



## BEFORE YOU SAY, “I DO”

### START UP

God created us as relational beings—it is hard-wired in us to want to connect with others. But, there’s a problem: often, our closest relationships are the trickiest ones to get right. This is especially true with dating and marriage.

- Statistics show there is a shift in our culture away from the commitment of marriage. Overall, less people are getting married. When people do get married, it tends to be at an older age. Today, an unprecedented number of millennials will remain unmarried through the age of 40. Why do you think there has been a shift?
- When it comes to dating, we all grow and alter what we’re looking for and what is important to us. Over the years, how have your views changed in what the “perfect spouse” looks like and how to best find him or her?

### DISCUSS TOGETHER

Read **Genesis 2:15-25**.

- Why is it significant that God says it is not good for Adam to be alone? How should that impact the way we think of our own lives today?
- What words does the passage use to describe the level of commitment between Adam and Eve? Why is this significant?
- We live in a commitment-adverse culture. These passages, however, emphasize the necessity of commitment for deep connection. Why is commitment related to closeness and intimacy?
- Has it been hard for you to find committed friends? Is it hard for you to commit long-term to others? What challenges have you faced?
- One type of committed relationship is marriage. Neil Warren, a psychologist who started eHarmony, said, “Your choice of who to marry is more crucial than everything else combined you will ever do to make your marriage succeed.” Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- Jeff mentioned several ways we can choose poorly. We can rely on feelings. We can have sex early (before the commitment of marriage). We can convince ourselves that we can change the other person. We can ignore wise people. Which of these resonated with you (your own experience or the experience of friends or family)? Did you disagree with any of them?
- What is important in choosing well? What have you learned?
- What would you say to someone who thinks they made some mistakes in how they chose their current spouse?
- Where are you most in need of God’s empowering grace in your dating, relational, or marital life right now? Share with the group.

### LIVE BIG

Grace has the power to turn any “oops” or relational difficulty into glory. If we open up our life to God’s grace, He will lovingly change us from the inside out and help us love others the way He loves us—sacrificially and unconditionally.

- For married couples: Have couples break off, hold hands, and pray for God’s strength to love one another with a committed, unconditional, Jesus-kind of love.
- For singles: Have a time of prayer together, asking God for His strength and help in becoming the kind of person we are looking for.