

## Discussion Guide



## LOVE FOR SPOUSES

Ephesians 5:21-33

*Note: It's not often that the IBC teaching team tackles a topic that only applies to a portion of the audience, but they decided that, because of its importance in society and its sacramental nature in church doctrine, marriage was a topic important enough to make an exception. Andy was careful to mention, however, that a healthy understanding and practice of Christian marriage is beneficial for all Christians and culture — married or not. This discussion guide is applicable for all audiences, regardless of marital status.*

### Front Porch

*(Ice Breaker — 5 minutes)*

Pastor Andy has a habit of dating himself with pop culture references. This week he described Genesis 3 by saying, "Paradise became Peyton Place." Peyton Place was a primetime soap opera that aired on ABC from 1964 to 1969.

#### Discuss

- Do you remember Peyton Place?
  - Have you ever followed a soap opera? When and which one?
  - What TV shows are you watching these days?
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# Sitting Room

*(Lesson Review – 40 minutes)*

Like he has done throughout this series, Andy used three categories to outline his sermon: the heavenly marriage, the hurting marriage, and the healing marriage.

## The Heavenly Marriage

There has never been one of these – or, at least, not for long. Before Gen. 3, Adam and Eve’s relationship was a snapshot of God’s good design for marriage. Both sexes reflect something of the nature of God. And together, the two become one and reflect the God who is three-in-one. Andy said it isn’t a pastor who marries a Christian couple, nor the couple themselves; it’s God.

### **Read Mark 10:6-9**

#### **Discuss**

- Whose marriage do you admire? Is there someone whose loving marriage inspires you?

## The Hurting Marriage

Andy mentioned the pains and pitfalls of marriage many times in his sermon. He was careful to speak to people who are hurt by a spouse. He said, “Because we are broken by sin, we break out marriages.”

#### **Discuss**

- If you’re married, share the state of your union. How is your marriage doing?
- If you’re single, what’s your impression of marriages at IBC? Do the marriages you observe seem to be hurting or healing? Do they leave you inspired or concerned?

## The Healing Marriage

Andy returned to Col. 3 to outline three steps for moving our marriages from hurting toward healing. These are the same three steps we have visited for healing other relationships in the Home Front.

### **Read Col. 3:12-14**

## Serve

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

### **Discuss**

- If you're married, name one way your spouse serves you.
- If you're single, name one way your friends serve you.

## Forgive

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **Bear with each other and forgive one another** if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

## Love

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.***

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# **Kitchen**

*(Application — 15 minutes)*

## **Couples Time**

If your group is composed entirely of couples, divide into couples and take turns answering these questions:

- How do you need me to serve you?
- For what can I forgive you?
- How can I demonstrate my love for you?

## **Group Time**

If your group is not all couples, discuss these questions:

- Does a sermon on marriage matter to the single people in your group? Why or why not?
- How can IBC singles demonstrate “oneness” and fidelity as the bride of Christ without being in a marriage?
- As a single person, what do you most want your married friends to know about this topic?
- As a married person, what do you most want your single friends to know about this topic?

Close in prayer.