



Reset

Part 1 – Reset Your Marriage

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today, we're talking about resetting your marriage. I'm going to ask you some questions and see if you can get these answers right. **Which state in the United States has the lowest percentage of divorced people?** Texas? Alaska? Utah? Very clever. I didn't even think of that one. Do you know what the divorce rate is for a Mormon who gets married... This is true; I've been studying this all week. A Mormon that gets married in the Temple, do what the chances for divorce are. It's 1.6%. So, thank you for recalling that to my memory. The lowest percentage of divorced people live in the state of Massachusetts. What? They're liberal! Honestly, the divorce rate in the Northeast is lower, percentage wise.

I love this one. **Which occupation has the lowest risk of divorce?** The unemployed? Raise your hand if you just said the unemployed. Pastor is number five on the list; we don't even make the top. You all take us to the brink is what that basically says. Factory workers? Lawyers? That isn't even on the list. It's agricultural engineer. Less than 2%. How many of you in here are single and want to marry a farmer? You're a farmer? It's going to work out perfectly for you then. Do we have an older, male, single farmers in here? Do we have any widowed single farmers? I'm being dead serious; raise your hand right now. "You don't have to be lonely at farmersonly.com." This is fascinating to me. If you're wanting the research for all of this, I can give... Maybe we'll put it in the notes online.

This one cracked me up. **A marriage where the husband has a higher BMI than the wife has a lower risk of divorce.** This doesn't mean you both need to be skinny. It just means the husband needs to be fatter. When I read that, I told Amy, "That's it! That's why we have such a great marriage! Every time I eat a donut, it is lowering our risk of divorce." That's why we say around here, "Don't get a divorce, get a donut." Jim Brawner, this one is for you. He said, "No, that last one was." **Smokers have a 53% increase risk of divorce over non-smokers.**

How about this one. I love this one. **Husbands who refuse to share housework with their wives have an 81% chance of divorce.** I've got like 40 of these that are based on science and research, but that's all you get because we're practicing the shorter message time.

I've been stressed all morning with the idea of even asking this question, so I'm taking it very seriously for just a second. This is a core value of our church. We've been sharing core values for the last couple of weeks in our series... My mouth just went immediately dry with the question I'm about to ask. But this is a core value of our church. **We believe here that if you're breathing, you have hope.** We believe that. If you are in here and you're breathing, you still have a shot at life.

That's what we were trying to set up in that first video. We're not promised tomorrow, but if you're breathing right now, you can change right now. If you're breathing right now, you still have hope. Where do we get this? Ecclesiastes 9 says, **4 Anyone who is among the living has hope...** Here's the question I'm going to ask. We're not going to do the Baptist bow your head and close your eyes thing, but we're going to put a little bit of an altar call at the front end of this.

If you say, "Ted, I do not believe there is hope for me," would you raise your hand? I know some of you may believe that and you're like, "But everybody is looking, and I don't want to be bombarded by this castle cult at the end." If you believe that... and I know there are some in here that do believe that because I get your emails and I get your messages and I get the fact that you've lost hope for your marriage, your family, for you, for your job. The tone when you speak to me sometimes and share your story; it's a hopeless tone. It's a "There's no hope for me." And then you start sharing your past with me. Then you start telling me all the things you've done and all the things you've said. You're making a case for the fact that you're hopeless.

We don't believe that here. And the goal of the next four weeks is to prove you wrong. To make sure you know you're not hopeless. We believe this. Again, it's a core value of our church. We believe Jesus breathes life into dead souls, which means he breathes life into dead marriages and families as well.

So, here's the outline that we're going with for the next four weeks as we look at your marriage, your family, your faith, and your work, letting Jesus breath life into you in a new way. I encourage you to go to Revelation 2 in your Bibles. This is a picture of a church, the Church at Ephesus, that needs a reset. They are going to be commended and then they are going to be disciplined. We're going to get the outline for what we can do to reset our lives, reset our marriages, reset our families, reset our faith, and reset our work out of Revelation 2.

These words are coming to the Church at Ephesus some 40 years after they got started. It's interesting because when Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus five years after their start, he commended them for their strong faith in the Lord. He commended them for their active service to one another. We pick up another 35 years after where Jesus is now speaking to them. Again, these are now second-generation Christians in Ephesus, and they are still commended for their service to one another, but they are not commended for their faith in the Lord. Then they are going to get a reset on how to get back to their faith in the Lord.

