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## THE LITTLE FOXES

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### Part 3 of The Peasant Princess

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Song of Songs 2:8 - 3:5 | October 05, 2008

You're listening to the Peasant Princess Sermon Series, where Mark Driscoll takes us through the poetic book, Song of Songs. For more audio and video content, please visit [marshillchurch.org](http://marshillchurch.org).

Well, howdy, Mars Hill. Here we are in Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, Verse 8. If you've got a Bible, feel free to go there. That's where we will start this evening; a couple quick announcements, while you are finding your place, and if you are new, my name's Mark — one of the pastors; good to have you. We will be answering your questions — my wife and I will — at the end of the service, so go ahead and text those in. We have been getting a billion questions. One thing I would strongly recommend is this book. This book actually answers almost all the questions we've received. God, Marriage, and Family by Andreas Kostenberger; great book, deals with singleness, marriage, gender roles, sexuality, birth control, children, divorce, homosexuality, leadership in the church. Basically covers everything.

A great PhD scholar; the footnotes alone are longer than 60 pages. So this guy did his homework. It's a great book. Cannot commend it enough; really appreciate this work. Many of the questions that have been asked via text messaging would be well served and dealt with in God, Marriage, and Family by Kostenberger, published by my friends at Crossway; would strongly encourage that. Secondly, next thing is this week we're dealing with how to catch foxes in your vineyard. It's a metaphor out of Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, and so, of course it is Mars Hill. Someone created a video game to go along with this, so you can actually go to [peasantprincess.com](http://peasantprincess.com) and play whack-a-fox this week, and it is appropriate for children. It's a simple little fun game, and a member of the church made that, so that's what happens when you have tech guys.

They created a little video game for you, and, Number 3, this is a really great week. It's a very important week. It's Mars Hill's birthday. So Mars Hill's 12 years old today. Very nice, very nice, and, so, happy birthday, Mars Hill; amazingly enough, things have gone so well over the years. We're exceedingly glad. Gracie and I were talking about it today that when we first started the church it was so small and so broke — and really God has been so faithful. Two weeks ago we had our biggest Sunday of growth ever. We grew by 2,000 in one week. Last week we grew by another 500, and this week I'm sure we'll be down. All the guys living with their girlfriends and all the stay-at-home dads hit the eject button on Mars Hill after the recent Q&A, but we still love them and pray for them. So, for those of you who remain, happy birthday, Mars Hill; good to have you all.

I'll go ahead and pray. We're gonna get to work in Song of Solomon, Chapter 2 today, and I'll just tell you this in advance. This is gonna be more like a big counseling session. I'm just gonna share with you some stuff that's real practical that I have used in my pastoral care for people over the course of the last decade here at Mars Hill, and things that Grace and I have told people — we've met with them. So the text this week is God's way of giving me an opportunity just to share with you some things that we might share if we sat down over a cup of coffee. So, Father God, we begin by thanking you for Scripture. God, I confess to you that we live in a world that doesn't know you, and in a way that doesn't organize families to honor you, and, so, God, as we open your Word today, we ask that our minds would be receptive, our hearts would be open.

And that are lives would be changed through the Scriptures, and so, God, I pray for my friends, that they would hear what the Scriptures say and, God, that you would enable me by your Spirit to serve them well. And, God, when all is said and done, it's our request that we, in all of our lives, particularly our relationships, would honor Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen. Give you a quick setup. Here's the book. It's about a husband and wife; loving intimacy, relationship, conversation; series of love songs between the two of them. She speaks first. She speaks last. She speaks most frequently. She speaks most freely, and this week she begins, in Chapter 2, Verse 8. The book is not necessarily in chronological order. Here they're preparing for an evening out together — time together, as it were.

"The voice of my beloved," she said, "Behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag." He's a stud. "Behold, there he stands behind our wall looking through the windows, looking through the lattice." Okay, he's not a peeping Tom or a stalker. Actually, here's what happens. She is in her home. She's looking at the window, waiting for him to come. It's time for them to be together. They're going on a — you know, romantic time together, or whatever the case may be, and she sees him coming, and what is he doing? Running. You know that's a guy who's pretty motivated, right? When a guy runs, right, he's pretty interested. So he is coming to her house. He's pursuing her. He's wanting to get time with her. He's a stud, and he's obviously very motivated.

And she looks and sees him coming and her heart sort of has that pitter-patter, and she's excited to see him. "My beloved speaks to me and says, 'Arise, my love,'" — that's his nickname for her — "My beautiful one, and come away, for the winter has passed. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth. The time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." When he's saying — what she's saying, rather, is that winter is over, spring is come. Spring is often the time for love, and I was thinking about it. Gracie and I met — we went on our first date March

12, 1988, and it was shortly thereafter in the springtime that I think both of us in our hearts were determined to spend the rest of our lives together. It's amazing how springtime is often the time for love.

She goes on to say, "The fig tree ripens its fruit and the vines are in blossom. They give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one and come away. Oh, my dove, in the cleft of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face. Let me hear your voice. Your voice is sweet. Your face is lovely." The next two verses is where we will camp today. "Catch the foxes for us. The little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom. My beloved is mine and I am his. He grazes among the lilies until the day breathes and the shadows flee. Turn, my beloved. Be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains." Springtime. "He's coming to be with me," she says. "I love him. I love his voice. I love his face. I enjoy his presence." And she says, "I am his and he is mine."

The big issue we'll start with is Chapter 2, Verse 16, where she says that they have mutual belonging and ownership. She says, "He is mine and I am his." Now let me explain this, because this is the essence of a Biblical marriage. If one person gives them self and the other does not, that's an abusive relationship. If one person serves; if one person accommodates; if one person is considerate; if one person doesn't share any secrets, doesn't tell any lies, doesn't withhold any of their heart or their money or their life, and the other person does, that's an abusive relationship. You've got a giver and a taker. A Biblical relationship is two givers, because our God is a giver. Our God gives love and life and joy and peace and he gives, and if we are to be in a Christian relationship, we give.

The husband gives himself to the wife: all of his heart, all of his money, all of his life; and the wife reciprocates, gives all of herself to her husband. Again, this is not one person giving. Furthermore, it's not one person taking anything. Love can't be taken. It has to be given, and let me go on a bit of a — an excursus for the men. The Bible teaches in the New Testament that the man — the husband — is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. Places like I Corinthians 11, I Peter 3, Ephesians 5; places like Colossians 3, repeatedly says, in the New Testament, that "The man is the head of the wife." What this means is that he is to lovingly, humbly, graciously, sacrificially lead his family. It says it this way in Ephesians 5. "Husbands, love your wives like Christ loves the church."

