

Today we start a new series called **Staying in Love**. And I am so excited about this series because I think this could be one of the most powerful and impact-full series we do all year. If we really get what this series is about and really apply it to our relationships it could transform our families and even our community.

Personal

Now some of you know a bit of my background and have met my mom. But the man who was with my mom was not my father. You see I grew in a divorced home. How many of you can relate? I don't think any of us have not been affected in some way shape or form by divorce. I know it has affected my relationship with my wife, and I suspect it has affected your relationships too. You see there is **a million dollar question** that whether or not you have asked it, I'd bet you have thought it. I think it's a question every single adult and every single college student, maybe even high school student, every one of us ask this question. And I think this is a profoundly important question that is sort of sit on the surface of our culture every single day for most of us.

Question

"I wonder if people ever stay together for good. Is it possible for two people to stay happy together forever"?

The Hope

In spite of what you've seen, current marriage, what you've experienced, see in culture, divorce rate there's something in you and there's something in me that would still say it's possible! not only that, we think it's possible for us

Now , We're gonna take about 10 seconds talking about falling in love. That's all it takes about 10 seconds --- because the only requirement for "Falling in Love" is a pulse. right? If you have a pulse, you can fall in love. Some of you are in love with people you never even met, some are on TV. You just stare at them and you are so in love with him, I'm so in love with her.

The Facts

It has never been easier to "fall in love" but, I would argue, and I bet you would agree it has never been more difficult to "Stay in Love" and yet that's what we want!

The Past

But it's getting more and more difficult, part of it is because of what you have **seen** and **experienced**. The truth is very few people have ever been around a healthy romantic married couple relationship. Very few people have ever even seen it.

So consequently the model for us and the law of relationships and the rules of relationships that are so wrong are what we adopt. And, it makes it almost impossible for us to stay in love.

Lot of people grow up with ---

“Do unto others as they deserve to be done unto”

“Do unto others as they do unto you”

“Do unto others as your mood would have it”

“Do unto others so as to get them to see things your way”

“Do unto others until you wear them down and get your way”

“Do unto others until you’re ready to leave”

Think about your friends, or your cousins, or maybe even your parents relationships. They may stay together but there not in love. And that is not what you want

So most of us growing up, through what we have seen and had modeled for us, we’re just completely ill equipped. We’ve never seen a truly healthy relationship. But all of us think it is possible, To fall in love and stay in love, and we think we’re candidates for that kind of relationship.

The LIST

The other thing that makes this difficult is what we felt growing up. Some really smart people got together they actually came up with a list. This is a list of what it takes for a child to grow up in a very nurturing environment and to leave adolescence into be equipped to engage in healthy relationships

All it takes is you need to grow up in a home where you get respect and this is like massive doses of all of this

**RESPECT,
ENCOURAGEMENT, COMFORT, SECURITY, SUPPORT, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL,
APPRECIATION, ATTENTION and AFFECTION!**

Sound like your family?

If that is what it takes over a long time to equip us to engage in long term relationships as an adult I mean its growing up, what are the odds of us being able to maintain a forever and happily ever after kind of relationship? Especially when we connect with and meet people who didn’t go up getting that kind of stuff either?

So consequently what happens for most of us as we come into adulthood looking for someone from which we can get (THE LIST)

I fall in love with you, but now that we’re both in love with each other, I’m wondering are you going to give me (THE LIST) or are you just cute? Do you just have a good job? Once were in love with each other what begins as a hug around the neck, becomes a stranglehold, give me (THE LIST) but I gotta have it, because I came into this thing with a deficit. You know I’ve been malnutrition in terms of love and affection, and all that stuff.

So, I'm going to squeeze it out of you and you're going to squeeze it out of me, and I just wonder why I don't think you're so cute anymore. And that car so what! You know and all of a sudden the things that just created this emotional energy, we couldn't stay away from each other, somehow it starts to go away.

The Culture

Another thing that make this really difficult: Our culture has a really **low threshold of pain relationally**.

Which means it doesn't have to hurt too bad and we decide to get out. Gone are the days when I said I do, and I do means I do.

But it just doesn't take a lot of pain - plus and in our culture the message we get every single day,

If you are not happy in your current relationship it's because you're with the wrong person. And if you'll just keep looking you'll find that soul mate. If you keep moving from relationship to relationship eventually it's going to happen to you because you're finally going to **meet the right person**.

I decided that the person that I choose was going to be the right person and we're so glad we work through those difficulties, because choosing the right person is part of it. But learning to become the right person is the other part of it. And it's the part of it, that we get no help for from culture and from the world around us.

The Bible

Now, into that chaos, Jesus speaks. 2000 years ago! He is with His guy and He gives us the foundation for enduring relationships. Enduring love relationships the foundation for romantic love. That, "In love, I can't wait to get home in the afternoon, or I can't wait to hear the garage door open". And it's so simple, but it's counterintuitive, it's so not a part of the way we normally think, it's a paradigm shift in your relational thinking. But it is so simple, but even when I say it your going to say yea right, Give me something rich, something good, I got my spouse here today, its your chance. Come on work on them, come on. But don't take my word for it, just find the people that you look at their marriage and you say "that's where I want to be, that's what I want going on in my relationship". Here is what you are going to find, this is so simple, it's so powerful, it's so rare, it's so accessible, it's so available, if two people are willing to simply accept this basic teaching of Jesus.

