

# BiG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

## 4.18/19.09 // FIREPROOF MY MARRIAGE: I WANT A NEW MARRIAGE

**BiG iDEA:** God wants you to keep your covenant vow and become a better spouse with His help.

### // Ice Breaker \_\_\_\_\_

**Option 1:** Describe a time when you joined a club or signed a contract only to wish that you could have a “do- over”.

**Option 2:** Who have you looked at as an example of a “perfect” couple? Why?

### // Questions for Discussion \_\_\_\_\_

**1** What misconceptions about marriage did you have before the nuptials?

**2** About 50% of marriages in the U.S. end in divorce (a debatable statistic). Lots of marriages are crashing and burning. Divorce even among those who call themselves Christian is rampant and common. God intends for couples to marry, and stay married, for life. Why do you think the marriage covenant is not honored?

**Hebrews 13:4**

“Marriage should be honored by all....”

**3** Why are so many couples choosing to live together apart from or before marriage? What is the reasoning behind that? Is it different reasoning for men than women?

**4** Statistics tell us that the divorce rate for couples who live together first is much higher than for couples who do not live together first. Why do you think this is so?

**5** Jesus permitted divorce when there has been “unfaithfulness.” Obviously, this includes adultery...but how far do you think “unfaithfulness” extends?

Matthew 5:31-32

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

**6** Some believe that it’s an acceptable thing for a Christian to marry a non-Christian, because the Christian spouse can win the non-Christian spouse to Christ. What does Scripture say about this kind of “evangelistic” marriage? How does it then relate to dating and engagements?

1 Corinthians 7:15-16

<sup>15</sup>But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. <sup>16</sup>How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

<sup>14</sup>Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What harmony is there between Christ and Belial [Satan]? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

**7** Many say, “God doesn’t want me to be miserable,” as a justification for seeking divorce. Is

**happiness your right as a believer? What “limits” are there to happiness?**

John 16:33

[Jesus] “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

**8 The Bible teaches that wives are to submit to their husbands, and that they should be taught to love their husbands. Husbands are told to love and respect their wives. While the way these principles are carried out may vary from culture to culture, ultimately they mean to meet the needs of your spouse, and to put their needs ahead of your own. While there is disagreement about how these principles are carried out, how do you think marriages would be better off following these teachings?**

Titus 2:4-5

Then they [older women] can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup>to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Ephesians 5:22-25, 28

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

**9 What does the marriage covenant mean to you as a Christian? How should we submit to God in that covenant? How does a covenant with God keep you together when a “civil” ceremony or “contract” doesn’t?**

**Malachi 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup>You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. <sup>15</sup>Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

**10 From a biblical standpoint, what is love? It has been said that love is a decision not a feeling. Do you believe that is true?**

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup>Love never fails.

**11 Paul writes about how Christians should treat each other. How does this passage apply to husbands and wives, though not written specifically for that context?**

Philippians 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

**// Application\_\_\_\_\_**

**Commit to memory Genesis 2:24**

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

**Make Christ the center of your relationship.**

**How Can I Put Christ at the Center?**

*These are basic...but are you doing them?*

- **Go to church weekly, and bring your family.**
- **Read your Bible and call on the power of prayer.**
- **Get in small groups.**
- **Read Christian books on marriage.**
- **Find mentors.** *Seek out a godly couple and ask them how they do it, and take notes.*
- **Speak Positively to one another.** *Encourage, Praise, Appreciate. Getting rid of those destructive patterns of aggression, rudeness, insulting. Learn new communication skills.*
- **Get counseling** *if needed.*

**// Prayer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pray that God will show you how to strengthen your marriage.**

**Pray for the protection of your marriage.**