The whole goal for a husband is to be like Jesus to his wife, so that she could trust him and feel safe with him, to build intimacy around his Christ-likeness, that he is a man who is safe. Many men will only take that doctrine and turn it into an abusive relationship, meaning, "I'm the boss. She is property. I tell her what to do and she is supposed to submit to me." That's a very — misuse and abuse of a Biblical principle because it's nothing like Jesus treats the church. What happens sometimes in those scenarios is that a man starts to view his wife as if she were property. "She's mine. I tell her what to do, I treat her as I wish, and I take from her what I want." That's abuse. That's abuse. It's nothing like Jesus, nothing, nothing like Jesus.

And I say that because sometimes in Christian marriages, stupid men — and there are many stupid men — stupid men don't understand what it is to really love their wife like Christ loves the church, and, instead, they take from her in a way that is abusive, rather than giving of himself to her so that she could give of herself to him, and this sometimes comes out sexually. The first time that there was a prosecuted case of marital rape in the history of the United States of America was 1978. Until that time, men would do horrible things to their wives, and the assumption was she's basically property. He gets to do what she wants. She belongs to him. That case was tried and then a study was undertaken of 900 wives — and let me get the statistic correct here — 14 percent said that they had been sexually assaulted by their husband.

Statistically, a wife is twice as likely to be sexually assaulted by her husband than a total stranger. Of those wives who are sexually assaulted, 50 percent reported that they were assaulted 20 times or more. Statistically, as well, if a woman is being abused in that way, and she goes to the church and tells the church, "My husband is, you know, forcing himself on me. He's not loving me as Christ loves the church. He's abusing me," she's more likely to put up with it, hang in there longer and not call the police because oftentimes Christians have a misunderstanding of what it means to be the family leader, and the man gets away with all kinds of gross sin, and the woman suffers in the name of being Biblical. If you're a woman in that situation, call the police and call the elders. Get the help you need. The situation in Song of Solomon is not this:

She doesn't say, "I am his, period." She doesn't say, "He gets to take what he wants, period." Here's what she does say. "My beloved is mine." He went first. That's what it means to be the leader. He gave himself to me. He gave his heart to me. He gave his life to me. He gave his future to me. He gave his trust to me. He gave his money to me. He gave his body to me. He's held nothing back. He's given himself totally to me, and, she then says what? "And I am his." So I have given my whole self to him. That's a Biblical marriage. Anything else is abuse. Where there's a taker and a giver, or there's someone who doesn't give themselves and simply takes from the other, it's all abuse. I praise God that Grace and I have given ourselves to one another. I've given myself to her. She's given herself to me. There's nothing to hide. We're in this together.

That allows for this woman a sense of freedom. You wonder why she's passionate. You wonder why she's free. You wonder why she's so creative and amazing. Well, it's because he has given himself to her and she has given herself to him. Now to guard their relationship, they're gonna talk about three things. They're gonna talk about foxes, fears and friends, and first they're gonna talk about foxes in chapter 2, verse 15. "Catch the little foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil our vineyard." In that day, you had a beautiful vineyard. You were cultivating. You're harvesting it. A relationship is like that. It's lots of work. It's lots of pruning. It's lots of attention, so that it can live and grow and be fruitful, and what she says is, "Little foxes come into the vineyard. They eat the fruit. They gnaw the root, and they destroy the life, and our relationship is like that."

Every marriage has little foxes that come in. They're small, you don't see them. They're sneaky, but they devastate. I believe that texts like this are God's way of giving pastors like me a blank sheet of paper to just talk to you about foxes that I see getting into people's vineyards. I've done — Grace and I, early on, we did all the premarital counseling. We've done counseling premaritally for hundreds of couples. I've officiated — I stopped counting at 100 weddings at one point, and that was a long time ago. I don't do as many weddings as I once did, but I've done a lot. We have counseled hundreds, maybe thousands of couples over the years. So I put together, with my wife, a list of foxes that we see getting into vineyards commonly. I'll break them

down into categories for you to pay attention to. The first is architecting issues.

Here's the deal. Husband and a wife are to come together to build a life, and the first thing you need to agree on is the blueprint. What are we building? So the first thing is priorities, and that is that your first priority is to mature as a Christian; read your Bible, pray; walk with God; be a Christian. Secondly: to be a good spouse. Love your wife. Love your husband. Number 3: be a good parent; and then Number 4: whatever else it is you have to do, like me working a job. Now what happens is if you invert the priorities, everything falls apart. Let's say the highest priority is the children. Say, "Well, we're staying together for the sake of the children." Well, someday they're going to grow up and leave. "Well, we can't make it to church because Johnny's got Little League and Sally's got dance recital, so we can't go to church or Bible study anymore."

Okay, then Jesus isn't the foundation of the relationship. Johnny and Suzie are, or dance recitals and Little League is. There's nothing sinful about having your kids in activities, but the children and their activities can become more important than Jesus. The key is to have a home in which Jesus is the center, the marriage is the priority, and the children are loved and welcomed. If you put the children at the center of the marriage, eventually what happens is the children grow up and leave and that's when couples divorce, have all kinds of hardship. The guy hits the midlife crisis. Why? If the children are the glue that binds the marriage together, once they graduate and leave, there's nothing to hold the marriage together.

If Jesus is the center and it's about loving him and growing in him and maturing in him, then the husband and the wife will have Jesus as their center, and the children will be welcomed into the relationship between mom, dad and Jesus, and it's a healthy place to build a family. The priorities have to be Jesus, spouse, children; has to be. Otherwise, even the way you architect your home will be completely inverted. Couple other things I would say, as well. This includes understanding how to use the Gospel. The Gospel is this: that we're all sinners by nature and choice. That our sin has separated us from God and one another, and that Jesus is God, come into human history to live without sin; to die for sin; to take sin away; to rise so that we might have newness of life. If you don't understand the Gospel, what will happen is, you're going to punish one another.

I do this illustration all the time when I officiate a wedding. Usually the wife-to-be is right here and the husband-to-be is right here, and she takes her bouquet and hands it to the maid-of-honor. I make them face one another and hold hands, and they look amazing, and everybody is smiling. And I always tell the audience, "There's only two problems with this marriage: this woman and this man." Other than that, all the variables are totally set up for a wedding. This woman will sin against this man, and this man will sin against this woman, and when I look out, all the married couples are — I know who's married at that point, because they all look like bobble-heads, they're all, "Oh, yeah, I got that. That's true right there." And all the single people look confused, like dogs that heard a whistle. They're like, "Huh? What are you talking about?"

And the truth is that a husband and wife will sin against one another, and I always put my first in the middle, and I say, "Sin will come between them and drive them apart." The question is: what will you do with sin? The answer is: you need to have Jesus. He died for sin and takes it away so you can be reconciled. If you don't understand Jesus, then you can't confess your sin and forgive the person who's sinned against you, and what you'll try and do is punish one another to pay for the sin. It's a false form of atonement. "You were mean to me. I'm mean to you. You commit adultery on me. I'm committing adultery on you. You weren't nice to me. You get the silent treatment. You raised your voice. I chuck something. I'm gonna make you pay." Or bitterness. "I can't trust you. I can't forgive you. All hope is lost. We're done."

