THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

February 2 & 3 '08
"Reboot" Series
When its time to adjust the "default" settings...

This Week's Message: **"A Picture For All the World to See"**
Pastor Mark Burch

Proverbs 18:22 reminds us that he who finds a wife, finds a good thing, and gains favor from the Lord. Marriage was intended to be the most intimate of all human relationships, a friendship that endures for a life-time, and a secure shelter when everything around us seems to crumble.

But for far too many, marriage has become a difficult path to walk. Because it is such an "up-close-and-personal" relationship, it is impossible to avoid the knowledge that your spouse is not perfect. Imperfection is fine! UNTIL it begins to impact MY LIFE! And so the hard work begins; the work of making the union of TWO IMPERFECT people become a beautiful dance of romance, respect, and mutual submission.

Ephesians 5:32…
(Marriage) is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church…"

Do you have questions about Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? Send them to sermonquestions@willowparkchurch.com and then listen to future messages for the answers!

SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

History (Making it Personal)

1. Share around the group the stories of marriages you have admired, respected, or wanted to emulate. What made those relationships attractive to you?
2. Share some of the crazy or funny events that you've walked through in your own marriage, and how these events strengthened your relationship.
3. If you had to boil it down to just one trait, what would you tell a young couple preparing for marriage was the single most important element to bring into the relationship?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

4. Read Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-9; and Deuteronomy 24:1-4.
   Think about the context – six times Jesus says "you have heard it was said, but I tell you." What are the significant changes Jesus is making from what they have heard…. What are the implications?
5. Have someone give a quick overview of the book of Hosea – what is the story that is being told here – and what is the point?
   Read the following texts: 1:2-3; 2:2-6; 2:14-15; 2:23 and 3:1
6. Hosea paints a graphic picture of God's faithful love for His people (Israel then and the church today) but also stands as an example of marital faithfulness. Read Ephesians 5:31-32 and talk about the "picture" our marriages are to be.
7. What are the characteristics of God's love toward His children?
   Take some time to list out the ways God shows His love toward us – use scripture and your own life experiences to illustrate.
8. Look again at Matthew 19 and also Mark 10:1-12. Focus in for a few moments on the phrase – "your hardness of heart" and talk about the implications. How do we keep our hearts soft?
9. Read I Corinthians 13:4-8. Its context is in the use of our spiritual gifts. Consider how we might use our gifts to serve our spouses. Why are these traits difficult for us to follow?

Taking It Home (Application)

10. This is an intensely personal and potentially painful topic. Spend some time in prayer for those you know who have experienced a marriage failure, and need the loving care of their friends during these days of healing.
11. As you face the inevitable challenges that marriage brings, make a personal commitment that you will not suffer alone, but that you will find a trusted Christian friend to share with, pray with and gain counsel.
12. Take some time for honest confession around your group. Share some of the struggles that you are facing or have faced – not to air your dirty laundry, but to open the conversation to others who may be struggling in silence, thinking they are they only ones. Let people know you are not perfect!
13. As you close your time, spend some time in prayer for the families in our church that are in marital trouble today. Pray that God would soften their hearts; protect their children, and bring reconciliation to these homes.

Satellite Weekend - March 1/2 (RUSH)

Because 1500 kids will take over the Hwy 33 campus for Rush on March 1/2 weekend, services will be held at the Glenmore location (formerly Garden Valley, 228 Valley road) on Sat at 5:15 and Sun 9:15 and 11:00. Or you can join us at on the other campus locations on Sunday (South 9:15 and 11:00 or Lake Country at 10:00)