


TALKING POINTS WALKING POINTS

A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

The Power of Promise

Part 3

The Promise of Partnership

2021.4.25



Questions for Community Group Discussion

- 1 Tell about a time when you observed a **power struggle** at work or among your friends. **Why** did it happen? What was the **outcome**?
- 2 Tell us about a time when **someone helped you** accomplish a difficult task or learn a new skill (be it mastering golf, Excel spreadsheets, calculus, meeting a deadline at work, or moving a piano).
- 3 Since that person was **your** helper, were they **inferior** to you? Explain.
- 4 What can subordinates do to not **feel** inferior? What can bosses do to help that happen?
- 5 Have someone in your group read Psalm 128 aloud, slowly. What **emotional response** do you think the psalmist wished for his psalm to elicit from those who heard it?
- 6 Do **you** have that same response (take a vote as a group)? Why or why not?
- 7 Have someone in your group read Ephesians 5:22-33 aloud, slowly. Do you think that the teachings of Ephesians 5 **would lead to** the family experience described in Psalm 128? **Why or why not?**
- 8 In your opinion, what are the **challenges** of the husband's role? What are its **joys**?
Men: Which of those challenges and joys have you **personally** experienced?
- 8 In your opinion, what are the **challenges** of the wife's role? What are its **joys**?
Women: Which of those challenges and joys have you **personally** experienced?
- 9 What are v. 22-31 about? So, **how** can Paul make it be about "Christ and the church" (v. 32)? Explain.
- 10 What is **your** marriage "about"? Explain.

Ready for a free "Marriage Tune-Up"?
write to:
BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Application-Challenge

- 11 • Work through the "**Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time**" exercise contained in this week's Talking Points, Walking Points.



This week all of the questions are rather straightforward. Perhaps not too much to explain...

- 1 Since Doug's sermon handled the hot potato issue of leadership and submission in marriage, this first question lays the groundwork by focusing on the destructiveness that can come from interpersonal struggles. The goal, of course, will be fore all to trust God that his plan for marriage leads to harmony.
- 2 This question segues toward helping folks appreciate the role of "helper". We all **need** help from time to time, and those who **give** the help are anything but inferior or unnecessary. This question "sets up" the next few, which focus on non-marriage examples of help (since this is a less inflammatory domain!).
- 3 As you can see, this question is designed to move folks incrementally toward an understanding that the role of "helper" is a very dignified role.
- 4 While still staying safely in an "non-marriage" domain, this question aims as exploring ways that helpers can feel valued (what they can do for themselves, what their superiors can do for them).
- 5 OK, we're easing into the issue of roles in marriage! This extremely traditional picture of family life may be repugnant to those who wish for the total abandonment of husband-wife-child roles in marriage, but the question is, "What emotional response do you think the psalmist expected and wanted?" Does it seem that the participants in this psalm chafed at their roles, or do things appear harmonious?
- 6 You can have fun with this one—do the "yeas" or "nays" win? Listen carefully to the "why" part.
- 7 All joking aside, the "feel" of Psalm 128 is one of joyous harmony (**everyone** is enjoying himself—not just the patriarch!). So, the question is, "How can a family find this sort of harmony?" It is the **result** of living life God's way (ie, Ephesians 5:22-33). Do group members have "buy-in" on that? Listen to their "why or why not" answers.
- 8 These questions are designed to help folks "get real". You and your wife may need to "prime the pump" with your own answers. Model honesty.
- 9 V. 22-31 are **obviously** about marriage, but then in v. 32 he says that he's speaking about "Christ and the church". Here's the connection: marriage is copy, **not** the original. Marriage exists as an "object lesson" on Christ's loving, sacrificial, joyful relationship with his redeemed people, the church. The Christian life is about our trusting, submissive, joyful role as the chosen, redeemed, loved bride of Christ. This is a profound mystery, and it holds the key to joyfully embracing our roles in marriage. This means that marriage is "about more than us".
- 10 Let folks puzzle over this, grappling with that they've thought their marriage was "about" (our happiness, raising a family, etc.) Marriage is bigger, more consequential than that. Wrestle with this together.
- 11 This is the single point of application Pastor Doug has asked us all to do this week. Urge your group to take it seriously. Perhaps come up with a way to help each other follow-through.
- 12 We can all benefit from a "tune-up". And, it's free. Need I say more? Urge folks to contact us.