Here's where we pick up in Revelation 2. This is the Lord Jesus speaking to the Church at Ephesus. **2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.** It goes on with the commendation, not condemnation. **3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.** That's a pretty good commendation. I think this is many churches in our country, and around the world for that matter, who have been faithful in service and feel their love for God is best displayed when they're doing stuff, when their bulletins are thick, full of activities, full of programs, full of classes, full of Bible studies.

We can fall into this too. Let's help the poor in our community. Let's help the poor in our congregation. Let's minister to those who are adopting, those who are fostering. Let's make sure we are taking care of our missionaries who are overseas. We can get wrapped up in just doing good works. But here's what Jesus says.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Maybe many of you memorized this from a very young age. "You've forsaken your first love." You have forgotten why it is you do all of this. You've lost sight of why you serve one another. "You love because I first loved you," is what he's saying. "You are giving to people because I give to you." You're still doing all of that, but you forgot the source, the one who empowers you to do this, who gifts you do to this, who fills you to do this.

So, here's how they get back to their first love and it's a three-part outline. First of all, **5 Consider how far you have fallen!** Take an assessment of where you are right now. Look around and see where your life is at and then **Repent...**

This has been a week for me. Many of you may know the story and I'm not even going to get into the details of it, but a pastor who has, I would just say, placed his thumb print upon this church, a leader that I have followed for 22 years of ministry. Much of what we do has been influenced by this leader and his ministry of 40 years. I'm not sharing anything that hasn't been listed in the New York Times or the Chicago Tribune, but to learn over his 40 years of ministry... and now part of the #MeToo movement has brought to the surface dozens and dozens of women that have come out against him in the way that he has behaved in his ministry.

I just want you to know that when I'm reading all of this, I go to a very dark place. It's one of the reasons why you'll come up to me and ask me to lunch this week and the answer will be no. I only meet with women in public over the age of 70. That's kind of my standard. That offends some of you, but... I was thinking about this the other day. I guess the older I get, that standard is going to have to keep going up. So, today, I announce to you the new age is 75. But, I go to a very dark place.

This leader started a world-wide global leadership summit. The summit took place this week. Do you know what I prayed this week and especially on Wednesday before the summit began? I prayed that this leader, who's still being stiff-necked with it all and denying it and not coming forth... I was just praying, "Lord, call the Holy Spirit to just break him down." Do you know what I wanted to see happen? And I would have rejoiced and rejoiced and rejoiced if he would have been the opening session of this summit, if he would have walked out onto the stage and fell down on his knees before millions of people that were watching and confessed every one of his sins before us.

Do you know what would have happened? Sure, he would have had the haters and the stalkers, but he would have had those who understand how faith works receive him, because that's what we're called to do. Here is a man who, for 40 years, has preached hope. He actually said, "I believe the church is the hope of the world." I would change that a little bit to say I believe Jesus is the hope of the world, but I know what he was saying. He would say that and now who I'm wondering how much he feels hopeless when he feels everyone is against him.

Listen, consider how far you've fallen. Take an accurate assessment and repent. This word looks scary to some. This word is a refreshing word. It's a word that means you fall down on your knees, you repent to your Father in heaven, you repent to those around you, and then... The Baptists were getting nervous because we only had two points. There's a third point. After you consider and repent, ***...and do the things you did at first.*** Go back 40 years, go back 35 years to when you served one another out of your first love. Right now, you're just serving each other, but not out of your first love. There may be some other motivation driving you in this. Go back and do the things you did at first. Now watch this. ***If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*** Your ministry will end, bottom line.

What I want to do today... I've been working on this; it's been in my heart for about a year in working with couples. When I work with couples, I always try to figure out where they are. I'm trying to figure out the consider part. Where are they right now? Where were they? When did it go bad? When did they stop loving each other? When did they forsake one another? How did they get to this point right here? Here's what fascinating to me. Almost all relationships start the same way. We say this around here all the time. It doesn't matter how you meet: eHarmony, farmersonly... I don't know why I keep... I'm going to be doing your wedding within 12 months. I'm not a prophet, but I'm holding that up before the Lord. There is a farmer in Iowa watching online right now and he's lonely and he doesn't want to spend the \$29.95 a month. Just move that camera over to her... No, don't do it.

