

## Fight of Your Life | Fight for Your Spouse

Petie Kinder | 2 Samuel 6:14-22

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Aaron Brockett: Hey guys, I just want to take a minute and celebrate all that God did at Easter last weekend. We had over 15,000 people in attendance at all of our campuses. We had 1,200 people who served in various roles all the way from the parking lot to greeting guests at the door, helping people find seats, serving our kids in Kids' Ministry, and everybody else behind the scenes. I just want to genuinely thank you. Without all of you serving, there's no way that we could do what we do.

Some of you might be like, "Well, why are we making such a big deal about the numbers?" We're not making a big deal about the numbers, but we do celebrate all that God did because every number has a name and a story, and those names and those stories matter to us, so I genuinely want to thank you.

I know the number that many of you have been asking about is child sponsorships. How many kids did we sponsor?

Well, just to give you a little bit of a recap for those of you who maybe weren't here, we have a partnership with Stadia and Compassion International. Last year at the end of the year, we told you that we wanted to plant four churches in Peru, and then Compassion originally asked us to sponsor 800 kids in Peru. We thought we could do more than that, so that number got increased to all 3,000, and when we decided to do child sponsorships on Easter, we thought that we could do more than 3,000. So we decided to take on the nation of Brazil as well for a total of 7,000 kids.

Well, we didn't quite get 7,000, but we did sponsor 5,000 kids last weekend, which I think is absolutely phenomenal.

We heard some amazing stories last week of people sponsoring more than one child, families going in on it together, and I just want to thank you for being joyful in your generosity. Because of you, there are 5,000 children whose lives changed last weekend, so thank you so much.

Well, today we're beginning a brand-new series that I'm really excited about called *The Fight of Your Life*. We're going to be looking at King David's story in the Old Testament and talking about how important it is for us to fight for the people who we love instead of against them.

I'm in Louisville today speaking and so our very own Petie Kinder is going to kick off this series. I cannot wait for you to hear the message that he's going to bring, but before he gets started, take a look at this recap video from last weekend.

(Video, Aaron): True compassion takes action. When we were stuck in the futility and the frustration, God did not just have sympathy for us, God had compassion. It was an action. And that action has a name. His name is Jesus. And now Jesus calls those of us to now unleash compassion to the rest of the world.

Petie Kinder: Well, the only proper response to that is that right now at every campus—Northwest, West, North, Downtown, online—we need to celebrate what God did in changing 5,000 kids' lives last weekend. Come on! That's incredible.

I don't know about you, but for last weekend, it was one of those moments in the life of our church that I was just so proud to be a small part of this place. I know you probably felt the same way. It was just such a cool moment.

If you didn't have the opportunity to be with us last weekend and you still want to get in on that, you can do so by visiting [tpcc.org/compassion](http://tpcc.org/compassion) and you can still have the opportunity to sponsor a child that way.

Like Aaron said, we're kicking off a brand-new series today, so if you're with us for the first time, or maybe this is your second time with us if you came last weekend to Easter and now you're back to continue checking it out, we're glad to have you.

This new series we're starting is called *The Fight of Your Life*. The whole concept for it is that we are going to try to fight for the relationships that matter most in our life instead of what we typically do, which is we fight with the people who matter most in our lives. So we're going to try to kind of flip the script and change the game and fight *for* the relationships that matter most.

I'm so excited about this series because it bridges so many different backgrounds. You see, all of us, it really doesn't matter if you were raised in church or not, it doesn't matter what your beliefs about God are, we all have these important relationships in our lives and we all want them to be strong.

Nobody wants the drama that comes with tension-filled relationships and failed relationships. Nobody wants that, so it really doesn't matter what background you're coming from today, whether it's a religious background or a nonreligious background; this is a series where you're going to see that the Bible intersects with real life, that what God has to say about these relationships can help you whether you believe in him or not.

Today we're going to kick off the series by talking about how to fight *for* your spouse. We're going to talk about how to fight *for* your marriage. We're going to talk about a principle that the Bible teaches about marriage that if you'll put it into practice in your life, it will make your marriage stronger. Whether or not you believe in God, if you'll put this into practice, it will make your marriage stronger.

