



TALK IT OVER

Stronger Marriages

Stronger - Week 3

Pastors Andy and Stacie Wood

October 3-4, 2026

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the questions provided or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions at the end of the document.

Scriptures

Genesis 2:18, 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:21-33, Malachi 2:13-15

Questions

1. In Genesis 2:24 we read God's clear design for marriage. It says, "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." This is God's clear design for marriage. Do you believe this and why?
2. Genesis 2:18 says, "I will make a helper suitable for him." The sermon explained that the word "ezer" describes a strong and necessary helper, not someone who is less important. How does this change the way you understand the role of a wife in marriage? What does true partnership look like when a husband and wife are working together toward God's purposes?
3. As men and women, we complement each other in many different ways. What are some key ways we can see these roles and responsibilities in a healthy marriage?
4. For the women in the group: The Bible tells us in Ephesians that we are to submit to our husbands. This can be translated "to respect and honor him." Do you think the world has a distorted view of submitting? Why is it so easy for culture to confuse biblical leadership and respect with hierarchy and servitude and how does the concept of equal partnership correct that?
5. For the men in the group: Ephesians 5:25 tells husbands to love their wives "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." What does sacrificial love look like in the ordinary parts of marriage, such as communication, finances, parenting, conflict, or serving

one another? How can a husband lead in a way that gives life rather than control or domination?

6. For both: How does viewing a wife as an equal partner in a covenant relationship change the way a married couple makes decisions together? What are some practical ways they can make their marriage their primary human relationship while still honoring their parents and other family members?
7. Ephesians 5:21 calls believers to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,” while verse 33 calls the husband to love his wife and the wife to respect her husband. Why do you think love and respect are both important in a healthy marriage?
8. How is a covenant different from a relationship based only on feelings, convenience, or what each person gets from it? In Malachi 2:13–15, God describes marriage as a covenant and calls His people to remain faithful. What does faithfulness look like in everyday married life, especially when feelings change or life becomes difficult? How can we build the kind of commitment where our actions are guided by our promises rather than by our emotions?
9. Ephesians 5:31–33 connects the oneness of a husband and wife with the relationship between Jesus and his bride, the Church. What does your marriage, or your understanding of marriage, teach you about the way Jesus loves and cares for his people? For those who are single, what can you learn about Jesus’s love from this picture of marriage?
10. Where are you most tempted to believe that your way of doing relationships is better than God’s way? What is one practical way you can show greater love, respect, honor, or humility in your closest relationships this week?

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you’ve learned today?*

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email JasonW@saddleback.com.