



6 NOV 2022 | PS ERNIE SONG | FAMILY: MARRIAGE: THRIVING, NOT SURVIVING | LUKE 22:24-27, 31-34, 39-46, EPHESIANS 6:10-13

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

- To recognise that marriage on earth is a reflection of the Christ and the Church.
- Identify and reflect on ways we prepare and be the One to our (future) spouse).
- To recognise the importance of Christ as the ultimate Source and draw from Him.

SERMON SUMMARY

In the previous sermon on Family, Pastor Ernie had spoken on how man was created to be God's image bearers on earth. Both men and women reflect a unique picture of who God is. Sin caused the Family to be broken but the hope for families is found at the Cross. The best gift we can give our families is a whole self.

Pastor Ernie spoke on how Jesus is the ultimate spouse for the Church and how earthly marriage is a reflection of God's relationship with the Church.

- Marriage is between 2 Fallen people ([Luke 22:31-34](#)). - Hardship is to be expected due to our own sin and self-centredness. Therefore, marriage is not about finding "the one", but rather being "the one". We become "the one" in our marriages when we allow God to shape us through it.
- Marriage is a Team Effort ([Luke 22:24-27](#)) – Marriage must be done as a team with the goal of serving one another. It is about "us" and not me. Couples need to move from competing to completing each other. Marriage is full of challenges that couples need to go through together. While our roles as parents are important, it must not take over our roles as spouses. When couples journey and serve each other as a team, it reflects the example of Christ that laid down His life for His bride.
- Marriage was not designed to replace the Source ([Luke 22:42-43](#)). – We ultimately need to draw from God and not from each other, and to allow our spiritual community to speak into our marriages.

SERMON RECAP

God created man to be His image and we are a reflection of who God is. However, Sin caused the family to be broken. However, Hope for families can be found at the Cross and the best gift we can give to our family is a "whole" self.

Jesus is the ultimate spouse. This passage shows the bridegroom's relationship with the bride. Jesus is the bridegroom; the church is the bride. Marriage reflects God's relationship with the church.

Pastor Ernie touches on 3 key points:



1. Marriage is between 2 Fallen people (Luke 22:31-34).

- Challenges are to be expected when 2 fallen people come together as a team to do life together.
- As we are fallen, we will be self-centred and selfish. There will be times where the couple is unable to meet each other halfway and it will never be equal effort from both parties all the time.

In this fallen world, there are no promises that marriage, for all its capacity to be beautiful and enriching, will be a lifelong series of increasing physical delights. In reality, a healthy marriage will probably lean more on the Sermon on the Mount than on the Songs of Solomon.” – Herman Bavinck, The Christian Family

- Marriage is hence about being “the one” by allowing God to shape us in our marital relationships
- Marriage is about two individuals committing to each other for life to work through their sinful nature. It is not about finding “the one” but being “the one” to each other, so that they as a team can be image bearers to others.

2. Marriage is a Team Effort (Luke 22:24-27). It is about Us, not Me. The goal of the team is to reflect God’s glory to the World

We reflect God’s glory in the world when we:

a) *Receive one another as Christ received You.*

- We need to learn to love and accept each other.
- The goal of a spouse is to protect the marriage through the challenges that come.

b) *Serve One Another as Christ served You*

- Marriage must be done as a team with the goal of serving one another (e.g., Jesus washing the feet of His disciples)
- We are to work together as image-bearers, by serving each other and moving from competing to completing each other
- Couples are to journey through it together, not individually (laying down our lives for the sake of the other – Example of Christ)

c) *Guard and Protect Your Marriage as Christ Guards His Church through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:10-13)*

- A marriage is a covenant vow in God. It is a spiritual matter and can undergo attacks from the Evil One.
- We need to put on the full armour of God and to be strong in Him.
- We need to recognise that our spouse is our helper, not our enemy.
- We also need to recognise that while our roles as parents is important, it must never take over our role as spouses.

3. Marriage was not designed to replace the Source (Luke 22:42-43).

- We are to draw from God and not each other. Imperfect sinful people with leaking tanks cannot fill each other (Isaiah 45:5a)
- We were never meant to fully find perfect love and happiness in our spouses and we can only give from what we have
- We are to a) draw from God daily and b) draw from God through your spiritual community.



As we seek God for strength to love others (our horizontal relationships), we need to first be right with God (our vertical relationship). God must be our priority and our Centre. May we hold fast to Him to restore our relationship with Him and with our loved ones.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Our Church has curated a helpful personal reflection guide for cell members (married or single) to reflect on questions related to singlehood and marriage. There are also helpful articles that provide biblical perspectives. Leaders may also wish to use this resource to guide in their cell facilitation, or to choose an article that is helpful to the members' life stage.

Resource: rlc.sg/beyondpulpit

Content:

Reflection Guide:

Part 1: For Married Couples (Individual and Couple)

Part 2: For Singles

Articles:

1. Equal Value, Different Roles (on family manifestos, roles of husbands and wives)
2. What Singles wants Marrieds to know
3. Choosing a Life Partner

1. What are some characteristics of a thriving relationship?

Leader's Notes

This is a relate and reflect question for members to ponder about. Members can share about characteristics of thriving relationships (Christian or Pre-believing couples). What about these characteristics help relationships to thrive? How do they overcome difficulties and how do Christian couples remain centred in Christ?

Transition

God desires for us to thrive as individuals and as married couples.

