

MARRIAGE  
® IN CHRIST



SUMMER 2020

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Meditations by William C. Wacker, unless otherwise noted.

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## INTRODUCTION

We offer these meditations and activities to help you to celebrate summer as a couple and in this difficult time, allow your hearts and your marriages to be filled with hope!

We invite you to take a short time—about 20 minutes a day—to do something for your marriage even during vacation. You will find greater unity, an increased appreciation for learning more about each other, and gratitude for the small ways you've chosen to show your love and affection. What's more you will have fun in the process!

We chose “S'more for your marriage” to brighten your day, because it is fun, s'mores are tasty, and marshmallows have been a part of recorded history since the 9th century BCE. Mallow plants are commonly found near marshes or oceans and on every continent. There are even references in the book of Job regarding mallow. Our ancestors used mallow as an anti-inflammatory, pain reliever and exotic delicacy for nobility. We came across 72 recipes for various s'mores. One was maple bacon s'mores! Yum! Today's S'mores are usually made with store bought marshmallows made with corn syrup, sugar & gelatin versus the root of a mallow plant and the gelatinous substance extracted from it.

Enjoy!

As always, we invite you to join in our mission of strengthening marriages and changing our world. There are many ways to partner with us:

- Prayer:
  - “Come Holy Spirit, inspire our hearts, inspire couples to desire your presence in their life, marriage & family. Draw them to you and may we be a vehicle to reveal You to them.”
- Become a recurring partner
- One-time donation
- Send us your MIC testimony at [info@marriageinchrist.com](mailto:info@marriageinchrist.com); photos too!
- Tell others about the Marriage in Christ Seminar, available online this Fall!

[To Donate Today!](#)

## HOW TO USE THIS SERIES

Set yourself up for success! Pick a time of day you can be consistent with. Turn off your phones and other distractions. Light a candle. Sit close together and take turns reading the parts out loud.

### FORMAT

We have set up each day into three parts:

**PRAY** We have selected one scripture passage with a resurrection theme for you to read. It is followed by a meditation, a time for quiet reflection, discussion, a blessing, and a prayer for unity.

**TALK** We provide one or two conversation starters each day. These are not necessarily related to the Scripture reading or the meditation. They are meant to help you get to know each other better. Getting to know each other is a lifelong process of revealing ourselves and listening to each other. And, the more we know about each other, the more we love. The more we love, the more we want to know!

**ACT** We offer three suggestions each day for ways you can choose to love each other better. Pick the one you like best and try it! These actions are designed to build friendship, deepen affection, and help you remain connected to each other.

We hope you enjoy this selection of PTA. May they be a **bright spot** in your summer plans



## Day One: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Hosea 6:1-6

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. <sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

### MEDITATION

Hope is like 3D glasses that allow us to see what is not visible to our normal vision. We can see the future in such a way that we can live more freely and fully in the present because we know that the person who guarantees that all things will work together for our good is sharing one life with us right now. That person is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in us, with us and living one life with us right now. It is the Spirit who moves us to reconcile, who moves us to love each other in deep and tender ways. It is the Spirit who prays with us and as us in the most difficult moments of our life. Our hope is not deceptive, nor an illusory promise made to keep us going. It is God's precious gift of his own presence. Hope is God patiently waiting with us and in us. Waiting for the great and glorious day when in his time, he will right all wrongs, defeat all enemies including death. On that great and glorious day, we will see how all things have worked together for good for those who love God. Try on those glasses today.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- How do we want to celebrate the summer as a couple?
- My favorite memory of eating s'mores is...

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Have a bon fire and make s'mores! (try using peanut butter with the chocolate)
- Make sure your kisses last at least six seconds. Every now and then go for a full minute.
- At night, step outside and gaze at the stars together.



## Day Two: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### MEDITATION

Near the end of his great letter to the Christian community in Rome, Paul was overcome with love for these brothers and sisters who were living in the shadow of the imperial power of Rome. Perhaps they could see Caesar's home on the Palatine Hill right across the Tiber River. Perhaps they felt a quickening in their heart every time Paul called Jesus, Lord and Savior – titles that Caesar had coopted for himself. After all, it was treasonous to say those things out loud. But for Paul there was no doubt in how the long story of humanity would end. This prayer burst from his heart. He prayed that the God of hope would fill them with joy and peace. Joy and peace that come from believing our story will end well. Hope allows us to live now in great joy and in peace, because in the power of the Holy Spirit we have a confidence that is not available to those who rely on their own power, their own strength. Today, rejoice with Paul and the community in Rome. Rejoice with all of creation because the Lord is faithful to his promises!