Sermon Summary

Today, Pastor Doug continued his series on marriage entitled “The Power of Promise.” We looked at the Promise of Partnership, which says this to our spouse: You are my covenant partner in Christ (Genesis 2:24). A covenant is a pledge where vows are made between two people committing their lives to one another, until death parts them. And this covenant is made in the very presence of God.

We are partners with our spouses, and for that partnership to flourish, we need to understand and live out God’s design for the home. In a covenant partnership, God has designed that the husband serve as head of the home (the pilot), and that the wife serve as his helper (the co-pilot). Men, that means that God will hold you ultimately responsible for what happens in your home. And you should feel weight of that responsibility. God’s Word teaches that the husband has two main responsibilities: he is to lead and love his wife.

Let’s consider first his leadership role. Being the leader of your home means that you are to be your family’s biggest servant. A biblical leader isn’t someone who calls all the shots. It’s not someone who forces his agenda on the rest of the family. Being head of the home doesn’t mean that you are to be waited on hand and foot. Rather, it is someone who seeks to serve those whom he is called to lead. If anything, being head of the home means that we are to serve our family, hand and foot. Leadership involves delegation and decision-making. In marriage, someone has to be the final decision-maker. Someone has to delegate responsibility, and God has ordained that this should be the husband. Husbands, this doesn’t mean that you make decisions unilaterally. Because your wife is your God-given helper, you need to listen to her. She has wisdom and insight that you do not. The husband’s second responsibility is to love his wife. In Ephesians 5, four times in the space of nine verses, husbands are commanded to love their wives, both unconditionally and sacrificially.

While God designed the husband to be the head of the home, He designed the wife to be his helper (Genesis 2:18). Wives, just as God comes alongside us to provide what we lack, so God calls you to come alongside your husband to provide what he lacks, so that together you might fulfill your God-given responsibilities.

As his wife and helper, God calls you to submit to your husband’s authority as the head of the home (Ephesians 5:22-24). Biblical submission, however, is frequently misunderstood. Submission does not imply inferiority; rather, it is related to differing roles of equal worth and dignity. Submission does not imply a loss of personhood—a wife’s dignity and worth as a person created in God’s image is in no way undermined by submitting to her husband. Submission does not involve blind obedience; decisions should be jointly reached. Biblical submission greatly differs from the world’s concept of submission.

Not only are wives to lovingly yield to their husbands’ leadership, but they are also enjoined to respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:33). Just as women have a great need to feel loved by their husbands, so men have a powerful need to feel respected by their wives. In his book *Love and Respect*, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs talks about this whole dynamic of love and respect. He says in marriage, when a man doesn’t feel respected, he reacts in negative ways toward his wife. As a result, she doesn’t feel loved by her husband. This in turn leads her to react negatively to her husband, and he doesn’t feel respected. And on and on this crazy cycle goes. Wives can help break the cycle by beginning to express the respect their husbands crave.

Talking To Others About This Week’s Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week’s sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

How are we doing in our role as husband or wife? What guidance does the Bible give us for improvement? Let's see.

