

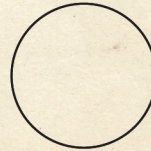
FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

FIVE COMMITMENTS TO FAIL PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE

DEVOTIONAL - WEEK 1



SEEK GOD



A long healthy marriage comes from seeking God—both individually and together. Over the next five days you'll focus on the importance of seeking God in your marriage and find practical ways you can seek Him.

Day 1: Matthew 22:34-40

God is your “one” and your spouse is your “two.” You'll never be fulfilled in life until you seek and meet the “one.” God is the only one that can bring true fulfillment.

Talk: Share a time when God felt very real to you.

Pray: Pray that both of you will develop a renewed passion for God.

Do: Briefly write your story of how you came to know Christ as your Savior and then share your stories with each other.

Day 2: Matthew 6:25-34, Jeremiah 17:5-8

You must seek the “one” with your “two.” Not only should you spend time alone with God daily, but you should also spend time with God together.

Talk: What things keep you from seeking God? What are some ways you can remove those distractions?

Pray: Ask God to help you remove the things that are keeping you from seeking God both individually and together.

Do: Agree on a time you will seek God together each day through reading the Bible and praying together.

Day 3: 2 Chronicles 7:11-18

To seek God together you must pray together. Sure, it can be awkward to pray together at first, but consider this: it's hard to pray with someone you're mad at. It's harder to want a divorce from someone you're praying with. It's even more difficult to have an affair when you're seeking God together.

Talk: What things in your marriage do you want to bring before God in prayer?

Pray: Pray about those things you discussed with your spouse about your marriage.

Do: Make a list of things you prayed about. Keep this list in a place where it will remind you to pray together. Feel free to add to your list as things come to mind.

Day 4: John 1:1-18, Psalm 119:97-112

To seek God together as a couple, you must read God's Word together. God is woven into every area of your life. To realize and understand that fact, you must start with reading the Bible daily because it is through His Word that God speaks to us.

Talk: Why is it important to read the Bible together? What should that look like for your marriage?

Pray: Pray for God to give you both the discipline to pray and read His Word together every day.

Do: Pick one of your favorite Bible verses or passages and read it aloud to your spouse.

Day 5: James 4:1-8, Proverbs 3:1-6

Not only are praying and reading God's Word vital steps toward seeking God together, but you must also worship together and create your own spiritual traditions. More importantly, you must do life together with God as a couple.

Talk: What should it look like for your family to do life together with God? What types of spiritual traditions should you start or revisit?

Pray: Pray that God will reveal Himself to each of you in the details of your life because it's easier to seek God when you believe you will see Him.

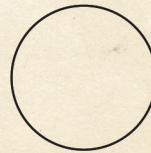
Do: Go on a walk outside together and worship God by enjoying His creation.



SEEK GOD



FIGHT FAIR



All married couples fight. That's a fact of life, but to have a long and healthy marriage you must learn to fight fair. This week you will read about and discuss with your spouse ways you can fight fair.

Day 1: Proverbs 18:1-13

When it comes to fighting within your marriage, it's not if you will fight, but how you will fight. You must learn to fight fair. In fact, God has given us rules about how to fight fair in the Bible. One of the most important rules is to always stop and listen carefully to your spouse during an argument.

Talk: Recall your first fight and discuss how your fights have changed since then.

Pray: Ask God to grow your ability to listen and to instill patience within you.

Do: This week, take turns listening to one another. Allow your spouse to share whatever they want and listen without interruption as they share.

Day 2: Ephesians 4:25-32, James 3:1-12

God's Word tells us that the tongue is a powerful weapon. In fact, the tongue is described in Proverbs as being as sharp as a double-edged sword. As a result, you must guard your words faithfully when you fight fair.

Talk: Compare how each of your families dealt with conflict while growing up and share how that shaped the way you handle conflict.

Pray: Ask God to give you the right words to say to your spouse when you fight fair. Ask Him also to help you speak life-giving words to your spouse at all times.

Do: Express your love to your spouse by writing a note of encouragement and sending it to them via letter, text, or email.

Day 3: Ephesians 5:21-33, James 1:19-27

In order to fight fair you must handle your anger righteously. Reacting with only your emotions will escalate your fight. Instead, be slow to anger as the Bible says in James 1:19 because it will lead to resolution and healing.

