

Sermon Based Small Group Guide
For September 18, 2022 sermon:
"The Creator and His original design"

Warm up:

1. Every year, at the beginning of our small group season, it is good to stop and talk about your hopes and expectations for your group. We hope you will become closer friends. We hope you will grow in your faith through a deeper study of God's word and an honest discussion of your spiritual progress (and struggles). We also hope that you will find ways to SERVE as a group. This is a new expectation for many groups, but doing some meaningful ministry together can create lasting memories and the excitement of seeing how God can work through you. What do YOU hope happens this year in and through your small group?
2. What do you believe is the best or most important preparation for a strong marriage? (For example: Thorough pre-marital counseling, good examples growing up, etc.)

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes) Read: Ephesians 5:21-32

1. ASK: What makes a Christian marriage different from a civil ceremony? Marriage is a fundamental institution found in all human societies, but a Christian marriage should be different. Our society sees marriage as a commitment (basically a contract) between two people with the government, who issues the license, as the one who declares the contract "legal". A Christian marriage may look similar and the parties sign that same document, but it should be seen as a "covenant" in which God is a witness to the vows and the final authority that the husband and wife submit to. What should make a marriage covenant more powerful than a marriage contract?
2. ASK: Do you believe in the idea of a "soul mate"? What does that mean to you? The online dating company "eHarmony.com" markets the idea of a soul mate, but sometimes the soul mate idea can steer us wrongly into thinking marriage exists to fulfill us...to make us happy. If we expect any other human to satisfy us, complete us, and make us ultimately happy, haven't we put that person in the place of God? We are to find our fulfillment and purpose in God, and any person we put that expectation on is going to fail us and disappoint us every day. According to Psalm 107:9, what does God want to be/do for His people? According to John 10:10, what did Jesus say was the difference between him and our spiritual enemy?
3. Today's world is all about "me", and marriage is no different. People want to know what THEY will get out of marriage. How is "loving like Christ loved us" different?

Apply it: (10 minutes)

How can your small group support and encourage you? Have you lost a spouse and need comfort? Are you married but struggling? Share as honestly as you can and pray for each other as you close.