



## FALLING IN LOVE WITH JESUS THROUGH HIS WORD

[1 Corinthians 2:9] We're starting every message at the beginning of this year with these verses. Getting into His Word is one of the ways we fall in love with Jesus. This coming week, read the entire Book of Philemon. It's only 25 verses!

### INSTRUCTIONS MISSING!

Pastor Andrew reflected on being married 25 years, how little prior instruction we get on marriage and parenthood, and learning to do relationship together. Everything, including appliances, comes with instructions—except marriage and family! But the Bible provides some very core instructions so our relationships can flourish. Paul ended Chapter 2 that everything boils down to love; however, there is a profundity to this because love is not just a fleeting feeling.

1. For those married and/or parenting in your group, how can you relate with this feeling of being left entering into a major life experience without much instruction?

### FINDING THE RIGHT MINDSET TO HEAR (POTENTIALLY) TRIGGERING BIBLICAL PRINCIPALS

[Colossians 3:18-21] If we get real, we may have heard these passages a thousand times, but there's something triggering that sometimes keeps us from really hearing what the Bible has to say, like the words submit and obey. As a result, in order to have the right mindset, we have to realize why these walls are built up. It's because we've seen submission and obedience used incorrectly in a manipulative or suppressive way rather than a loving way. We have to get outside of our earthly experience to accept the message correctly. We have to look at these verses contextually to understand them.

2. Do you have triggering reactions to the words submit or obey? If so, are you ready to look past incorrect use of these concepts to be ready to hear a biblically-sound application?

### THERE IS NO SEPARATION BETWEEN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE AND OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

[Colossians 3:3-4] Verse 17 says "whatever you do" should be done in the name of Jesus. Whatever you do is a spiritual endeavor. There is no separation between our spiritual life and our everyday life. Many times, we can divorce our earthly relationships with our spiritual relationship with the Lord by compartmentalizing our lives. But the vertical influences the external and cannot be separated. Just like your smartphone has many functions and yet it's still one device, we have many different aspects to our lives but we have one life in Christ. Where many relationships break down is not recognizing the spiritual underpinnings that influence them.

3. Where do you tend to separate your thinking about spiritual and everyday matters?

### ALL OF OUR ISSUES ARE EITHER A MATTER OF THE SPIRIT, THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, OR OF LOVE

[Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7] All of our issues are either a matter of the spirit, the Fruit of the Spirit, or of love. In your relationships and whatever may be contentious about them, it's a matter of one or more parts of the Fruits of the Spirit being incompletely formed or it's a matter of incomplete love. All sources of conflict come back to these two sources. These lists are only helpful if you apply them to YOURSELF, not the other person. If you're looking where the other party missed the mark, you're not seeking oneness, but looking for blame. Looking introspectively at these lists will reveal where you need to ask God to do a work in you. Don't seek rightness, but oneness in every relationship. This takes humility, but it's worth it because relationship issues have spiritual roots.

4. What would happen the next time you have an argument if you went over the lists in these verses and considered the source of the conflict within YOU (not the other person)? What would that reveal?
5. What stands out as the area that God would like to grow you in your relationships?

### WOMEN: BIBLICAL SUBMISSION IS POWER UNDER CONTROL

[Colossians 3:18-19] We have to understand the context and time relating to these verses. There was patriarchal, authoritarian rule, so this was a radical concept then (and yet it's also radical now). The first misunderstood word is submission. Submission is not surrender or suppression. Biblical submission is power under control. Women have incredible power, but it should be wielded correctly. Your husband has a mother and doesn't need another one, but he needs a helpmate. He doesn't need to be treated like a child, but instead appreciated and supported in his endeavors. Your words have weight and meaning to him. With much power comes much responsibility.

6. Men/Women, what are some examples of women using their relationship power in hurtful or helpful ways?

### MEN: LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL AND WITHOUT RESERVATION

Men have been called to love their wives akin to the way Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. That means sacrifice. It doesn't mean you sacrifice your family at the altar of your career. You may need to step away to care for your family first and not with leftovers. This is a compassionate and kind love and is not conditional upon response. This is a radical dynamic between submission and love where a dynamic thing happens that is honoring to God and healthy for us.

7. Men/Women how does this concept speak to you in a practical manner?

### THE KEY TO MARRIAGE IS TO USE YOUR POWER FOR EACH OTHER, NOT AGAINST EACH OTHER

We can be advocates and helpmeets in marriage or be at war. It's not just a surface level issue, but also deeply spiritual. This means we need to be humble and, on our knees, asking God to develop the love of Christ in us. Husbands do not have the ability to love their wives without first understanding the love of Christ. Wives do not have the ability to wield their power over their husbands without the authority of Jesus. In the midst of that, a dynamic thing happens not only in marriages, but in all relationships and is a testimony. They key is to use our power for each other and not against each other.

8. What relationship area do you need to invite Christ to participate in rather than trying to do it on your own?