



Twoignite You Know Me

Pastor Ted Cunningham

This is Twoignite Sunday. We take the second Sunday of every month and we talk about marriage. Matt and I have spent the last couple of months preparing for this day. We've been looking for the perfect love song and we think we've found it, so would you help me welcome Matt Gumm, our worship pastor, to sing to you what we think is the perfect love song.

*Chick-fil-A, I could eat there seven times a day
Where the people laugh and children play
Oh, I'm in love with Chick-fil-A*

*Suddenly, I need waffle fries in front of me
With some nuggets & a large sweet tea
Oh, Chick-fil-A. You set me free*

*Kids, get in the van, so we can go there today
But, their stores are closed!
Oh, I know,
'cause it's Sunday!*

*Chick-fil-A, what a dirty, rotten trick to play!
Now I have to settle for Subway!
Oh, I'm in love with Chick-fil-A
Mmhmm... Chick-fil-A*

He did a great job on that guitar didn't he? One more thing... It's just one of those times in our town we all celebrate new things coming into our town. One of our teaching pastors was at Chick-fil-A for the grand opening and he preached what I think is one of the most inspirational sermons I've ever heard in my life. I've watched this about ten times and I wanted you to see it this morning if you haven't seen it. This is one of our teaching pastors, Shay Robbins, and I think you'll be inspired.

Video plays... My friends... Something special is happening here right now. I feel like our circumstances are causing us to become a family. I was out there and I can only feel 30% of my toes. Alright, I was getting scared and I didn't know if I could make it, but my friend, Grant, he said "Let me take your boot off and put your toes in my armpits cause I feel like we're family!"

And you gotta know this: tonight, the temperature, it's going to plummet! And you're going to think "I don't know if I'm gonna live through this!" But my friends, I'd like to remind you that there is a nasty concoction of peanut oil and (inaudible) and adrenalin coursing through your veins! (inaudible) And so I challenge you tonight to reach deep down, down through your esophagus, past your heart, and into your gut, and I want you to grab onto your intestines and you say "I'm gonna tough it out just like Rocky Balboa when he faced Apollo Creed and Mr. T. and the Russian too."

So, my friends, I want you to grab your friend next to you, like this Pirate who I've never met before. Go ahead, do it! Just do it! Turn to your friends, your family and look them in the eyes. I want you to tell them sincerely "I really love you, man. Not in a weird way, man, just like we've been through a lot together. I love you. If you need my armpits tonight, they're yours." We've got... and I'm not good at math, but approximately 9 ½ to 10 ½ hours left and we're gonna...

Was that inspiring or what. I'm embarrassed to tell you how many times I've watched that clip this week. I've been limited. Amy says I'm only allowed to eat there twice a week. We wanted to give out some gift cards today to Chick-fil-A. I was trying to think about how to best give these out. Carson said "Oh, Dad, I've got the perfect way." So how I'm going to give these out is Carson's idea. You'll probably figure it out in just a second. If you get shot with one of these darts, you get a free Chick-fil-A sandwich. So, Pat, I thought I'd start with you. I'm just kidding.

We have one for everybody today. So when you leave today, they'll be in the back. Grab one. It's not one per family; it's one per person, so take as many as you are. So thank you, Chick-fil-A and Kevin Hutchinson, our friends. Hopefully we won't get in trouble from other fast food chains in Branson.

We've been on this journey since the beginning of the year with #52IN15. I encourage you to go on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and so long as there is electricity and you have the internet, type in this hashtag and keep up with all the dates happening around Woodland Hills Family Church. We're encouraging you to go on one date a week for all of 2015. I love the accounts that have been set up for this. So we are excited.

Next month Adam and I are going to go to Dallas to a marriage ministry conference. Adam Donyes is presenting #52IN15 because churches around the country are picking up on this and they are not nearly what Woodland Hills or our teaching team that you just saw on the screen is because they're doing 15IN15 and some of them are planning 16IN16 and we're like "We're in Branson; we're doing 52IN15." So in the first two months of the year, this is how many dates we've recorded with #52IN15: 950 dates. We think that's a pretty big deal.

We're going to jump right in today. We're going to be talking about the knowledge you have of your spouse. We're going to be talking about intimacy – what does it mean to be known? What does it mean for you to know your husband or for you to know your wife?

