

GROUP
— *Video Experience* —



TONY EVANS
KINGDOM
MARRIAGE

FOCUS[®]
ON THE FAMILY

CONNECTING GOD'S PURPOSE
WITH YOUR PLEASURE

GROUP

→ *Video Experience* ←

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THE FAMILY



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Kingdom Marriage Group Video Experience
Participant's Guide

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WELCOME, KINGDOM COUPLES!

Marriage is under attack, according to Dr. Tony Evans. The key to building a relationship that survives and thrives is to embrace God's original purpose for marriage.

Kingdom marriage is a covenantal union between a man and a woman who commit themselves to function in unison under divine authority in order to replicate God's image and expand His rule in the world through their individual calling.

The pursuit of a kingdom marriage will expand your vision of how a marital relationship should function and what it can accomplish. As you work your way through the DVD sessions and this guide, you'll discover Bible-based principles for reigniting the spark in your relationship. You'll also learn what God can do with two people who are fiercely devoted to Him—and to one another.

At the core of each session is a video presentation featuring Dr. Evans, author of *Kingdom Marriage*. Dr. Evans' inspired teaching will give spouses new insights into their relationship as well as their potential.

To make these truths come alive, you'll find these sections in each session:

The Gathering

Read this brief excerpt to focus on the subject at hand. Answer the questions that follow the passage. If you run out of time, finish the section at home.

Show Time!

Use this section as you view and think about the DVD presentation; it includes thought-provoking questions and biblical input.

Transformation Moments

This brief wrap-up will help you find encouragement and ideas for applying the teaching to your own marriage.

Note: The DVD presentations and this guide are intended as general advice only, and are not meant to replace clinical counseling, medical treatment, legal counsel, or pastoral guidance.

Focus on the Family maintains a referral network of Christian counselors. For information, call 1-800-A FAMILY (1-800-232-6459) and ask for the counseling department.

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FINDING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

The Main Point

When you treat your marriage as a covenant with God, everything else—including love, happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment—will fall into place.

The Gathering

To find out more about God's purpose for marriage, read the following excerpt from *Kingdom Marriage*. If you have time, answer the questions that appear at the end of the selection.

Or you can finish the section at home.



YOUR TRUE PURPOSE


Passion matters and happiness is great, but rather than being the purpose for marriage, they are benefits. Marriage exists to glorify God by expanding

His rule and reach. It uniquely reflects His image like nothing else. When you pursue God's purpose as a couple, then everything else you value in life—such as happiness, love, and satisfaction—will fall into place. . . .

The problem today is that we have transposed the benefit of marriage with the goal, so that when the benefit—happiness—is not working out, we quit and move on, or we resign ourselves to living a life of unhappiness. A large percentage of marriages end in divorce, and many couples who remain together do so out of economic or practical constraints, not love and a shared purpose. Again, kingdom couples share a purpose, not just passion. Emotions change, but the purpose remains and is what can tie two people together until death do they part. . . .

Marriage is not merely a social contract; it is a sacred covenant. It is not simply a means of looking for love, happiness, and fulfillment. Those things are important; in fact, they are critical. But they are not the most important or the most critical. Yet because we have put second things first, as important as second things are, we're having trouble living out either. When God's purpose and principles for marriage are undermined, His image becomes distorted, and our ability to influence others on God's behalf erodes.

Kingdom couples must view marriage through God's kingdom lens. A kingdom marriage is defined as "a covenantal union between a man and a woman who commit themselves to function in unison under divine authority in order to replicate God's image and expand His rule in the world through both their individual and joint callings."¹



If someone had asked you on your wedding day what the purpose of marriage is, what would you have said? Who or what influenced and shaped your view of marriage—for better or worse? What would happen to your relationship if you focused more on advancing God's kingdom and less on finding your own happiness and fulfillment?

Show Time!

In session 1 of the *Kingdom Marriage Group Video Experience*, Dr. Evans lays out God's purpose for marriage and Satan's plan to thwart that purpose.



After viewing Tony Evans' presentation, "Finding God's Purpose for Your Marriage," use the following questions to help you think through what you saw and heard.

1. Dr. Evans says, "Kingdom marriage is defined as 'a covenantal union between a man and a woman who commit themselves to function in unison under divine authority in order to replicate God's image and expand His rule in the world through both their individual and joint callings.'"

Which of the following words describe your reaction to this definition of marriage as God intends it to be?

Check the boxes of the ones that apply or write in your own responses.

- overwhelmed
- excited
- unprepared
- optimistic
- confident
- curious
- desperate
- doubtful
- willing
- uncertain
- ashamed
- thankful
- eager
- ready
- other _____
- other _____
- other _____

In one sentence, explain the emotion that's hitting you hardest as you begin this study of kingdom marriage.

