



First Comes Love

How to build marriages & relationships that last

SERIES OVERVIEW

Divorce rates in the US have long been startling. About 40-50% of all first marriages end in divorce. Within the church, unfortunately, the data looks little different. However, statistics and numbers often obscure the *people* behind them: the upended lives, the devastated children, the shattered families... What our culture paints as normal – divorce – is actually a tremendous contributor to the brokenness of our world, and it's something we must take seriously if we want to demonstrate Christ's self-giving love to our neighbors.

In this series, we are going to explore just four verses in Romans 12 in which the Apostle Paul calls Christ-followers to adopt several core, Christlike attitudes in our relationships. Although the passage is not specifically about marriage, what we will see is that it contains profound truths which can help marriages at Grace tell a different story. Not just reversing the statistics, but demonstrating through our covenant faithfulness that there is another way to live.

WEEK 1 - YOUR MARRIAGE IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR OVERVIEW

When it comes to marriage, many Christ-followers have lost the plot. With a multi-billion-dollar wedding industry commodifying romance, a flood of TikTok influencers offering quick fixes for relationships, and dating apps promising to help people find "the one," we have too often bought the lie that marriage should be passionate, fulfilling, fun, easy, and adventurous at all times. If they fail to live up to those standards, we begin to consider other options.

Scripture, however, paints a far different picture of marriage. In it, the focus is not *romance* or *passion*, but **covenant faithfulness**. This is not a feeling; it's a posture. Covenant faithfulness is a dedication to doing whatever is necessary to make our relationships last, especially the ones in which we have made a covenant before God, like marriage. In this message, we will explore what it looks like to set yourself aside for the sake of your spouse, recognizing that although this posture takes a lot more work and effort, it is the key to true, lifelong love. Covenant faithfulness is also, in fact, the key to deeper joy and fulfillment in marriage than anything our quick-fix culture has to offer. As Paul says elsewhere, "Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up" (Galatians 6:9). Your marriage is worth fighting for.

*Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them.
Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.*

Romans 12:9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can there be different kinds of love? Describe the different kinds. (see also [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#))
2. Read [Romans 12:9-12](#).
 - a. What would be the difference between pretending to love others and really loving them?
 - b. What does it look like to "let your love be genuine" for couples? For any relationship?
3. Read [Malachi 2:14](#) (NRSVA) What is "covenant faithfulness"?
4. Do you treat your marriage relationship like God treats his relationship with us? In what ways?
5. How would Grace Church be different if every married couple and every single of Grace practiced agape love?