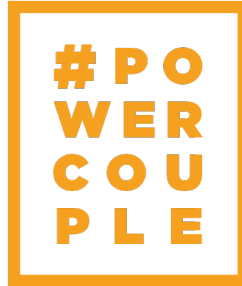


WHEN
CHARACTER



& CHEMISTRY
COLLIDE

#powercouple | *Wingman* | Chad Bruegman | 2.25.17

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer these two questions:

If you had to pick one movie to watch that is an action or sci-fi movie, what would it be and why? (*Dig deep, ladies!*)

SHARE

Welcome to our series **"#PowerCouple."**

Every year at Red Rocks Church, we go through a series on relationships because God has so much to say to us about them. Relationships affect our lives in powerful ways. Who we surround ourselves with matters. Character matters. What we are looking for in a potential spouse matters. How we continue to date our spouse matters. Most importantly, knowing God's design for marriage can change everything, whether we are single, divorced, married, or remarried.

The tag-line for this series is "when chemistry and character collide." Regardless of your marital status, character will take you places that just plain chemistry can't. Chemistry with the opposite sex happens naturally, but it is only the kindling that starts the fire. What keeps the fire ablaze into marriage is character. Godly character is the logs of the fire that keeps the love burning during the ups and downs of life.

As we journey through the book of Ruth, we are going to see how chemistry and character collide, how

doing the right thing matters, and how God can redeem any situation, even if it might seem hopeless. Our prayer is that this series will point to the God who can restore those of us who have drifted far from him, that we would experience forgiveness and restoration, and then turn around and live with a renewed commitment to follow Jesus. We hope going through the book of Ruth would give hope to the single, divorced or widowed. We hope you are reminded that it is God who sees, redeems, and gives us purpose. Finally, for those who are married, we pray that God would rekindle a fresh fire in your lives to put God at the center of your relationship.

Marriage is a dance. Like all relationships, there is a flow to it. In marriage there is an ebb and flow, push and pull, a learned dance over time. We begin to learn this dance in the dating relationship, where most of us will put our best foot forward, but then the dance can become more complicated as we take trust, loyalty, and selflessness to a whole new level in the covenant relationship of marriage.

This week Chad talked about the marriage dance in a message titled, "Wingman." Wingman refers to the way Boaz willingly spread his wings to protect and lift Ruth up. It is making a conscious effort to selflessly pour oneself out for another in the same way that God spreads his wings over us. We learn to be a wingman by following in the footsteps of Jesus, who is our refuge.

Let's read Ruth 2:1-12

What are the character qualities you see in Ruth?

What are the character attributes you see in the life of Boaz?

Boaz asks that God would repay and reward Ruth as she has chosen to take refuge under God's wings.

Why is this imagery so important?

G R O W

In relationships, it is of the utmost importance that we strive to be found "worthy" people. In the book of Ruth, we see both Boaz and Ruth referred to as "worthy," referring to their character attributes of faithfulness, loyalty, good will, self-sacrifice, and kindness. They noticed each other because both were looking for those qualities in a person. In particular, Ruth not only found a man of character who didn't try

to take advantage of her; she also found a man who was modeling Christ-like character.

As we watch their story unfold, it is no coincidence that this drama takes place on the threshing floor, where the grain was separated from the chaff. It is where the priceless grain was found and the chaff – the worthless outer shells – were tossed out. Marriage does the same thing to people: where God wants character and substance and not just hollow outer shells. Both Ruth and Boaz were people of substance.

Let's read Ruth 3:1-11

In Block, D. I. (1999). *Judges, Ruth* (Vol. 6, pp. 633-634) we see the significance of this moment and the symbolism in the eastern culture at the time.

Ruth requests that Boaz marry her. The idiom she used may be puzzling to the modern reader, but there was no question about its meaning in the Israelite context in which it was given. Literally *pāraś ānāp al* translates "to spread one's wing over." One recognizes immediately a play on 2:12, where *kēnāpīm*, "wings," had served as a metaphor for the refuge that Yahweh, the God of Israel provides. Accordingly, one's first impulse is to interpret this statement similarly. Ruth is hereby requesting (even demanding) that Boaz take her under his wing and assume responsibility for her security. But there is more to the demand than this. The word *kānāp* is gloriously ambiguous, referring not only to the wings of a bird but also to a skirt, the corners of one's flowing garments (hence NIV). Literally then this statement could be interpreted as a request by Ruth to Boaz to cover her and protect her from the chill of the night. He is not the only one shivering. But there is still more to the demand, for in common Hebrew usage "to spread one's wings over someone" was a euphemistic idiom for marriage. The gesture of a man covering a woman with his garment was a symbolic act, which according to Near Eastern custom signified "the establishment of a new relationship and the symbolic declaration of the husband to provide for the sustenance of the future wife." This is what Naomi had in mind when she proposed this scheme as a way of providing *mānôa*, "rest, security," for Ruth in 3:2. In essence she challenges Boaz to be the answer to his own invocation of blessing upon her in 2:12. Remarkably, Boaz interpreted this immediately not as a demand for sex but as a proposition for marriage, a conclusion supported by his response in vv. 10-13.

Following Naomi's advice, Ruth takes the risk to challenge Boaz. Her challenge to him: be the man that he wants God to be for Ruth. Ruth is asking for him to show her what a redeemer looks like. Men, we can't be all talk when it comes to God! In our actions, we must show we are men of God, too.

For the men, what are some actions we need to take to be men of character for our wives, future wives, or girlfriends?

What can you do to encourage men or a man in his role in relationships?

M O V E

Marriage is a dance on the threshing floor of life. It is a beautiful thing, but it can be painful when we are in the process of developing character. Just like a threshing floor, God uses marriage to separate the wheat from the chaff. God blesses us through marriage and at the same time uses it to make us holy. It breaks us down through pressure and weight, and then the winnowing fork separates the chaff. What is left is pure valuable grain. God desires for us to be pure, committed, and loyal.

Since we are focusing on the men this study, let's be a 'wingman' for the women in our lives. Let's demonstrate character, serve, and protect them.

Here is some homework for the men:

- ✓ Ask her what her passions and dreams are and how you can help serve her to get one step closer to them.
- ✓ Ask her what things she needs prayer for daily, and then consider putting a post-it note of how to pray for her on your bathroom mirror or some other place you look every day.

For the women:

- ✓ Encourage your husband or boyfriend anytime you see him lead the way to serve, pray, or show godliness. Notice him.
- ✓ Challenge him to lead a devotion for you both. Whether married or dating, this is so important.

Get some counsel: *We tend to treat our cars better than our own relationships. We take cars in for maintenance, but not our relationships. All individuals and couples need to make it a priority. At least once a year, meet with a godly counselor and get a check-up. Sometimes talking through your struggles can help you more than you know and might get your relationship back on track. Red Rocks Church has a resource list of local Christ-centered counselors. Just visit www.redrockschurch.com/resources and click on 'counseling' or talk with one of our Campus Pastors or Life Group Ministry Leaders.*

P R A Y

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

T O G O

Psalm 9:10

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.