

# LIFEGROUP LESSON



"Family Life 2013"  
(Part 1 of 4)

## Oneness in Marriage



### TIPS FOR DISCUSSION FACILITATOR

Ensure that the aim is first to understand the text and then to make it meaningful and relevant. The discussion questions provided are intended to bring out the relevance for today.

Begin with a prayer for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

Begin the discussion by reading the sermon passage (where applicable), and discuss about its overall meaning by asking what could be the key focuses/emphases in that particular passage.

Spend appropriate amount of time on each question with as many members as possible making a contribution. At the end of each discussion the leader should summarise the main points that have arisen and direct the group towards making them applicable in their individual lives.

A balance must be kept between ascertaining what the Bible teaches and what are the opinions of participants. So the facilitator should make sure that there is an understanding of the passage before questions are raised.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

Our oneness in marriage is God's intention. How can we achieve that oneness?

1. Achieve Our Oneness Through Christ
2. Achieve Our Oneness Through Connection
3. Achieve Our Oneness Through Communication

### Understanding Oneness in Marriage

*Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 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." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. **Genesis 2:22-24***

Being one is not easy but it will demonstrate the kind of unity in diversity so needed in our broken world. If it works, it is a powerful message of God's hope to the world. If it fails, it brings about barrenness and impact in a destructive way. Satan peevs at good marriage and works overtime to break them down. Our work in our own marriages will be at the frontline to resist that spiritual attack.

The unity in our marriages is the key to God's plan of blessing our land. Being one can happen through three avenues, which can be called the "Three Avenues to Achieve Oneness in Marriage." These are not mutually exclusive and all three should be strong to achieve delightful and lasting oneness in our marriages.

- **Achieving Oneness Through Christ** - We are first and foremost united through Christ. If we don't have Christ, unity is unnecessary; it will be hard and virtually impossible. Honouring Christ as the Leader in our marriage is the first and most important avenue to achieve oneness in our marriages.
- **Achieving Oneness Through Connection** - We are shocked by seemingly loving couples going separate ways. Two person seen walking, doing things and even talking together may suggest harmony but the bigger question is whether they are emotionally and spiritually connected. Connection comes about being purposefully in agreement more than being physically together. This is what Amos 3:3 speaks about. We need to agree to walk together in important areas of our marriage life. While it is unlikely we can be 100% in agreement in every single area of our lives, it is important that we are always getting nearer.
- **Achieving Oneness Through Communication** - Marriages break due to a breakdown in the spiritual and emotional connections. Connections break down as a result of a lack of communication. In James 1:19, the author gives us some good advice. We are always communicating, either in our words (including our tone) or in our deeds. So it is not a lack of communication but a lack of loving communication that tends to be the culprit of relationship meltdowns.

### Discussion for Point 1: Achieve Our Oneness Through Christ.

- What do you think "being one flesh" in the marriage means, i.e. is it just about having physical intimacy? Explain your answer. Why do you think it is important for a married couple to work towards "being one flesh", i.e. what can happen if there is a lack of unity in the marriage? What are some possible hindrances that can cause a lack of desire for unity in a marriage? Why is it important to have Christ as the Leader in our marriages? How can you tell if Christ is not the Leader of a marriage? Hence what do you think it means to have Christ as the Leader of your marriage? What are some practical steps you can take to allow Christ to have more leadership in your marriage? Encourage the LG couples to refer to **Appendix A**, and to take time on their own for "**Hearing God for Directions**" for their marriage.

### Discussion for Point 2: Achieve Our Oneness Through Connection.

- When was the last time you and your spouse had a major difference of opinions? What do you think are some possible sources of these differences between you and your spouse, for example family upbringing, etc? Is your spouse having a different perspective on things necessarily mean he or she is wrong (and by implication, that you are right)? "Connection can only happen when both spouses agree to meet at the centre away from both their perspectives, rather than always insisting that one spouse adopt the perspectives of the other." Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. Hence how should you handle the differences of opinions between you and your spouse if you want to work towards connection? Encourage the LG couples to refer to **Appendix A**, and to take time on their own for "**Assessing the Connection Level**" for their marriage. They can also consider "**Working on an Agreement Project**" to build their connections deeper.

### Discussion for Point 3: Achieve Our Oneness Through Communication.

- Why is communication important in achieving oneness in our marriages, or for unity in general for that matter? What are some important characteristics of good communication that can facilitate oneness in our marriages? What can happen if there is a lack of honest and meaningful communication between the spouses? How can you be more serving in your communication with your spouse? Read Ephesians 4:29. Our communication is more than the actual word we say; it also includes our tones, facial expressions and other non-verbal communications. What is one area of your non-verbal communications that you need to grow in so that your communication with your spouse can be more edifying? Encourage the LG couples to refer to **Appendix A**, and to take time on their own for "**Having "No Choice But Talk" Dates**" for their marriage.