Talk: Discuss with your spouse the best way and time to approach each other when addressing an issue in your marriage.

Pray: Ask God to reveal to each of you times where you haven't fought fair and to help you restore any damage to your marriage caused by these fights.

Do: Create a simple list of ground rules based upon what you've learned from God's Word to use when you fight. Keep this list in a place where both of you can see it to remind you how to fight fair.

Day 4: 1 Peter 3:8-12, Romans 12:9-21

Married couples that fight fair work towards resolution. Couples that do not fight fair press for victory. When we confront each other, we should always confront to bring about healing and never to win.

Talk: Recall one of the silliest things you've fought about in your marriage. Why do you think couples so often fight about silly things?

Pray: Ask God to reveal your faults when it comes to fighting with each other and ask Him to help you improve in those areas.

Do: If you've recently experienced something good in your marriage, then be intentional today about celebrating it. Feel free to be creative in how you celebrate. If you feel you have nothing recent to celebrate, then celebrate something good from your past and talk about how that moment affected your marriage.

Day 5: Matthew 18:21-35

When you fight fair, you both must be willing to apologize and forgive each other. By doing so you will be able to quickly put the hurt behind you and move towards a resolution and restoration.

Talk: Discuss some of your recent fights. Apologize to each other for your unfair words and actions. Take time to forgive each other as well.

Pray: Ask God to help you forgive and to have a heart of forgiveness.

Do: Show how much you love and appreciate your spouse by doing something special for them today.

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

FIVE COMMITMENTS TO FAIL PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE

DEVOTIONAL - WEEK 3



SEEK GOD



FIGHT FAIR



HAVE FUN



One of the most important things you must do to have a long and healthy marriage is to simply have fun. Even though you will endure tough times as a couple, you should always strive to find ways you can have fun and keep the romance as strong as it was the day you walked down the aisle. This week you will read about and discuss the importance of having fun and the types of fun every couple can enjoy.

Day 1: Ecclesiastes 9:7-10, Proverbs 17:22

Without fun and intimacy marriage becomes a business relationship. It's simply two people existing in the same house with two separate lives. No one falls in love having a bad time or being bored. Fun is not a luxury in marriage. If you don't make time for fun, you may not have a marriage to make time for.

Talk: What things are keeping you from having fun? Discuss ways you both can remove these barriers.

Pray: Ask God to help you remove the things that are keeping you and your spouse from having fun together.

Do: Go on a date night tonight or work together to plan a date night for one night this week. Make a commitment to stick to the plan!

Day 2: Song of Solomon 4:1-16, Song of Solomon 7:1-9

The Bible shows us that there are three types of fun every married couple must enjoy. The first is to spend time face-to-face talking with each other. Remember those days when you would stay up to 2:00am talking? Strive to bring back that type of conversation. Don't spend your time always talking about your busy schedules, things to do, and frustrations. Talk about the things that are most important in your lives and marriage. Compliment each other and build each other up with your words. Express your love through words like we find in the Song of Solomon.

Talk: Talk about how you felt the first time you met your spouse and share with them the reasons why you fell in love with them.

Pray: Thank God for the qualities you love most about your spouse. Pray that God will continue to develop those qualities even more.

Do: Play a game together today and enjoy a time of conversation as you play.

Day 3: Song of Solomon 7:10-13

Another type of fun all married couples should enjoy is to spend time together. How can you expect your marriage to grow if you don't spend time together? Husbands crave activity time with their wives. In fact, husbands are more likely to open up when they are doing something with their spouse that they enjoy. More importantly, spending time together can allow time for good face-to-face conversation.

Talk: Discuss the things you both enjoy doing most. Talk about how your interests have changed over the years.

Pray: Ask God to give you opportunities to spend more time together as a couple. Thank Him for all the great times you've already enjoyed together.

Do: Do something spontaneous with your spouse today such as going on an unexpected lunch or dinner, going on a drive to revisit some of your favorite places, or going on a walk together.

Day 4: Proverbs 5:1-23

The third type of fun that all married couples must enjoy is intimacy. Sex and intimacy within a marriage are vital components to having a healthy marriage. Many studies have shown that couples stray away from their marriage when intimacy is not present, as they attempt to find it elsewhere. It's important to keep that passionate fire burning that you felt at the beginning of your marriage going throughout the rest of your lives together.