Bitterness or punishment, in varying forms, comes in unless you understand Jesus and the sinner repents, and the offended forgives, and there's reconciliation around him. That's why I'll say this, as well: For those of you who are single, marry someone you agree with, and know what you believe. When it comes to issues of Jesus and worship and marriage and family, study the Bible. Study the Bible. Study the Bible. Come to deep convictions and then marry someone who shares them. It's hard enough if you agree on what you're doing to build your life together. If you don't even agree on what the blueprint is and your conflict is always over what are we going to do, you're never gonna make any progress whatsoever. I have guys ask me this all the time: How do you make Grace do that? I get that question all the time.

I'm like, "Make her do what?" "Well, she stays home. You got five kids. She's nice to you. Like, how do you make her do that?" Like we arm-wrestled and she lost. You know, like we flipped a coin. "Oh, guess who's staying home with the kids?" You know, like — we didn't do it like that. I knew at a very young age — I mean, I was a brand-new Christian, and I knew I wanted to have big family. I wanted to be the provider. These were all Biblical convictions. I wanted a wife who would be willing to stay home with the children, not begrudgingly. That we would share certain values, and work together, and Grace said, "Well, I believe those same things as you," right? We'd been studying the Bible. Okay, great, we agree, then we should be married. The worst thing you could do is marry a Christian who doesn't agree with you.

All of a sudden, you're married. It's, like, okay, "What about kids?" "I don't want kids." "Well, I wanted a big family." "Well, we should've talked about this." We don't agree on what we're building, now we have serious conflict. Know what you believe Biblically, and then marry someone who agrees with you, and make sure, if you're single, you go through the premarital process here to get you ready, ensuring that you're well-suited, well-prepared, and well-aligned. How about this one? Well, I'll tell you this, too. Gracie and I, we actually agree. It's just — it hit me this morning. Gracie and I agree. We agree that I am to lovingly lead the home; that she is to be my helper; that we're equal, but with distinct roles. We agree that men should be elders over the church. We agree. It's amazing. We agree on almost everything.

Don't agree on everything, there's always something. We agree on almost everything, and somebody asked me this morning, they said, "What would it be like if you and Grace didn't agree?" And Mars Hill church would not exist if Grace and I didn't agree. We made huge sacrifices. I mean, it's the 12th anniversary of the church today. We both made huge sacrifices to plant this church. I didn't get a salary from this church from three years. We have hung in there and worked hard over the years, and God's been exceedingly gracious and good. But if we didn't agree, Mars Hill church would not exist, wouldn't exist. I mean, it's that big of a deal. My whole life work in ministry, if Gracie and I are not like-minded, it doesn't come into existence.

Because rather than having my wife and I working together, we're always fighting over who's gonna win and who's gonna win, and what it is we're supposed to do. Marry someone who's like-minded, and know what you believe. Couple other things, just practical foxes that can get in the vineyard: organizing your home. Architecting issue, right? How many of you grew up in a random home, meaning no real bedtime, no real dinnertime, everybody comes and goes. You — you're in the house watching TV and people walk in. You're not sure they are. People just come in occasionally: neighbors, family, friends. It's just a little bit chaotic. You don't even have to sleep in the same bed every night. All right, it's just sort of that home. Little random? How many of you were closed home? Tuesday night's turkey pot pie night. Dinner's every night at 6:01.

Wednesday night is bath night for the kids. Thursday night is family devotions. Friday night is another bath night for the kids. Friday, you know, is pot roast night. I mean everything's on a chart, and your dad's an engineer, and your mom loves Excel, and everything's put together. Everything's nailed down, and friends don't come by unless they call two weeks in advance and schedule an appointment, and then it has to go through a committee. I mean, it's a closed home. If the phone rings, it's like, "What is that? What is that?" "Oh, that's a phone." "What?" And usually it's a solicitor, right, because nobody calls. It's closed home. An open home is somewhere in the middle. Certain people can drop by, but not everybody, and there is a schedule, but it's flexible to make adjustments.

When Gracie and I got married, our home, because of ministry, was very random, and I'm more closed home. I don't like — I mean, I'm — she's an extrovert. I'm an introvert. She loves having a million people over. I love having a million books. I mean, we just — we're just different. Not good or bad, just different, and so she would open the home too much, and I'd be like, "I can't have this many people over all the time. I'm freaking out." Because I'm weird in a social situation, I am., and then she would be like, "But we haven't had anyone over since the last Presidential election, and you don't stop reading your books." I was like, "True." So we should come with something in the middle, where we entertain a certain amount, we have family night certain amount, and so we've come to an open home.

But some of you even newly-married couples, you got to have that architecting discussion, because if the random-home person is married to the closed-home person, then the random-home person is going to keep dropping in with a bunch of people for dinner that they didn't call in advance and give warning of, and the closed-home person will load a gun and greet you at the door: just those kinds of things. Couple other things to think about, technology: how are you going to handle cell phone and I-phone and e-mail — because this can be a very tense point? The phone's always ringing; e-mail's always being answered. Other people are always interrupting. Our rule in our family is we don't answer the phone at dinner. We don't check e-mail when we're hanging out. I turn off my phone when I'm home with my family, turn the ringer off.

I mean, technology can destroy a family because it doesn't allow any ongoing privacy, and it's constant interruption and disruption, and the kids, in particular, can find that to be very disrespectful that they're not a high priority. Couple things as well, how are you going to handle extended family? Some of you have in-laws, some of you have outlaws, all right? Some of you — how are you going to handle that? Do they — do your parents get to be involved in all your conflicts? I hope not. When there's an issue in your marriage, does there need to be a huge family meeting and everybody shows up and gets to weigh in on your life? Hope not. Do you have to be present at every holiday: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanza, Valentine's Day. It's another holiday, come on down.

Everybody's birth — do you have to be together for everything, or do you have a right, as your own family, to say, "Look, we can make it to certain things. We can't make it everything. This is how it's going to go." Particularly when you get kids, it starts getting really hard. All of a sudden you're supposed to eat 27 turkey dinners. I can't handle that much. I pass out. How are you going to handle family? Do you have to go on vacation together? Do you have to spend all your time together? How — do they have a right to just hang out at your house? I mean, you gotta make these kind of understandings. Here's a little key. He deals with his family. She deals with her family. The worst thing can happen is he deals with her family and she deals with his family. That's when all of the conflict arises. Couple more. Just scheduling and budgeting.

Some of you don't even have a schedule or a budget, and then a lot of your fights will be over the small details of dollars and minutes. Need a good schedule. Gracie and I meet every Monday. Sync our schedules up, same computer, format, platform. Send one another invitations, digital calendar. See one another's schedule, all of that, and a budget. Now I'm not a great budget guy. I'll just tell you that right now. I'm a spender. Grace will spend money for other people. I'll spend money for other people and myself. Okay? I love to eat out. If I see something, I buy it. It somebody tells me they need something, I'm buying it. My wife and I, we give away tons of money every year. One of her gifts is giving, and I love that about her. She's very generous, and I totally — that's one of the things that attracted to me to her.

