

the Andersons

WEEK 3 | MARRIAGE | GROUP GUIDE • CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

In a world where everything is constantly changing, do technology and social media help build relationships or distract from relationship building in your life? Why?

SHARE

Welcome to our ongoing teaching series called “The Andersons.”

God has much to say when it comes to doing relationships his way. Relationships done right can enrich our lives and bring us to whole new levels of fulfillment, peace and growth. Relationships done wrong will reap frustration, stagnation and ultimately will bring us harm.

We can all recall times in our lives where we asked people for relational advice. Whether a friend, co-worker, stranger on the plane or even a counselor, how do we know what advice is good advice and what advice is bad advice? Throughout this series, we are going to look at God’s perfect design on how to do relationships right by contrasting that with what it looks like to do relationships wrong. Each week, we will start the message with a look into the dysfunctional world of “The Andersons.” We will learn what not to do when it comes to friendship, dating, marriage, and parenting.

This week we are talking about friendship and more specifically, friendship in marriage. In a world that presses us and moves us around due to over-filled calendars, we can lose sight of friendships, especially in our own marriages.

As Solomon wrote in Proverbs 31, “Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” Those who fear the Lord, who make God the foundation, will not be shaken when things change.

Again, this topic is not only for those who are married, but tremendously important for those who are single or divorced. There is never a better time to talk about God’s design for marriage than when we aren’t married. If we are dating, there is no better time to evaluate our dating friendship and ask ... when the charm and beauty fade away in the future, do we currently have a strong friendship to base a marriage on? If we are looking to date someone, how about we make sure we can develop a real friendship before we start dating?

There are so many things in life that are not in our control and change in marriage, but the one thing that we can choose to control is how we invest in friendship in our marriages.

Let’s start by reading Proverbs 1:1-6

Proverbs 5:18-19

May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful

deer – may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

How does this proverb help “the wise” that have been married for a long time?

How does this proverb give “knowledge and discretion to the young” that are still early into their marriage?

Do you think our culture has put unrealistic expectations on men and women when it comes to beauty? Why or why not?

How can unrealistic expectations of beauty and physical appearance be damaging to relationships?

GROW

So many things throughout the years of marriage will evolve and couples are continually learning to live with a new normal each year. Marriages face many challenges. Some of the biggest challenges are having children, not being able to have children, the pain of miscarriages, unexpected illnesses, and despite parents’ best efforts ... watching a child go wayward. Each year it seems there is a new normal. This can put tremendous pressure on our marriages and if we are not careful, we spend so much time dealing with the logistics of life that we forget about the very friendship that led us to the wedding altar in the first place.

Even Friedrich Nietzsche, who was not known to be a fan of God once said, “It’s not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.” Whether you are a follower of Christ or not, we know that friendship with our spouse makes for a happier marriage. Despite the continual changes, we need to find our satisfaction in God and building a real friendship with our spouse in gospel-centered marriages.

May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer – may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

Spence-Jones in the commentary Proverbs talks about what satisfaction looks like in marriage:

Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times. The love of the wife is to refresh and fully satisfy the husband. The word *dadayah*, “her breasts,” only occurs here and in Ezek. 23:3, 8, 21, and is equivalent to *dodeyah*, “her love.” The marginal reading, “water thee,” serves to bring out the literal meaning of the *y’ravvuka*, derived from *ravah*, in *kal*, “to drink largely,” “to be satisfied with drink,” but misses the emphatic force of the *piel*, “to be fully satisfied or satiated.” This is expressed very forcibly in the Vulgate rendering, “Let her breasts inebriate thee (*inebriant te*),” which represents the strong influence which the attractions of the wife are to maintain. The LXX., on the other hand, avoiding the rather sensual colouring of the language, substitutes, “May she thine own lead thee, and be with thee always.” And be thou ravished always with her love; i.e. let it intoxicate thee. The teacher, by a bold figure, describes the entire fascination which the husband is to allow the wife to exercise over him.

Why do you think the scripture says, “may her breasts satisfy you always” or in other translations, “at all times”? Are there times in marriage when it seems difficult to feel satisfied with our spouse?

What are some of the biggest temptations in the world that try and promise satisfaction outside of our spouse?

MOVE

In this week's message, Chad talked about the importance of friendship in marriage and the challenges we face year to year. How do we then cultivate a better friendship? It sounds like great news for those who are in a good place to build from, but what about those of us who barely have a desire to be friends right now?

The best news, yet the hardest news to hear, is that we can cultivate it, but it isn't always easy.

John 15:12-13

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

We can cultivate a friendship by serving the other person, by daily laying down our own desires to show love in action for our friend. And who should be our best friend if we are married? Our spouse. There is no greater person we can lay our life down for than our spouse. The second way we can cultivate a thriving friendship seems less spiritual, but on the contrary ... we need to start dating our spouse again! Marriage without friendship can't work in our culture. Friendship needs to be nourished or the danger is it will become a business relationship. We need to control what we can control and that can start with dating our spouse. Yes, it will cost you some time and possibly money to put a consistent date night on the calendar, but nowhere near as much time and money as the devastating and compounding cost of an emotionless and bleak marriage. The third way we can build better friendships is to take specific time each day to talk vulnerably with our spouse ... not about the car repair, the kids or the boss, but just talk about life. Vulnerability is a statement of trust, which is the currency of friendship.

What does it look like, on a daily basis, to lay down our life for our friends or our spouse?

In what way do you personally feel served by other people or by your spouse?

What are some good ideas of how to date our spouse again? (Maybe ask some questions from young dating couples who would be the experts on ideas)

What is one way this week you are going to try to build a better friendship with your spouse? If you are single, what is one way you can build a better friendship with your significant other or friends?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

In all our relationships, let's first seek God and ask him to strengthen us to be the people we are called to be.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Additional Resources on Marriage:

From This Day Forward – By Craig Groeshel

The Mingling of Souls – By Matt Chandler

*For a complete list of Red Rocks Classes offered for pre-marital and marriage enrichment, please contact Chris@redrockchurch.com