

THE VOW OF PURSUIT

PURSUE RELATIONALLY

To kick things off, go around the circle and ask your group to answer the following question:

What's your favorite date night activity?

LIVE AUTHENTICALLY

Welcome to week 2 in our marriage series, The Vow.

Wedding vows are more than a declaration of love; they hold the keys to a strong, lasting marriage.

Whether you hope to get married someday or you've already tied the knot, discover what growing in these vows can mean for your future.

How has culture shaped your idea of marriage?

COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

This week, Pastor Josh taught on The Vow of Pursuit in our marriages. By nature we pursue what we don't have, which is why pursuing that special someone takes place in the dating/courting process. The problem though is that once we've gotten what we once didn't possess, often the pursuit no longer takes place. We get distracted by life, career, and kids, and pursuing our spouse becomes the furthest thing from our mind. In order for marriages to stay healthy and strong, you have to work hard at it. You need to place God on the priority spot in your life, and you must take a vow to pursue your spouse throughout your entire life. **Vow #2:** I promise to always pursue my two.

LIFEWAY
LIFE





Read Romans 12:9-11

The Apostle Paul reminds us in these verses of our Christian responsibility to “love one another with genuine affection,” and to “take delight in honoring each other.” Our affection for one another is to be genuine/real/authentic. We are to delight, find joy in honoring each other. These principles can and should be applied to our marriages first and foremost.

The Greek word for “to honor” is transliterated “time”. It means, “a manifestation of esteem, honor, and reverence.” How cool is that! We should delight/find joy in bringing about manifestations of honor and reverence toward our spouse, which will require devoting our time.

Pursuing your spouse needs to be a daily, intentional choice to bring about manifestations of esteem, honor, and reverence. One way you can do this is when you think something good about your spouse, say it! Don’t hold back. We are called as Christ-followers to do this with all people. So, how much more should we do it with the one God has joined you with for life.

Paul follows up in verse 11 with “Never be lazy, but work hard, and serve the Lord enthusiastically.” We are to never grow lazy in this effort to honor our spouse. We are to work hard at it every single day that God has blessed us with them in our lives. This is where so many marriages go south. We become lazy in our effort to pursue and honor our spouse. We chuck it up to, “They’ll understand,” or “They know how I feel.” But the truth is, they don’t. They don’t because you don’t say it. They don’t because you don’t show it. They don’t because you don’t put in the time to pursue them. Your pursuit for one another is what led you to Promise your lives to one another, and the pursuit should never stop. God pursues us with a relentless, honoring love, and he calls us to do the same with all people, especially with the one God has entrusted to us.



How would you rate yourself at honoring your spouse with your words and deeds?

What holds you back or keeps you from honoring your spouse?

Read Proverbs 3:28

This week Pastor Josh encouraged us that when we think about something special regarding our spouse, we should do it. In this passage, we see that if our neighbor is in need we should help them. If we loosely apply this verse to the context of marriage, this means that we are called to provide for our spouse when we are able. If our spouse is in need of encouragement, in need of someone to listen, even in need of a good foot rub, we are called to provide for them. This means on the days when we are exhausted from work, the days when we just don't feel like doing the dishes just cause, the days when we don't feel like pursuing, we are still called to do so.

In this proverb, it encourages us to not send our neighbor away when we have the ability to help them. The same is true within our marriages as well. We cannot constantly choose to emotionally tell our spouse to "come back tomorrow, then I will help you." We don't just wake up one day and have a Christ-centered, healthy marriage. It happens one tough conversation at a time. It happens one sacrifice and compromise at a time. It happens when we live out Proverbs 3:28 in our marriages. When you think of something special to do for your spouse, don't turn them away promising help tomorrow, do it today.

What was the last thing you did for your spouse just because? What is one thing you could do to emotionally, spiritually, or physically "help" your spouse this week?



Read Nehemiah 5:14-19

This past Sunday Josh reminded us, “When you want something different, be it.” In other words, when you feel like you’re not receiving from your spouse what you want, or they are not being what you want, you first have to “be it.” You have to lead by example.

Nehemiah was the picture-perfect example of this principle in scripture. When the nobles were taking advantage of the people, and the people were complaining to Nehemiah about their struggle, instead of following suit and taking advantage of his position, Nehemiah decided to BE what he wanted the other nobles to be. He and his officials didn’t draw on their food allowances, they didn’t tax the people heavily, and they worked hard on the wall alongside the people. They wanted the people to be self-sacrificing and hard-working, so Nehemiah said, “I must BE first before the people will BE.”

This same principle can be applied in our marriages. None of us are perfect. We all fall short of God’s standard and we all fall short of each other’s expectations from time to time. But instead of complaining and saying, “I wish my spouse would be...,” or “I wish my spouse would do...,” we need to have the same attitude as Nehemiah and look at ourselves first, to see how we might BE what we are desiring our spouse to be.

When we do this, it keeps us from thinking, “If I only had this in my life,” or “The grass would be greener over there...” And keeps us focused on pursuing the relationship God has placed us in, and it keeps us focused on being self-sacrificing, instead of self-serving. Remember what Josh said on Sunday, “If the grass looks greener somewhere else, then it’s time to water your own lawn.”



When you have wanted something different out of your spouse, would you say you looked to BE first, what you were asking them to BE, or did you complain and blame?

What do you think was the motive behind that decision?

DEVOTE DAILY

This week Josh challenged us on the Vow of Pursuit. Take your relationship back to the beginning, when you both first started. Going on romantic dates, sweet text messages, all the things people early in love do. Then the wedding happened and then kids came, work got busy And you just don't pursue each other like you used to.

This week your challenge is to pursue your spouse like you once did. Complementing each other, take your spouse on a date, make your husband/wife breakfast one morning. Take time for one another this week. If you are single or dating, this week take time to write down the qualities in someone you are looking to pursue. While you're looking for your number two, continue to pursue your number one (God).

Pray: As a group, spend some time praying together and thank God for your spouse. If you are married Commit to God together that you will continue to pursue each other every day. If you are single or dating, ask God to lead you in the right direction when it comes to finding your two, and commit to God that you will continue to pursue him every day. Also, pray that as a group you would continue to surrender your life to God on a daily basis.

Memorize: "For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave his life up for her" Ephesians 5:25