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- Share a memorable vacation story.
- What is something you are hopeful about?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Go on a hike.
- Take scenic selfies of you and your beloved.
- Hide love notes for each other.



## Day Three: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: 1 Timothy 4:1-5

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, <sup>2</sup> through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. <sup>3</sup> They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. <sup>4</sup> For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; <sup>5</sup> for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

### MEDITATION

Liars and deceitful spirits have a very hard time getting it right about creation and marriage. Our age vacillates between deep disrespect and abuse of the created world and a near worship of Mother Earth. Marriage has been redefined, ignored, or abandoned all together. What is at stake is that creation is good, and we are to care for it with great respect. Humankind is very good and the complementarity of male and female reflects for the world to see the very image of the good God who created the world. Marriage in particular is good. It was created by God in a particular way, for a particular reason to ensure the unity of the husband and wife and so that in that unity they would become co-creators with Him and produce children. Paul's words remind us that marriage itself is a precious good to be rediscovered and celebrated.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try this conversation starter:

- What is the biggest risk you have ever taken? Would you do it again?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Have a bon fire and make s'mores using chocolate chip cookies instead of graham crackers.
- Do something unexpected for your spouse.
- Let your spouse know how important he or she is to you.



## Day Four: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### MEDITATION

“Do not worry about anything.” “Do not be afraid.” “Trust in the Lord.” Why is it so easy to say, but so hard to do? The answer might lie in where we are looking. Every moment we spend in rejoicing and giving thanks for all that we have, is a moment we don’t have to fret on what we don’t have or to fear the future. If we focus on Jesus, if we focus on our spouse there simply is less time to worry. But it is not just an issue of time, it is the orientation of our life. To live as if Jesus is our intimate friend means that we are usually aware of his presence. He is sharing one life with us. If we act in such a way that Jesus is our constant companion, we will have his peace. It is the certitude that with Jesus all things will work together for good. That peace brings order to the chaos of fear and worry. It is a peace that flows from God himself. It is a peace that defies comprehension, but it is not irrational, because it is guaranteed by the Creator himself.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord’s Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- If you could possess a superpower, what would it be?
- How can we help (fill in a name) today?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Leave a love note on a pillow, in a purse or pocket.
- Send funny and/or romantic cards by snail mail or e-mail.
- At night, step outside and gaze at the stars together, name a constellation for each other.



## Day Five: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is **kind**, and my burden is light." (trans. modified by WCW).

### MEDITATION

I know this is not the translation that you are most familiar with and technically "easy" probably makes more sense when associated with "burden." Who would have guessed that the Greek word for "kind," *chrēstos* is the word Matthew chose to translate the word Jesus used to describe his yoke? The range of meaning for *chrēstos* includes kind, loving, merciful, morally good, upright, and of course, easy to bear. The surprise waiting for us in this aisle is that when we are tired and burdened, we can come to Jesus and give him our troubles. He will carry them, and in exchange we will put on his yoke, which is to experience his kindness and lightness.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- What burden do you want God to carry for you?
- What are three ways you would like to see us grow together as a couple in the coming months?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Sing to each other.
- Toss water balloons to each other. Warning: you might get wet!
- Go for a walk. Take umbrellas if it is raining.



## Day Six: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Titus 3:4-7

When the kindness and the generosity of God our savior appeared, He saved us not because of the righteous works which we performed, But, in accord with his own mercy, He saved us through a bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit which he poured out on us lavishly through Jesus Christ our savior, so that made righteous by the former's grace we might become heirs according to the hope of life eternal. (Translation: WCW)

### MEDITATION

The kindness and generosity of God is visible in the person of Jesus, the Christ who is our savior. Kindness and generosity – the Greek word for generosity forms the root of the English word philanthropy. Kindness and the love of man, kindness and gifts of money that transform an institution. Great gifts that make it possible to build libraries, hospitals, and schools. Great gifts that can change an entire community, city, state or country. But imagine a gift that has the power to transform all of human history? A gift that makes it possible for the human race to escape the enslavement of sin and death. What do you call the gift that changes our very nature and allows us to become heirs of God's own family? This gift is called Jesus lavishly pouring out the Holy Spirit on us in our baptism. It is ok to spend an entire day in this part of the market, basking in gratitude for such a great gift.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- What is one piece of good news you heard this week?
- If you could ask for a miracle, what would it be?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Make a care package with his/her favorite snacks and leave it in a spot where they will find it.
- Go for a walk on a beach, barefoot.
- Go for a bike ride together.