Talk: Discuss ways you can spice up your marriage and improve your intimacy.

Pray: Ask God to help make intimacy a priority in your marriage.

Do: Implement one of the ideas you discussed about how to improve intimacy in your marriage.

Day 5: Revelation 2:4-5, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Do you remember what it was like when you first met your spouse and the indescribable feelings you had at that time? Do you still have those same feelings today that you did then? Chances are your feelings are still strong for your spouse, but probably not at the same intensity they were in the early days. To get what you once had, you have to do what you once did. Think back to the romantic things you did in the early days and strive to bring those back into your marriage.

Talk: Share with your spouse the top five things you love most about them.

Pray: Thank God for all the fun you've had in your marriage and ask Him to help you have even more in the years to come.

Do: Spend some time looking at old photos or videos of your wedding or photos of your early days as a couple. Have fun reminiscing together.

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

FIVE COMMITMENTS TO FAIL PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE

DEVOTIONAL - WEEK 4



SEEK GOD



FIGHT FAIR



HAVE FUN



STAY PURE



Purity is absolutely vital to having a long and healthy marriage. Too often it is lack of purity that causes marriages to fail. This week you will learn the importance of purity in your marriage and discuss ways you can ensure your marriage remains pure.

Day 1: Hebrews 13:1-8

God's Word is very clear about purity. You must keep yourself pure so that your marriage can remain pure. You must not allow toxins into your life that can tarnish your purity and destroy your marriage.

Talk: Confess to your spouse something in your life that you've placed ahead of your spouse and God.

Pray: Ask God to help you remove those things that are distracting you from focusing on your spouse and that could bring impurity into your marriage.

Do: Give up something this week that you love as a sign of your commitment to purity in your marriage.

Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Romans 13:12-14

Unfortunately, the amount of impurity is growing in marriages and causing an increasing number to break apart. Studies show there are three primary reasons for the increase in impurity. First, there are more temptations today than in the past thanks largely to such technologies as texting, social media, and the many websites dedicated to pornography. Second, people are getting married later in life. Finally, there is a growing sense of entitlement causing people to justify such things as living together before marriage, viewing pornography, or even having affairs. Because these and other factors make it easier to lose your purity before and during marriage, it's vital that you do not compromise and put yourself at risk.

Talk: Ask your spouse: how are we compromising and putting ourselves at risk when it comes to purity?

Pray: Ask God to protect your marriage from all impurity and to help you address any at-risk issues there may be in your marriage.

Do: Write a short love letter to your spouse today and find a creative way to give it to them.

Day 3: Ephesians 5:1-21

There are two types of purity everyone must focus on. The first is outward purity, which is the way in which you behave. Think about this: if your spouse were to watch a video of the way you behaved for an entire day, would they be proud or disappointed? Does the way you dress reflect purity? Does the way you talk reflect purity? Does what you look at or watch reflect purity?

Talk: Ask each other this question: What outward changes do you need to make to reflect a life of purity?

Pray: Ask God to convict you of any outward changes you need to make and to help you make those changes as you both strive for purity.

Do: Find a new or fun recipe and cook something together. While you cook, enjoy some great conversation.

Day 4: Psalm 119:1-16

The second type of purity everyone must focus on is inward purity. This type of purity refers to the condition of your heart. In fact, if you are struggling with outward purity, it's likely the result of a lack of inward purity. Inward purity begins in your heart through a relationship with Christ, and you maintain inward purity by nurturing and continually growing your relationship with Him. Inward purity is also the result focusing your mind and thoughts on Christ and not on things that are impure. Be passionate about pleasing God and living a life of total purity, both inside and out.

Talk: Share with your spouse the current condition of your heart. Discuss what things both of you need to do in order to maintain inward purity.

Pray: Ask God to help both of you make inward changes you need to make in order to have a pure heart.

Do: Publicly express your love for your spouse today. A great way to do so would be to post something positive about your spouse on Facebook or Twitter or to speak well of them in front of others.

Day 5: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Colossians 3:1-25

When impurity enters into a marriage, the results can be devastating. Take a moment today to visualize the wake of destruction that would result if you were impure in your marriage. Visualize explaining to your kids, visualize losing your reputation, visualize losing the respect of your spouse and family, visualize breaking the heart of God, and visualize one day meeting God and giving an account of your actions. Do everything you can to stay pure. Your marriage depends on it!