And so, you know, the way it is, money goes into a pot and then we've each got an expense account with our own private debit card, just to track our own spending. Otherwise I don't even pay attention to it: those kinds of things. Do you have a system for your schedule? Do you have a system for your budget? If not, you're gonna be fighting all the time, and one more architecting issue, there will invariably come times in your marriage where you just disagree. Gracie and I always try to work for consensus. I do believe I'm the leader of the family, but a prudent wife is from the Lord, Genesis 2:18, she's my helper. She completes me, right? She's made for me. I Corinthians 11, we're one, and so we always try to work for unanimity. We're on the same page. We agree.

I mean, sometimes I've gotta be patient or she's gotta be patient so that we come to agreement. You will hit points in your marriage where you don't agree. There's gonna be something that comes up and you say, "We just don't agree." When to have kids; how to space the kids out; if we should relocate, if we — if he should start a new career, whatever it is; we should stop having kids now, you know, the quiver is full, whatever it is. My recommendation is, when you hit those points, bring in a mediator: Biblical counselor, pastor, Godly older couple that's not related to you, right? And then present your case. Each of you humbly submit to their decision, and come under some authority humbly for the sake of unity and love in the marriage. Gracie and I rarely have to do this. We did do this once. We just didn't agree.

We had to present our cases and go to somebody who was wise and get some counsel. It's okay. Sometimes you will need that. If it's like that all the time, there's a real problem in the marriage. All right, if it's every Tuesday's mediator night, like, there's an issue. You should work through 99.9 percent of your stuff. Come to consensus together. Make your decisions in love and unity, and if you can't, bring someone else in. There's also, after architecting issues, there's just annoyances. Okay, tell me if this is true. I would say that this is the one thing Paula Abdul got right: opposites do attract. The spender marries the saver — some of you weren't around in the '80s, it was a big song. The spender marries the saver. The neatnik marries the slob. The early bird marries the night owl, and the introvert marries the extrovert. True or false? True.

Because when you meet them, they're different and you think they're interesting, and six months later, they're annoying. The difference between interesting and annoying is time. It's the only variable, okay? And so what's gonna happen is, you're gonna be attracted to someone different than you, and then those differences are going to drive you insane. So let me give you two things. Number 1: try to find a workable solution for the things that you have to. Give you an example. Gracie and I — we're different. I like to be early. I always like to be early. She's fashionably late, very fashionably late, and so I used to freak out all the time, and I tried everything to manipulate her.

I actually, at one point, set all of her clocks forward about 15 minutes: in her car, on her nightstand, and I thought, "There we go. We're not going to fight about this. I'll just be the only one who knows what time it is, and we'll be fine." Still late; didn't work, and so we talked about this for years, and finally I told her, "Sweetheart, I just don't like being late. I think it's rude. It freaks me out. It stresses me out." And she says, "Okay." So she's made a sincere effort. Now my wife is actually punctual, on time. Love that, and I have learned that when she's running a few minutes late, because she's doing whatever girls do — it's a lot going on — that I always carry a highlighter and a book. So if I have to sit in the car for a minute or two, I'm reading theology, in a happy place emotionally, highlighting dead authors, and I'm fine, okay?

So I just — it's finding ways to make it work. She's like, "I'm sorry I'm late." It's like, "That's cool. I'm in John Owen. We're fine, baby. We're all good," you know. The Number 2 thing is: some things you just got to let them go. You may just — you just be — may be married to someone that it's just never going to happen. If it's a big issue and it's a make-or-break deal, you gotta work it out. Like for me, smoking and cat: that would be make-or-break deal, because I'm allergic to both. So like if Grace came home with a smoking cat, like — I'm like, "That's not gonna work, sweetheart." But there's other things that, you know, you just let go. You just — "Well, I love you, there's a lot of good things about you, there's a few eccentricities. We're not going to fight over those, I'm just going to learn to let those go."

Number 3: there also are seasons in life that are just hard. One of you gets sick. It's gonna be a hard season. Wife has a baby, gonna be a hard season. If that baby's colicky, she has complications, difficult birth, hard recovery. You're going to have to just live through certain seasons. Get through them. You just got to endure through them. That's all. Perseverance: it's a very important Christian doctrine, and it really applies well to marriage. You just gotta hang in there and get through it. You need to talk lovingly about, "I miss you. I'm lonely. This is a hard season. Here's how I think we could stay connected." But at the end of the day you've just got to be understanding, and I tell you guys that, you know, some of you guys are idealistic. You're like, "I wanna get married."

We're just going to have 50 kids, 1 every 30 minutes, and she's going to home school and churn butter and sew clothes, and it's gonna be awesome. I'm just telling you, man, don't expect a lot of romance. I'm just telling you, you know, expect to be suffocated in your sleep, but don't expect a lot of romance because you may not be very considerate. Right, some guys are like, "I want kids right on top of one another and I want you to home school, and we're gonna do natural birth, and I also want you to not neglect me," with, you know, the 27 kids in diapers, and the one that's colicky, and, you know, trying to teach Latin to the 4-year-old.

I mean, it's a lot, and some guys need to be really reasonable and pull back and say, "Am I really loving my wife? Am I considerate of her? Are my expectations even reasonable? This is a hard season. I need to be considerate here." Some of you guys really got to look at the whole plan and factor in just whether or not you're even being nice to your wife. Sometimes, too, the foxes that get in the vineyard are regarded to attitude. There was a guy, John Gottmann, he was a professor at the University of Washington. I don't know if he's a Christian or not, but he did a sociological study in which he was identify leading markers for divorce, and he said that four attitudes, in particular, were often very key signs to whether or not a couple would be divorced, and he called them the Four Horsemen of Divorce.

The first was criticism, and that is where you don't bring a complaint, like, you know, "that really bothered me," or a concern, "I'm worried about us," it's a criticism. "You always do this. You never do that." Those kinds of overstatements; it's personal. "You are an idiot. You are a failure. You are a joke." It gets very personal criticism. That's the beginning. Another one is contempt: sneer, mock, ha, deep sigh, roll the eyes, here we go again. What you're — sometimes it's mock. It's negative nicknames. What you're communicating in this is disgust. "I'm disgusting with you. I'm disgusted by you." It's personal disdain. That doesn't draw anyone in. It just simply shoves that person away. Thirdly is defensiveness. When you do sin, you excuse yourself.

"Well, of course I'm angry. Look who I'm married to. Of course I'm moody; I have to share a house with you. You made me this way." Excuses, blame shifting. "It's your fault, not my fault. You triggered me." And if you're really spiritual, you do what Eve did in Genesis 3, you always blame it on the devil. "Oh, the devil. Honey, we're under spiritual attack again; the devil." All right? If you don't just say, "That was a sin. I was wrong. Please forgive me. Eventually the marriage falls apart." Unrepentant people are terrible spouses. Unrepentant people are terrible spouses, because they never learn. In addition, Number 4 is stonewalling. You tune out. Put the ear buds in. Turn up the radio in the car. Turn up the TV. Put the newspaper up. You disengage, ignore. 85 percent of the time that stonewalling occurs, it's the husband.

