

The Vow - February 23rd - The Vow of Pursuit - Troy

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures

from the Message:

Colossians 3:19

Ephesians 5:25

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Philippians 2:3

Hebrews 3:13

Start reading.

Colossians 3:19 NLT

Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

Ephesians 5:25 NLT

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance

Philippians 2:3 NLT

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Hebrews 3:13 NLT

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today", so that none of you may be hardened by sins deceitfulness.

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What's something crazy you've done for love?
- What things did you once do to pursue your spouse? What similar things can you do today to keep on pursuing your spouse?

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

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How can we love our spouses and others in our lives the way that this scripture instructs us to love?
- How do you handle those times when you believe that you are the only one working at your marriage or when your spouse refuses to discuss the issues creating drabness or divisiveness? What are some resources available to you for finding the encouragement needed to continue pursuing a healthy marriage account as a spouse committed to living out 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?
- Read Philippians 2:3-7. What does it mean in your marriage and life to put others needs above your own? What's our motivation for such strange behavior?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Why is it so easy for married couples to become complacent in their relationships with their spouses? How do you fight against complacency and work at your marriage?
- What are you committed to start doing for your marriage (encourage daily, date monthly, escape yearly)? Why is this not happening already for you and your spouse? If you are single, how can you do this in your close relationships?
- How does it make you feel to know that God pursues a love relationship with you? Have you allowed God to completely catch you? Why or why not?
- What commitment are you willing to make for your love relationship with God (read daily, pray daily, serve weekly) to continue growing stronger? Why are you not already doing these things?

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

- Whether married or not, try to love others with a love like 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
- Encourage more in your marriage or if single do so in your close relationships.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Jesus, thank You for always showing us an unconditional love. Align our hearts with Yours so we can love others better. Holy Spirit, help us to be faithful in always pursuing a godly marriage. Amen!

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss it.

Question: "Does God pursue us?"

Answer: The Bible commands human beings to pursue God and promises that, when we do, we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). But it also tells us that God is the initiator of those spiritual pursuits (Psalm 53:2; Romans 3:10–12). Jesus said that no one can come to Him unless the Father first draws them (John 6:44). Jesus told several parables that illustrate God’s pursuit of mankind. The entire Bible is the story of God pursuing us.

From the very beginning, God has pursued us. After Adam and Eve sinned, they did not run *toward* God; they ran *away from* Him, hiding among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8). But God pursued them: “The Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’” (verse 9). It was the first missionary effort, as the Creator sought out His lost creatures. God has always had a heart of reconciliation.

Jesus used the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin (Luke 15:3–10) to teach that God pursues us. Jesus wanted us to understand the heart of God and that He knows each person intimately (Matthew 10:29–31; Psalm 139:13). Jesus’ mission on earth was to “seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). To seek something is to pursue it. We pursue love, money, fame, and relationships because they are important things to us. God pursues us because we are important to Him, being created in His image (Genesis 1:27).

God’s passionate pursuit of us involved sending His beloved Son to die in our place (John 3:16–18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 9:15). Because we could not reach Him through our own efforts, He reached down to us. He pursues us even when we are obstinate: to the Israelites, God said, “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations—a people who continually provoke me to my very face” (Isaiah 65:1–3).

Jesus walked among the people He loved and lamented their spiritual stubbornness: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37). He had come in the flesh to pursue those He’d created, but they rejected Him (John 1:11–13). God’s message of redemption has gone out to the whole world. He has thrown open the doors of salvation, and whoever will may come (John 3:16; 12:46; Romans 1:16).

Through His followers, Jesus has continued to pursue men and women of every era, nation, tribe, and tongue (Revelation 5:9; Acts 2:38–39). His last words to the disciples were instructions for carrying out the work He had begun: “You will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Ever since, Jesus’ followers have continued to go into all the world, spreading the good news that God is pursuing a relationship with them.

God continues to pursue those who have trusted in Christ for salvation. Through His indwelling Holy Spirit, God comforts (James 4:8), corrects (2 Timothy 3:16), and compels His children to obey His Word. He disciplines us as part of His work in conforming us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 12:5–7). He pursues a deeper commitment from us, because it is only as we abide in Him and He in us that we can bear much fruit for His kingdom (John 15:1–8). His pursuit is for our good. There is no greater honor in the universe than being the objects of the Lord God Almighty’s pursuit.