*We love because he first loved us.*

~ **1 John 4:19** ~

## Appendix A (For general reading and discussion as a couple)

### Tips to Achieve Oneness in Our Marriages

By Hiew Hong Teck, Family Life Ministry

*(Note to Discussion Facilitators: This appendix can be printed for the couples in your group for them to practice the tips in their personal couple times)*

Oneness in marriage is God's plan. He wants to bless us through the richness of unity with one another. A spouse is to be enjoyed, not (just) tolerated. He wants to restore us so that he can restore our impact as a couple to others in this world.

These are some practical tips that can get you started in seeking to achieve oneness in your marriages. Through the oneness in our marriages, God will be able to pour more not just into our lives but also into the marriages around us. All these can only be done through our mutual love for one another compelled by Christ's own love for us.

#### **Achieving Oneness through Christ - Hearing God for Direction**

God did not leave us alone. The first voice we hear should be that of the Holy Spirit. Spend the next 5 minutes praying together. Ask Jesus to take centre stage and be the focus of your marriage. Learn to be open to let Him lead your marriage.

Ask God out loud.

If this is your first time doing it together, it may seem uncomfortable or strange but we can overcome it merely by doing it. Remember that God is not impressed with fancy words. He just wants us to pray regardless of how our words sound. To pray out loud helps us to truly pray. It's the focus and attention.

This is what you say (but I suggest using your own honest words)

*“ Heavenly Father, I thank You for .....*

*I acknowledge that I need to put You first. I ask that You come and take centre stage in our marriage. Let .... and I truly be Your followers. We will let go and let You take over. Speak to us and guide us in our marriage. Let us let Your voice be louder than all the other voices in our marriage. We will commit to know Your Word, to listen to godly counsel, to be sensitive to what You are saying through the things happening around us. Let us hear Your still small voice so that we will always know what You want to say. In Jesus name, Amen.”*

Spend another 5 to 10 minutes after the prayer to just listen to God individually. Write down on a piece of paper what you think God wants to tell each of you for the marriage and share it with your spouse.

## Achieving Oneness through Connection – Assessing the Connection Level

Spend 5 minutes as a couple self-assessing where you are right now in the following areas of your relationship with each other, with 1 being in lowest agreement and 10 being in highest agreement. Do the assessment separately before coming back together to discuss your answers with your spouse.

Spiritual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Financial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Values & Belief	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Purpose/Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What is one (or two) area that both of you agree is what God wants you to work on at this point of your marriage? Discuss with your spouse and develop a plan to work on it. Pray together and commit this area of your marriage to God.

## Achieving Oneness through Connection – Working on an Agreement Project

When was the last time both of you worked on something together? Discuss with your spouse so that both of you can “agree” to work on an agreement project which will align both of you purposefully. This should not be a once-off activity. Instead, be creative and intentional to work on such projects with your spouse on a regular basis.

Examples of Agreement Projects:

- Redo your family budget together using a new tool or system you can get your hands on.
- Organize an outreach get together both you can your spouse can do for your common friends.
- Plan a strategy to discuss with your leader how you can be serve together as a couple in your life group
- Plan a break or just a weekly schedule to rekindle your passion or your love life

## **Achieving Oneness through Communication – Having “No Choice But Talk” Dates**

One of the key practices a married couple can do is to keep dating. The purpose is to create an unrushed environment where open and truthful communication can happen. Dating is very likely something you have done before, so it is not whether you are able to do it but whether you will bring it back.

“No Choice But Talk” dates are times intentionally planned with the following rules:

- At least an hour long
- No electronic devices or other distractions except one another
- Always keeping Ephesians 4:32 in mind

During your “No Choice But Talk” Dates, make sure you pray together, seek forgiveness and talk about important things to keep the oneness in your marriage sky high.

*Note: If child care is needed during your dates, try asking your child’s life group leaders! Not only will your date be made possible but your child’s leaders will value the time spent to shepherd your child. If you have been personally forming a partnership with them (or if necessary, you are willing to compensate them for their time), I’m sure something can be worked out.*

*If you do not know your child’s life group leader and have not partnered them, please contact them <http://www.hopesingapore.org.sg/come/people-groups/hopekids/kids-ministry-is-all-about-partnership/>*