

Grace Groups – It's Complicated: Marriage (weeks 1–2 Group Guide)

Leader Reminder These questions are a tool, not a checklist. Please **pick and choose** the ones that best serve your group. You will not cover them all. The order of importance in your group is:

1. **Prayer** (seek God together)
2. **Connection** (share life and listen well)
3. **Questions** (engage Scripture and sermon themes) Do not sacrifice prayer and connection in order to rush through content.

WEEK 1 — MARRIAGE IS A METAPHOR

Text: Ephesians 5:21–33

Theme: God uses marriage as a word picture to help us understand His love for us in Christ.

Warm-Up Share a time when something complex was explained to you using a metaphor or picture. Why was that helpful? Leader Note: Keep this light. Everyday examples are better than spiritual ones at this point.

Dig Deeper

1. Paul says this passage is ultimately about Christ and the Church (v.32), not just marriage. Why do you think God chose marriage as one of His primary metaphors for revealing Himself? Leader Note: Help the group see that God meets us in what we already understand.
2. Marriage shows God's UNITY. Read Ephesians 5:31 and John 17:20–21. How does the "two becoming one" in marriage point to God's desire for unity among His people? Leader Note: Emphasize that unity is not sameness but shared purpose and love.
3. Marriage shows God's SACRIFICE. Read Ephesians 5:25 and Romans 5:8. What stands out to you about how Christ's love is described? How is sacrificial love different from emotional or conditional love? Leader Note: Reinforce that biblical love is something we give, not just something we feel.
4. Marriage shows God's COMMITMENT. Read Ephesians 5:28–30 and Matthew 28:20. Why is perseverance such a powerful witness to the world? What does it tell us about God? Leader Note: Be careful here—this is descriptive, not prescriptive. Avoid placing pressure on painful marriages.

Application • Where have you seen Christian unity (or disunity) shape how others view God? • What is one way you can practice sacrificial love toward another believer this week?

Prayer Focus Thank God for revealing Himself through Jesus. Pray that Grace United would display unity, sacrifice, and commitment in a way the world can understand.

WEEK 2 — LET'S GET NAKED

Text: Genesis 2:25; 3:7–21

Theme: We were created to be fully known and fully loved, but sin brought hiding and shame. God pursues us and covers us with His love.

Warm-Up Have you ever had a dream where you were exposed or unprepared? What emotions came with it? **Leader Note:** This introduces vulnerability without requiring personal disclosure yet.

Dig Deeper

1. Read Genesis 2:25. What do you think it means that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed—not just physically, but relationally and spiritually? **Leader Note:** Highlight safety, openness, and trust.
2. Read Genesis 3:7. How did sin immediately affect the way humans related to themselves, each other, and God? **Leader Note:** Help the group see that hiding—not violence—was the first result of sin.
3. Fig leaves represent self-protection. Where do you see “fig leaves” in modern relationships or church culture? **Leader Note:** Normalize the instinct to hide without excusing it.
4. Read Genesis 3:8–10 and 3:21. What do these verses reveal about God’s heart toward people who are hiding in shame? **Leader Note:** Emphasize that God seeks before we repent and covers before we clean ourselves up.
5. Gospel Connection Read Galatians 3:27 and Romans 5:8. How does Jesus being stripped and sacrificed change how we understand shame, vulnerability, and love? **Leader Note:** Keep the focus on grace, not self-improvement.

Application • Where are you tempted to hide instead of being honest—with God or with others? • Who could be a safe, trusted person to practice biblical vulnerability with?

Prayer Focus Thank Jesus for fully knowing us and fully loving us. Pray for courage to step out of hiding and for Grace United to be a place of truth, safety, and restoring love.

Closing Leader Encouragement

These conversations may surface pain, shame, or strong emotions. Create space for grace. Your role is not to fix, but to point people to Jesus—the One who pursues, covers, and never walks away.