



Singleness & Marriage

by Pastor Scott Boerckel

It is easy for our views about singleness and marriage to suffer from faulty presuppositions.

In this brief article, I hope to identify some of those faulty presuppositions and to offer a biblical alternative.

This will not be easy, since there are significant emotions attached to such personal matters. However, whether single or married, we need to understand God's design for our thriving so that we can avoid the idols of our own hearts.

The first faulty presupposition is that God wants me to be happy in my life. Children growing up in America develop a faulty view of God. Because we are so successful at controlling our environments and have the freedom to pursue almost any endeavor, we can falsely presume that God wants to make all our dreams come true. Christian Smith has described it as "Moral Therapeutic Deism."

This faulty view can be stated in five beliefs:

- There is a God who created earth and watches over it.
- God wants people to be nice, fair and good, as is taught in the Bible and most other religions.

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Inside this edition of the OakLeaf... Biblically speaking, singleness is neither inferior nor superior to marriage and vice versa. There are dangers to suggesting that there is only one ideal relationship status for the Christian adult. Married, single, or single-again we are all one family and equally valued members of Christ's body, the church, and each called to maximize our lives for the glory of God.



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- The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about yourself.
- God doesn't need to be involved in your life except when there's a problem that needs celestial performance enhancement.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

What this means is that we develop very early on in life a view that life is all about one's happiness. Things that do not produce immediate happiness are disparaged. Things that promote immediate happiness are valued.

But here's a surprise: God is not concerned about a person's individual happiness as much as He is concerned about His own glory and the individual's growth in glorifying God. That is why the Bible is filled with all sorts of statements and events which contradict the "God wants me happy" view. Jesus' statements in particular about self-denial, about suffering, and about giving away everything are designed to challenge this false presupposition that life is all about me and that I am supposed to be happy all the time. God can and does reprioritize our lives so that we can be filled with joy. But to say that God exists to make me happy is heresy. It is only as our view of happiness conforms to the glory and character of God can we say that God is concerned about our happiness.

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If people are rejecting even the idea of God, might it be because this view that God exists to bring all humans happiness runs so counter to reality? Our lives are not happy when Mom and Dad get divorced. Our lives are not happy when we flunk a test. Our lives

are not happy when we get sick. Our lives are not happy when . . . you get the idea. So, it is just a short and logical step, given the faulty presupposition, to conclude the following:

- 1) If an all-powerful God exists, He exists to make me happy.
- 2) I am not happy.
- 3) Therefore, an all-powerful God does not exist.

Christians all too often come into that breach of "unhappiness" with mindless platitudes that God will bring the happiness. If by "happiness," we mean the alleviation of all pain and problem and the coming of success that we dream of, the real God who is really there will not bring it . . . at least not how we expect it. When those expectations are dashed, that is a good thing. So the Christian who rushes to give "Jeremiah 29:11" to the unhappy person so that he will believe in God and so become "happy" is only pushing an idol.

A second faulty presupposition: marriage makes people happy. Despite all evidence to the contrary, lots of people continue to believe that marriage itself is happiness producing. Then, we are shocked to discover that when two selfish people, each interested in their own happiness, marry one another, the result is dismal. Marriage itself is not happiness producing. One can have a happy marriage; one can be happily married; BUT the happiness is not because of the marriage alone. Such things as self-sacrifice, unflagging commitment, loyalty and fidelity must also be present.

Let's put these two false presuppositions together and see what happens.

- 1) **God wants me happy.**
- 2) **Marriage makes people happy.**

Do you see why it is so easy to conclude a third wrong?

- 3) **God wants me to be married.**

Now, it may be true that God wants you to be married. But if your presuppositions for reaching that conclusion are wrong, you might be wrong about that too. So, when we see texts of scripture which tell us



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that marriage is good, we falsely believe that marriage being good means that I will be happy. Further, when we confront texts of scripture which tell us that it is good for some not to marry, we falsely believe that these scriptures are irrelevant, inapplicable, or somehow countermanded by a higher goal.