Now, that's actually not the reason I'm so excited about this message, okay? No doubt that's needed. I'm not sure if you've noticed, but the divorce rate in our country is sky high. I'm not sure if you've ever been around a failed marriage—maybe you've experienced one yourself—you know how devastating it can be, so no doubt this teaching is needed for the state of marriage currently in our country.

That's actually not why I'm so excited about it though. I'm excited about this message specifically because this message on marriage is not just for married people. This message on marriage is for everyone. It doesn't matter if you're single, if you're widowed, if you're divorced, if you're married, it doesn't matter where you're coming from today, this message is for you because the reason that this principle works, the reason this principle that we're going to talk about, if you'll put it into practice, the reason it works is so much bigger than marriage. It's actually something that I believe can change your life.

That's right. I think that even if you're here and you're single, or you aren't married, you're widowed, you're divorced, wherever you're coming from today, I think God's teaching and God's heart for marriage, if you step back and figure out why it works, it can absolutely change your life.

So with that as our setup, go ahead and get your Bible, or a Bible app if you have it on your phone, and get to 2 Samuel chapter 6. Second Samuel chapter 6 is where we're going to live today.

Now, here's what we're going to do. I want to kind of give you the preface. We are going to snoop and kind of creep on a marriage today. We're going to get a good vantage point to David's first marriage.

Now, David was one of the most written-about characters in the Old Testament. And that's right, I said his first marriage. David actually had several marriages. He had some failed relationships along the way, so maybe if you're new to the Bible and you're new to the whole church game, maybe you thought that all of the Bible characters were like super-clean-cut Ned Flanders guys who never made any mistakes or had any mess in their lives. Well think again because David had some issues.

So we're going to creep on David's first marriage to a young woman named Michal. Now, he and Michal—you need to know this—they were like a biblical-times celebrity power couple, okay? They are on par with Brangelina; they are on par with Jay-Z/Beyonce. It was like David and Michal were a power couple.

Now, the reason they were a power couple was because David, when they first got married, was a rising star, okay? He was not yet the king of Israel, but he was a rising star in the nation of Israel. People loved David. He was very famous, very popular, and he was rising in his leadership, so he brought some celeb status to the game here.

But Michal brought some celeb status too, okay? She was nothing to bat an eye at. I mean, she brought some celeb status here because she was the daughter of the current king, King Saul.

So you have this incredible celebrity power couple, but you need to know a few things about them before we jump into 2 Samuel 6. You need to know their hookup story. Their hookup story was fascinating because it was just laced with juicy drama.

So King Saul sees David and he sees David's this young rising star, and he actually sees him as a threat. So you're going to see throughout the entire story of David that Saul's always trying to kill him. I mean, he's always like attempting murder on his life because he wants to get rid of this threat to his kingdom.

One of the very first ways that he tries to kill David is with a little bet, a little wager. He says, "David, I will offer you the hand of my daughter Michal in marriage," this beautiful woman who just made David weak in the knees. He's like all googly-eyed. He's never sent emojis before in a text, but he's sending her emojis. He doesn't know what he's doing. He's so enamored by her.

He says, "I'll give you her hand in marriage if you'll kill a hundred Philistines." Now the Philistines were an enemy nation, so what Saul's really thinking here is there's no way David can kill a hundred Philistines; there's no way. So this will surely lead to his death.

David goes out and he's like: Oh, I'm going to show him who's boss right now. If I can win her hand in marriage by killing a hundred Philistines, I'm going to show her just how much I love her.

My man David goes out and he not only kills 100 Philistines, he doubles it up and kills 200 Philistines. He's like: I am winning this girl. And you can just imagine her love for David grew like: Oh my gosh, did you see his six-pack when he was fighting them dudes? Whew!