This is why we love #51IN15. This is why we believe in the power of #52IN15. You need the time away with your spouse. You need a regular time in the craziness and the chaos and the hectic pace and the

bad rhythm that we often have at times as couples to sit down and engage one another, eyeball to eyeball, body to body, face to face, distraction free, kid free, connecting with each other.

Every month, we pick out a few couples that we think are doing this well. Let's look at the first picture of a couple that we believe has been knocking it out of the park, the Larimores. They're making music videos. If you're new to #52IN15, I think this is the last month that you can get into it and still be eligible for the cruise we're giving away at the end of the year. In my opinion, the Larimores are in the hunt. They've made music videos called *Kiss the Girl*. If you get a chance, go on #52IN15. I think it's on all the social media platforms. Check out what they're doing. They're doing a lot of kissing; that's all I can tell you. There is a lot of kissing going on and we love this.

How about this next one? Any time a husband will rub his wife's feet and prepare her a bath is a good thing, so we definitely count this as a date.

We picked a winner for the month of February which was Creative Romantic. And we believe it's this couple right here. We think this couple works for Disney because they did all of these Disney sketches. We think this was expensive. There are a lot of costumes, a lot of prep. I can't even tell you who all the characters are, but you've seen all this at Disney. We say they are the winners. We're giving them a \$100.00 gift card to Disney Gift Stores to replenish their wardrobe.

Here's why it's so much fun to do this dating and to get to know your spouse even more. Some of you have been married for 30 years and you think you have nothing new to learn about each other. But let me kind of show you how being married works in your favor. For starters, you know your spouse's past. You know where they've been, you know their home town, you know their parents, and you've been to their house. You've seen their mom or dad do something and you've had that aha moment where you're like "That's why he does that that's why she does that." You love your spouse, you can take or leave the family, but you know their past and you begin to build this history, you begin to build this understanding of the person you have in front of you right now and all the people that have invested in their life, some good and some bad. You know all the people that have been building this person to who they are today. You have all this information and you're creating a history. This is why I tell young people that when they are dating...

If we have any online daters here, you met online. I have no problem with that. Senior adults sometimes question if it's legal, but it's totally legal. The issue with online dating is sometimes you get this idea in your head that compatibility and chemistry is something you find or test for and it's not. Compatibility is something that you create over a very long period of time. Compatibility is something you grow into and you begin to not only process and understand your spouse's past, but you begin to have your own past with that spouse.

You also know your spouse's pain. You know what makes them hurt. You know what their buttons are. Hopefully, as a loving, caring spouse, you're not pushing those buttons, but you're tending to those buttons, you're caring for those buttons.

You also know your spouse's preferences. Now this is where it really gets fun in marriage. My wife and I, this past summer, took the kids to Kanakuk Kamps. It's a great program for a husband and wife to take an annual abandon. You put your kids at Kanakuk Kamps and you go somewhere and act like you don't have kids. It's so wonderful. So we went.

Amy likes to walk and eat, walk and eat, and find nice restaurants. She's into small portions – quality food with small portions. We went to this very nice restaurant in New York City. The chef comes over with this plate that has some mint leaves sticking out of it. He said "To begin your meal, we encourage you to each take a mint leaf and rub it across your lips." So I'm rubbing the mint across my lips and he goes, "Then take it up, over, and around your chin." I'm looking at this guy... He tells me he picked the mint that day in New Jersey. I didn't know New Jersey was known for their mint.

The whole time we are doing this... Amy's into it because she wants the full experience so if he tells us to rub mint on our face; we're going to rub mint on our face. She snickering the whole time because she knows me and she knows I was born in Illinois where we grew a lot of produce, but we didn't rub a lot of it on our face. She's just snickering the whole time, knowing that I'm hating this. At one point, we're still rubbing and he's standing there watching and I'm thinking *You know there are some things that are to be between a husband and a wife alone, okay, buddy? I need you to go back to the kitchen or something as I have fun with your leaf here and whatever it is you want me to do with it.* This is compatibility. You are becoming compatible together and I love it.

Seven or eight months later, we'll be eating dinner and I'll reach over to Amy's plate and grab some broccoli and just start rubbing it on my face. Those New York people...

This is what I love about marriage. This is what makes marriage fun. Now stick with me because at the end of this message, we're going to take a turn and this is also why marriage can become so nasty. We're going to look at why divorce can be so painful and how it can not only tear a couple apart, but how it can tear a person apart and why it can get nasty at times because of this knowledge that we have of each other.

