

DIGGING DEEPER

How To Lose Your Family: Criticize Your Mate

THE MAIN THEME

Marriage flourishes when spouses celebrate one another as God's gift instead of criticizing their faults.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Genesis 2:23 – “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man’.”

WHAT NOT TO MISS

- Criticism is the most predictable disaster in relationships.
- Dating often starts with celebration, but marriage can drift toward criticism.
- Criticism works through blame, absolutes, attacks, comparisons, and sarcasm.
- God's design is for us to celebrate our spouse, not criticize them.
- Four ways to celebrate your spouse:
 1. See them as God's gift.
 2. Sacrificially give yourself to and for them.
 3. Love them as yourself.
 4. Anticipate a shared future together.

LIFE APPLICATION

Criticism erodes intimacy and joy in marriage, while celebration strengthens and renews it. By seeing your spouse as God's gift, giving sacrificially, loving them as yourself, and anticipating your shared future, you create a flourishing marriage centered on God's glory. This week, replace criticism with celebration. Instead of pointing out flaws, speak gratitude. Instead of withdrawing, invest in your spouse. Rekindle anticipation by talking about your shared dreams and future together.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY – God's Gift

READ: Genesis 2:22–23

REFLECT: Adam saw Eve as God's gift and celebrated her.

RESPOND: Write down three reasons you are grateful for your spouse (or a close friend if single) and share one with them.

TUESDAY – Sacrificial Giving

READ: Matthew 6:21

REFLECT: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

RESPOND: Choose one practical act of sacrificial love to do for your spouse or family today.

WEDNESDAY – Loving as Yourself

READ: Ephesians 5:28–30

REFLECT: Loving your spouse is loving yourself.

RESPOND: Identify your spouse's love language and intentionally show love in that way today.

THURSDAY – Anticipating the Future

READ: Jeremiah 29:11

REFLECT: God has plans for a hope-filled future for His people.

RESPOND: Discuss one dream or goal for your future together and pray about it as a family.

FRIDAY – Celebrating, Not Criticizing

READ: Philippians 4:8

REFLECT: Focus on what is true, noble, and praiseworthy.

RESPOND: Replace a critical thought with a word of celebration and encouragement today.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Create a safe space for honesty about struggles with criticism.
- Encourage couples to share ways they can celebrate one another.
- Include singles by exploring how the church can celebrate each person as God's gift.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Challenge couples and families to practice daily celebration instead of criticism—write down one thing each day to thank God for about your spouse or family member.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is criticism so damaging in marriages and families?
 - How does seeing your spouse as God's gift change your perspective?
 - What are some ways to sacrificially give to your spouse or children?
 - How does Ephesians 5:28–30 deepen our understanding of love in marriage?
 - Which love language is most important to you? To your spouse?
 - What are some shared goals or dreams you and your spouse/family can pursue? •
- How can singles in the group live out the principle of celebration in their relationships? •
- Where do you most often slip into criticism? How can you redirect it to celebration? •
- What practical step can you take this week to rekindle joy in your marriage or family? •
- How can the group support one another in creating homes of celebration?

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

- Pray for hearts to see spouses and family members as God's gift.
- Pray for renewed joy and unity in marriages.

CARE

- Pray for families to sacrificially invest in one another.
- Pray for strength to replace criticism with encouragement.

CULTIVATE

- Pray for deeper love and mutual growth within families.
- Pray for homes to be places where Christ's love is cultivated daily.

COMMISSION

- Pray for families to reflect God's covenant love to neighbors and nations.
- Pray that marriages would be a testimony of celebration, not criticism.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for giving us the gift of our spouses, families, and church community. Forgive us for when we criticize instead of celebrate. Help us to give sacrificially, love deeply, and anticipate the future with hope. Strengthen our homes to reflect Your love and to be testimonies of joy in this world. Amen.