She was loving her some David. In fact, the text actually tells us that. If you look at 1 Samuel chapter 18, it says this about this whole instance. It says, “When Saul realized that the Lord was with David and how much his daughter Michal loved him...,” See, her love for him grew. But “...Saul became even more afraid of him, and he remained David’s enemy for the rest of his life.”

Not exactly the best start to a relationship with your in-laws, okay? Now, if you’re married, you know that the in-law game is a very tricky game. You gotta play that hand very, very carefully. Maybe, fellas in the room, you can relate to this, but I’ve always had this kind of underlying suspicion that my father-in-law might want to kill me for marrying his daughter.

David didn’t have to wonder. He knew! He was for sure trying to be killed by his father-in-law, and the death threats kept coming.

And actually, not only was their hookup story fascinating, but their first fight is something you need to know about as well before we get to 2 Samuel 6. Their first fight came as a result of Saul trying to kill David again. See, Saul said: All right, if I can’t kill him that way, I’m just going to send soldiers to their house and I’m going to have them kill him right there in their home, so he sends soldiers over to David’s and Michal’s house.

Now Michal caught wind of this, and so she has this interesting moment where she’s kind of in between her father and her husband trying to figure out what to do. So she sneaks her husband David out the back window and says: Go, run for your life because the soldiers are about ready to come kill you.

Then she does what any sensible person would do. She puts a dummy in the bed—this sounds so crazy, okay? This is why you need to read the Bible because it’s incredible. There are incredible stories in there. She puts a dummy in the bed, puts a wig on the dummy, covers it up, then tells the soldiers: Hey, my husband’s really sick today. Could you just kind of leave him be for a little bit? Thinking that would work!

This is total normal behavior. Please tell me that you have done this before, that you put the dummy in the bed with a wig on to cover up for your father... This has never happened to us! This is crazy stuff!

Now, Saul calls her bluff. Saul’s like: There’s no way that that’s true. He actually comes and asks her, “Why are you lying to me?” The dad asked his daughter. The response is really interesting. Look what happens in 1 Samuel 19. “‘Why have you betrayed me like this and let my enemy escape?’ Saul demanded of Michal.”

Now this is an interesting response. We need to really capture this. “‘I had to,’ Michal replied. ‘He threatened to kill me if I didn’t help him.’”

Now that’s not true. That’s a lie. But you see what she’s trying to do here. She’s kind of between a rock and a hard place. She’s having to choose between her dad and her husband. So what she does here is kind of understandable. She’s trying to preserve both relationships, so she sneaks her husband out the back window and says: Hey, go run for your life. Dad is coming. Then dad comes and he’s all mad. She’s like: Hey, he threatened to kill me if I didn’t do it.

She’s trying to preserve both relationships. You need to remember that because it’s very key to understanding what happens in 2 Samuel chapter 6.

Now, a lot happens between 1 Samuel 19 and 2 Samuel 6, but the real big things you need to know, the big thing that affected their relationship, or you would think would affect their relationship, is that King Saul dies and David becomes the king.

Right? Dad is out of the picture. She no longer has to choose where her devotion lies. Dad's gone. They probably have a great marriage now. She's not just the daughter of the king; she's the *wife* of the king. Surely everything is awesome now.

And in fact, what we're going to read in 2 Samuel 6 was a mountaintop moment for David. You see, David had just recaptured this thing called the Ark of the Lord, the Ark of the Covenant, and it was this thing that symbolized God's presence.

So David's having this mountaintop moment where he's getting to celebrate the fact that God is going to be at the center of his life; God's going to be at the center of his kingdom; God's going to be at the center of the nation. He's celebrating and worshiping God. It's a mountaintop moment for David.

But it would actually be the rock-bottom breaking point for his marriage with Michal. We're going to get to see what's been happening in her heart in between 1 Samuel 19 and 2 Samuel chapter 6. With that in mind, let's jump in.

Verse 14 is where we're going to start. It says this: "And David danced before the Lord with all his might, wearing a priestly garment. So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams' horns." They're celebrating God.

"But as the ark of the Lord entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she was filled with contempt for him. They brought the Ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the special tent David had prepared for it. And David sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. When he had finished his sacrifices,..."