A third faulty presupposition: singleness makes people happy. Increasingly, marriage is being avoided in our culture and around the world. Since 1960, the percentage of never married American adults has doubled from 15% to 31%. People are marrying later in life, and many are avoiding marriage altogether. In many cases, this is because it is taking longer to identify a spouse. In other cases, people are marrying later and later out of fear that marriage will lead to unhappiness. Still others would love to marry, but finding a marriage partner has proven to be very difficult. The case that I want to address here, however, is the person who is avoiding marriage because they think that marriage will make them unhappy. Many young men seem to be avoiding marriage because they fear the responsibility of marriage will

diminish their happiness and freedom. Although the reasons are more complex, it appears that women likewise increasingly are avoiding marriage because it would diminish their happiness. For the single person who is actually seeking marriage, these growing numbers of young adults who are avoiding marriage present an even more complicated social landscape to navigate.

Practically, how does the smashing of these three false presuppositions affect how a Christian ought to live? I can think of three ways:

- 1) For the person who is married—Happiness may be a blessing of marriage, but it may not be. Do not assume that God does not want you to stay married if you are not happy. If you are married, God wants you to do everything in your power to preserve that marriage, for reasons that go far beyond your present happiness. If you think that God exists to make you happy and that marriage is supposed to be happiness producing, it will be so easy to find reasons for dissolving your marriage. Seek your joy in your Creator.
- 2) For the never married person—Happiness is not dependent upon your marital status. Neither marriage nor singleness in themselves bring happiness. Plus, your own view of what constitutes happiness likely needs conforming to the image of Jesus Christ. Do not rush to marriage thinking it will make you happy. If you do that, you are guaranteed disappointment. But, do not hold back from marriage out of fear that unhappiness might come. Most people are designed to marry. Do not fear it; God will indeed use marriage to shake out your selfishness. For those who desire marriage and have not found a spouse, it is okay to experience sadness and disappointment, but entrust yourself to your faithful Creator. His plan is for your ultimate good.
- 3) For the person who is divorced—Many people object to the view that God forbids a divorced person from marrying another partner on the basis of the two false presuppositions. Here are the questions that get asked, “How can you forbid a person happiness?” “God does not want us to be doomed to an unhappy life, does He?” As gently as I can, I want to remind us that God is bigger than our present happiness, that He exists for Himself, not for our happiness, that

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marrying someone else is no ticket to happiness, that if indeed the scriptures teach that a divorced person should not marry another, then that likely is ultimately the place of greatest happiness. There is no true happiness which is not aligned with the will of God. All other happiness is simply selfish ambition disguised very cleverly. So, let us not begin the divorce/remarriage debate with the false presuppositions that God wants everyone happy and that marriage is what brings happiness. Rather, let us seek earnestly what the texts of scripture say on the difficult topic, recognizing that God seeks to align our will with His, so happiness, singleness, and marriage are not ends in themselves but are means for us to know Him who is eternal life itself.

Without the new birth, it is impossible to get false presuppositions out of our thinking. The unbelieving world simply cannot live God's way. With the new birth, however, God empowers us not only to believe right things but to live the right way too. Happiness is never denied us, no matter our marital status, but in no case is happiness, as we may personally define it, promised. In all cases, the opportunities for glorifying God are just as real for you as for all other people. When we understand that, we will discover the joy of true happiness that is aligned with the will of God.

The focus of life must be God-centered. There is no true happiness apart from it. The LORD spoke to Jeremiah over 2500 years ago about finding our ground of true happiness in knowing God, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.'" *Jeremiah 9:23-24*

Undivided Devotion

by Bryon Phinney



My wife and I have ministered to the Church and the world together.

We have also had areas of ministry different from one another. When the areas of ministry are separate, our schedules and priorities sometimes conflict. This requires negotiation and sacrifice on one person's part, sometimes at the expense of that spouse's ministry.

I love being married and this is the life the Lord has assigned to Becky and me (1 Cor. 7:17). Our marriage has made our lives richer and more capable to be ministers of the Gospel in some respects. In other ways, marriage has made it necessary to change our plans. This is part of the balance between ministry and marriage that Paul describes.

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says those who are married have worldly troubles (vs. 28). Those who are married are also naturally more anxious about the things of the world (vs. 32-34). Paul also communicates a sense of urgency about this life in light of the need to spread the Gospel (vs. 31). His advice was this: if someone is single it is better to remain single; if married, they should act as if they are not (vs. 29).