What he's communicating is, "I'm done. We're not working on this, we're not praying about this. We're not fixing this. I'm done with you." Some guys, and gals, will even say that. What he says is then "This degenerates into where you accept parallel, lonely lives." "You got your friends. I got

mine. You got your money. I got my money. You got your life. I got my life." Sometimes it's, "You've got your church. I've got my church." And eventually it just ends up in divorce, because, functionally, you're already two people living two separate lives. The Bible says you're to be one. Architecturally, this is manifesting itself, according to some articles that I've read in New Home Design. It said that one of the great trends in new home design is two master bedrooms with two master bathrooms and two master closets.

Husbands and wives saying, "You live here. I live here." The Bible says in Hebrews 13 that "The marriage bed," — not the marriage beds — "Should be kept pure." But that's just the architectural outworking of a couple that is functionally divorced. In addition, Number 5, there is issues of pain. You came from a divorced home. You were molested as a child. You were raped as an adult. You were a woman who was in an emotionally, physically, sexually, spiritually abusive dating relationship or former marriage. You're a guy or a gal who was with someone. You gave your heart. They betrayed you, cheated on you, destroyed you. Those are issues of pain. Issues of pain can be foxes in the vineyard to be sure. I liken them to a broken bone, right? If you break a bone, and you don't get it set properly, it heals back up but it's never quite right.

You walk with a limp, and it hurts. Your soul is like that. Those kinds of devastating, painful life moments, if not properly set, you heal in a bad way, and what Christians will oftentimes say is, "I don't wanna talk about that. That's in my past. I'm beyond that." My answer is always, "If you were truly beyond it, you would talk about it. You would say, "This is what happened to me and this is what I've learned and this is what God is teaching me." If you can't talk about it, then it's not in your past, it's still a fresh, broken wound, and sometimes people will just get married and try and move on, not dealing with issues of their past. If you're one of those people, we have redemption groups for people that have been abused or addicted, to help people, and sometimes it's painful.

It's like re-breaking the bone to reset it so you can be healthy and whole, and you can live the life that God intends for you. Sometimes it's — well, it's Number 6: issues of shame. You've got secret sin in your past you've never confessed to your spouse. You're the guy who's got the porn problem or the gal who's got the porn problem — everyone struggles with it, it seems, today. There's shame. There's secrecy. There's stuff your spouse doesn't know. You've got a duplicitous life. You're not walking in the light as he is in the light. Have you really asked one another, "Do you have any secrets from me? Is there anything I don't know from your past or present?" Some couples don't even ask the hard questions. They assume, "Everything's right until I hear otherwise," and then it's oftentimes too late. These are all foxes that get in the vineyard.

My question to all the married couples is this: Ask one another this question — and Gracie and I have been asking it for days and talking it through — what are the foxes in our vineyard? What are the foxes in our vineyard? And don't give the answer of "I don't think there are any." That's not a Biblical answer. The world is filled with sin, and we are sinners. There will be foxes in the vineyard. Acknowledging them; repenting of them; getting rid of them; guarding against them returning; that's the work of God's people. He gives himself to her. She gives herself to him. They're trying to maintain their unity by dealing with the foxes in the vineyard. Secondly, she articulates her deepest fear; foxes, fear and friends. Chapter 3, Verses 1 through 4, she speaks of a nightmare that she had: her deepest fear.

"On my bed by night, I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him but found him not. I will arise now and go the city, in the streets and in the squares. I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. The watchmen found me as they went about the city. Have you seen him whom my soul loves? Scarcely had I passed them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, into the chamber of her who conceived me." Her nightmare is this. He's left. He's gone. One of the questions every couple has to ask: what is your deepest fear? What are the foxes? What is the fear? For her the deepest fear is there's going to be a night where he doesn't come home, he disappears forever. That's a legitimate fear. Not all fears are bad, but fears need not be fed.

They need to be labored against. If you fear something, then you need to safeguard the marriage to ensure that that fear doesn't become reality. Can't be dominated by fear, but you have to be careful to protect yourself against things that are rightfully fearful. Grace and I had this conversation long ago, before we got married. We don't believe in divorce. We have two options: happily married; unhappily married. Those are our two options, and we made a vow. We never speak of divorce in our marriage. There are Biblical grounds for divorce. I'm not saying they're not, but our agreement was: we are going to figure it out. We don't open the back door of divorce, and we don't threaten one another with divorce. "I'm going to leave you. I can do better than you. I'm sick of you. I'm trading you in." None of that kind of accusatory nonsense.

Those idle threats, or those hostage-taking statements. We don't use the "D" word. We don't do the "D" word. We're not getting divorced. We're not talking about getting divorced. We're not threatening divorce. My kids have asked me this repeatedly, because they have friends who have had parents that have been divorced. My parents have — the kids have come to us on various occasions and said, "Mom and dad, are you guys ever going to get divorced?" "No. No, we're not. We love Jesus, we believe the Bible, we're going to figure it out no matter what happens." Today men, as well — in that culture it was primarily women who would be divorced. The husband would leave. Today, thanks to no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, the husband and the wife are equally likely to commit adultery and file for divorce, and divorce is a real concern.

If you track the first marriages for 40 years, what percentage do you think end in divorce before year 40? 67 percent, okay? Now Gracie and I married at 21. We'll easily see 40, 50, probably 60, depending upon what I do with bacon, right? We'll probably be together for 60 years. Now what that means is we have a two-thirds chance of not making it. 67 percent chance of divorce. Is that a fear? Yes. It is a paralyzing fear? No. Is it a fear that says we need to work really hard? If two-thirds don't make it, we're going to have to do better than most to make it. Statistically, the average couple that does divorce does so in the first seven years. Half of all divorces that do occur happen in the first seven years. So, statistically, get through year seven, your odds just go up. That's why you hear about the seven-year itch. Statistically, it's actually true.

Additionally, a study out of the University of California Berkeley found that now that women are in the workforce, as well as men, if a husband and a wife are both working in corporate America, which my wife did until she came home to have kids. My wife has a degree and worked in an advertising

agency and climbed the corporate ladder until we had children, and now she's a full-time mom, but if a husband and a wife are working full-time in the marketplace, who do you think is more likely to commit adultery: the husband or the wife? According to the study at Berkeley, the wife is slightly more likely to commit adultery than the husband. The big myth is guys commit adultery and women are always victims. The truth is women are at least as likely or equally likely to commit adultery, and the evidence at Mars Hill bears this out.