In the Song of Songs 2: 14, we read this: ***14 My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice...*** In other words, Solomon is speaking to the Shulammitte woman who is set back in a little bit and now he is going to, through dating and courting and good conversation and asking questions and caring for her heart... The "cooing of the dove" is another term used in this text. He's going to try to go in and get her. How do you go in and get a dove out of a crevice in a mountainside. It's somewhat delicate. You have to gently go in and bring the bird out. He says "Your voice is sweet and your face is lovely. It's this information that I'm going to get about you that, right now, you're not sharing with me."

Every time we have Twolgnite Sunday, we want to talk to singles, spouses, and parents, so let me talk to the singles for just a little bit on how you can pace your dates. You don't need to vomit your life history out onto the table on date one or two. If he's a man, he will bring you out gently. He won't go at you, wanting to know everything. I think this, in many ways, because of social media and all the online stuff, if you think about this... All the seniors, you dated and you married and you got engaged in a time

where we didn't have social media. Think about what social media is doing. Now we're putting all this out online for the world to see, not just for the person sitting on the other side of the table. So, young people, be very careful. It's Proverbs 2: 1. Be discreet. Be very careful with the information you share about yourself with others because in dating and in relationships, the world doesn't need to know everything about you. They don't need to know every single one of your dreams and goals.

For my over-sharing friends on Facebook... You put so much out there and people see you after reading your history on Facebook for two or three weeks where you're just vomiting all over it and they're thinking *That person has issues. That person needs some serious help with how they share information with other people.*

Here is the definition of intimacy we will work off of today based on this verse. Intimacy is being fully known and fully accepted. Some of you in here right now, as we talk about online sharing, you know the struggle with being fully known and not being accepted at all. That's the problem with over sharing. That's the problem with just giving everything.

I know I'm kind of stuck in between the generation behind me and the generation in front of me. The generation in front of me we call the boomers. They would have sayings like "I'm not going to share my dirty laundry with anybody." But then the generation behind me is using terms like authentic and vulnerable and transparent. I would encourage you to be very careful with those words because I don't know that you need to be fully known to everyone. Sometimes that fully known turns into false humility. The problem is you're finding that not everyone is going to accept you.

So we thought we would have some fun with it today and we want to see how well a couple knows each other. Is there a couple in here that will celebrate their one year anniversary this month? Marcus Harris, you'd be perfect for this. Marcus and Ashley, come on up here for just a second. You are going to win big prizes today, my friend.

It's a little game we like to call *Know It or Throw It*. We are going to trademark this. Corey did a great job making this. Ashley, you stand right here with a stack of cards. Marcus, you stand over here with a stack of cards. I have a Frisbee here and it has a gift card attached to it. If you get the answer right, you get to keep the Frisbee with the gift card; that's Know It. If you get it wrong, I give it to the congregation. So we are going to do six questions and you're going to write down... This is on the fly. It may or may not work. You're going to write this down.

What is your wife's favorite song? I'll give you just a minute while she writes down her favorite song. This is for a Starbucks Gift Card. You've been married for a year; you should know this.

What is her favorite song? (he has no answer)

Tell them what it is.

It's Classic.

There we go; a Starbucks Gift Card going out into the audience.

Ashley, you're going to write this next one down. What is your husband's favorite dessert?

You're smart. He kept it general. Look at me giving you hints. This is for \$25.00 at the Keeter Center.

He said ice cream, my friends. Very good; you get to keep the Keeter Center for lunch.

Marcus, if your wife could visit any country on vacation, which one would she choose?

The whole point is you should be discussing this amongst yourselves right now too.

She said Greece so now I throw \$25.00 to Sugar Leaf.

You two need to spend more time dating is all I'm going to say right there.

Ashley, what artist on his iPhone, iPod, or playlist would he be most embarrassed about if anyone knew?

This is for \$25.00 to Cracker Barrel. The answer is Justin Bieber. You're going to Cracker Barrel; take your grandparents there later today.

This is a 50/50 shot. Marcus, If your wife had to either dance or sing on a Branson stage, which would she choose?

Dance! They win a gift card to Buffalo Wild Wings.

The last one is a big one. It's \$25.00 movie tickets and two more Chick-fil-A cards.

Ashley, what is your husband's guilty pleasure television show?

Gilmore Girls!

This is a big one. This is like a full date. Are we ready? I'm going to throw it.

You guys did awesome; way to go.

If you are brand new to our church or brand new to Branson, you have a little bit of variety wherever you go in this town. If there is no variety, they don't know Jesus.