I love this part. He's so happy. I love how he celebrates here. "...David blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies. Then he gave to every Israelite man and woman in the crowd a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins." He's like: A cake for you, a cake for you, you get a cake, you, everybody gets cake!

That's a great celebration. I love cake.

"Than all the people returned to their homes." It says, "When David returned home to bless his own family," because he's bringing cake to his own fam; he ain't gonna give cake to everybody else and not provide his own, "Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him. She said in disgust, 'How distinguished the king of Israel looked today, shamelessly exposing himself to the servant girls like any vulgar person might do!'"

Pause for a second. Can you imagine that moment? I mean, this is a mountaintop moment for David. He is like over the moon that God is now the center of his leadership and his kingdom. He's declaring his love for God. He's so grateful for what God has done in his life. He's singing. He's clapping. He's dancing. He's going crazy, and he doesn't care who's watching.

For those of you who are new around here, this is honestly why we worship the way we do. You may wonder why we get so passionate and so expressive, but it's just because we're so overwhelmed with gratitude for what God has done for us. It's just a natural response to it, and David was experiencing the same thing. David was often called a man after God's own heart. It's because of moments like this where he just, with reckless abandon, worships God. He doesn't care who's watching.

I know some of you ladies in the house are thinking, "Man, if my man were to ever do that, like if my man were to ever worship God like that and just be wholly devoted to him, I would be so attracted to that. He'd have that whole like Tim Tebow thing going. Whew! I'd be all in."

But Michal wasn't there. Michal was embarrassed and she chews him out. Now, David's response to her is very direct. There are some ouch moments in it. It says this. "David retorted to Michal, 'I was dancing before the Lord, who chose me above your father and all his family!'" That's a burn moment.

"He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord, so I celebrate before the Lord. Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes! But those servant girls you mentioned will indeed think I am distinguished!"

See, what he's saying here is: I don't care who's watching. You don't understand what God's done for me. I'm willing to look even more foolish than this.

Can you imagine the king of a nation with all the wealth, all the power, all the influence, all the intellect, all the wisdom. He had everything at his fingertips and he's saying: I don't care about any of it. All I care about is telling my God how much I love him, how grateful I am for him. The humility that it took for a man in that position of power to do this and to say this.

But for Michal, that's it. This is the end of the line. Like end scene. Relationship's over. That's actually the last we will ever hear Michal mentioned in Scripture; never mentioned again. David would go on to have other relationships with other women. This was the end of the line.

So my question is what happened? This marriage that began with such a romantic and heroic love story. What happened?

This is where I love the Bible because not only is the Bible an incredible book with wisdom that can improve your life, not only is it a book that's filled with the greatest love story ever told—the love that God has for us—but it's a literary masterpiece because there are some hints that the Bible was dropping us along the way to let us know what's going on. Did you catch them?

I want to back up for just a second. Back in verse 16, it's a very interesting way that the Bible speaks about Michal. Look at what it says. It says, "But as the Ark of the Lord entered the City of David," catch this. It says, "**Michal, the daughter of Saul**, looked down from her window." That's a curious way to reference her.

And it actually does it again just four verses later in verse 20. It says, "When David returned home to bless his own family, **Michal, the daughter of Saul**, came out to meet him." It's a very curious way of referring to her because by this point Saul had been dead for several years. He was no longer the king. David was the king.

If these were to read normally, it would read: Michal, the wife of David. But it actually read, no, no, no, no, Michal, the daughter of Saul. You see, what the Bible is trying to do is trying to say yes, this is a historical account of what happened, but let me reveal to you what's going on underneath the surface. Let me reveal to you what's going on in the heart of Michal. Her allegiance and her devotion were still with her dad.

Her allegiance and her devotion were still with Saul, and that's the whole reason she's bitter right now. It's the whole reason she responded to David like she did. Because she's seeing David worship God with everything he has, with reckless abandon, not caring who's watching, and you know what she's thinking? My daddy would've never done that. My daddy would've been more respectable, more distinguished, more reverent, more proper, more kingly. My dad would've never done it like that. Because her allegiance and her devotion were still with her dad.