Paul urges that we should have an "undivided devotion" to the Lord (vs. 35). Those who are single have a greater capacity for this kind of devotion. They are not encumbered with certain distractions or conflicts or obligations which come with being married. The need is urgent. The present form of this world is passing away (vs. 31) along with precious, eternal souls. For however long God plans for you, live single for the glory of God – an undivided, devoted life to our Lord, a life those of us who are married are unable to live.



Bryon Phinney serves in the Young Adult Ministry at East White Oak. He and his wife Rebecca host the young adults in their home every week. They are empty-nesters now that both Nathaniel and Abigail are in the career and family building stages of life. Abigail married Ben and they have introduced the first grandson to the family. Bryon works as a lead software engineer for State Farm. He also enjoys running, reading and woodworking.



Blessed and Single

by Sandy Way

When young I never imagined being single all my life. Presumably marriage and children were in my future. Little kids always delighted me.

In high school I had several male friends in choirs and other singing groups. I dated some but was not serious about anyone. In my sophomore year of college, I began dating a young man from my home church. We became good friends and wrote to each other daily. He and I were sure that we were in love. One evening, he invited me to his family's house for dinner. During the meal I watched as both his father and his brother berated their wives. I began to wonder how I would react in a similar situation and soon realized that I didn't have the maturity to deal with put-downs of that sort. At least not yet. **But, I was still in love with the idea of being married....someday.**

Years passed... Still single, one night I prayed telling God, "If You want me to be single, then take away this desire to be married!"

Later I yelled..."That's NOT the answer I wanted!"

Over the years I have often read and thought about the Apostle Paul's comments regarding marital status in 1 Corinthians. I had, however, never thought about singleness as a gift until I read this in The Message version.

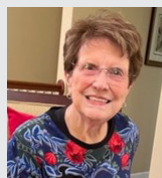
"God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others."(7:6)... "And don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there. God, not your marital status, defines your life." (7:17)

It's true, and God has blessed me in so many ways in my singleness. Through the years I've loved taking part

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in Bible studies, choirs, ABFs, and small groups. He gave me the ability and many wonderful opportunities to sing from the age of 3 to my late 50s. He's put children in my life through babysitting, loving and fun family relationships with nieces and nephews, teaching Sunday School, VBS, 16 years of summer day camp counseling at my home church, 2 years teaching/living at a home and school for homeless children in South Carolina, and teaching an additional 34 years in Indiana public schools. I am blessed with good friends and have many great relationships.

I'm thankful and blessed, indeed!



Sandra (Sandy) Way is a graduate of Taylor University, and taught school until retiring in 2004, then moved to Georgia to live with her twin sister. In December 2010 the two of them moved to

Bloomington to be near their other sister and her husband. Sandy has been a member of East White Oak for 12 years. She has served in Children's Ministry and thoroughly enjoys the small group that meets at her home. Her six nieces and nephews and their children are the love of her life. They are scattered across the country, but she likes sewing and has designed and created quilts for ten of the eleven great-nieces and nephews who have graduated from high school.



Thriving as a Single Christian

by Whitney Huettemann

Singleness is not punishment; it is a gift. Being single gives me extra time to serve the Kingdom of God. I am tethered only to Jesus.

I have the extra time to wholeheartedly prepare for the coming of my only certain Groom. My best life as a single person is maximizing my freedom with my time and resources to grow my faith and seek the interests of others.

To learn love, I had to make Jesus my first love. If the Lord has a spouse in my future, my love for him will be merely an image of God's love. The image of love that I may one day share with a husband cannot truly fill me. However, I am filled with God's undying love that overflows to other people. I grow in intimacy with Jesus in the quiet, secret places.

I don't need to earn my Heavenly Father or my earthly father's love. I am loved as I am. For years, I felt like a burden in my relationships. I didn't believe in redeeming love for myself. After years of therapy to reframe my mind, and sitting before God, I embraced God's love instead of pushing it away.

I worked through my past traumas so that my future would be free from the bondage of unhealed hurt. Deep wounds left to fester are certain to become obstacles to healthy future relationships.

I try not to escape my situation, rather to live alert and ready to serve others. Being soberminded and focused is hard for me because I am easily distracted. But when I am focused on the needs around me, I work hard.