Attraction and chemistry. Let's start all the way back there and understand something. I have a fear of public spelling. Public speaking doesn't bother me. You know I mess up my words all the time and you're okay with that, but when I misspell a word... So, I'm going to spell some things wrong just for those four grammar police that we've got in this church. I want you to think for a moment about what first attracted you to your spouse. I want you to think about when you had those sparks. It starts with attraction before you even meet the person. Something catches your eye. Then chemistry is those sparks that begin to develop.

I actually met with a couple two years ago. I asked him to tell me why they wanted to get married. He said, "Ted, you're never going to believe this. I know you're going to doubt this, but when we get together, there are literal sparks."

You know me, I'm just like, "Okay..."

And he's like, "I know you're thinking I'm just talking about that feeling inside. Literally, when I touch her, there is a shock."

I said, "Well, I'm here to help you because there should be more to the decision to get married than that feeling you get after you rub your feet on the carpet. It's more than that." Attraction and chemistry. You're just drawn to a person.

From there, you move into **connection**. You make a connection. For some, that becomes just dating. For some, maybe that becomes an official courtship. There are all different ways connections begins, but this is very important. Even for those who don't plan on getting married, the connection after this

for some of you in here was just the hook up. You just said, "Hey, you look good to me and I look good to you; we've got so many similarities..." In this stage, you're focusing on similarities and downplaying differences. "...so, let's have sex." For some, it's just let's move in together. There are so many ways people connect.

But, from this connection and right around this connection, there are two paths that you take. One is you begin to **decide** and the other is you begin to **drift**. Now this is very important because at this stage, here's what we know. **Happily married couples and divorced couples score similarly on marital satisfaction at the beginning of the marriage.**

That's important to understand because a lot of times, a couple will tell me, "We got married too young." When you got married, how old you were when you got married, how long you've been married; those aren't the factors that determine a great marriage. People will tell me, "Well, we didn't meet the right way." How you met does not determine the quality of marriage you can have now. "You have no idea how we've treated each other over the last several years." Okay, how you met, how you've treated each other has nothing to do with the quality of marriage you can have right now. "Ted, you have no idea how bad it is right now." Okay, here we go. How you met, how you've treated each other, they way your marriage is right now has nothing to do with the quality of marriage you can have. You have to decide your way into it. This is the key. These are the two lines: **Decide or Drift**.

Decide – To decide is attention, putting thought into it. A lot of times we say marriage is hard work. Stop saying that and start saying marriage is decision. We decide our way into a great marriage.

Drift – To drift is the lack of decision. Drift says we won't decide anything and that's where it begins.

Decide says, "You know what? I like you, I love you, here's a ring. I've already talked to your dad; will you marry me?" Then she has a decision to make. Then if she says yes, then together you have a decision to make. When do we want to get married? Where do we want to get married? How many people do we want to invite to this thing? We should probably talk to your dad before we determine that amount. And then back and forth you go because you're deciding, your choosing.

Versus the drift. The drift says, "You know what? Let's not choose." Young people, you fall into drift so easily today because you think if you don't decide, that will protect your heart for when this falls apart. It's just not true. If you want a high-quality marriage, you have to think decision. You have to move forward in making good decisions. After you decide, you're going to spend the rest of your lives together. You're in this until death do you part or the Lord returns. That's how long this marriage is going to last.

Then you get to move into what I love, which is the **discovery** phase. The discovery phase is when... From chemistry, you know you're focusing on similarities, now you get to see how different you are. You get to see you have more differences than you have similarities. You probably should have talked a little about that, but that's not how relationships typically form.

It's why I think premarital counseling that spends the bulk of the time on budgeting is a colossal waste of time. You have to move past that. You have to get beyond whether or not you're going to use envelopes or a debit card or however you're going to do it. You have to get into how you are different.

It's like that couple that came in and I asked them to tell me about their last fight. I'm wanting to discover their differences. They sit there thinking about it. Then they say, "That's why we're getting married. We don't fight."

"Oh, that's awesome. What do you think you might fight about?"

"We have even thought about what we might potentially fight over, and we see no potential conflicts in this relationship."