And we saw this happen, right? If you go back, we saw when this little seed was planted in her heart. It went back to their very first fight. Their very first fight she sneaks her husband out the back window to protect his life and then her dad says: Why are you lying to me? And she says: Because he threatened to kill me.

It was right there that it happened. When the seed of divided devotion was planted in her heart and left unattended, it turned into a full-blown betrayal, and that's really the ultimate wedge that was driven between Michal and David.

Now, translate this because we have a big bridge to gap, 3,000 years in fact. This happened around 1,000 BC; we're now in 2018. So let's bridge 3,000 years of history and figure out how in the world can we apply this to our marriages today. What is God trying to say to us as we fight for our spouse, and it's a very simple principle. It's *simple*, but we're going to talk about how to apply it because it's actually a little bit more than just simple, okay? But here it is: **Your spouse should be your person.**

### **Your spouse should be your person.**

Now, if you're not familiar with the phrase **your person** or the concept of **your person**, don't worry, I got you covered. I got definitions we can use in the form of a sentence. I got all the stuff for you. Now, it's not official; if you go look it up in Merriam-Webster's dictionary, it ain't gonna be there. This is Petie's dictionary. Deal with it.

Here's a working definition for you: **Your "person" is the person closest and most important to you, no matter what happens.**

### **Your "person" is the person closest and most important to you, no matter what happens.**

Now let's use it in the form of a sentence because you gotta get this into your kind of working vernacular, okay? Used in the form of a sentence might be like this: ***"He is my person. There is no one I'd rather binge-watch a TV show with than him. He is my person."***

Fellas, you may say it like this: ***"She is my person. I am willing to binge-watch a really bad TV show with her. She is my person."*** For all the fellas at every campus that have watched every episode of *Fixer Upper* and *This is Us* and *Parenthood* and *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Don't say amen to that. Don't admit it, don't admit it.



You may say it like this: ***“She is my person. When my team is playing in a big game, I still speak to her and acknowledge her existence. She is my person.”*** Ladies, if your fella does this, it is a sign of true love, okay? He loves you.

Ladies may say it like this: ***“He is my person. When his team is playing in a big game, I understand and am at peace with the fact that he is going to act like a child, regardless of the outcome. He is my person.”*** Also, you know this is true.

**Your spouse should be your person closest and most important to you, no matter what happens.** That person who you just love spending time with. That person who knows you inside and out. That person who is not just one of many priorities in your life, but when push comes to shove, they are *the* priority in your life. They’re going to get your first and your best.

Your spouse should be your person even if you guys are in different places spiritually, even if you believe different things about God. Marriage works best when your spouse is your person.

Now, you may say, “Okay, duh. That’s like how this is supposed to work.” That’s kind of what you signed up for when you said your vows. When you said for better or worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer but it better be richer, ‘til death do us part, you were basically signing up for your spouse to be your person, so this is kind of obvious. This is kind of simple.

But, friends, simple is not always easy. Just because something’s simple doesn’t mean that it’s easy to apply to your life. You see, I’m sure Michal thought this was simple. I’m sure when David killed all those Philistines to win her hand in marriage and the bravery and the courage, the googly eyes, all that, I’m sure she was like: David is my person. There ain’t nothin’ ever comin’ between us.

But then daddy came between them. Simple isn’t always easy.

And maybe you’re still sitting there thinking like, “Yeah, I don’t know if this is actually my problem, though. This might be someone else’s problem, but not really my spouse. This is not us.” Let me, for just a second, paint you a picture of why I believe this is actually the first and foremost problem of every marriage in the room.

You see, when your spouse popped the question and you said yes, and you planned the wedding and you got married and you began your life together, your spouse was definitely your person. But then you got that job, that job that you’ve always wanted to have, or maybe it’s the job that will lead to the dream job, but either way it’s still just a job. And ever since you took that job, it’s been chewing you up and spitting you out. Ever since you took it, it’s been wrecking your life. If you aren’t careful, that job that you wanted, that you took, can end up becoming your person.