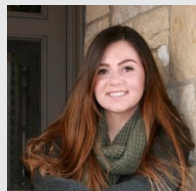
Being a nurse is challenging work that requires my attention, but it is rewarding work. Additionally, I like to go on international and local mission trips. Missions has taught me to open my eyes to hurting people.

After work, I have fun within the protective boundary lines of God's commands. I don't withhold good things from myself out of shame or pity. I enjoy my time learning new skills and hobbies to become more well-rounded. I do sports, read and write, and travel.

I like to focus on the good in front of me with gratitude, not complaining or worrying about what I don't have. Contentment is key. One good thing in front of me is my community of family and friends. My singleness can lead to isolation if I let it, so I choose to lean into God and my community.

I listen to the voice of truth. The Word of God and my inner circle encourage me not to settle for anything less than God's best. They keep me accountable. Moreover, my parents affirm my value and never pressure me to get married. This has given me the ability to wear singleness with confidence.

Jesus hears my desires and refines them. Marriage is one of my heart's desires, but I have yet to find out if this desire is the gift God has for me. Singleness or marriage, His gifts are always perfect. In the meantime, I get to spend my beautiful life growing closer to Jesus, serving others, and enjoying the journey.



Whitney Huettemann serves as a Registered Nurse at Martin Health Center of Westminster Villages. She graduated with her Associate's Degree in Health Sciences from Cornerstone University. Then she bridged to the University of Detroit

Mercy where she received her Bachelor's in Nursing degree. She is the daughter of Dr. Jeff & Jennifer Huettemann. She actively participates in East White Oak's young adult ministries, called The Bridge. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, spending time with her family and friends, and playing sports.



Navigating Marital Conflict

by Keith Studnicki

Even when couples strive to love one another, there's an abundance of ways that they can weaken their marriages.

Each spouse brings to the marriage a unique mix of expectations, sin, trauma, mental health challenges, etc., which can hinder wedded bliss.

Fortunately, God's power can be made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12).

Because every couple will face it, here are a few tips for navigating marital conflict:

- Humble yourselves and pray. Get the plank out of your eye before you try to get the speck out of someone else's (Matthew 7). We need to be open to feedback and accept personal responsibility. Admitting when we're wrong and repenting is essential to restoration.
- Listen, understand, and validate emotions even though emotions can sometimes pass quickly. Ignoring emotions can foster division. A wise mind recognizes emotions and combines them with logic in decision-making. Allowing others to be heard can relax their brain, leading toward situational resolution.
- Attack unresolved issues rather than each other. Remember you're on the same team.
- Have fun but don't avoid difficult topics. They'll generally remain unresolved without working through them. Be slow to speak and watch your tone and body language. When it's time, speak truth in love and kindness. Avoid comments like "you never, you always, etc."

We need to be open to feedback and **accept personal responsibility.** Admitting when we're wrong and repenting is essential to restoration.

- Respond to "bids for connection". These are subtle solicitations for attention or affection such as a smile, touch, or asking for advice. Don't miss these as they can renew emotional bonds and bring healing.
- If you're struggling to remain calm, take a break (approx. 20-30 mins). Research shows you're not going to effectively listen to your spouse if your heart rate is over 100 beats per minute.

If needed, don't hesitate to reach out for wise counsel. Working through challenges in a healthy manner rather than giving up is one way that Christians can demonstrate a renewed mind and can glorify our Father in heaven.



Keith Studnicki serves on the East White Oak Missions team. He is married to Lindsey, and they have four children. Keith is employed by State Farm as the Mental Health Consultant for the leadership team. He also serves at Truth in Love Counseling as a Licensed Clinical

Professional Counselor (LCPC). Keith enjoys hunting, learning, and watching the Chicago Cubs and Bears.



A Picture of a Godly Marriage

by Beth Ann Deal

Each for the other, both for the Lord. This expression was shared by a pastor and adopted by my parents early on in their marriage and was an expression shared and passed down through the years to myself and my two sisters, Pam and Allison.

We have watched it serve our parents well. It has exemplified a marriage to both honor and learn from in our own marriages, and now that of several married grandchildren.

