

What Did You Expect?

Commitment # 2 - We will make growth and change our daily agenda.

- Marriage and Gardening
 - Gardening takes hard work – pulling weeds, tending to the soil, planting seeds, watering, pruning, etc.
 - To have an unsuccessful garden takes no work at all - absolutely nothing! Inattentiveness is all you need
 - To have a successful flower or vegetable garden there are no shortcuts – you can be sure that when you see one a lot of hard work has been put in by someone
 - And so it is with marriage – a successful and beautiful marriage takes much hard work while an unsuccessful marriage takes no work at all
 - Good marriages just don't happen by hanging out together, living in the same home, raising the same children – it takes weeding out our sin and planting and watering seeds righteousness
- The Biblical Call – Ephesians 4:17-24
- The Biblical Call Illustrated – Jeremiah 1:10
 - *Change always has two sides – destruction and construction*

A. Pulling the Weeds of Sin

- Weeds are actions, words and attitudes that choke out marriage as God intended and keep it from thriving – *that choke out love, kindness, forgiveness, grace, etc.*
- Six General/Major Weeds to be Pulled (from *What Did You Expect*)
 - 1) Selfishness
 - ✓ Philippians 2:3-4 –
 - ✓ “Nothing works in life (let alone in marriage) when the human community is comprised of a bunch of self-appointed little sovereigns seeking to set up their own little kingdoms.”
 - 2) Busyness
 - ✓ Ephesians 5:15-17 –
 - ✓ “Marriage, too often, is what we do in between all the other things we are doing that really determine the content and pace of our daily schedules. But marriage doesn't function very well as an in-between thing...”

3) Inattention

- ✓ 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 16 reminds us that we must pay attention to spiritual things in our lives
- ✓ Prevention is the best medicine

4) Self-righteousness

- ✓ Romans 12:3; 3:23 –
- ✓ “Do you welcome the moments in your life when your spouse approaches you with a criticism or concern about something you said or did? Are you glad when God placed you next to someone who helps you see with greater accuracy? ...Have you actually invited your spouse to confront you in places where he or she thinks it is needed?”

5) Fear

- ✓ Fear of Failure – spend so much time wondering about the what ifs that you miss the joy of the present, or you unwittingly fulfill your own prophecies
- ✓ Fear of Man – perhaps you are attaching too much of your sense of worth to your spouse, meaning that your day depends on how they respond or don't respond, what they say or do not say. This puts your spouse in a place where only God should be, and he or she will always fall short.
 - Perhaps you fail to confront sin and difficulty, leaving the weeds in place, pretending they do not exist or are not a big deal
 - Fear of rejection is a part of this fear of man – what will he or she say? How will he react?
- ✓ Fear of Future – paralyzed by the thought of “what might happen” – like fear of failure and fear of man it can keep us from enjoying life and one another – we must remember not to worry about tomorrow – planning is good, fear is not
- ✓ Deuteronomy 31:6 –

6) Laziness

- ✓ “Laziness is always self-focused and self-excusing. Laziness is undisciplined and unmotivated. Laziness permits us to be passive when decisive and loving action is needed.”
- ✓ Proverbs 24:30-31 –
- ✓ Proverbs 21:25 –

- ✓ Proverbs 20:4 –
- ✓ Proverbs 22:13 –
- More Weeds! See Ephesians 4:25-5:4
- Weeding Tips
 - ✓ Identify the weeds – examine what you are growing using a book that helps you identify weeds – the Bible!
 - ✓ Pull them early before the roots go down too deep or they spread too wide – be diligent!
 - ✓ Pull them regularly – Pulling the weeds of sin is not a one-time event – to ignore this truth is to ignore the garden of your marriage – set a day of the week to pull weeds if needed
 - ✓ Prepare the soil by watering and/or loosening the soil – by prayer and the word
 - ✓ Use tools as needed – prayer and the word, fellowship
 - ✓ Get the whole root whenever possible – dig deep, look for the cause, not just the “fruit”
 - ✓ Off with their heads – if you can’t get weeds up by their roots, chop their heads off every now and then. That will prevent them from setting seeds, and with any luck, they’ll eventually die. Don’t excuse bad behavior!
 - ✓ Invite others to help – Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25
 - ✓ Start with your own garden
 - Psalm 139:23-24 –
 - Lamentations 3:40 –
 - ✓ Then help your Spouse see their weeds
 - Matthew 7:3-5 –
 - Galatians 6:1 –

Homework

- Read chapter 7 and discuss it with your spouse
- Memorize Psalm 139:23-24
- Review Ephesians 4:31-32 and Romans 12:2