Talk: Ask your spouse to share with you one way that you can be more present in your marriage.

Pray: Spend time praying for each other today. Pray that God will give you the desire to remain pure at all costs.

Do: Give your spouse a hug or a kiss every time you see them today.

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

FIVE COMMITMENTS TO FAIL PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE

DEVOTIONAL - WEEK 5



SEEK GOD



FIGHT FAIR



HAVE FUN



STAY PURE



NEVER GIVE UP

Marriage is not easy. Do you remember your vow of loving each other for better or for worse? You are guaranteed to face tough times together as a couple, but you cannot give up when times get tough. It's not an option. This week you will read from God's Word about the importance of not giving up in your marriage and discuss ways you can do this in your marriage.

Day 1: Matthew 5:31-32, Mark 10:1-12

It seems many married couples have lost their will to fight. We see evidence of this in the growing divorce rate. God's Word tells us divorce should never be an option. When times get tough in your marriage, the word "divorce" should never enter into your vocabulary. Your marriage is worth fighting for. Never give up!

Talk: Discuss with your spouse how you've seen divorce impact your family and the families of those you know.

Pray: Ask God to help remove the word divorce from your vocabulary and give you both the will and determination to never give up when times get tough.

Do: Look up your wedding vows or find some vows online that you both like and recite them to each other. Take time to write new vows that will help shape the vision for the future of your marriage.

Day 2: Ephesians 6:10-20, John 10:7-10

God never promised us an easy life. As followers of Christ, we will face difficult times. The same goes for our marriages. We have a spiritual enemy whose purpose according to John 10:10 is to steal, kill, and destroy. Our spiritual enemy wants to take you out and he would love nothing more than to take your marriage out as well. Just knowing the fact that your marriage will be attacked will help you fight for your marriage.

Talk: Discuss with your spouse some of the ways you feel your marriage is under spiritual attack.

Pray: Ask God to help you recognize when your marriage is under attack and guide you on the best ways to fight for your marriage.

Do: Work on a simple project together or do one of your chores together. As you work together, enjoy a time of quality conversation.

Day 3: Nehemiah 4:1-23

Family is worth fighting for. Your marriage is worth fighting for. Don't give up when times get tough and instead do as Nehemiah said, "...fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." If you are heading towards divorce, fight against it. If your relationship with your spouse is strained, fight against it and seek restoration. If you've been hurt by your spouse and you're holding a grudge, fight against it. Let that grudge go and forgive them.

Talk: Admit any grudges you have with your spouse and forgive them. Discuss those areas of your marriage that need restoration.

Pray: Ask God to equip you with the tools you need to fight for your marriage when it comes under attack.

Do: Commit to staying actively involved in reading God's Word together and praying together by choosing a new reading plan or devotional to begin next week.

Day 4: Titus 2:1-10, 1 Peter 5:1-5

When it comes to growing your marriage and fighting for your marriage, you can't do it alone. You need other married couples mentoring both of you. Allowing a more mature, wiser couple to speak into your marriage during both the good and bad times is essential to having a long and healthy marriage.

Talk: Discuss these questions with your spouse: who are some couples that you admire for their strong marriage? What can we learn from them?

Pray: Ask God to bring the right couples into your life that will help grow your marriage.

Do: If you don't have a couple mentoring your marriage, decide with your spouse on a couple you can approach to ask to become your marriage mentors. If you already have marriage mentors, do something special for them today to thank them for the positive influence they have on your marriage.

Day 5: Matthew 19:1-6, Genesis 2:4-25

Over the past few weeks you've learned from God's Word how to fail proof your marriage by doing these five things: seeking God, fighting fair, having fun, staying pure, and never giving up. Sure, these five things sound easy to do, but it will take a lot of work from both of you, but your marriage is worth it. Don't let your marriage become part of rising statistics. Remember that God placed you together just as He placed Adam and Eve together in Genesis 2. You were designed to complement each other, to be companions, to love each other, and to carry out God's divine will for your marriage and your lives.

Talk: Discuss what next steps you need to take in order to ensure that you continue to grow and protect your marriage.

Pray: Thank God for all you've learned about each other and your marriage over the past few weeks. Ask Him to help guide the next steps you take towards a long, healthy marriage.

Do: Do something special to express your love to your spouse and your devotion to ensuring that your marriage lasts for a lifetime.