Monday—Evaluate **yourself** on the following questions:

Use the following scale: 0 = “never” 1 = “seldom” 2 = sometimes 3 = “frequently” 4 = “always”

- Does the fact that Jesus is Lord manifest itself in practical ways in your marriage?
- Do you use the Bible to determine your convictions, decisions, and practices in your life in general, and marriage in particular?
- Do you and your spouse study the Bible, pray, worship God, and seek to serve God together?
- Do you and your spouse seek to please one another?
- Do you ask for forgiveness when you have done something wrong?
- Do you allow your mate to disagree with you or make a mistake without becoming nasty or punishing?
- Do you focus on the things you appreciate about your mate and express appreciation in tangible ways?
- Do you communicate with one another on a daily basis?
- Do you express your opinions, ideas, plans, aspirations, fears, feelings, likes, dislikes, views, problems, joys to each other?
- Do you and your mate understand each other when you try to express yourselves?
- Do you show love in many practical and tangible ways?
- Do you still court one another with occasional gifts, unexpected attention, etc.?
- Is your conversation pleasant and friendly?
- Do you pray for one another, support and seek to encourage one another?
- Can you discuss differing viewpoints on values, priorities, religious convictions, etc. without becoming irritated or upset?
- Do you anticipate sexual relations with your spouse?
- Are you able to discuss your sexual desires with your spouse and are your sexual desires compatible?
- Do you agree about the way money should be and is spent?
- Do you agree on how to bring up the children (or, if they've left the home, how to relate to your adult children)?
- Do you refuse to lie to your spouse? Can your spouse have full confidence in whatever you say?
- Do you have a good relationship with your in-laws? Do you appreciate them?
- Are you glad to introduce your spouse to your friends and associates?
- Do you control yourself when you are moody so that you do not disrupt family life and inflict your moodiness on others?
- Do you accept corrective criticisms graciously and seek to change behaviors that displease your spouse?
- Do you maintain your own spiritual life through daily Bible reading, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines?

Tuesday—Tally your score from yesterday, and write it here:

- If you scored 70 or higher, you probably are experiencing a degree of unity and happiness. But don't get complacent—unless you scored a 100 (and weren't lying!)—there's room for growth. If you scored from 50 to 70, there is significant work to be done. If you scored below 50, your marriage is far below the biblical norm. This explains why you are not experiencing unity and fulfillment in your marriage.
- With a highlighter, mark the items for which you scored yourself with 0, 1, or 2. What trends do you observe?
- Take time now to pray about those areas. Affirm to God your commitment to grow and change, and trust him for grace to do so.
- Schedule 30-45 minutes with your spouse this evening to compare and discuss your results, and to pray together.
- Order Wayne Mack's *Strengthening Your Marriage* (ISBN: 978-0875523859) to read together.

Wednesday—Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.

- Make a complete list of all the things biblical love **is** or **does**. Make a list of all the things it **isn't** or **doesn't** do.
- **Why** do you think that 1 Corinthians 13 describes love in the context of struggle, opposition, and sin?
- **How would you advise** someone with marriage struggles who says: “I just can't love him/her anymore”?
- Which of those things in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a seem most difficult for you to imagine doing?
- What advice do you think a godly friend would give to you?

Thursday—Read 1 Corinthians 13:4. For each of the descriptors in this verse, look them up at <dictionary.com> or, better yet, in order to get a true, biblical understanding of these terms, look up the words in the parenthesis (note that some are nouns, others are verbs) at <webstersdictionary1828.com>. Then, for each word, write out the definition and a real-life example from your marriage. “Love is...

- patient (patience)
- kind (kindness)
- not jealous (envy)
- does not brag (brag)
- not arrogant (arrogance)

Friday—Continuing with the same instructions from yesterday, read 1 Corinthians 13:5-6. “Love...

- does not act unbecomingly (unbecoming)
- does not seek its own (seek)
- is not provoked (provocation)
- does not take into account a wrong suffered (account and wrong)
- does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth (rejoice; unrighteousness; truth)

Saturday—Continuing with Thursday's instructions, read 1 Corinthians 13:5-6. “Love...

- bears all things (bear)
- believes all things (believe)
- hopes all things (hope)
- endures all things (endure)
- never fails (fail)