2. The Bible describes God's purpose for marriage in Genesis 1:26: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

How would our world be different if all couples took their kingdom marriage covenant seriously?

What would change in your world—in your marriage, your home, your circle of influence—if you and your spouse committed to a relationship that actively seeks to mirror God and expand His rule in the world?

3. Which of the following areas of conflict have caused problems in your marriage? Check the boxes of the ones that apply or write in your own.
 - finances
 - sexual intimacy

- parenting style
- friends
- family
- personal habits
- priorities
- expectations
- household responsibilities
- unresolved issues from the past
- personality conflicts
- substance abuse
- time apart
- other _____
- other _____
- other _____

What role does Satan play in each of those problem areas?

4. In discussing the command not to eat of the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden, Dr. Evans quotes God as saying, “You have the choice. The choice is between *human*

reasoning (good and evil; you figure it out) or *revelation* (what I reveal).”

Dr. Evans continues, “Most of our marriages have been influenced by the homes we grew up in . . . , the people we know who are as miserable as we are, what the media says about it, or the environment in which we live. All of those influence our perspectives on marriage. Everybody has an idea.”

How has your marriage been influenced by human reasoning—specifically . . .

- the homes you and your spouse grew up in?

- unhappily married family members, friends, and acquaintances?

- portrayals of marriage online and in movies, TV shows, books, and magazines?

- the culture you live in?

What specific steps can you take to prevent those influences from overshadowing God's revelation?

5. Think back to Dr. Evans' story about trying to assemble a bicycle without using the instructions. Why do many couples try to assemble their marriage without consulting God's "instruction manual"?

What are some of the dangers of trying to assemble a relationship on your own?

6. Read the following excerpt from *Kingdom Marriage* and reflect on the questions at the end.



THE COSMIC CONFLICT

Satan, a created creature, is no match for the all-powerful Creator. That's no fight. Yet what God did establish was the opportunity for inferior creatures—human beings (Psalm 8:5)—to demonstrate that in this spiritual battle, even we can win when we operate according to God's kingdom rule. We are in an ongoing battle, and Satan has had thousands of years to perfect his punches. He likes to target married couples first, since we ultimately reflect the union of Christ with the church, as well as pass down the image of God to the next generation. As kingdom couples, we have been cast in a cosmic conflict to manifest God's rule in history for the advancement of His kingdom and the reflection of His glory.

God has delegated the managerial responsibility for ruling on earth. We hold that responsibility. Yet keep in mind that He has not turned over *absolute* ownership of the earth to us. By turning over the management to us, He has established a process, within certain boundaries, wherein He respects our decisions even if they go against His own, or even if those decisions are not in the best interest of that which is being managed. As a result, we either experience blessing or the consequences of poor decisions.

. . . Your decisions as a couple regarding both how you relate to each

other and how you reflect God to others through your union directly affect the quality of life you experience. The tragedy for most couples is that they have followed suit with Satan, seeking ownership rights, not just management responsibilities. As owners, couples go outside of God's rule and make decisions based on their preferred will or desires. And like Satan, they experience the distance and conflict he did when he was booted from God's presence.

What that means is that you can have a happy marriage or a miserable marriage depending on whether or not you exercise your rule as a reflection of God's image. God isn't going to make you rule according to His rule. He isn't going to force you to have a productive and fulfilling relationship. He established marriage and its purposes, but you have the option of living by those purposes or not.

Frequently the well-being of a marriage is determined by whether the husband and wife are reflecting God's image in their individual roles. Once that mirror shatters or even cracks, the reflection of the relationship breaks with it. Nearly every time there's a family breakdown, it is the result of one or both spouses operating outside the covenantal bonds of marriage. They are modeling a broken mirror. As a result, they experience less of God's favor.

Satan either tries to get us to relinquish our management and hand it over to him by deceiving us into believing that he has authority, or he tries to get us to manage poorly based on our own judgments and distorted worldviews. He often does this through the promotion of conflict in our relationships, or through the enticement of ungodly choices.

When we as couples fail to align ourselves under God's kingdom rule, the battle lines are drawn.²

What battle strategies has Satan used in the past to negatively affect your marriage? How did you respond to his attacks? What specific steps can you take—as individuals and as a couple—to reflect God more clearly in your marriage?

Transformation Moments

Read the following passage from the book of Psalms. Answer the questions that follow the passage. If you run out of time, finish this section at home.



THE LORD'S GLORY AND MAN'S DIGNITY

O LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth,

Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!
From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have
 established strength
Because of Your adversaries,
To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
And You crown him with glory and majesty!
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen,
And also the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

PSALM 8:1-9



The phrase “a little lower than God” also can be translated as “a little lower than the angels.” In what ways are humans a little lower than angels? Why does God prefer to use the “lowly” to accomplish His work? How can we use the psalmist’s words as inspiration or motivation to pursue a kingdom marriage?