

**Week of May 20, 2018**

BELOW IS A REPRINT OF THE EMAIL I SENT TO YOU DURING THE WEEK CONCERNING 'WHAT ABOUT THE SINGLES IN MY GROUP.

I have heard from a few Home Group Leaders about the current series and what to do because 'we have unmarried people in our group.' I am glad about the sensitivity to all people and the helpful questions. Here are a couple of thoughts and ideas.

First, you are in good company to be sensitive and ask questions about how this affects all people. Pastor Todd and others are thinking about how both married and unmarried might relate to these biblical teachings. In week one, Todd said, "This series is primarily aimed at those who are not yet married so that you would begin to orient your decisions around God's design for marriage now." He is being inclusive and wants us all to have your sensitivity. We would welcome and learn from your questions, so please write back when you can.

Here are a few thoughts about the series

- 1- We believe that we all benefit from understanding God's heart on this topic. This topic was an early teaching in the Scriptures and continues throughout the New Testament. This is very essential.
- 2- God's design for relationships flows from God's character and His eternal relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The same language of being "one" is used in this relationship. As we learn about oneness in marriage, we learn about what it means to be "one" with God and one another. So this is foundational in many ways.
- 3- The topic of oneness and this series (1+1=1) helps us to connect with and be helpful to the people in our worlds. This includes people who are single and married- we all need to understand God's plan for intimacy with Him and one another. This can help people without Jesus understand that this is God's desire for them. As God gives us an opportunity with people in our worlds, we have His wisdom on intimacy, relationships, and drawing near to God and others. (Colossians 4:5)

Here are a few things I plan to do in my group:

- Discuss the character and plans of God for us. He has revealed in His design for oneness in marriage and other relationships (see John 15-17). You will notice something about this idea in our weekly studies. That doesn't mean that we don't also discuss this in marriage, but we can be very inclusive in our conversations by looking at the big picture of why and how God designed us for oneness.
- Discuss how God's plan for oneness is applicable in all circumstances and all relationships. For example, if the topic is communication, then broaden it to include the application to other relationships.
- Discuss who and how this is helpful to the people in our worlds. Everyone is always talking about relationships - it's the focus of our music, social media, etc.. So whether you are married, single, divorced, or whatever your situation, relationships are essential to your life.
- Discuss how this helps those who are single and those who have single friends. This will be foundational to their future.
- Go deeper in our sharing of what we are feeling and experiencing. For example, we can talk about loneliness, the joy of what it means to be in the family of God or the Bride of Christ. Do I have intimacy with God? With others?

You are wise to be sensitive- this is a strength. So help us know how we can maximize this. Please write back with your ideas.

HERE ARE SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS WEEK'S STUDIES

STUDY THE WORD

The fact of different "roles" is found in God's nature and His designs.

Notice that the three persons of God have different roles with one essence and value.

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *While Todd did not teach on this aspect of roles, it is helpful for everyone to have God's perspective. As we learn from the Scriptures, all three are involved in many roles. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all involved in creation, and yet each has a role. So this is true of salvation, truth, love, and every aspect of their and our lives.*

Father: John 3:16-17; 14:26; Galatians 4:4-5

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *The Father initiates, sends, set the timing, etc. He also answers prayer, etc.*

Son: John 5:19; 6:37-38; Romans 5:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:5

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *The Son follows the lead of the Father, fulfills the actions of the Father, and makes possible our reconciliation and relationship with God. (He is the mediator)*

Holy Spirit: John 3:3-6; 14:26; 15:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:11; 15:16; Galatians 5:22-23

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *The Holy Spirit has many roles including giving us new life, glorifying Jesus, empowering, indwelling, and bearing fruit through us.*

Notice how God designed marriage to have roles.

Ephesians 5:22-28

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *This was explained on Sunday morning.*

God designed the church to have roles.

Ephesians 4:11-12

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *God gave different roles and spiritual gifts to people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor/teachers, etc. None of these gives elite status to anyone. They are simply the roles that God decides.*

## DISCUSS TOGETHER

Why do we often confuse the idea of roles with worth?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *This is probably at the root of much confusion. This includes the roles in marriage and the church.*

If husband's role of "leadership" means "responsibility," what does this mean to him? To her?

If the wife's role of "helper" means to "give strength and aid," what does this mean to her? To him?

How are both of these roles true for everyone in Christ?

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *This may seem like an odd question. However, every believer is called to take responsibility, to help / give aid. It is matter of 'where?' and 'with whom' that we fulfill these roles.*

## PRAY

- The 21 Day prayer challenge is for all people: Pray together with someone every day.
- Pray for the people in your world
- Pray for your adopted global workers

## APPLY IT THIS WEEK

Continue in the 21 Day Prayer Challenge.

**NOTES TO LEADERS:** *I hope you can encourage people to pray through the 21 day challenge. The more I learn of the Lord, the more I know that it is He who brings the love, the growth, and the power to be like Jesus.*

May God be your strength and peace,

Steve