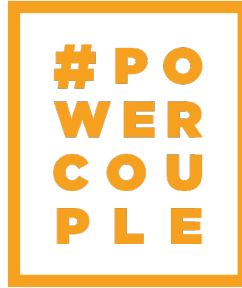


WHEN
CHARACTER



& CHEMISTRY
COLLIDE

#powercouple | *Which Way You Goin?* | Shawn Johnson | 3.4.17

LG Weekly

START

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

What was the worst compliment you ever received?

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.

This week Shawn made a statement that we intuitively know is true, but when we are facing difficult situations feels hard to believe. He said, *“Just because you don’t know what God is doing ... doesn’t mean He isn’t working.”* For the last three weeks we have walked through the story of Ruth and watched a woman of character deal head on with loss, fear, and insecurity by moving toward God in the struggle. Ruth did not see what was happening behind the scenes, but because she pursued what God might have for her, she was in a place where she could experience what God might have for her life.

Ruth had an opportunity to go back to what was familiar and start all over, but she did not return to the familiar or the comfortable; she changed her direction.

Read Ruth 4:13-15

Ruth was a living testimony to the goodness of God, as she went from a broken foreign widow to a cherished bride with a little son. What were some of the real hardships she faced?

Have you ever had a time where you didn’t know what God was doing? What was that experience like for you? Explain the challenges that experience brought up for you.

What is difficult for you personally, about changing directions?

G R O W

Think for a moment of the stories Ruth and Boaz could tell at the dinner table about how they met and what God did in their lives. What happened in their lives completely changed the family tree. Think about your own family tree right now. Some people will smile and think of how great your grandparents were, how they endured to provide a better life for your own parents and now you are the recipient of those sacrifices.

Others would rather forget about their family tree or feel embarrassed by decisions made by parents or step-parents.

We can't decide how we are brought into this world, but we can decide how we want to live once we are in it. Ruth and Boaz both made character filled-decisions that had God-sized implications for the future of their family tree. We are no different. We don't need to hide our family stories, but embrace who we are and move forward in faith. Those of us who know God should have the greatest of hope. What God is doing in our lives can forever change our family tree. Because of our faith-filled decisions, we can be history makers for future generations. Ruth and Boaz unknowingly became the great-grandparents of King David and generations after brought us the birth of a little boy named Jesus.

Read Ruth 4:18-22

What legacy do you hope to leave your family or those around you?

Has your faith in God inspired you to live differently than maybe the way you grew up?

M O V E

Ruth and Boaz experienced God's blessings as they made character and faith-filled choices. Their choices put them in a position to receive the blessing. It wasn't a formula to be blessed. The greatest blessing either of them received was to know and experience God in their lives. But their stories crossed paths and today are a testament to God's goodness. We don't control life, but we can choose how we want to live our lives. For Ruth, life seemed very out of control and she was faced with an important choice. When we read the book of Ruth, we can easily miss the life defining moment, but it is the lynch pin moment of the entire book. It is right there in front of us.

Let's read Ruth 1:11-16

Block, D. I. (1999). *Judges, Ruth* (Vol. 6, pp. 639-640) we see Ruth making a life defining decision:

Hearing Naomi's command to return to Moab for the fourth time and watching her sister-in-law head down the road, Ruth stood between a rock and a hard place. Would she choose her own people the Moabites and their god Chemosh with whom she was no doubt familiar, or would she cast her lot with

her mother-in-law and her alien kinsmen, and their God Yahweh, whom she knew only through the grid of Naomi's imperfect faith? The first act reaches its climax as she declares her answer in vv. 16-17.

The first words we hear from Ruth's lips alone are among the most memorable in all of Scripture. Few utterances in the Bible match her speech for sheer poetic beauty, and the extraordinary courage and spirituality it expresses.

Ruth and Orpah both experienced the same tragedy, heartache, emotions and pain. One chooses to go back to her people and the gods she is familiar with while the other makes a life-defining choice to move toward the one true God in completely unfamiliar territory. This move would prove to change her entire life and every future generation after her. This is why even today, we are reading the book of Ruth and not the book of Orpah.

When times get extremely difficult for you, what past habits, people, or mindsets are you tempted to run back to because they just seem familiar?

Being able to verbalize what you don't want to return to can really help you when making decisions. Is there a decision you need to make in which you need to choose to follow God and his leading over what might be familiar?

During this series, what is one thing that has impacted you most?

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 up 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

A 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

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...

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