My parent's met while in high school and despite dating others, they always seemed to end up back together. School dances, attending movies, 4-H, church youth activities, and driving around Steak 'n Shake (yes that was a thing!) were dating activities of the day! Both

While they began their marriage with very little but love... they would be quick to tell you how blessed they have been as they have grown closer to each other and to the Lord.

would tell you that they grew up in a great time in America when families were so happy to be reunited after WW2. The community of Danvers honored God and country, and while their family backgrounds were different their family values were similar.

Before my mom's senior year of high school, her family moved to Peoria. She then went on to attend Bradley while my dad, after attending Iowa State, farmed with his father, worked out East with cattle, and served in the Army Reserves. Despite long distances, they knew they were to be together and married on a warm late summer afternoon in 1961.

While they began their marriage with very little but love, they sought the Lord's wisdom and guidance and they would be quick to tell you how blessed they have been as they have grown closer to each other and to the Lord over these many years. And as a daughter, I would say I have been very blessed to watch God's faithfulness in their marriage over many of those years and to glean from it.

Here are a few takeaways.

Marriage is for keeps.

Through thick and thin, my parents taught us girls to love our husbands through the ups and downs, highs and lows, joys and sorrows of life. Marriage is a lifetime commitment to each other. Both of my parents would be quick to tell you that while marriage is challenging, by praying with each other and for each other daily and reading His Word together, God has been faithful. Both recognize that marriage is a covenant relationship, and when both husband and wife belong to the Lord, He is the one that keeps you together. Commitment keeps you together through hard moments and seasons.

Marriage requires shared goals.

My parents have had the same goal for their children, grandchildren, and now 3 great grandchildren—to all know and love the Lord. Growing up, we never missed church and serving the Lord within the church walls was something I witnessed my parents faithfully do. While living on little money as a newly married couple, they never went into debt and always had a financial plan. It was always stressed that our finances belonged to the Lord; we were to tithe and be good stewards of God's gifts. When I witness finances being one of the leading causes of divorce, I feel blessed to have the example set by my parents for shared goals spiritually, financially and other areas as well.



My parents have set for each of their children and grandchildren a picture of marriage that reflects the beautiful relationship between Christ and his church.



Marriage is enjoying time with one another.

Early on in my parents' marriage they enjoyed square dancing and a young married group at the church they attended. As the years went on they got involved in their daughters' church, school and 4-H activities and enjoyed being with other parents and families with similar interests. And now as empty nesters they enjoy spending time with family and friends, playing games, listening to sermons, reading, studying God's Word with their East White Oak small group, and wintering in Florida. They thoroughly enjoy each other's company, often laughing and reminiscing, and I love witnessing the "spark" they still have for one another.

Marriage is sacrificial.

I have witnessed both of my parents sacrificially serve the other at various times in their marriage be it through a health challenge, a relinquishing of one's way of thinking to do what the other one thought best, or a giving of their time and talent to support the other when needed. God and family always come first.

While not perfect, my parents have set for each of their children and grandchildren a picture of marriage that reflects the beautiful relationship between Christ and His church. Their example has brought a joy filled, secure, and God honoring way of life that is my prayer not only for my own marriage but for all marriages as we seek to live out....*Each for the other, both for the Lord.*



Beth Ann and husband Sam have been a part of East White Oak for 30 years. They have two children and two grandchildren. In her years at East White Oak, Beth Ann has taught Sunday School and Women's Bible Studies. She has also served on the Missions Team, Short term missions trips, Welcome Team, and Prayer Corp. Beth Ann recently retired as a high school math teacher and presently works for ISU supervising student teachers while also serving as a Substitute Teaching Leader for Bible Study Fellowship.



What if your marriage isn't what you expected?

by Susie Warren

Forty years ago I married the love of my life. Mark was a follower of Jesus. Jesus was the Lord of his life and not a casual relationship. He lived out his faith daily.

One of the first things he said to me was, "God is good!" We enjoyed a wonderful first year of marriage despite some strange physical anomalies that Mark was experiencing. After barely a year of marriage, our plans and dreams were crushed by the debilitating diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). The doctor told Mark he had 3-5 years.

One of my best friend's dad wrote to me and shared a passage from the book of Daniel 3:24-25 "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it, not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

After barely a year of marriage, our plans and dreams were crushed by the debilitating diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

He reminded me that while Mark and I were in a fiery trial God would walk with us step by step. Notice how it also says that they walked in the midst of the fire without harm. We can testify that Jesus has walked with us every moment of every day and protected us from harm.

