

WEEK 2: Happily Never After

FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

- ✓ Start your group discussion with the “Check-in” question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week’s application challenge.
 - ✓ Review the “Big Idea” to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week’s message and focus your group’s discussion towards a clear direction.
 - ✓ Read this week’s scripture passages together and guide your group through the “Discuss” questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week’s message.
 - ✓ Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in “Apply”. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the needs & dynamics of your group.
- NOTE:** You do not have to cover all the questions provided in “Discuss” and “Apply”.
- ✓ Connect with God together as a group through this week’s “prayer practice”, which can be in the form of a prayer exercise or some guidance on what to pray for in relation to the message or application.

CHECK-IN	Did God show you the names of people in your life to whom He wants you to show love? What are some ways you’ve expressed love to them?
BIG IDEA	<p>If you want to enjoy the good life and experience a happy life, we must improve our social relationships. Very often our relationships are harmed because of unhealthy expectations. These expectations were formed from our God-given desires for respect, admiration, companionship, acceptance, intimacy, sex and love, among others. Our expectations can shape our reality and change our lives, both emotionally and physically. We often live with idealized images of others and experiencing a lot of disappointments. The good news is that God gives grace for reality, not for illusion or temporary fascination.</p> <p>There are four types of expectations we create in our relationships that ultimately collide and cause confusion and chaos. During the process of collision, we may tend to navigate towards either leaving, conquering, conforming or compromising with others. However, Jesus shows us a more excellent way to deal with people in our relationships through mutual submission to one another out of reverence and love for God.</p> <p><u>Facilitation Strategies:</u></p> <p>Although the illustration used for the message is marriage, modify the questions to include your members’ circumstances. <i>Meet your group where they are.</i> If your group is primarily made up of singles, this sermon can still be applicable! These discussion questions touch on God’s design for healthy marriages. So change the wording of the questions accordingly. How do these questions fit in the context of a dating relationship or a future marriage?</p>



<p>DISCUSS</p>	<p>Read Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 2:21- 3:1.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What should our motivation be for submitting to one another?2. Meditate on what Christ has done for you and how that impacts the way you relate to your spouse, family or others.3. How have the following affected your your expectations going into marriage or relationships? What pictures of marriage have you tried to imitate or avoid? (TV or movies, books or magazines, your parents' marriage(s), other marriages)4. Pastor Samuel discussed that when desires for marriage turn into expectations, conflicts ensue. Four common responses to conflict in marriage: We run. We conquer. We conform. We compromise. Do you find yourself doing any of these?5. God designed marriage so that He could tangibly express His love for you. How does this truth change your understanding of marriage? How does it make you feel to know that God has designated you to be the primary instrument of change to reflect His love for your spouse?
<p>APPLY How do we respond to God's teaching in meaningful ways? What might God ask of us in mind, spirit, or actions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Now list 2-3 things that you might owe God if He were to take a debt/debtor approach with you. How has being free from obligation to God changed you? How might being free from obligation in a relationship affect that relationship?2. In what ways might you be guilty of parenting your spouse by trying to manage his/her behaviour? What are the fears associating with letting go of your spouse's obligations to you?3. What are the benefits of freeing your spouse from your expectations?4. For singles: how can you apply these principles in your life, now?
<p>PRAYER PRACTICE</p>	<p>If you are in couples' group, have members pray with their spouses. If you are in a mixed or singles' group, pray for each other in terms of current and future relationships. Use this time to apply the message - basically, pray over some of the things discussed today: freedom from expectations, and responding to one another in love.</p>

