

## THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

One simple but effective model for studying the Bible is called S.O.A.P. The acrostic S.O.A.P. stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. As you prepare for this week's Life Group, we encourage you to begin practicing this method on the passage. Here is a brief breakdown of the steps below.

- **Scripture-** Read the Scripture passage above slowly and ask the Lord to give you insight into His Word for yourself and for your group.
- **Observation-** Begin walking through the passage by making observations about the text. What are some things that stand out to you as you read it? What questions come to your mind as you read the passage? What words or phrases seem like they are important to understanding the meaning of the passage? Are there any words that are repeated more than once? What does this passage say about God? Are there any lists in the passage? Is this passage telling us how to do something or is it something happening to you?
- **Application-** Write down a few ways that this passage applies to us as Christians. How has God spoken to your heart through your time in His word? Are there any principles discovered in the observation section that can be applied for your group? Take a few moments and write down a few things that God wants you to focus on for this week's discussion.
- **Prayer-** Pray over the things that God has shown you. Ask God to first work in your heart through what you've learned. Pray for your group and for your upcoming meeting. Ask God to lead your group and give you wisdom as you discuss this week's content.

## TRIBE // WEEK 1 GOD'S GOT YOUR MARRIAGE

### THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Marriage is not always easy, and when we are in a rut it is helpful to remember how to pursue each other modeled after the love of Jesus. This week we are inspired to create a thriving marriage with God at the center of it!

For more insights relating to this week's sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/> . We post a new blog every Sunday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

### ICEBREAKER

- 1) What are some common misconceptions that people have about married life before they get married?
- 2) What's one characteristic you most desire or admire in a spouse?
- 3) If you had the chance, what advice would you give to a newly married couple? What things would you encourage them to do? What should they avoid?

### DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE SERMON

**Read: Ephesians 5:25–31**

As you read through these verses keep these questions in mind:

- What value does this chapter add to what we understand about God?
- What are some of the things that stand out to you when you read the passage?

### —DISCUSSION POINTS—

*How can I create a thriving marriage?*

**Point 1 – Keep Christ at the center.**

**Read:** Ephesians 5:25

“...just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” According to Ephesians 5:25, the love of Christ is the example of sacrificial love.

The way Jesus loves the church is the model that's meant to remain at the center of our marriages. The cross is the crux of our marriages. Paul couldn't envision how to talk about

marriage without talking about what Christ did for the church. So, Christ—and the character of Christ—are to be at the center of any thriving, biblically-based marriage.

Think about the fact that Jesus chose to die for His bride. How often do we see the fault of our spouse, and think about how they have to make it up to us? But Jesus saw our fault, and instead of abandoning us, He gave Himself for us. This selfless act led to our being made holy and blameless (verses 26–27). It’s not about *getting even*—it’s about *giving everything* for the sake of the marriage.

(DISCUSS):

- Truth be told, we don’t literally go die on a cross for our spouse. So, how can we practically live out this truth in our marriages? If you are not married: How does Jesus’s example of love serve as an example for loving others in general?
- Christian music artists Shane and Shane, have a song entitled “Psalm 45 (Fairest of All).” One of the lines from the bride sings to Jesus, saying: “You ransomed your bride on the day that you died.” How does the gospel take on greater meaning when we think of the cross as the way Jesus, as the Bridegroom, “ransoms” or rescues us?

#### —ADDITIONAL INSIGHT—

\*Excerpt from this week’s blog post entitled: Eden Was Just the Beginning of God’s Plan. Read the full blog at <http://newbreak.church/eden-was-just-the-beginning/>

We all know how it went. Adam was naming animals and then realized they all had a companion, but he didn’t. He realized he was, in a sense, alone. God wanted him to realize this! (You can read about this in [Genesis 2](#).) Just after Adam is put into a deep sleep and has part of his side pulled out to form Eve, Genesis steps outside the narrative for a moment to provide some commentary on what this means. Genesis 2:24 says: *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

For thousands of years, this verse was a profound explanation of marriage, two distinct people on the journey toward a special oneness. As great as this was in the Edenic vision, we learn that this was the *prototype* (the first version), and not the *archetype* (the final version), of marriage. When the apostle Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, he does not do so in a way that we would expect. While giving instructions to the married couples in Ephesians 5, Paul cites Genesis 2:24, and then makes a statement of paramount importance;

<sup>29</sup>*After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—* <sup>30</sup>*for we are members of his body.* <sup>31</sup>*“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>32</sup>*This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.* (Ephesians 5:29-32, NIV) Just as Eve came from the body of Adam (Genesis 2:22), the Church is of the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:30). And as a result of that, the Church, and every Christian therein, will be joined

to Christ in a way that the first marriage pointed to all along. Right after quoting Genesis 2:24, Paul says that this "profound mystery" is actually about Christ and the Church.

**The marriage between a man and a woman is a metaphor. It was the shadow, but not the substance. It was the appetizer, but not the main course.**

Marriage acts as a metaphor pointing to what marriage has been about all along, but has been concealed in the mystery of the gospel; that the Lord would "marry" His people who He redeemed. It might sound strange to us, but that is why it helps to think of the beauty of the metaphor that we see in marriage. If the metaphor is beautiful, we could only imagine the real thing!

Now, this kind of language is not completely new to the New Testament. The Old Testament gave prophetic allusions to it where Yahweh, the God of Israel, said He would take His people as His bride.

