

WHAT HAPPY COUPLES KNOW

PART 1: NOTHING

INTRODUCTION

A great marriage doesn't happen by accident. It requires care and regular maintenance. But sometimes we don't want to make the effort. As long as it's not broken, do we really need to talk about it?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define the purpose of marriage? What are some of the influences and experiences that shaped your definition?
2. Take a few minutes to write down some of your hopes, dreams, and desires. To what extent do you assume marriage can fulfill them?
3. Talk about a time when you used one or more of the 4 Cs—convince, convict, control, coerce—to try to fulfill your hopes, dreams, and desires in a relationship.
4. When you run into conflict in a relationship, is your tendency to leave, try to win, conform, or compromise? How has that worked in the past?
5. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. Does the idea of “giving yourself up” to another person—without the expectation that they will fulfill your hopes, dreams, and desires—seem reasonable? Why or why not?
6. Do you think marriage is about compromise? Why or why not?
7. During the message, Andy said, “Christianity isn't about getting what we deserve or giving to others what they deserve. It's about getting what we don't deserve and doing for others what was done for us. That reduces marriage to a submission competition—a race to the back of the line.” Does that sound like a realistic approach to marriage? Why or why not?

MOVING FORWARD

What does your spouse (or future spouse) owe you? Nothing. Happy couples know they owe each other everything, but are owed nothing in return. So, take your cue from Jesus' all-encompassing command: “As I have loved you, you are to love one another” (John 13:34).

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2