The majority of adultery cases we have ever handled were the wife, not the husband, who was the guilty party, and I want you guys to think about this, particularly you single guys. This should be a growing concern. This is a state in which there are no-fault divorce laws and that if you have children, the primary caregiver gets custody of the child. What that means is this, men. If you put your marriage together in the way that the Bible says: you love your wife. You go to work. You work hard. You provide. You have kids. She stays home with them. If she decides that she meets her soul mate on line, has an emotional affair. Hooks up with some guy; runs off with the kids. Files for divorce; she gets half of everything you own and the kids, because custody generally goes to the primary caregiver, and if your wife stayed home, she's primary caregiver.

One of the worst conversations I ever had with a — in my whole life was with a buddy of mine. He loved Jesus, loved his wife, loved his kids, worked his job. She stayed home to look after the kids. While he's out working hard, she was running around on him. Met her soul mate — some loser, underemployed guy; she files for divorce. Takes half of his money and his kids, and now he has to go pick up his kids from a house that he paid for from a man that stole his wife and children. You guys need to be very careful that you're looking for a good life and a good wife, and not just a good time. You need to be very careful that if you marry a woman, you agree theologically.

"We're gonna love Jesus. We're gonna love each other. We're gonna be faithful to one another. We're gonna labor together. We're gonna build a life together, and one of us isn't going to betray and destroy the other." It's hard enough to get life built if you agree. Too many guys think, "Ah, she's cute. I like sleeping with her. We live together; seem compatible," and they don't think about the future. Want you all to be careful, particularly those of you who are single, on how you put your life together and who it is that you marry. Is this a real concern? It should be. Should it paralyze you? No. But should it give you caution so that you don't just rush into marriage; rush into relationship; bypass a whole, good premarital process at Mars Hill; just sleep together; live together? Just should be very careful and very wise. There is the issue of foxes.

There is the issue of fears, and then lastly there is the issue of fears. Chapter 3, Verse 5. "I adjure you, Oh daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles of the does of the field, that you do not stir or awaken love until it pleases." Couple things here; throughout this series we've been getting a lot of e-mails from single people saying, "I hate this series. It's all about love and marriage. How does this apply to me?" First thing I would say is, "Thank you for your unselfish opinion. I really appreciate that." More than 90 percent of you will marry, statistically. So even if you're not married, statistically the vast majority of you will marry. So we want you to get ready for it by looking at things Biblically.

In addition, a lot of — you may look around and notice a lot of people in our church are married, and if you love them, you would be glad that they're getting some instruction, as well. Furthermore, the case in the Song of Solomon is that it's a husband and a wife having these series of conversations. Her single friends, as it is here, they're in the middle of the conversation, learning from the relationship. The content here is in the midst of single people learning from the married relationship, and so the book is for single people as well as married, and the two things I would ask you, first of all, for all of you: who speaks into your life? Who speaks into your life? Here their friends keep speaking into their life. Are you in a community group to discuss the sermons? Are you in a redemption group to deal with your addiction or abuse?

Are you becoming a member? Are you pursuing relationships with Godly people? Are you seeking and inviting Godly counsel. They do, and, Number 2: if you are single, what foxes are already in your vineyard today? Single people tend to think, "I don't need to start thinking like a married person till I'm married. So I can be selfish. I can be irresponsible. I can wrack up credit card debt." And the most likely person to have credit card debt is a single woman. "I can play around. I can go to parties and drink too much. I can hang out at the bar. I can date non-Christians. I can cross physical lines. I can live with someone. I can sleep with someone." Why? "Well, it's not like I'm married and have kids." And the answer is, "Well, someday you probably will be, and right now you're collecting foxes to bring into your vineyard."

And so you want to conduct yourself while you're single in such a way that when you meet the person that God may have for you, that you have as little baggage and carry-ons as possible; you don't say, "Well, here's all my ex's and my disease and my sexual issues, and my credit debt and my selfishness and my crummy theology, and I can't find my Bible and lucky you. Look who you get to be with." You need to start conducting yourself in a way that will prepare you to be married long before you meet your spouse. The myth is: "Well, I'll meet somebody, and then all the foxes will leave my vineyard and I'll be a totally different person." Not true.

This is a good time, if you're single, to study our Bible; to grow in your theology; to serve Jesus in ministry; to figure out your spiritual gifts; to knock out your education; to pay off any debt that you may have on credit cards or school loans. This is a good chance with Godly older people; to seek out mentors; to travel; to do missions work. I mean, this is a wonderful opportunity to really keep some foxes out of your vineyard and to be cultivating it so that you have a fruitful life to invite someone into. Now, I'll bring out my wife Grace at this point. And as she's coming out, here's my heart. I love you. I'm your pastor. We want the best for you. And we're talking really practically, because so much of life comes down to the practical issues. Hi. She's not late. She's right on-time. Isn't that good? Hi, baby. You guys have some questions.

We'll take some of those for you. Maybe if the guys in the booth could throw the first one up. Downtown: "You said headship is leading, loving like Jesus, and guys get it wrong at times. What is submission and how do gals get it wrong?" That's a girl question. That's you, baby.

Grace Driscoll: That's a great question, and I appreciate that you wanna know what it is instead of — or fighting to do it. Well, submission, like it says in Ephesians 5:22, "Submit to your husbands as to the Lord." And then later it talks about "Make sure that the wives submit to — or respect their

husbands.” So it’s a sign of respect to your husband. So, for me to not submit is going to look different than for you to not submit, because it depends on what your husband considers to be a helper, and submissive. Anything that is disrespectful to Mark, if I just say I’m just making a bunch of decisions, whether it’s for the family or the kids or my own issues and not ever coming to him, and talking through stuff like that, that would be disrespectful of me, because he cares for the family.

Grace Driscoll: He wants to lead the family well, and he would need to know, you know, things that I’m doing, and part of my life to be able to do that. If I am disrespecting him in how I’m talking to him, or not willing to repent of things or — I mean, there’s a lot of things that can be un-submissiveness. It comes down to our hearts, and if we’re willing to humbly submit to the Lord first, and then what our husbands are asking of us. So, I mean, it probably looks very different for different wives in what their husbands are asking of them.

Does that mean we can disagree? You can disagree with me?

Grace Driscoll: Yeah, but we can talk it through, and, ultimately, if there’s something we disagree, and it’s a decision that has to be made, then I need to submit to what you believe — what your decision is. And God honors that. If it’s a decision that I was wrong, then later I need to repent and say I was wrong, and I submit it to you that I was wrong in my thoughts on that, and the same goes for Mark. If he’s wrong, then he confesses that to me later, but he’s still the head that’s responsible for making those decisions, and I’m responsible to follow that.

