

The Vow - February 16th - The Vow of Partnership - Troy Knight

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures from the Message:

Genesis 2:21-24
Matthew 19:3-6
Prov 29:18a
Psalms 127:3

Start reading.

Genesis 2:21-24 NLT

So, the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.' This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Matthew 19:3-6 NLT

Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?" "Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female. And he said, "'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

Prov 29:18a KJV

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Prov 29:18a NLT

When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.

Psalms 127:3 NLT

Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- If you're in a relationship, how are you opposites, and how are you similar?
- Share the first thing that attracted you to your spouse. If you're single, what is the most important attribute you're looking for in a significant other?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Troy said, "When dating, opposites attract. When married, opposites attack." How have you seen this played out in your marriage or in a previous marriage?
- Read Genesis 2:21-24 and Matthew 19:3-6. What do you think it means to become united to a spouse? Share some examples of why a marriage could struggle to move from ME or YOU to WE.

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Troy shared 3 things for which married couples should have a common vision:
 - 1) **A common vision for your FAITH.**
In what ways are you practicing a common vision for faith in your marriage? If this is an area where you need to improve, what steps do you plan to take to make that happen? If single, then how are you preparing yourself for a possible marriage relationship with regard to your faith and what you are looking for in a spouse?
 - 2) **A common vision for your FINANCES.**
The number one cause of divorce in America is arguments over money. In what ways are you striving as a couple to be unified in your finances? If this is an area in which you need to improve, what steps toward improvement do you plan to take? If you are single, are there ways to view your finances now that could prepare you for a possible future marriage?
 - 3) **A common vision for your FAMILY.**
In what ways are you striving as a couple to be unified in how you raise your children? If this is an area where you need to improve, what steps for improvement do you plan to take? If you are a single parent what steps are you taking to raise your children in unity with the Bible? If you are a grandparent, how can you support your children and their spouses to find oneness in raising their children?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to working on the one area of the 3 above with which you struggle the most in your marriage.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Heavenly Father, help us to always pursue godly relationships about "we" and not "me." Holy Spirit, give us the strength to love the way You love us. Jesus, You sacrificed Your life for us. Teach us to lay down ourselves as godly partners. Amen!

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss it.

Question: "What does it mean to be one flesh in a marriage?"

Answer: The term "one flesh" comes from the Genesis account of the creation of Eve. Genesis 2:21-24 describes the process by which God created Eve from a rib taken from Adam's side as he slept. Adam recognized that Eve was part of him—they were in fact "one flesh." The term "one flesh" means that just as our bodies are one whole entity and cannot be divided into pieces and still be a whole, so God intended it to be with the marriage relationship. There are no longer two entities (two individuals), but now there is one entity (a married couple). There are a number of aspects to this new union.

As far as emotional attachments are concerned, the new unit takes precedence over all previous and future relationships (Genesis 2:24). Some marriage partners continue to place greater weight upon ties with parents than with the new partner. This is a recipe for disaster in the marriage and is a perversion of God's original intention of "leaving and cleaving." A similar problem can develop when a spouse begins to draw closer to a child to meet emotional needs rather than to his or her partner.

Emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, financially, and in every other way, the couple is to become one. Even as one part of the body cares for the other body parts (the stomach digests food for the body, the brain directs the body for the good of the whole, the hands work for the sake of the body, etc.), so each partner in the marriage is to care for the other. Each partner is no longer to see money earned as "my" money, but rather as "our" money. Ephesians 5:22-33 and Proverbs 31:10-31 give the application of this "oneness" to the role of the husband and to the wife, respectively.

Physically, they become one flesh, and the result of that one flesh is found in the children that their union produces; these children now possess a special genetic makeup, specific to their union. Even in the sexual aspect of their relationship, a husband and wife are not to consider their bodies as their own but as belonging to their partner (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). Nor are they to focus on their own pleasure but rather the giving of pleasure to their spouse.

This oneness and desire to benefit each other is not automatic, especially after mankind's fall into sin. The man, in Genesis 2:24 (KJV), is told to "cleave" to his wife. This word has two ideas behind it. One is to be "glued" to his wife, a picture of how tight the marriage bond is to be. The other aspect is to "pursue hard after" the wife. This "pursuing hard after" is to go beyond the courtship leading to marriage, and is to continue throughout the marriage. The fleshly tendency is to "do what feels good to me" rather than to consider what will benefit the spouse. And this self-centeredness is the rut that marriages commonly fall into once the "honeymoon is over." Instead of each spouse dwelling upon how his or her own needs are not being met, he or she is to remain focused on meeting the needs of the spouse.

As nice as it may be for two people to live together meeting each other's needs, God has a higher calling for the marriage. Even as they were to be serving Christ with their lives before marriage (Romans 12:1-2), now they are to serve Christ together as a unit and raise their children to serve God (1 Corinthians 7:29-34; Malachi 2:15; Ephesians 6:4). Priscilla and Aquila, in Acts 18, would be good examples of this. As a couple pursues serving Christ together, the joy which the Spirit gives will fill their marriage (Galatians 5:22-23). In the Garden of Eden, there were three present (Adam, Eve, and God), and there was joy. So, if God is central in a marriage today, there also will be joy. Without God, a true and full oneness is not possible.