It's found in John 13:34 "A new command I give you". We have the Ten Commandments I'm going to give you a new one. New - in the Greek can mean all kinds of things, New,extraordinary,Recently discovered,Remarkable "Love one another"

Oh man Pastor you should have the studied harder, is that it?

But, listen to what Jesus does. It can slip right by you if you're not careful. Jesus takes a word that we normally use as a noun and it makes it a verb it's an imperative is a command He says, "I want you to go and love one another"

I know love is something you fall into like a Pool and out of like a high chair. I mean I realize love is like a noun okay, but I'm making it a verb! I want you to love one another.

Which means Jesus was not have been very good marriage counselor.

Jesus says No, if you want to maintain it, if you want foster it, then you need to treat Love not like a noun, but you need to treat it like a verb. And I want you to go home and I want you to love one another!

So here is the bottom line. This is just the beginning, we have 4 weeks for this. The Foundation for "Staying in Love" is to make love Pause, a verb.

In a long-term relationship the feeling is the caboose of the train! Not, the engine it starts off as the engine. I understand that it starts off that way, but then it goes to the back in train and becomes the caboose.

What Jesus says is "I want you to learn how to actively love one another".

You have to **love one another** but he doesn't stop there! And maybe this is the new part of the command. Listen to this new command "Love one another, **as I have loved you.**

So in other words, I don't want you to take your cues from the culture, I don't want you to take your cues from your parents. When you think about what does it mean to love like a verb, I want you to take your cue for Me and if you'll allow me to, I will teach you how to love. Not to be in love, you have a pulse, your good with that. I want to teach you how to stay in love. But if it's going to happen, Love must be a verb not just a noun. To staying in love you must "Make love a verb".

The Hook

Now, later on, years later the Apostle Paul comes along to the same idea and says it in a different way. Except he uses a bad word. I mean really bad words that we don't like. He use a bad word that often gets us Christians in a lot of trouble because the word offensive, and we kind of discount everything he says about this very idea. But many of us back away and say I don't know about that but I'm telling you it's the very same thing and it's an extraordinary powerful words that helps illustrate what Jesus meant when he said love one another.

Ephesians 5:21 just going to look at this this first section, he starts off the bad word "Submit to one another, (and then here's the Jesus part again) out of reference for Christ.

You know that means? It's the same as love one another except it's just got a barb on it. He says the bottom line, the foundation, the starting blocks for people who are going to stay in love is mutual submission.

Mutual Submission = In our relationship you are THE priority.

When both people make the other the first priority that is mutual submission. No You go, No you Go

Let me just tell you I don't know if you've ever seen a marriage between a man and a woman but when you see it, it's powerful, it is rare to see, it scary because somebody has to go first. Somebody has to say you know what even if you don't make me the priority, I'm making you the priority in a relationship when two people get this going on, I'm telling you love is alive and well in that relationship. It's so rare very few of us ever seen it but when you see it you say THAT is what I want!

Paul says this is what Jesus was talking about mutual submission. You first, no You first, no You first. You may never go into building, you may be holding the door for the rest your life, but it's okay. Now, we're going to talk about this a lot but that's the beginning, that's the foundation. LOVE, actively, verb one another specifically, Submit.

Submit mean you place yourself under the other person.

Not because of birth order, or by financial status or some other caste system. Not that you're not as important, it's a choice you make, a decision you make regardless of who I am and what I have, and what I brought into the marriage and who I'm related to and whatever else. I am choosing to place myself under you, as you choose to place yourself under me.

Jesus says.. I want you to learn to love. I want you to take your cue from me

Now let me tell you one of the greatest thing about being a pastor. Seeing men and women who grows up in highly dysfunctional homes and they place their faith in Christ. And they begin to change, and they learn to accept and adopt the Jesus Way of thinking about love and they learn to express the love of Christ and the forgiveness of Christ and they have a complete mental shift in terms of what it means to love to receive love and then they get married and even though the odds are stacked against them, their marriage in no way reflects the baggage that you would expect to see in that marriage. And you ask the how in the world did that happen and they begin to say that we're taking our cue from our Heavenly Father in Heaven who illustrated Love in the most amazing way when he gave His Son to die to be our Savior. Learning to submit to one another we take our submission cues from our Savior who submitted to us when he gave up his life on our behalf.

Is it possible for two people to fall in love and stay in love forever Absolutely but it doesn't happen because you fell in love in a big powerful way in the beginning of the relationship.

You stay in love by making love a verb by loving one another and taking your cue for loving one another from the one who loves you the most.

Meeting and falling in love can be maintained in fact it can even get better!

But that happens by daily committing to make your spouse first.

Next week we're going to get really specific what it mean mutual submission what does it mean love one another and I want you to be ready for next week on the connection card is the passage of Scripture we're going to study next week together.