Now you know my little secret on how to solve this. I know there are some people that I know watching from the East Coast who I've done this to. It's one of my favorite things to do when doing premarital. I invite them over for dinner at our house but give them bad directions on how to get to our house. We want them late. Then she'll call because they can't find it and I'm not telling her it's because we gave them the wrong address. Then I start giving her more bad information. Then when they get there, there's a little bit of tension. "Well she said to turn right..." It just gets better and better. I deny everything I told her over the phone. And I say, "How are you two going to have a good marriage if you can't even communicate on basic directions?" Then there's this frustration between them. Now we can get somewhere. Now we can help you have a great marriage because a great marriage involves a couple who knows how to resolve conflict. And all God's people said... Amen.

You move from discovery to this crazy **devotion**. Devotion is enthusiasm that says, "The more I learn about you and how different we are, the more I'm enjoying this." You get to devotion when you realize... And my wife is sitting way back there because you're sitting in her seat. I don't know if you know that? Are you new to the church? Yeah. Unbelievable. And you just think you can walk in here and sit wherever you want? You know I'm kidding. You want a bottle of water? Here's a brand-new bottle of water. Welcome to Woodland Hills. We don't let people get too comfortable too long before we just go at them. Great devotion in your marriage is that moment when you realize the more I learn about you, the more I realize I'm not going to change you. I'm not going to work to change you. I'm going to discover and I'm going to live in awe, curiosity, and fascination about how God created you.

You're going to say and do things that remind me of your parents. Have you ever been to your in-laws' house... I love it when you go to your in-laws' house and they'll say or do something... I have these moments at dinner tables where I'm like, "Oh, that's why." Twenty years of listening to Norwegian talk out of Dennis L. Freitag... You have these moments, 22 years into marriage, of just discovering and it builds devotion. Why? It's because we're still going off of decision. We've decided. And then, you keep going. Dedication, commitment; I'm in it to the end. That's what's great.

This morning, Amy and I were getting ready. She's more environments and getting into the details of everything and how it works here at the church, and I'm more into trying figure out... I was stressed this morning about spelling and all of this and going back and forth and Corey right in my face like high-five

distance from me. She's talking business and details and environments of the church, and I'm thinking about this. Do you know why it's easy for us to have moments of tension. It's because this is until one of us dies. We have to remind ourselves that we took a vow to do this until death. We'll work through it. And you know what? Even beyond that; we'll have fun working through it.

Some of you are like, "We ain't there." Do you know why? It's because right around here... Remember, everybody starts pretty much the same, but right around here, you didn't make decision, you started to drift. And as you were drifting... This is the word I've been stressed about all morning: **Disillusionment**. Thank you, Father in heaven. Yeah, your expectations aren't being met. You came in with a pile of expectations. Every marriage has expectations, but the gap between your expectations and what you're experiencing... Gary Smalley taught us this over 15 years ago. That gap between the two is what we like to call stress, but stress is a socially acceptable term for anger. You're mad.

And because you've made no good decisions, you've not worked through things before in the past. The more you drift and become disillusioned, you don't have a system in place to learn about each other and work through things. And that disillusionment quickly turns to disconnection. You stop talking to each other. One of you moves to another bedroom. You become all about the kids and you just continue to let things drift and ultimately it ends in divorce.

These are the two paths. Some of you today, as we go through this outline, if you're deciding or drifting, what I want you to know, wherever you are right here, as you're considering your ways... This is very important to understand. **Marital satisfaction depends on factors and skills couples could do something about in any season or stage of life.** You can have hope leaving here today, right now, because it's something you can choose. You can decide your way into marital satisfaction. For some of you, it's been drifting.

Every time I get to share – and it's almost every weekend somewhere around the country – on marriage, I love to share the story of the National Institute of Marriage. I'm a 110% believer and fan in that. Not only do they work with thousands and thousands of couples, but you can say with those thousands of couples now it's research. This number changes every now and then. These are couples who are a divorced, separated, or have filed the paper work. The last number I got was an 87% success rate with couples who come to the marriage intensive program. And they do not define success as couples staying together. Bob Paul, the President and kind of the architect behind the Marriage Intensive, said, "Marital success for us is not a couple staying together. Success for us is a couple staying together and reporting high levels of marital satisfaction."

If you're going to look this up or you're watching from around the country or world, you can find it as Hope Restored from Focus on the Family. Ryan Pannell, who was our counselor for years, is one of the lead therapists out there. We lost him to this. If it wasn't for NIM, I'd be frustrated he left, but he's gifted in this and the Lord is using him and all the other counselors in this. I always share this story. Sometimes, I'll even share it if it's an extended comedy night or if it's a conference or retreat. I always love sharing that story because couples come up to me all the time.