Now let's turn the corner a little bit on this now because I'm going to take you back to the Old King's English. If you do some word studies here, it's the concept of knowledge that we don't really use anymore, but it's referring directly to sexual intimacy. In Genesis 4: 1, in the New King James Version, you read **1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife...** In your translation, it probably reads like this if you have an NIV. **Adam made love to his wife Eve...**

So there is a knowledge now that you have that you go beyond preferences, beyond the past, to now there's a knowledge you possess of your spouse that you know them better than anyone. You know them better than their parents. You're going to spend more time with your spouse than your spouse spent with their parents. So you know this person better than anyone.

In Matthew 1, you read the same thing. You read this throughout all the scripture. Speaking of Mary and Joseph... **25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.** He knew her not, but when we read it in our NIV or a more modern translation it says but he did not *consummate*. He did not *make love to her*. They ***did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*** This is why part of the messaging of Twolgnite Sunday comes from Genesis 2: 24. It's speaking of this intimate knowledge. ***That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.*** You become one and you have knowledge of each other that no one else has.

In the Song of Songs 4: 8, on the honeymoon between Solomon and Shulammitte woman, she is undressing before him. He's processing how scary this can be. He's processing the knowledge he now has of her. He says this is Chapter 4: 8: ***Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amanah, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions' dens and the mountain haunts of leopards.*** He speaks of all these dangerous and scary places.

He's giving her the understanding that he is validating what's about to take place. He's saying "I don't want you to be scared." This is why marriage provides you with safety. Speaking to my single friends again, I want to encourage that you when we speak of purity, it's not meant to be a cosmic killjoy. God doesn't tell us to save sex for marriage because he wants you to not enjoy life until you're married. He tells us to save sex for marriage because you're going to give information to a person about yourself and it needs to be in the context of safety.

It breaks my heart every time I turn on the news and I see all of these stories of young people who have used all these different apps where they're giving away information about themselves to another person and the regret and the deep guilt that they live with. This is why Solomon is saying "I want you to know that with me it's going to be safe. You can trust me." This is why we believe that the wife sets the boundaries in the bedroom. We believe that this is a conversation that you should be having, husband and wife. For help with this conversations, if you go to our church website, woodhills.org, you can download an intimacy menu. It's 52 questions that a husband and wife can discuss with one another to find out what the boundaries are in their marriage, in their bedroom. It's a conversation that we must have. When a relationship becomes sexual, you give another the most personal information about you.

I hope I have some grace here today because it's one of the things I love about Woodland Hills Family Church. This has been the place where I've made more mistakes than any other place on the planet. This is the place where I've said some things that I feel like I probably shouldn't have said. I've apologized for it and you've offered grace, grace, grace. I've been processing this over the last couple of weeks, trying to figure out why divorce is so painful and nasty and devastating for folks. This is just the start of my thinking on this as I understand the scripture. I'm going to say some things today. I want to process some of this with you in the hopes of bringing healing for many.

If my words don't come out just right, I ask that you hear my heart. My pastoral tone may run way ahead of my theological processing at this point which I was told in seminary that you should never do, but I didn't do all that well in seminary.

One reason divorce is so painful, devastating, and, at times, nasty... Does anybody know what I'm talking about? The reason why it's so painful, devastating, and, at times, nasty is because the one who knows you better than anyone, leaves with intimate and incriminating knowledge of you. This is why I love this song. I downloaded it because I just thought it fit. You'll probably know it.

*She's my kind of rain
Like love in a drunken sky
She's confetti falling
Down all night*

*She's the sun set shadows
She's like Rembrandt's light
She's the history that's made at night
She's my lost companion
She's my dreaming tree
Together in this brief eternity
Summer days, winter snows
She's all things to behold*

*So I wait
And I try
I confess all my crimes*

This, to me, is what makes marriage so beautiful. Someone knows your past, they know your pain, they know your preferences, and you know what they say? They say "I love you." It's someone who knows the hardest things to know about you, the most difficult, painful things to know about you and they look you right in the eyes and they say "I have my own story too. Can we accept and love each other?"

This is the part I'm still processing because when I meet a person who has gone through a devastating, painful, and nasty divorce, they walk with their heads down. They walk in to rooms and situations and they think people are looking at them and thinking... You're falling for this idea and this is where we want to do ministry today to the person who has been through a painful, devastating, and nasty divorce. You have this idea that there is something more broken in you than in the person you're sitting next to this morning. You're falling for this idea that there is something more broken in you than in the person in front of you or the person behind you. You think there is definitely something more broken in you than in me.