Or maybe even more dangerous, or as equally dangerous, is maybe someone at work ends up becoming your person, someone who ends up just kind of understanding you. They understand the pressures that you’re facing. They understand how horrible it is to work for your boss and it just seems like they get you more, and before you know it, your spouse is no longer your person.

But even if that’s not the case, even if it’s not kind of an emotional attachment to someone, if someone were to look at your life and say, “What’s more important to you, your job or your spouse?” Based on your schedule, based on the stress you bring home, based on your inability to leave work at work, someone may take an objective look at your life and say that your job is your person, not your spouse.



Or maybe whenever you guys got married and you celebrated your wedding with all your friends and family and you walked down that aisle and it was such a memorable moment, maybe not too long after that you started trying to have kids. Maybe you were not as successful in that endeavor as you thought you'd be, and that led you down a road of treating infertility and just praying that God would let you have biological kids of your own. Or maybe you decided to go down the road of adoption. Either way, maybe, by the grace of God, he blessed you with those kids that you had always wanted and always prayed for.

But then, before you know it, those little munchkins that you prayed so hard for are taking up every minute of every day to care for them, and the only time you have left after caring for them, minus the hours you work, is the only time you have left to take care of things around the house, pay the bills, keep up with extended family, and then Lord knows if you have any time left after that you know what you're doing with that. You're taking a nap or you're going to bed at 9:00. Can all my tired parents in the house give an amen? Phew, good night.

But here's the problem. If you aren't careful, your kids can become your person closest and most important to you and your spouse ends up being more like a glorified roommate that you happen to co-parent with.

Don't even throw on top of that the extra layer of having a social life because I mean you know what a blessing it is and a pressure it is to have good friends that you can hang out with often. It's a blessing—we're actually going to talk about how to fight for your friendships in this series—but you know that if you're not careful, that crew that you can drop everything for to hang out with, to go watch the big game with, that social crew that you've got can become your person. All the while, your spouse gets the leftovers of your attention, your time, your energy, and your affection.

I don't know about you, but sometimes, when I'm trying to think about all the relationships that I'm managing in my life, I kind of feel like Stretch Armstrong. I'm trying to be a good dad. I'm trying to be a good pastor. I'm trying to be a good husband. I'm trying to be a good son. I'm trying to be a good friend. I'm trying to be a good neighbor. I'm trying to be all these things and, quite frankly, at the end of the day, there are many times I don't even feel like I'm doing great at any of them.

And in those moments, I start throwing myself a pity party because I think not only am I not being like everything I'm supposed to be for everybody else, but I can't remember the last time I did something for me! I can't remember the last time I had fun and did something I wanted to do!

And then that really convicted me because then I think it really boiled it down to a breaking point for me. Because I realized that whether it's your job, whether it's your friends, whether it's your kids, at the end of the day, most oftentimes in our lives, you know who ends up being my person? Me. See, this is true whether we're ready to admit it or not, but this next statement is true. Most of the time, the most important person in my life is me.

When I'm in an argument with my wife, most of the time what's going on is that my wants, my needs, and my desires aren't being met. That's what's motivating it. At the root of it, when someone or something else is your person, at the root of it is selfishness and self-centeredness.

Pastor Tim Keller says it like this, and I love this line so much. He says, *"Only you have complete access to your own selfishness, and only you have complete responsibility for it. So each spouse should take the*

*Bible seriously, should make a commitment to 'give yourself up.' You should stop making excuses for selfishness, you should begin to root it out as it's revealed to you, and you should do so regardless of what your spouse is doing.*" So finger-pointing. It's not like, "Well, they're not doing it!" No, no, no, no. Think about you first. Focus on your own selfishness.

Here it is. *"If two spouses each say, 'I'm going to treat my self-centeredness as the main problem in the marriage,' you have the prospect of a truly great marriage."* Because when you make someone or something other than your spouse your person, at the root of it, it's self-centeredness. It's selfishness. And you have to fight that.