Here's one couple. I'll just show you their picture. You don't need their names, but they walked up to me and they said, "We just want to validate everything you said about the intensive because we went through it 14 years ago." They said, "We can't even begin to tell you... Before the intensive, no one had ever painted a picture of marriage for us like they painted. We didn't know marriage could be that good. We had no idea." I meet couples like this all the time. For us, for you this morning, let's go through this outline again as we look at this. I'm going to encourage couples who are stuck, couples who are ready to give up.

Consider: Where is your marriage now? I just want you to point it out. I'm seeing some dating couples and engaged couples because they've been having a ball the whole time. I say things and they look at each other and giggle and touch each other. You're so easy to spot in the crowd and we love that, but we know where you are. Others need to figure out where they are on decide or drift.

For some of you in this area of disillusionment, disconnection, and divorce, this is who I want to talk to the rest of the morning. You can consider your ways and you know when you started to drift. A good friend of mine who lives in Nashville now... He would tell you and he shares it publicly, "We as a couple started to drift when we had our child. We stopped being us when we had kids. We stopped putting focus and making decisions; the decision to go on a date night, the decision to speak kindly to one another. It just all became about the kids."

I want to speak to others of you who you started to drift when you moved to Branson. Or you took a job and you can go back to the moment you started to drift when you took a job and you wanted to impress the boss, you want to impress the clients, you were trying to build a business and you threw everything you had into your work and your marriage started to drift.

For others, it was a tragedy that hit your family. The loss of a child, the loss of a family member. For some right now, it's the desire to have a child and you can't have a child. You can take it back to when you became discontented in that process of trying to conceive a child and your marriage, in that process, started to drift. All we're asking you to do is to consider where you are right now. Keep in mind that where you are now does not determine the quality of marriage you can have right now because if you are among the living, you have hope.

Once you can nail it... You're right here. "We're living together, but he's upstairs and I'm downstairs." "Ted, we're separated, but we're not yet divorced." They're in here right now. If you're separated, but not yet divorced and the paperwork has been filed, please hear this. Jesus can breathe life into your dead marriage. So, what do you do if you know your right here, in between a season or stage?"

Repent: What do you need to confess? We've had it happen in this church. People get up at this moment right here and they go across town to a spouse who is attending another church and they fall down on their knees before that spouse and confess their sins. For some of you, drift started when your pornography addiction took off. Your spouse knows you're in drift, they just don't know why. As you consider where you are today, you're going to confess your sins before your spouse your. You're going to confess the affair that you've been having. You're going to confess the emotional affair. You're going to confess just going onto Facebook and flirting around and seeing if you can groom someone into a

relationship. Some of you have been taking your family off course financially. The drift started when you started to hide money from your spouse to do what you wanted to do. There are all these secrets that we keep in marriage. When you consider where you are, start with repentance. What do you need to confess?

Redo: What do you need to start doing again? After you see where you are, after you've confessed... Again, this may take some time. I'm telling you, repenting to your spouse... We get this very confused in the church. Forgiveness and healing are not the same things. Your spouse can forgive you, but still need time to heal. And... This is very important too. The other way around works too. When trust has been broken, repentance has been given, you can forgive your spouse while you heal. You can forgive a spouse because you have been forgiven by God in Christ Jesus, and all God's people said... amen. You can forgive a spouse, but you still need time to heal. Don't withhold forgiveness while you heal. At the same time, as we now get into redo, there may be some of these where you're like, "That ain't happening." I get calls on this all the time. "I'm not ready for the redo part." Continue to make good decisions. Decide your way into high levels of marital satisfaction.

What did you do? At the beginning, **you surrounded yourself, with people who celebrated your marriage.** That was called a wedding. You gathered before God and gathered witnesses and you celebrated. We get this from Song of Solomon 1: 4 ***We rejoice and delight in you, we will praise your love more than wine.*** These are the daughters of Jerusalem praising the love of Solomon and the Shulamite woman.