I want you to hear this: That is not true. The brokenness you feel is God's design and plan for marriage being broken – the oneness that he planned marriage to be, the glue-like bond for a husband and a wife together for life.

Another way to put this is if you think about the vows... This person knows you pain, knows your past, knows your preferences. This is why you take a vow until one of you dies. You want them to die with this information. We can laugh at that, but that's how God designed it. You're going to know this person better than anyone, so imagine what happens after 15 or 20 years of the exchanging of this information and this knowledge and now we separate and now we divorce. And now this history, this evidence against me is with this other person and they can do whatever they want with it.

This is one reason, if you are going through a separation or a divorce, I want to encourage you, as your pastor, with this. When the separation takes place, when you move out, when he or she moves out, when the divorce papers are filed, would you do this favor for yourself and for your family and friends all around you: Get off of social media. Just get off social media altogether because it's draining you. It's adding to it and it's hurting. I want you to make the commitment for your family and friends and for you to say "I'm going to take a break from this." To me, that's the pain behind a divorce that a lot of people don't process. Instead, it's like "I'm a bigger sinner than the next guy." No. You're a sinner and I'm a sinner. We looked at this in our first series of the year called *Rescued*. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. For all of us are broken people.

It's just that now you're participating in a relationship that is broken. Now you're wondering what is going to happen with this information. Can I just give you this rest and encouragement? I want the divorced person, the person who is recovering from a divorce, the person who is maybe going through a separation and you understand because you are dealing with this pain right now... We want to leave you today with this encouragement. Psalms 139: 1-4 says this: **1 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.** You can hide from everybody you want to hide from, but you cannot hide from God. You will never be able to hide from God, no matter how hard you try, no matter what your narrative becomes in your head where you're trying to tell yourself it's not that bad or it's not that big of a deal or you're not that bad of a person. No; he has searched you and he knows you. He knows you better than anyone. **2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.**

This is why Psalms says **Post a guard at my mouth.** This is one every now and then I need to know because words hit my tongue and the Lord knows them before I know them and then it's bam; it comes out. I'm thinking that would have been a good one to have that guard to put a spear through it before it actually left my face. The Lord knows you better than anyone. So I want you to think about that. He knows you, he knows your past, your pain, you preferences, the difficulties that you are going through and this is where we proclaim the gospel.

Every message in our church is going to have the gospel proclaimed in it. So with that knowledge, what does he do? Does he hold you in condemnation? What does he do with that knowledge when he knows the words that are about to leave your mouth, when he knows what's in your heart? Psychologists tell us there are three parts to a man's heart. There is the public part that we share with strangers on the streets. There's the private part that only friends and family know about. Then there is that third place that we try to hide from everyone.

Guys, this is where you put lust and pornography and masturbation. You put it in that third place where you want no one to know about. Ladies, this is where you put your graphic romance novels. You're like "Boy if the Pure Joy team knew I read those books..." So you put it in that place that nobody knows about. But God knows and this is what Romans declares and we will end with this verse this morning.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And all God's people said... Amen.

We are broken people. In our age of information, more people have information about you than you probably care for and with the information they have on you, you're like... And now that's online forever. You wish you hadn't said it, but now, like toothpaste, you can't take it back. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So what would happen if in marriage... "This is the safety I want to create in my marriage, my home at our family table, in our bedroom. I want it to be a safe place. I want it to be a safe place where I can have information of my wife..." You should have information of your wife of your husband and be the safest person on the planet and love your spouse as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

Father, we're grateful for the work you do in our lives. I pray for the divorced, the separating. I know the pain and the hurt that they are feeling and experiencing and I ask that you would comfort them in the knowledge of the gospel. I pray that they would walk in freedom to know that the blood of Jesus covers them.

For the one who has walked through a painful and devastating and nasty divorce and they've not placed faith in Jesus, I pray that this be the day, this be the morning that they confess their sin and they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and this be the day they proclaim Christ as Lord, Christ as Savior. 3

For the husbands and wives who have this information and knowledge of each other, that are fully known to each other, but not fully accepting of each other, may be this be a day they make the pledge to be a safe and secure spouse. May this be the day they commit to each other that they say "I know this of you and this doesn't make me run from you, this makes me run to you. I receive you, I love you, I care for you," as husband and wife become compatible rather than search for it.

We love you and it is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.