

# 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. Do NOT feel like you have to use every question. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

## 5.23/24.09 // FIREPROOF MY MARRIAGE: LOVE FOR A LIFETIME

**BiG IDEA: We “fireproof” our marriages when we enter into a covenant and not a contract.**

Most of this material is adapted from the *Fireproof Your Marriage* small group curriculum (outreach.com)

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

**Option 1: What public ceremonies have you been part of where you made promises or commitments?**

**Option 2: What have you had to get licensed for? What were the requirements?**

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

**1 What are some ways in which people can “separate” (i.e. physically, emotionally, spiritually) a married couple? Is there anything or anyone that “separates” you from your spouse?**

Matthew 19:4-6

<sup>4</sup>“Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'  
<sup>5</sup>and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?  
<sup>6</sup>So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

**2 Divorce is “breaking faith” with your spouse (NIV). The King James Version uses the phrase “deal treacherously,” which means to not take vows seriously. What does this say about how God views divorce?**

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.

**3 What do you think some of the reasons might be that God hates divorce? Have you had experience with divorce personally? What are some of the real-life consequences of divorce?**

**4 What direction is given in this passage? How would it apply to marriage?**

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. <sup>5</sup> It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

**5 How does this principle differ from the world's view of a contract relationship, i.e. is it contingent on both parties fulfilling their obligations?**

**6 When you first got married, how solemn and permanent did you consider your vows? How fully did you understand the nature of a covenant? (Note: if you are not married, answer in light of how you view wedding vows in general.)**

**7 What are some ways or resources we can rely on to help us keep the vows we make?**

**8 What do these verses teach us about how and why we are able to love? What do we need most to in order to love others, especially our spouses?**

Romans 5:5

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. <sup>6</sup>You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

John 15:12-13

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

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

**Commit to memory John 13:34-35**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**What part of the traditional wedding vows are you having the most problem with? Why? What one thing can you do to improve?**

- **To have and to hold (how well have you bonded and "held") to your spouse?**
- **For better or worse (how stable is your treatment of your spouse, regardless of circumstances?)**
- **For richer or for poorer (how well does your marriage stand up to financial pressures?)**
- **In sickness and in health (is your marriage affected by health struggles?)**
- **To love and to cherish.**
- **I pledge my faithfulness (are you faithful?)**

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

**Pray for God's supernatural love to flow out from us.**

**Pray for strong, healthy marriages.**