So I say let's fight. Let's throw down on it. Let's do something to where we can actually put this principle into practice in our lives, and so I want to issue you a challenge, all right? It's a challenge for all the married folks in the room at every campus. The challenge is very simple. I want you to figure out when the beginning of your week is, whatever the beginning of the week is. Like for my wife and I, it's really Sunday evenings. Sunday evenings for us is kind of like the time once we get the kids down, before the school week starts, before the work week gets super-busy, Sunday night's kind of the beginning of our week.

I want you to find out the beginning of your week, and I want you to have a moment with your spouse where you look them in the eye and you say this: **This week, no matter what happens, you are going to be the most important person in my life.**

**This week, no matter what happens, you are going to be the most important person in my life.**

Why I love this challenge so much is that it bakes in accountability to your marriage. See, because you can't look your spouse in the eye and say this and then not remember it when you guys get into that next argument.

You can't look your spouse in the eye and say this and not remember it when you're deciding whether or not you're going to get home from work on time or stay at work two hours late. You can't say this and not let it actually play out in your life.

Now, I thought about having this moment right now at every campus in the room. I thought about having every married couple in the room look each other in the eye right now and say it because, you know, once we tell you to do something, you go out the door, the percentage chance of you actually doing it goes down, so I thought, man, let's just do it in the room. Have everybody look each other in the eye and say, "This week, no matter what happens, you are going to be the most important person in my life," but I thought better of it because we have to keep this service G-rated.

Because I just have a belief that when this moment happens, some sparks might fly and our nursery classrooms in 2019 and Kids' Ministry might just be booming! You're going to grow this church! So I'll let y'all figure out when you're going to have that moment. That's on you; that's not on me.

But maybe as equally important as when you have this first moment when you say it to each other may be just as important as what happens the second time. Because when you say it the first week, it's like, "Okay, let's see what changes," but then when you say it the second time, next week, you know what would be super-helpful? Instead of just going straight to saying it, maybe you should start off with a kind

of review question and just look your spouse in the eye and say, “Hey, this past week, did you feel like the most important person in my life?”

“Oh, why did you have to say that?” I know it’s not going to be fun. I know some of you are thinking, “Oh my gosh, this is going to reveal so much that I have to work on and it’s not going to be pretty. It’s going to be hard.”

Yeah, it is. That’s why it’s called a fight. Nobody said this was going to be easy. This is a *fight* and from one fellow fighter to another, can I just tell you that it’s worth it? It’s worth it.

You know, I’ve not been married for a really long time. I’ve been married for 11 years. For some of y’all, that’s like, “Man, they are so old. Did they get married when they were 12?”

No. I’m from Kentucky, but don’t be playing them jokes on me.

And to some of y’all, 11 years is just like, “You’re a baby. You’re not even too far into this thing.” But I can tell you that my wife and I have had our share of ups and downs, being all the way up and all the way down, and most of the time when we’ve been all the way down, it’s been mostly my fault.

But we’re fighting. We’re fighting to make each other the most important person in our lives. Man, I’m so crazy about her and I love her so much. I can tell you this, even with all of our ups and all of our downs, I wouldn’t trade my marriage for anyone’s. And that kind of a love and a devotion to each other does not come without a fight.

It’s worth it **and** it works. I’m telling you it works. If you’re here, it doesn’t matter if you believe in Jesus or not. You can take this principle, put it into practice in your life, and it will result in a stronger marriage. It works.

Now, I told you this wasn’t just a message for married people but it’s for everybody and that’s because the reason that it works, the reason that this principle works is because God is trying to say something to all of us through the marriage relationship.

See, God set up marriage to tell us something, whether or not you’re married, and that’s what I believe can actually change your life. You see, Paul would write it like this in Ephesians chapter 5. He says, “And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.”

Now, before all the women in the room start throwing things at me, you gotta read the next verse because it dishes something out to the fellas. It says, “For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies.”

See, this is what it looks like for your spouse to be your person. You see, in this situation—wives submit to your husbands; husbands die for your wives and love them just as much as you love your own self—in this situation, everybody wins. Everybody wins. It’s a mutual self-sacrificial love.