For some of you right now, drift started when you chose the wrong friends. Drift started when you started spending too much time with people who were tearing down your spouse, tearing down your marriage. A decision that you need to make and get back to is who are your back up singers going to be? We say at this church all the time, "Every marriage is a duet in need of great backup singers." Many of you have backup singers that you need to turn down and mute altogether. Then you need to surround yourself with people who celebrate you, who rejoice, delight, and praise the love of your marriage. I'm hoping that many of you say good-bye to some friends today because they are destroying your marriage.

Some of you who have... There are ladies in here that have male friends and males in here who have female friends. If that is a problem for you and you don't have boundaries with that, it's time to end the friendship. You're like, "We're not animals." But we do have boundaries. We are wise with this.

What's something else that you did? I'm sorry, my tone is going into angry preacher, counselor mode. I have to do that so you don't ask for counseling from me. **You couldn't stop thinking of each other** in the beginning. You thought about each other all the time. We get this in the Song of Solomon (1: 13) as well. ***My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts.*** This is how they would perfume their bodies. The scent just lingers. Meaning everywhere I go, whomever I'm with, you're always in my thoughts.

You remember back in this season right here when you were on the phone. This was Amy and I across campus. I'm in one dorm and she's in another dorm. I'm on the phone, "No, you hang up first. Nooo,

you hang up." Some of you can't hear me doing this. I did it. I was there. I was just like you back there. Your grades and everything were affected because you were thinking about each other all the time. Some of you just need to get back to the decision of thoughtfulness toward one another.

My wife has never stopped in 22 years... She is constantly bringing the coffee, bringing the water. She doesn't go and do anything for herself without thinking of me or our children. This is one, and my kids are here to verify this this morning. I love it when Amy says to me, "Do you want a glass of water?" "Thank you, babe. Yes, I would love a glass of water." Thirty minutes later, I wasn't thirsty until she asked me if I wanted a drink of water. Then this insatiable thirst built up in me because thirty minutes later... Does anybody else here have a wife who on their way to perform a simple task starts a major project? Does anybody else have this going on? This is Amy. I'm not joking. I'll see her on a ladder painting a wall on her way to get the glass of water. That isn't even the best part. I never want her to feel bad about forgetting the glass of water, so I try to sneak to the refrigerator to get it. From the ladder, I hear her go, "I was still getting that." "No, you weren't. You had forgotten."

Life hits us. There are walls to be painted. Fixtures to be hung. Does anybody else here have a wife who changes out light fixtures based on the season? I grew up in a home where you put the fixture up and it stayed there for 20, 30, 40 years. We change them out with the season. So, life hits us. And we have kids. That can keep you from thinking about each other. Some of you just have to get back to thinking about each other. Some of you are having a great conversation and the kids walks in. Stop interrupting this for that. Just put your hand up. Some of you think that so easy for us because we have teenagers. That's easy? Try that with toddlers. I was just with friends this week who did a great job of that in prioritizing the conversation with each other and saying, "Hey, you just wait a little bit."

You listen to one another. You not only listened to one another, but when she was done talking, you said, "Tell me more. Are you done? I need details. I want to know what's going on." This we get from the Song of Solomon (2: 14) as well. ***14 My dove...*** If you don't have a pet name for your wife, go with my dove. Isn't that a great pet name? And when you want to have a deep conversation, just call her by cooing.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in a church in Louisiana and the guy goes, "Pastor, if you start cooing around here, you'll get shot." ***...in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside...*** This is so good. Guys, your wife... She's not a mountain lion and she's not a snake. She's a gentle, tender dove. If you want to pull a dove out of the mountainside, you don't just start grabbing for it. You have to have gentleness and tenderness and kindness. Solomon is saying to the Shulamite woman, "I want to get to know you. I want to find out who you are. I want to understand you."

...show me your face, let me hear your voice... Come on, engage with me. And then for the third part of this, when he hears her, when he sees her, he's a safe spouse because he says, ***...for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.*** When you do reveal yourself to me, I can be trusted. When you do reveal yourself to me, I won't make it all about me. I will listen with you in mind and not just with me in mind.

We don't have time to share the passages on the rest. I'm going to give you several more out of the Song of Solomon. Dig into that book if you want to learn more.

Here's what else you did in the beginning. **You anticipated intimacy.** Let the king bring me into his chambers. Bow bow chickie chickie bow bow. **You complimented one another often.** You didn't just compliment one another, **you praised each other in public.** You spoke highly of one another when strangers were around, when friends were around, when family were around. You were speaking honor and blessing over each other.