2. As singles or married couples, how can we continue to prepare or present ourselves as the one for our spouse / future spouse? What are an area you can grow in and how can we allow our spiritual community to speak into our lives?

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and response question for members to share with each other. Members may wish to share what marriage or their understanding of marriage is, and to consider areas of their lives they can continue to present themselves as the one to their spouse or future spouse. What are some Biblical values to hold in our different roles (e.g. for parents, to focus on how the role as spouses must come before the role as parents). "The best gift you can give to your family (your marriage) is a whole self."

Members can also consider how emotionally safe they feel to speak about such topics in church or if they feel they must keep up a certain image? If they feel safe, what are the factors that have contributed to it and if they do not, what can we as a Church do to grow in this aspect?

Transition

As we take individual steps to grow in Christ, we must also recognise the importance of our own contributions to our spiritual community and vice versa.

3. **As a single or married couple, what can I do to help other singles or married couples to succeed? Share your experiences.**

Leader's Notes

This is a response question and to create an open platform for members to share. This could also be done in a form of anonymous feedback where singles or married couples could also share what kind of support they would like from others and the kind of support they could give. What can married couples do to help the singles within the cell and vice versa? What would it mean to do life together in spite of the similar or different life stages one might be in? How could we continue to draw from Christ?

Closing

God has created the institution of family and marriage as an avenue where we continue to be moulded in His image to become His image bearers. May we continue to turn to God and draw from Him as the Source

WORKS

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Pray for the institution of marriage and family, for God to continue to watch over it and for us to continue journeying with each other through it.
- May as we continue to seek God and allow Him to mould us in the current season and encourage one another to be what He has created us to be.
- May we continue to build each other up as fellow believers in the faith.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Pray for God's protection in the midst of an increase in community cases

3. World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Pray for peace especially in areas of conflict (Ukraine) and potential conflict – China & Taiwan.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **SuperLife: Discipleship at Home for Parents.** Sun, 20 Nov. 9am. Registration: rlc.sg/sl20novregform

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- Primary Session (Grace Chapel): *Who am I?* by Amy Loh focusing on nurturing a child's spiritual identity
 - Pre-School Session (Faith Chapel): *Love* by Rev. Nicholas Choo focusing on practical handles to help preschoolers to develop their identities in Christ.
2. **Consolidation of EA Sunday Services.** In light of our service attendance, we will be consolidating our Sunday services to one service at 9am from Sunday, 6 Nov onwards.
3. **Nov-Dec Church Calendar**
- 13 Nov – Christmas Gear Up (Service extended for 15 mins)
 - 13 Nov, 11 am – Workshop: How to Share the Gospel in 5 Mins (Link: rlc.sg/nov-reg)
 - 13 Nov, 2.30pm – Water Baptism Service
 - 20 Nov, 11am – 377A Forum: Future of the Family
 - 03 Dec, 4.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
 - 17 Dec, 2.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
 - 04 – 25 Dec – Christmas Evangelistic Services
4. **Current Pulpit Series – Family Matters.** In this series, we will explore issues concerning family, marriage and parenting. Our desire is to see families of RiverLife strengthened and be God's light in this nation. This series is relevant for all as it also explores the role of one's spiritual community in strengthening the families within RiverLife.
- *Series Details*
 - 23 Oct – Family: Love in the Midst of Imperfection
 - 06 Nov – Marriage: Thriving, Not Surviving
 - 13 Nov – Parenting: The Arrow Makers
 - *Beyond the Pulpit*
 - 23 Oct, 6 & 13 Nov: Sermon Self-Reflection Guides (Link: rlc.sg/beyondpulpit)
 - 6 Nov: Irreplaceable Movie / Documentary Screening (Link: rlc.sg/nov-reg)
 - 6 & 13 Nov: Podcast Episodes to explore topics in regards to the Family
5. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the [Digital Bulletin](#) for more details.
6. **RiverLife Kindergarten**
- RLK has vacancies for Chinese Teachers. If you wish to apply, please send your resume to Mrs Tan Oi Leng (oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg).
 - RLK are looking for volunteers for their Annual Concert and K2 Graduation. Full Dress Rehearsal – Thu, 10 Nov, 8am-1pm. Concert & Graduation – 12 Nov, 9am – 12pm. Contact: 65114168
7. **Updated Safe Management Measure.** Mask wearing for indoor worship services and religious classes is now optional. All worshippers and performers can sing and play instruments without wearing masks.

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8. **Call for Musicians and Vocalists.** The Worship & Music ministry is on the lookout for musicians and vocalists – keyboardist, electric guitarist, bassist, drummer and singers. If you are interested, you can sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.
9. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Immediate needs:
- *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
 - *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)
10. **F&B Related Ministries Recruitment.** We're looking for RiverLifers who love connecting with new people and enjoy cooking and serving. Team members will serve once a month. For more details Karen Koh (Welcome Lounge) at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg.
11. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.
12. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:
- You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rscs2022.
 - You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rscs.org.sg.
 - RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rscs.org.sg.
 - RCS is looking for 20 Food Collection Helper/Driver that is able to help with the loading/unloading of fresh food items at blocks where we are reaching out to. **Commitment:** Minimally once a month for 6 months, Saturdays, 12-4pm. Contact: rlcares@rscs.org.sg.

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13. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
 14. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
 15. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. *NO booking of tickets is required.*
 16. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
 17. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
 18. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

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Bank Code: 7171 / Branch Code: 029



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