Mark Driscoll: And the Bible says that I’m supposed to love you and be considerate with you. That a prudent wife is from the Lord, and that you’re my helper. So it’s not that I just make decisions and she lives with them, but it’s that, in love and in relationship, we work toward unity and, ultimately, as I understand headship, it’s like Jesus. Jesus took responsibility, even when it wasn’t his fault. Jesus isn’t responsible for any of my sin, but he went to the cross and he took responsibility for it. It’s not his fault, but he made it his responsibility. One of the most frustrating parts of this job is the vast majority of questions that I’ve received so far from guys is, “How can I have as little responsibility as possible?” And, as a Christian man, we’re supposed to ask, “How can I have as much responsibility as I can bear?”

Because Jesus is a man who takes responsibility, his men are to take responsibility, and so, what that means in our marriage is, Grace’s wellbeing, I make it my responsibility. The kids’ well-being, I made it my responsibility. I want to make sure that they’re loved; that they’re safe; that they’re provided for; that they’re cared for; that they’re tended to; that they’re nurtured; that they’re encouraged; that they’re maturing; that they’re growing, and I make that my responsibility. I don’t stand back and say, “Well, you’re your person. I’m my person. You made your mess. You fix it. You need to learn that. You figure it out.” Draw close, happily, and take responsibility to love and to encourage and to help. And so it’s that “Husbands love your wives,” and it’s that “Wives, respect your husbands.”

And what you’ll find in the marital conflict is usually, even on the same issue, the man feels disrespected and the woman feels unloved, and that’s the source of the conflict. I know, for Grace, my tone, my attitude, my patience, my motives: that really determines whether or not she feels loved, and with her, if her tone isn’t good, or her words aren’t careful, I feel disrespected.

Grace Driscoll: Or the timing.

Or the timing.

Grace Driscoll: Timing can be off.

Yeah, timing is very, very, very important, but I think Gracie’s right. I think the worst thing a woman can do is read and book and then say, “Well, that’s how that woman does it, and just do that.” Well, she’s writing a book about how she works things out with her husband. You have a different husband.

Grace Driscoll: So ask your husband, the person that asked this question, or any of you, ask your husband: how do you feel disrespected by me, and how can I fix that?

Uh-huh.

Grace Driscoll: And then the husband can ask the same of his wife: how do you feel unloved by me and how can I fix that?

Mark Driscoll: Nice, no. All right, next one. Shoreline: “How can I get my husband to not get all sweet on me because we are headed to bed?” You could keep that attitude. That’ll help.

Grace Driscoll: Ask him that, and he won’t be sweet on you anymore. Well — yeah. I — honestly, that attitude is very sad to me.

Me, too.

Grace Driscoll: Because there’s — it’s a sinful attitude, but there’s probably a reason behind it, too, and if you don’t want your husband to pursue you and love you, both emotionally and physically, inside and outside of the room, then you gotta figure out what’s behind that, and not just try and get him to stop pursuing you. If he loves you, that’s what he’s supposed to be doing, and it’s a mutual — it should be a mutual thing. You should desire to do the same for him, whether it’s physically or emotionally, inside the bed — ~~outside the bedroom. So I would pray about that question and ask the Lord to reveal in your heart what it is that wants you to have your husband stop pursuing you in that way. If there’s abuse or —~~

What about if it’s a guy who’s only really sweet when it’s for that reason?

Grace Driscoll: That needs to be addressed. If she feels like meat, instead of loved as a person that certainly can be an issue, and you need to talk about

that tenderly, and say, “You know, I know you love me, but this is — for some reason it makes me feel this way.” Or — and pray before you go to him and approach him with that, but — yeah, I mean, you got to talk through these things. You don’t want to let this continue because you will get bitter and more distant. That is definitely a fox in the vineyard that needs to be dealt with quickly, and it may take time to deal with it, but you need to start now. You’re asking the question now, so take that one step further. Pray through it and talk to your husband about that, and be willing to name your own sin in there, too.

Mark Driscoll: Okay, we’ll do one — next one. West Seattle: “What do you do when your husband works long hours and you don’t have the extra time or money for dates or baby-sitters?” You know, this is a really practical question, right? I mean, economy’s not great. You’re in the most overpriced city in America. Most people have two incomes. If you do what we think the Bible teaches, and that is, when you have little children, mom’s primary caregiver and dad’s primary income earner. You’re gonna have to be real prudent with your money. You’re gonna have to be real cautious. A couple of things that I would suggest: one is, do what you can to set up your home so that you can get mini-dates at night after you tuck the kids in bed. Do you have a place for you to be together? Do you have a tub you could soak in? Do you have a mommy/daddy snuggle spot?

Do you have those kinds of things to where — put the kids in bed, it’s an hour or two in the evenings you get to be together, that connecting alone time. Gracie and I, off our bedroom, we’ve got this little room with a fireplace and a flat screen and a couch, and we love to snuggle there and visit and have a glass of wine and read, and it’s kind of our private spot. And I’ve recently told the kids, “You cannot go in there,” because they trash it and there’s, you know, toys all over, and it’s not — you know, you sit down and you’ve got a G.I. Joe ~~—you know—~~ so it’s kind of a sacred mommy/daddy spot. The other thing that you can do is baby-sitting co-ops with other couples that are in the same situation.

Some of the smartest things I’ve seen are like four different families come together, and they say, “Friday night’s date night, and we’ll rotate watching the kids,” which means we get three date nights a month, and then one night a month we get, like, 100 children at our house. Right? And so you rotate and you build that together, and that’s where Community Groups and stuff can really help to do this. The other thing I would suggest is open your home and open your life to single people. Okay? Because they wanna get to know a family and they wanna learn, and if they’re trustworthy they could be good baby-sitters. That’s what Gracie and I did in college when we were dating. We married at 21, but before that, before our senior year, there was a family in the church that had — how many kids do they have now, is it 12 or 13?

Grace Driscoll: They have 13.

They have 13 kids; two boys, and — yeah, yeah. We’ll just move on, and a beautiful, wonderful family, but you can imagine what a baby-sitter cost. I mean that’s ~~—you know, 13 kids, I mean that’s a lot. So what we told them was we’ll come over and watch your kids if we can get some time hanging out with your family. So we’d go over for dinner and—~~

Grace Driscoll: They had four kids when we knew them.

Mark Driscoll: Is that all? They moved so fast, it was hard to count. So we’d go over and watch four kids and we’d get time with the family. We’d learn about parenting and marriage and get to get an inside glimpse into a Godly home, and watch them read the Bible with the kids and worship with the kids, and it was super instructive; learned a ton. And then we’d let them go on date night, and we’d babysit the kids, and it was really good for us and it was good for them. That’s the benefit of the body of Christ. The worst thing that can happen is marrieds over here, singles over here. The best thing is, you know, like it is in this book, marrieds and singles have loving friendships. The singles and the marrieds are learning from one another in community as God’s people.