You touched each other a lot. Some of you need to get back to this. This was years ago. I don't remember who it was. I think it was Mike Combs; I'm not 100% sure. He was joking with me because I encouraged all the ladies in the church to go home this week and shove their husband down on the bed.

He came to me the next week and said, "Why don't you finish that teaching there, Ted."

I said, "I thought I did. What do you mean?"

He goes, "Three times this week my wife pushed me on the bed and walked right out of the room." Honestly, I want to encourage those of you with questionable hips, this isn't something I would do. And definitely in the 9:00 service, I want you to hear that.

You spent quality time together. You didn't have to force a date night; it just happened. Now that you've been married 20 years, you have to decide your way into a date night. You have to decide your way into the daily delay, the weekly withdraw, and the annual abandon. You have to make that decision. Get back to that. Of all the things we're talking about today, I hope you just take one. If you're in drift, just take one. After you consider, repent, and now we're into redo, just take one. Spend quality time together.

Then you eliminate potential threats to your marriage. You didn't flirt around with them, you got after them.

I want to close with this. Wow, this is a very long message. I hope the Lord, today... I know he desires this for you. I hope many marriages are taking this to heart.

It's been ten years since we started Marriage 911 with this church. Would you help me thank all of those who have volunteered and scarified so much of their time? R.G. and Karen Yallaly lead this ministry and they have... I think the number right now is 27 marriage ministry leaders in Marriage 911 that meet with spouses who are here. This is the Marriage 911 ministry. For those who are beyond drift into disillusionment, towards the end.

Here are two things we share as we close out our time today. We want you, if your marriage is struggling, to be a part of this. The problem is we have no one to work with you right now. All 27 or our marriage ministry leaders in Marriage 911, who have been well trained... And that's the issue. We can't just say, "Hey, jump in here and just start talking to people." It is an intensive, multi-week program that

they walk you through one on one. It takes much labor. We have no space right now for you, but that's not how we want this story to end. Last week, we went through the Sweet Spot and we've been talking about core values. R.G. and Karen, I'm just going to ask you to get up here right now and stand in this corner by where Marsha is. Help me thank R.G. and Karen Yallaly for all of their work. As we worship together, if you've got a rocking marriage and you're are devoted to one another, dedicated to one another, and you're not serving in this church... If you've been praying and asking the Lord to give you a place to serve, as we worship and after we worship, during this next few minutes, I would like you to get up and go meet R.G. and Karen.

You're not committing to be a part of it. R.G. has to tell people regularly... He's an elder of our church and we trust him with this ministry completely. We ask you submit to the authority of the elders on this because there are confidentiality issues, there are training issues. There's so much that goes into this ministry, but if you would like to be a part of serving marriages in our church, we would like you to go up and meet R.G. and Karen. They are going to be here in this service and the next. If you're watching online, you can go online and say, "Hey I want to be a part of that."

If you need the ministry of Marriage 911, I'm going to ask our prayer team now if they would come forward and gather at the front. They have cards that they are going to give you. You say, "My marriage needs help." Today you can start with the consider and repent. Today, you can start with the "We want a redo, we want to move forward." Can I just say there are many of you in here right now that I've been looking at all morning. I've talked to you about your marriage. You've talked to me. You've been very honest and bold with me. Please go with what we're doing this morning and don't wait and get in your car and send me a message. Please don't. We're all here right now. Now is the time. If you're still breathing, you have hope. Please keep that in check with what the scripture says. You're not promised tomorrow. You're not promised the car ride home. Do business now. Come down and meet with them.

Now, we can't put you with somebody tomorrow. In this ministry, R.G. and I hate to say this, but no, not tomorrow because it's overloaded. You would think in a church our size that 27 of these marriage ministry people would be plenty. It's not nearly enough for the amount of people who are seeking help from our community through our church.

So, if you want to serve in Marriage 911, go see R.G. and Karen. If you need the ministry of Marriage 911, get on the list. It's first come, first served and we will put you with someone as soon as they are qualified and as soon as they are trained, and we will make sure that there is a place for you. We're also asking the Lord to give us discernment based on the need that we hear this morning of other ways that we can work with people quickly and not just within Marriage 911, but this is a curriculum we believe in and we trust in completely.

So, as we worship, we invite you to stand and we invite you to come forward whether your serving or you need the ministry of Marriage 911.