

VOWS

I TAKE THEE

2.16.2014 - GROUP DISCUSSION
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE – PART II
MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

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

What are two of your biggest pet peeves when it comes to other people and why? (Family, co-workers, drivers, marriage, dating etc.)

SHARE

Welcome to part two of our series entitled, "Vows." We have all heard vows before; in fact most of us have confessed vows to ourselves and to others. We have vowed to lose weight, get in shape, make things right, fix that relationship, break that addiction, come through for someone. We have all been to weddings where we have heard vows such as..."I take thee, for better or for worse, richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part, " and we wait for the crescendo by the pastor when he states, "you may kiss the bride."

If we are honest, we have seen some marriages thrive, while others break apart. We have seen vows forgotten and broken. Whether vows in marriage, friendships, work or as individuals, we have broken commitments and hurt others or have been hurt by others. Throughout this series we will study, talk and share about commitments. Among the debris of broken promises and pain, there stands one who will never walk out, give up or break his vow to us. It is God himself. The Lord will not break his vow to uphold us, love us and will never abandon us. Our entire Christian faith is based on God's promise to His people; it is the most perfect love story.

Let's read once again the foundational verses for this series:

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

Are you the type of person to overcommit to things or do you tend to shy away from committing to things? Why?

Do you agree with Chad in the message that we are a generation of cynicism and fear when it comes to the idea of marriage? Talk about why you feel that way.

GROW

Whether you are married or not, or were married at one time, most everyone knows that marriage can be great; but it can be extremely difficult. It is true that it is supposed to be “for better or for worse.” In fact Chad mentioned in the message that it should be retitled, “for better AND for worse,” because “worse” is just inevitable. Life happens and it can be difficult to navigate at times in a marriage. If you are single, but have dated in the past or are engaged currently, you understand how stressful relationships can get at times. Better and worse seem to come together as a package deal, so why are we surprised when this continues into marriage? In fact it becomes even more difficult in marriage.

Why is there such difficulty in relationships? The answer is that we live in a fallen world. To understand this better, we need to go back to Eden:

Read Genesis 2:24 – Genesis 3:10

The New American Commentary talks about God walking and this couple hiding, which is a profound moment:

Yet now the man and the woman are hiding from God in fear. God’s presence is also noted by his “walking” in the camp and sanctuary of Israel. Later Israel recognized that God demanded holiness and obedience if he were to continue to “walk” among his people. It was part of the sad deception that the man and woman who wanted so much to be “like God,” rather than obtaining the stature of deity, are afraid even to commune with him. The language of the verse, “the man and his wife,” imitates the description of the couple when in their innocence they had lived without shame (2:25). Now they have lost their innocence, their childlike trust in the goodness of God.

When do you most feel afraid to approach God and why?

How did sin and the fall of man affect relationships?

God knows exactly where Adam and Eve are. Why do you think he asks them anyway?

What does it say about God that he “walked” through the garden looking for Adam and Eve?

The actual conversation that took place in the garden was between the serpent and Eve, why do you think God addresses Adam first when they are in hiding?

MOVE

God understands our brokenness and empathizes with our weaknesses. God understands your situation and knows exactly where you are in your walk with him. God knows if you have been through a difficult divorce and can identify with the pain of betrayal. Jesus experienced an immense amount of betrayal and hardship, loneliness and loss of friendships. We can either let pain draw us closer to the God of comfort or we can run and hide from God. But our God is a God who seeks us out and offers to restore the relationship. C.S. Lewis once said, “Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” Most of us could agree that pain

in life can actually wake us to cling to God.

The good news is that regardless of your past, there is a promise just for you.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all these things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as if God were imploring you through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made the one who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we could become the righteousness of God in him.

When you think of the phrase “For Better or for Worse,” talk about some of the biggest challenges or biggest blessings from the list below:

Job
Marriage
Dating
Singleness
Divorce or Remarriage
Children
Health
Finances
Spiritual
Loss

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

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart, but even if our outer person is being destroyed, yet our inner person is being renewed day after day. For our momentary light affliction is producing in us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure and proportion, because we are not looking at what is seen, but what is not seen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is not seen is eternal.

Another great resource to read about marriage is “Love and Respect” by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs.

Special Note about this LG Weekly:

It is important to note that this LG Weekly study can bring up some difficult topics and memories. Remember, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For many of us who have experienced the pain of broken relationships or marriages, remember that you are forgiven, loved and belong. All of us have fallen short, so you are among a group that is all broken. The important thing is to decide what you think God wants you to do next for you are already loved and accepted by God.

Don’t give up, dig in, ask for prayer and let’s move on together!