



## The Purpose of Marriage – Message 1

### Warm-up

Fairy tales have been around for hundreds of years. Some of the most popular tales are *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Frog Prince*, and *Cinderella*. What do you think makes fairy tales so appealing? What's your favorite fairy tale? Why?

### Overview

As we begin our new series, *Not Alone*, we are going to study how to find belonging in an increasingly isolated world. We will learn how to connect better, communicate more effectively, reconcile differences, and gain a greater understanding of God's plan for our relationships. In this first message, we will focus on the purpose of marriage.

### Word and Application

The original purpose and intention of marriage is **connection**, but what if the fairy tale of our marriage has taken an unexpected turn? It's important to identify what causes a **disconnect** in marriage.

### Five Fairy Tale Busters

1. Difficult adjustments  
Differences in each spouse, like family and religious background, can make for difficult adjustments in a marriage. In what ways can difficult adjustments be alleviated?
2. Inability to resolve conflict  
Conflict can either drive us closer together or further apart. The ability to resolve conflict can turn battlegrounds into building grounds. What is the best conflict-resolving advice you've ever received?
3. Performance-driven mindsets  
When we compare our strengths to our spouse's weakness, we are embracing a performance-driven mindset. This leads to the destructive forces of criticism and contempt. Why are there never any winners in comparisons?

4. Self-absorption

When we focus most or all of our energy on ourselves, then we're self-absorbed.

**Read Philippians 2:3-4.** What do these verses teach?

5. Extramarital affairs

Our first and best affection is designed for our spouse which is second only to our affection for Christ. Affairs are often justified by the cultural lie that we are to be fulfilled, complete, and happy at all times. One may look for fulfillment outside of marriage in the following ways: emotional, sexual, career, materialism and activity. Were you surprised that some of these were categorized as "affairs"? Why?

## Three Aspects of Marriage Connection

### Read Genesis 2:18-25

1. Partners in life

In Genesis 2:18, God speaks of a complementary relationship. What Adam lacked, Eve supplied and vice versa. Woman was not taken out of man's head to be lorded over mentally; nor was she taken out of man's feet to be trampled on by him. Woman was taken out of man's side to be next to him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him. How do these truths change or challenge your perspective on the complementary relationship of marriage?

2. Partners in love

Adam saw his need for intimacy when he was naming the animals. In Genesis 2:22, God fashioned Eve to be suitable for Adam. Adam's love for Eve was based upon God's sovereign choice, not her performance. The world's understanding of love is based on performance, but that's not God's definition. Love and marriage in the kingdom is based on the unending, unconditional, immeasurable agape love of God. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.** List what love is and what love is not. Why is merit-based love which is given only on the basis of performance so damaging in a relationship?

3. Partners in light

We learn in Genesis 2:25 that even though Adam and Eve were both naked, they were not ashamed. Openness and transparency between them meant that they had total and open communication. Infidelity begins with a secret. What are ways to promote openness and transparency in marriage?

### Life Challenge

Because Adam and Eve were in right relationship with God, they were in right relationship with each other. The missing link in a marriage or any close relationship begins with a right relationship with Jesus Christ and understanding God's original intention for connection. What step do you need to take today to strengthen your relationships? What do you need to repent of in order to restore the connection in your marriage, family, friendships, or work relationships?

### Prayer

*Father, help us to have eyes to see and ears to hear Your intention for marriage. We desire Your will and purpose in all of our relationships. Please shine Your light on what needs to be exposed and repented of, and help us to honor You in everything we do. Pray for the specific needs of the group.*