And the reason that God wants marriage to function like that is a beautifully significant reason. It's supposed to mirror, it's supposed to reflect the relationship between God and his people.

Paul would write it like this in verse 31. It says, "As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' This is a great mystery, but..." Here it is. "...it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

You see, God created marriage for a purpose. God invented marriage. Did you know that? He invented it. He has a trademark on it, all rights reserved, copyright. Marriage belongs to God. And he created it for a purpose. And that purpose was not just to advance civilization. And that purpose was not just for procreation and populating the earth. Those are great byproducts.

He created marriage for a purpose, and it was to put the world on notice and say this: This is what the relationship between me and my people is supposed to look like. You see, God wants you as a spouse to lay down your wants, your needs, and your desires out of love for your spouse because Jesus laid down his wants, his needs, and his desires for the love of us.

You see, God wants you to prioritize your spouse as the most important person in your life because Jesus has already proved to us once and for all when he stretched out his arms and he died on the cross that we were the most important people to him.

God wants your spouse to be your person because God wants us to be his people. He wants a group of people who are wholly devoted to him, sold out to him, who are so focused on him above all else that when there are a thousand other things competing for our attention, a thousand other things competing for our devotion and our affection that we might say no to them all because we've got a God to say yes to.

Jesus wants a marriage full of **love** and **joy** and **passion** and **pursuit** and **sacrifice** because God wants a church full of **love** and **passion** and **pursuit** and **joy** and **sacrifice**, and that can be lived out by every single person in this room, whether or not you're married, single, divorced, or widowed. All you have to do is draw a line in the sand and say, "From this day forward, I'm wholly devoted to Jesus."

David had it right. David dancing and singing before God, not caring who was watching because he was just so consumed with gratitude for what God has done for him, he had it right. And you have the opportunity to do that today. That in response to the great love that God has shown you, you can take that step and you can start following Jesus and wholly surrender your life to him.

If you're here and you're single, or maybe you're divorced, that would actually be the best thing you could do to prepare yourself to be married or to be married again is to wholly devote yourself to Jesus.

But even if you don't ever get married, because that's not the goal, the best thing that all of us can do is respond to God's great love and say, "I will wholly devote myself to you, God. You are my person, and you've already told me, you've already proved to me that we are your people, that there's nothing that mattered more to you than rescuing and redeeming us."

But that's not a decision I can make for you. That's not a decision anybody can make for you. That's one you have to work out with God. That's one that only comes with you talking to God about it, and so we're going to give you some space to do that. I'm going to pray here in just a second, and after I'm

done praying, we're going to give you a couple minutes to reflect on what you've heard and to talk with God.

If you're here and you're wondering like, "Do I have to have my life cleaned up? Do I have to have the Bible memorized to do this?" No, no, no, you don't. You just have to be ready to say yes to God's love and receive that gift of salvation that he's offered us through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

So we want to give you the opportunity to reflect and to talk to God about that. If you're a believer in the room, it's a great time to take communion. Let's spend some time doing business with God today. Let's pray.

Lord, we love you. We're so grateful for you.

God, I pray for the marriages in the room at every campus that are hurting. God, I pray that you'd strengthen them. God, I pray for healing in marriages in every room at every campus.

God, I pray that you'd help us to have the boldness and the courage to look our spouse in the eye and tell them that no matter what happens they're going to be the most important person to us, and help us to live it out by the power of your Spirit in us.

God, I pray for everyone in the room at every campus, regardless of relationship status, that you'd help us to see how you prioritized us, how you gave everything for us. You came down and you lived a life of poverty, you faced every temptation we face yet you're without sin, you lived the life we could never live and you died the death we should've died, all so that we could be forgiven and free, and, God, in these moments, meet us and show that to us. And, God, allow our response to you to be just like David, to worship you and to give our lives to you, to be wholly devoted to you above all else. Meet us in these moments, Jesus. We love you. And it's in your name we pray. Amen.