

Conversation Starters

- What season of family life are you in?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years and what family life will look like?

Discuss

Knowing how to "do" family begins with understanding how to "do" the first and most foundational of all institutions – marriage. The Bible teaches us that God made us male and female and are joined together as such in the most basic union for social and relational unity.

God put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. God then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man. The Man said, "Finally! Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh! Name her Woman for she was made from Man." Therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh. (Genesis 2:21-24 The Message)

- Where do you look to for the vision of your family life?
- What has shaped your thinking on marriage?
- How does it compare to what the Bible teaches us?

Within a marriage, the Bible also instructs us on how to treat each other. It talks of submission, not in a negative sense, but in a loving manner or as submissive love. And it is directed to both parties. Both husband and wife are to yield to each other's better interests out of love – it is a mutual submission.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... (Ephesians 5:21-22, 25 NIV)

- How does the Bible's view on submission differ than what you may have thought at first?
- How does submissive love change your thinking about what it means for your role in marriage?
- How does the way Christ loved us inspire your approach to that role in marriage?

The Bible also tells us more about love and its qualities. We all must make a choice to love. We may not always feel like it, but we can still choose it. Spouses can wound each other in ways like no other person outside of the relationship can. So we must realize that and choose to love. When we do, we help set up a foundation to doing family the right way as well.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a NIV)

- Is this the kind of love that you strive to show in marriage?
- Do you choose to love even when you don't feel like it?
- What are some ways you can work towards modeling this love more?

Next Steps

God designed marriage to be more than we could ever try to make it on our own. If we stick to his blueprint for it, our marriages could flourish like no other relationship we will ever have. And it will set us up for a strong family life as well. Whether married or single, take some time this week to evaluate how you have thought about marriage and how you have approached relationships. How does mutual submission fit into that?

Intentional Parenting (Rocky River)

When: Every Thursday, from 01/31/2019 to 03/07/2019, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Register: <https://www.mecklenburg.org/event/1206684-2019-02-07-intentional-parenting-rocky-river/>

"Doing Family" Discussion Group (Lake Norman)

When: Every Thursday, from 02/07/2019 to 02/28/2019, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: Lake Norman Campus, 170 Joe Knox Avenue, Mooresville, NC US 28117

Register: <https://www.mecklenburg.org/event/1284387-2019-02-07-doing-family-discussion-group-lake-norman/>

Further Reflection

See Genesis 2:21-24; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.

Pray

God, thank you for how you have designed us and your instructions on how we should relate to one another. We don't all come from the perfect picture of family life or marriage and may not have always made the best decisions ourselves on how to live in the ones that we are in. Thank you for showing us how. Help us to live accordingly and submit to each other with the love you have shown us.