Mark and I knew we did not want to live in anger, bitterness, and despair. Together we turned to hymns and music to fill our hearts with praise.

Early in our grief, I asked Mark if he ever felt like running away from God. Mark thoughtfully answered that every time he ran away, he ran right into Jesus. Mark quoted John 6:68 "Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.'"

Looking back we can identify the countless ways God provided protection and supplied every physical, financial, and emotional need. Phil. 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Mark never considered giving up. God's power and promises are evident and true. 2 Peter 1:3-4 "... for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine na-



Our circumstances have not been what we expected, but we have the marriage we always wanted.

ture, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.”

Mark and I knew we did not want to live in anger, bitterness, and despair. Together we turned to hymns and music to fill our hearts with praise. The Imperials sang that God inhabits our praise. God has used the last 40 years to teach us that in our weakness He is strong. 2 Cor. 12:9 “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

God has also shown us that this life, full of affliction, is only seconds in light of eternity. 2 Corinthians 4:17 “For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison . . .”

Our circumstances have not been what we expected, but we have the marriage we always wanted. I admit I am the difficult one. Mark has grown to be very forgiving. He forgives me before I ask for forgiveness or sometimes ready to receive it. Mark has saved 100 plus unique messages on his communication device

expressing his love for me which also reminds me of how much more Jesus loves me. Our trials have revealed gifts we didn’t know we possessed or would have chosen. Our trials have connected us and blessed us with people we would have never encountered otherwise. Our trials have given us an eternal focus knowing that not only have we been redeemed but God will redeem “the years that the locust have eaten . . .” (Joel 2:25). What Satan meant to steal, kill, and destroy, God meant for our good and His glory. To God be the glory!



Susie Warren is a devoted wife to Mark and dedicated caregiver to both him and her parents. She will retire in May 2024 after a fulfilling 40-year career as an elementary Special Education Teacher and Academic Interventionist. Her spiritual journey has deepened through engaging in Precept Bible Studies taught by Lynny Wegman.

Small Groups Strengthen Marriages

In the world today, we face trials of all kinds when it comes to the sins that are attempting to infect our marriages. We have broken families with divorce rampant, causing devastating effects for a lifetime to come.

There is abuse, both physical and emotional. For some, marriages are being idolized, and for others, marriages have become separatistic, withdrawing away from society. The roles have been redefined due to the rise of feminism. Marriage is seen as conditional, lasting only as long as feeling. Our orientation is being redefined as marriage is no longer between a man and a woman.

Sounds bleak, doesn't it? So, what must we do to strengthen our marriages amidst these trials? First, we pray and praise the Lord that the power of Christ is enough to conquer all. Second, we look to the church for a pathway toward maturity. Did you know that we have almost 100 married couples in East White Oak Small Groups who would say this is a perfect place to strengthen your marriage?

Let's hear from them! Here are just a few of the dozens of comments we received:

"We've strengthened our marriage through studies with other like-minded couples. We've "done life" with our Small Group and built life-long friendships. It's comforting to know you have other God-centered couples praying for you, your marriage, and your family." - Jesse and Kristi Baird

"We get to meet new people and spend time praying for each other. It has also given us a place to share our deepest hurts. All these things help us grow closer to each other and God."
- Herb & Georgia Steffen

"Small Group has focused my wife and I on God and his Word. We are getting into the 4-in-1 Bible plan this year." - Dan & Heidi Lancaster

"One great thing about being in a married Small Group is being able to all pray together for each other's family." - Dan & Janna Gott

"Our Small Group Bible study has strengthened our relationship with each other and God."
- Russ & Mary Jo Waller

"We feel better equipped and supported as parents of littles through our Small Group."
- John & Gina Turton

"By joining a couples Small Group, we have gained new friendships with others our age, and more importantly, some great prayer partners."
- Troy & Becky Shealy

We are so thankful for each couple strengthening their marriage by being in a Small Group! Perhaps today is the day for you to join a Small Group at East White Oak. Don't let the trials and sins that are attempting to infect our marriages stop you. Talk to me anytime you want to join a group or sign up online.

— Pastor Justin



**Sharing the joys, struggles,
and sorrows of life with one another.**

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