*<sup>19</sup>I will take you to be my wife forever. I will take you to be my wife in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion. <sup>20</sup>I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness, and you will know the Lord.* (Hosea 2:19-20, CSB)

It is no wonder that the last book of the Bible, Revelation, is full of wedding imagery when describing the return of Christ (Rev [19:7-8](#); [21:9](#); [22:17](#); etc.). So if we trace the Bible's theology of marriage from cover to cover, we see that the first marriage was a metaphor of what the final marriage would be.

**The first Eden was for Adam and his bride. The final Eden will be for Christ and His bride.**

And if you are a Christian, you are being joined to Christ in a relationship that can only be compared to marriage. Your destiny is nothing less than to reign with Him in the new Eden forever and ever ([Rev 22:4-5](#)). Eden was like a project site with brilliant and beautiful potential but not the endgame. Rather, the new Eden is the goal of even the original creation! And so, the best is yet to come!

**Point 2 – Consistently act with love and respect.**

**Read:** Ephesians 5:33

On the surface it might seem like Paul is saying that women only need love, and men only need respect. But that isn't the case. We all need *both* love and respect. Paul is trying to emphasize the importance of love and respect within a marriage, and specifically with men and women leading the charge in their biblical roles: men with love, and women with respect.

Ephesians 5:33 uses a curious verb to communicate the action of showing respect—*phobeō*. This is puzzling to some who have seen this word before since it is—by and large—used to convey the idea of “fear.” This word family is used in passages that communicate the “fear of the Lord”

or to “not be afraid,” and in some cases it communicates the intense feeling of being in “awe”! However, few and far between, the verb does convey “respect” as it indubitably does here.

So, what is respect in marriage? It is a kind of admiration that lends to valuing and honoring your spouse. Think about it this way; if you respect someone, you will consider their perspective or opinion as having more weight than others’. In a similar way, we are to treat our spouse as deserving reverence over others.

(DISCUSS):

- What is the difference between “love” and “respect”? Why are both crucial ingredients in a marriage relationship?
- Think of Jesus in the gospel accounts. What examples come to mind of when He showed love or respect to someone?

#### —ADDITIONAL INSIGHT—

We can learn to more effectively love and respect our spouse when we get to know the way they are wired to receive love. Dr. Gary Chapman, relationship expert and author of *The Five Love Languages*, suggests that we give and receive love in five different languages:

Physical touch  
Words of affirmation  
Quality time  
Acts of service  
Receiving Gifts

He outlines that each of us are hardwired (either by nature or nurture) to best receive love in one primary, and potentially one secondary language. He also states that we tend to speak love in our primary language (the one we wish to receive love in), although that may not be your spouse’s primary language.

Note that all of us probably desire each of these at different points in time, but discerning patterns of how often or what circumstances create the desire for these love languages makes a big difference as a spouse! In other words, knowing when your spouse needs physical touch or when they need an act of service is an important role in how we give love. After all, our intentions can only take us so far, but when we know what is the best way to love our spouse in that moment or season, it will go a long way!

When we grow in our understanding of our spouse, we are more likely to be able to love them the way they best receive love.

What love language (from the five listed above) do most often prefer to receive love? (If you are married, what is your spouse’s love language?)

### Point 3 – Relentlessly pursue your spouse

**Read:** Ephesians 5:31

Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation of Genesis 2:24 (as already mentioned in the additional insight under point 1).

The journey of “becoming one” is not only a physical act, but a continual pursuit of “oneness” as life goes on.

Marriage isn’t a destination. So many of us believe that once we finally get married, everything falls into place and we’ve “made it.” But it doesn’t work like that. We’re meant to continue dating our spouse and growing together. Even as individuals, we’re constantly growing and changing. So, let us learn to grow together in our marriage.

(DISCUSS):

- You will spend the rest of your life getting to know your spouse. What is something new that you have learned about your spouse recently?
- What do you do to grow your marriage? Are there any tips that you have discovered along the way that you wish you knew earlier in your marriage?

#### —PUT IT INTO PRACTICE—

How do we pursue our spouse? Here are three ways.

**Give your spouse Attention.** This communicates to our spouse that we value them and that they are worth listening to. Attention is a huge part of falling in love and even more important for staying in love. What kind of attention does your spouse value? How can you be consistent in giving that?

**Give your spouse Affection.** Acts of affection are a way to make your spouse feel loved. You can’t experience unity in marriage with a lack of intimacy. It is important to be intentional about affection with our words and actions. What kind of affection is important to my spouse? How can I be intentional about it?

**Give your spouse Affirmation.** Become an expert in your spouse’s strengths and talents. Get a “Ph.D.” in what makes them amazing, instead of focusing on all the areas they need to improve. A good practice is to look for ways to affirm your spouse. And whenever you think a positive thought about them, don’t keep it to yourself! Express it! Just because you think highly of them does not mean that they know that; expressing affirmation is a way to make your spouse feel

love and respected. What kind of affirmation does my spouse value? How can I meet that need in them?

—SUMMARY—

Paul's instructions to the married build on the foundation that marriage is ultimately a picture foreshadowing the loving relationship between Christ and the Church. In the meantime, how do we have thriving relationships which reflect the love of Christ?

**Point 1 – Keep Christ at the center.**

**Point 2 – Consistently act with love and respect.**

**Point 3 – Relentlessly pursue your spouse.**

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

1. How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
2. What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?
3. BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?