



ONCE UPON A TIME

fairy tales and falls

Week 4 Group Guide | Message by Chad Bruegman

Start

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

Did you grow up going to a church or was church not even on the radar? What effect did that have on your life – whether positive, negative, or a mixture of both?

Share

Welcome to our brand new series called "Once Upon a Time."

Fairy Tales...when we hear those words, there can be very differing reactions. For some, there is excitement, hopefulness and wonder. We think about the stories of struggle, overcoming great odds, finding our true potential and seeing justice prevail. It's when the good guys win and the bad guys lose. Fairy tales speak to a much deeper part of the heart, where we understand that there is this epic struggle going on in life and it's something we can all relate to. For some of us, our motto is "being optimistic isn't always being happy. It's about taking what the world throws at you and saying 'I'm not going to let this get me down.'"

For others, when we hear 'Fairy Tales,' we have a very different reaction. Our initial thought is that fairy tales are dumb. Instead of hope, we feel despair or even anger. The stories of redemption just make us feel worse about our lives and remind us just how far we are from any type of fairy tale ending. Deep down, we know there is no happy ending. To compensate, we become masters of sarcasm and are card carrying pessimists. For those of who view them this way, our motto is "if everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something."

Throughout this series, we are going to look at relationships and how all of them are intertwined and connected to a greater story. We are going to talk about adversity, how we get back up when we fall, unconditional love, and finding real redemption. The good news is that this greater story is not a made-up fairy tale, but a true story with a real fairy tale ending.

In the conclusion to our series, Pastor Chad delves into the topic of sexuality and God's design for human flourishing. In Genesis, it is clear that God created Adam and Eve to flourish in a world without shame. Together Adam and Eve would work together to steward creation using both of their strengths to complement each other and bring out the best in each other for God's glory. Sounds amazing, right? Well, as we

all know, living in this perfect world in an unbroken relationship with God was short-lived.

Adam and Eve choose to do things their own way, but instead of finding freedom, they experienced shame as sin entered the picture. That perfect world was fractured and ever since, God has been in the business of restoring brokenness. God ultimately brought restoration through sending his son Jesus to live a perfect life, die on a cross for our sins and rise again, defeating sin and death once and for all. We all now have access to that kind of restored relationship with God if we know Jesus Christ as Lord. But even with a thriving relationship with Jesus, we still experience the consequences of sin in our lives and in the lives of others around us.

The good news is that God pursues us in the middle of our pain. God has a plan to not only redeem us, but our relationships as well. God wants to heal the hurts and brokenness, but we need to be willing to pursue him back and truly believe the his word. This week we talk about doing relationships the way God designed them, so we can flourish and experience the best He has for us.

Let's read: 2:18-24

When a man and woman are united together by God through marriage, they become one flesh. When two become one, how do you think this monumentally affects the couple's relationship going forward?

In your experience, is there someone's marriage you really look up to or admire? What do you think makes it such a great marriage?

What are some of the things you have seen that can destroy a marriage over time?

Are there things you think are essential in dating that help lead to a strong marriage?

Grow

Culture is a powerful thing; it's the environment we live in.

If you have ever been to Los Angeles or perhaps lived there, you will easily be able to relate to this. In the city limits, you don't see the smog; you just go about your day not realizing the air quality you are breathing in. But as you get further from the city, you begin to see more clearly and will notice that there is a layer of smog enveloping the city. From a distance you can see it, but when you are in it; the smog seems to disappear.

The same thing holds true with culture, when you are in it; you don't always see it, but it affects you. This can do amazing things for our souls if we are in a culture that pursues Christ, but can be devastating for those who are easily influenced and pushed and pulled in whatever direction society seems to be flowing. Like the old adage says, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything." The Apostle Paul understood this and wherever he went, he studied the culture and brought God's truth to those he spoke with in relevant ways. As Paul was speaking to the people of the Corinthian church, he noticed that sexual immorality was destroying the freedom of the people. He saw God's people crossing boundary lines that were set to protect them.

Let's read: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by D.K. Lowery, he shows us how the culture of the day was influencing the culture of the Corinthian church:

Food for the stomach and the stomach for food was another slogan by which some Corinthians sought to justify their immorality. They reasoned that “food” was both pleasurable and necessary. When their stomachs signaled hunger, food was taken to satisfy them. So too, they argued, sex was pleasurable and necessary. When their bodies signaled sexual desire, they needed to be satisfied. But Paul drew a sharp line between the stomach and the **body**. The body (sōma) in this context (cf. 2 Cor. 12:3) meant more than the physical frame; it referred to the whole person, composed of flesh (the material) and spirit (the immaterial; cf. 2 Cor. 2:13 with 7:5). The “body,” therefore, was not perishable but eternal (1 Cor. 6:14), and it was **not meant for sexual immorality** (porneia) but for union with the Lord (vv. 15–17), which is reciprocal (cf. Eph. 1:23). The eternity of the body, the future destiny of the individual, was made certain by Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor. 6:14; cf. 15:20).

6:15–17. So too the work of the Spirit (cf. 12:13) has affected Christians’ present destiny and joined them to Christ (6:15). Could a Christian practice immorality without grieving Christ? (cf. 12:26) **Never!**

The culture of the day in Corinth was basically a premise that everyone has a right to do whatever he or she wants ... as long as they aren’t mastered by it. How is this contrary to the teachings of Jesus?

Do you see that kind of vibe in our culture today? How does it affect you?

Throughout Scripture, we see that God is not into legalism, but God is into freedom. When God sets a boundary, you can be certain it is not to rob us of something, but to protect us from something. It is for freedom’s sake. The same holds true with sexual purity.

Because sex reflects the most intimate of interpersonal relations among humans, it should be reserved for the most permanent of interpersonal commitments.

~F.S. Bailey

Paul was warning the people in the Corinthian church that the sexual immorality going on was not just a physical act, but also a deeply spiritual one because God designed it to work that way.

Let’s be honest. Did you realize that your body is actually a temple of the Holy Spirit?

According to God’s word, how should we view our bodies?

Move

In this week’s message, Chad reiterated that sexuality is beautiful and designed by God. Sexual intimacy and pleasure were God’s idea, but the enemy of our souls lies to us about what brings fulfillment. It is God’s design that sex happen between a man and a woman in a lifelong covenant of marriage. Sexual activity outside of marriage is contrary to God’s plan and not only will not bring freedom; it will damage the relationship. Believe the truth of God that you are beyond valuable to him. So much so that Jesus laid down his life, gave up his rights and his body to ransom you from bondage. We were bought at a price.

1 Corinthians 6:20

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

What was the price God paid to bring redemption to his people?

Because Jesus offered his body on that cross in our place, we now can have freedom. How should we honor God with our bodies in return?

Considering the culture we live in, what would you say is the biggest struggle you have to live a sexually pure life? How can your closest friends help you stay pure?

Pray

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the situations that people might be facing today. If you are in a co-ed group, we suggest breaking up into guys' and ladies' groups to pray more openly.

To Go

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also, no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.