

# REALIGN YOUR LOVE

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

**NOTE TO FACILITATORS:** *This week is supposed to bring in a winter storm, so many of your small group members will probably be stuck at home. Check in with each one and make sure they are doing okay.*

**Also, note that many of the CPC events this may be canceled due to inclement weather. Be sure to check on CPC Facebook pages to make sure.**

### GOD'S VALENTINE FOR YOU

Last week Pastor Chris started a new series called REALIGN. Last week he introduced the idea of what it means to live in alignment with God's purposes for our lives. This week, he focused on the area of marriage.

**What do you think are some symptoms of a marriage out of alignment? [Awkward feelings, tension, disconnect, etc.]**

**In what ways (positive or negative) do you think COVID has effected many marriages? [Positive = more time together, time to bond with the family, etc. Negative = more time together, too much time with the family! Stress.]**

**List some of the causes of stress that can affect couples today. [Money issues, job status, raising children, unfulfilled life, feeling rejected and disrespected among family members and/or co-workers, etc.]**

**Genesis 2:18** (ESV)—Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

God made this statement not long after He created Adam.

**What does this short scripture tell you about how God views relationships, particularly the marriage relationship between a man and woman?**

1. It is good that we are not ALONE.
2. Our companions should be a HELP.
3. God puts His seal of approval on MARRIAGE.

The place where you are on your journey with Jesus may be totally different than the place where the person sitting next to you is. Some of you are happily married. Some are married... maybe just not as happy. Some are divorced, hurt deeply by someone you loved. Some of you bear the scars of grief, having lost the love of your life through the passage of death.

Know that wherever you are in your life's journey, God has a plan for you. The relationship heartbreaks of your past do not cancel out God's plan for your future. And just because your past may tell a story of hurt and disappointment doesn't mean that the future plans God has for you now is somehow a second-rate version of what He originally wrote for you. God is much bigger than to be limited by the rejection you've felt from others and the bad choices you've made in the past. Don't allow your messy past to derail your current relationships.

**Colossians 3:14** (ESV)—And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

## WHO GIVES THIS WOMAN TO THIS MAN?

Most of the time in weddings, you see the bride walked down the aisle by her father, who is holding back his tears. They walk up front to meet the groom. The minister then says, "Who gives this woman to this man in the ordinance of holy matrimony?" The father says, "Her mother and I."

In that moment, the father of the bride is symbolizing the role God plays in our lives. God Himself gives us to the groom—His Son, Jesus. Married or not, the Father gives us away to His Son.

**In this week's message, who did Pastor Chris say should come first in your marriage?**

- the husband
- the wife
- God
- the children

**How do you put God first when someone is nagging you to do something? [When we serve our spouse with the love and attitude that God says we should—without argument and with love—we are, in fact, serving God!]**

Look at how your response to your spouse effects your relationship with God:

**Malachi 2:13-16** (NLT)—Here is another thing you do. You cover the Lord’s altar with tears, weeping and groaning because He pays no attention to your offerings and doesn’t accept them with pleasure. 14 You cry out, “Why doesn’t the Lord accept my worship?” I’ll tell you why! Because the Lord witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows.

15 Didn’t the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does He want? Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. 16 “For I hate divorce!” says the Lord, the God of Israel. “To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife.”

Although this scripture addresses the male in terms of his unfaithfulness, understand that the same goes for the wife.

**According to this passage, when you can’t figure out why God is not blessing you or your family what do you need to examine? [How you treat each other.]**

**Verse 15 tells us God’s expectations. What is it? [Godly children.]**

**How do your choices change if God is first in your family?**

God must be first place in the home. When the goal is to raise Godly children and treat one another in a way that honors God, then God will be the priority of the home.

Obviously, this plan takes two to agree. God makes it clear that He hates divorce, yet a spouse that doesn’t make God a priority can make life difficult for one who is trying to live in a God-honoring way.

If divorce is part of your past story, don’t feel as though God has given up on your future relationships. God’s story for you isn’t over in the area of relationships. Just keep your eyes on God.

And God hasn't left out those who never marry either....

**1 Corinthians 7:32-35** (NLT)— I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please Him. 33 But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. 34 His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

**What does this verse say about the advantages of remaining single? [A single person can devote themselves more completely to the things of God.]**

**In verse 35, what does Paul say is the reason he is telling people this? [To "help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible."]**

## **YOU WERE MADE FOR LOVE**

A big point that Pastor Chris followed up on this week was based on this Scripture verse:

**Matthew 22:36-39** (NLT)—“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” 37 Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

**How does loving yourself affect how you are able to love others?**

**When you are down on yourself, what kind of thoughts occupy your mind?**

Psychologists have found that people who genuinely love others spend a great deal of their time thinking about how to show their love. They look around to see who needs help or encouragement.

Loving self increases dopamine, which increases feelings of motivation. So loving ourself can translate into showing others our love for them. Likewise, negative thoughts can cycle through our minds, locking up our emotions and placing the focus on our own insecurities and incapacities.

One of the biggest reasons why relationships (marriages or friendships) fail is because one or both people struggle with loving their selves in a healthy manner. This then translates to believing they are not worth loving anyway.

**Based on what you know in Scripture, what is God's desire for those who choose to marry?**

If you feel that your family life is a bit out of sync and struggling, perhaps it's time to take inventory on where your priorities are falling.

**Psalm 16:11** (ESV)—You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

## **PRAYER TIME**

- If you are married, thank God for the person He has set you to do life with. If you are not married, ask God to help you line your priorities with His. If you desire to be married, ask God to send you the perfect help mate for His plans for you.
- Pray for God to place within you the ability to love yourself in the way that He loves you. Then ask Him to show you how to love others the same way.
- Pray a prayer of dedication for your family—your spouse, your children, your grandchildren (Even if they aren't born yet, pray for them now!), your parents, siblings, etc. Offer yourself to be a servant to them, always modeling for them the God who loves them most.