Grace Driscoll: Yeah, and if the wife or husband has any skills that they can trade for babysitting — I did that, too; some of the young gals in the beginning of the church needed to learn how to cook, and so I would teach them how to cook and they would watch the kids another evening for us, and so there’s lots of creative ways of going about. And if you don’t have a lot of money like we, you know, in our college days didn’t. We just got creative. We went to the \$0.99 movies, and, you know, just made candlelight dinners and tried to make the most of what we had, and it’s really the time together that mattered. I mean, we really enjoyed those times, even though most people would be like, “You know, that wasn’t very exciting,” but it was just fun, and we would talk through stuff and just — we were so busy in our schedules, it was nice to just get those pause moments together. So.

But you would agree couples have to have a date night.

Grace Driscoll: Absolutely. I — we require it, don’t we, in our pre-marrieds, pretty much?

Mark Driscoll: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, if you’re going to be a legalist, be legalist about a good thing. Go on a date. You know, make it — make rules. Make good rules. Yeah, otherwise what happens is you can go for an extended period of time without ever getting dressed up; really emotionally connecting; doing something fun and romantic, and you just slip into mom-and-dad mode, and then all of a sudden the marriage isn’t the priority that it should be. Next one: “Can a wife appropriately encourage her husband to be a leader? If so how, and if not, what does she do instead?” I think the best thing a wife can do is encourage her husband to get with Godly men who are good husbands and family leaders, so that he could learn from Godly men. Some guys are more naturally timid, passive and fearful and they don’t like responsibility.

And it sounds like this wife is saying, “I want him to be strong. I want him to have the Bible open. I want him to be trustworthy and strong, independent, stable and.” — you can encourage him, and I think you should. You should find the evidences of God’s grace where he is growing and you are proud of him and where you do see that God’s at work, and you can nurture and encourage those. So encouragement of the things he is doing can go a long way. Guys really flourish under encouragement.

Grace Driscoll: And don't rag on him when he fails, because he needs — you need to be a safe place for him to try stuff out and come back to and say, "Oh, this isn't — you know, I'm not doing good in this leadership position. I'm going to try this out." And encourage him in that way. Don't say, "Oh, I knew you wouldn't do good in that" or — yeah, don't be critical, but really encourage him in just his desire to lead.

Mark Driscoll: And it may be even asking him a question like, "Honey, if you wanna grow in this area, who is it that we know that would be a good guy for accountability, for mentoring, for friendship, to help you there?" See a lot of guys, and gals too, we didn't have parenting. Our parents didn't know the Lord. We didn't learn certain things and it's all knew to us, especially if you just met Jesus and you're reading the Bible, your like, "Okay, I agree with this. I just don't know what this looks like or how to get started." Find someone who's a little further down the road. That's the benefit of the body of Christ, all right, older men are to be like fathers; older women are to be like mothers. You pursue them and say, "Okay, you've got some wisdom. I've got some humility. Could you help me out?"

Mark Driscoll: There's one of the first things I did in college — I was brand-new Christian — and I intentionally sought out some older men in the church that were really mature, and I just started asking them questions. "Can you help me figure this out? I don't know what to do. I know what the Bible says, and I wanna do it. I just don't know where to start. I don't know what I'm supposed to do." And for guys, it's seeking out, humbly, more mature men and/or older men who have their act together, and just aggressively going after that kind of learning and instruction, and I think you can ask your husband, "Who is it you can talk to? Who do you respect? Who's a guy who you think has really got this nailed? Why don't you approach him and ask him for some time and bring a notebook and take notes and see what he has for wisdom?" And you know what I find?

Godly men, just like Godly women, they love to encourage. They love to help. They love to talk out of their life experience, and you may be a little shy, but if you initially, generally speaking, they're thrilled to help.

Grace Driscoll: Sometimes the midweek has leadership classes too.

Yeah, in some of the campuses and stuff, there's just classes overall in leadership and some of that discipleship can be helpful, but I think it's good the wife wants to encourage her husband and she should. That'd be our encouragement on how to do that. Can we do another one? Have you got one? Belleview: "My Christian parents have been married 30 painful years. With them, as my example, how can I learn good relational values?" You wanna take it, baby? Do you want me to or — okay.

Grace Driscoll: Take the things that — if there's anything Biblically that they are doing right, take those and incorporate those, but otherwise you may not be able to learn from them, and that's where just good teaching from Godly people that you know. Good teaching from the pulpit, mentoring, all those sorts of things are the place you need to go in the Scriptures, because we can't — while we would love to all learn from our families, we can't always. We can take certain things away and apply those but we can't take everything. I mean, as parents, we all sin and do things wrong. So — yeah, I would just say take what you can and then just be willing to learn from other people that you do trust that are Godly and learn from the Scriptures. This is an important series and that way take these truths and start applying them in your marriage.

Grace Driscoll: Ask the hard questions and be willing to communicate about them.

Yeah, and I believe repentance begins in the mind. It's new thinking. You know, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your minds." So it's thinking differently, and then that reorients your desires, which then transforms your actions, and so it begins with instruction. That's where we're big on reading. Andreas Kostenberger's book, *God, Marriage and Family*; be really good for you to go through to establish a theological, Biblical framework for marriage and family. *Intimacy Ignited* by the Dillows is a really good marital Bible study on the Song of Songs, to get into the practical issues. And I think the —

Love That Lasts by the Ricuccis is a good —

~~—yeah, Love That Lasts by the Ricuccis in the Sovereign Grace network is a book that we like, and we got to meet them. They're a good couple. We're big on reading. I think~~ — we're always reading some book on marriage, relationship. We kind of have our whole marriage. Just learning whatever we can. Gary Thomas' book, *The Sacred Marriage* is a good one. We often will read those kinds of books and then discuss them. Get together, "Okay, what did you learn? What did I learn? What can we incorporate?" And those kinds of things are helpful.

Mark Driscoll: I think a good marriage should include ongoing reading, learning, Bible study, maturing, discussion, so that your mind's continually being renewed, and you're saying, "If I didn't get it from my parents, then I need to start in the Scriptures. Get the Biblical categories and framework. Seek out other couples in the church that I think have some wisdom to offer. Humbly learn from them and then talk about it with my spouse so that we can always be making improvements." And the goal is to never settle for those parallel distant lives. To fight, fight, fight for unity; for oneness; for intimacy, and to just vow before God that Satan won't win and that Jesus' resurrection is a new opportunity for a brand-new life, and I think even acknowledging that the sins of the parents need not be repeated is important.

Too oftentimes, I think we tend to either vilify our parents and rewrite history to where they were worse than they were, or we tend to canonize them and turn them into the saints that they simply weren't. The key is to realize your parents are sinners. Like Gracie said, take what you can get, and then omit what you should not receive and thank God for anything you've received and add to it, and that being said, we'll hand it over to the campus pastors at this point. Why don't you transition our time in prayer, sweetie-pie, and we'll hand it to the campus pastors? Thank you.

Grace Driscoll: Thank you, Lord, for your word today — tonight. I pray that you would help us all to see our foxes in our vineyards, whether we're single or married, and just be cautionary toward those. That you would expose them and that we would repent well, and turn from those things so that

we can love you fully and be Godly representatives to those around us. Thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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