## Day Seven: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: John 2:7-11

Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### MEDITATION

The authors of the New Testament had two words for "good." The first was *agathos*, which generally means internally good. The other is *kalos*, which means internally good and externally attractive or beautiful. The wine that Jesus made is described as *kalos*, good, beautiful, exquisitely tasty wine, the best they had ever had. This action revealed the glory of God who had become human in the person of Jesus. What do we know about God from this story? We know that he loved this young couple enough to give an abundance of really good wine. We know that God is both good and beautiful and most importantly deeply in love us. Perhaps you can find a glass of good wine to enjoy today!

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- If you could open a restaurant, what kind of food would you serve?
- What kind of wine would you serve?
- What would you name your restaurant?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Do something unexpected for your spouse.
- Read a poem to your spouse.
- Touch each other with affection.



## Day Eight: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Luke 10:38-42

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup> there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

### MEDITATION

Life has rhythms. Unfortunately, in our fast-paced life in the modern world, we even fill the slow times with too many distractions, too many things, too much information, too many electronic devices. We are held hostage by our computers, tablets, cell phones with internet access, 24/7 news cycles. We are afraid that we will miss something all the while unaware that we are in grave danger of missing someone – the Lord, our spouse, our children. Have we chosen the better portion? Or are we like Martha on steroids! Be intentional and take this opportunity to reorder the priorities in life – who is holding # 1?

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- What are you thankful for right at this moment?
- How would you spend your day/evening if the power went out?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Draw portraits of each other; or stick figures; or thumbprint people.
- Have a picnic.
- Build an indoor fort; read poems inside using flashlights.



## Day Nine: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: 1 Kings 19:11-12

And the angel said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (RSV)

### MEDITATION

Elijah was in hiding. He had just come from a miraculous victory in a battle in which he had killed over 400 prophets of Ba'al. Unfortunately, this was before the separation of church and state had been invented and the prophets were in the employment of Queen Jezebel and Jezebel had just vowed to kill Elijah. We don't normally find ourselves hiding from an enraged Queen who is looking to take our life. But too often, life can seem overwhelming and we want answers to the question: "does it have to be this way?" In those moments we turn to God for answers and expect him to speak in a loud booming voice or, perhaps more cynically, don't expect him to say anything at all. The truth is that the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit desire a deep, intimate and very personal relationship with us. And just like our relationship with our spouse it requires communication. And as Elijah discovered, God normally speaks in a still quiet voice.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- If you could choose music to play every time you entered a room, what would it be?
- Who would you swap lives with for a day?
- For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Call or video chat with other couples.
- Play your favorite card or board game together.
- Listen to an audio book together.



## Day Ten: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. <sup>21</sup> For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; <sup>22</sup> for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. <sup>28</sup> When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

### MEDITATION

When death has been destroyed everything will be subject to Christ's authority. He will then take all things and, along with himself, subject all creation to the Father. When that happens, God will be "all in all." We will not lose our personal identity, but somehow we will be taken up into God in such a way that he will be "all in all"—a phrase that is difficult to translate from Greek into English. It is God's intention to be one with us. While this kind of unity is profoundly mysterious, our unity as married couples is a tangible signpost pointing toward that reality. When it comes, that will be a great and glorious day. Creation itself is longing for it. On "that day" the trials and tribulations of this life will not in any way compare to the glory that awaits us.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- What three things do you want to be remembered for?
- If what we do is not in vain, which of the things that you have done or relationships that you have made do you most hope will be part of the “new heaven and earth”?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Make homemade marshmallows together.
- Rent a tandem bicycle and go for a ride.
- Listen carefully and intently when your spouse tells you about her or his day.



## Day Eleven: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Matthew 25:31-40

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

### MEDITATION

Two devastating epidemics hit the Roman Empire. One lasted from A.D. 165 – A.D.180 and another occurred in A.D. 251. The first plague, which lasted for 15 years and killed between a quarter and a third of the population, was possibly small pox and the second, equally as devastating, may have been measles. Imagine being in a city stinking of death, piles of dead bodies all around, homes abandoned, the sick left to fend for themselves. All around you, your family and friends are dropping. You can never be sure if or when you will fall sick too. The most famous physician of the time is coping with the epidemic by leaving Rome and hiding out at his country estate.

But Christians have hope. They do not appear to fear death. Rather, they act as if giving their life for the sake of caring for their sick brethren, is the equivalent of martyrdom. They often died as they lived out Matt 25:34-40. But because they give basic nursing care to the sick, both to their own and to their pagan neighbors, they don't die as often. Many even recover! Conscientious nursing care, as simple as providing food and water even without medication, cuts the mortality rate by 2/3 or even more. The believers survived at a much higher rate than their pagan neighbors. And their pagan neighbors survived at a much higher rate than those who did not have Christian neighbors or relatives. The Christians did not fear death and put into practice our Lord's command to love one another.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- How have we grown in unity in the last year?
- Is there someone in your life that you can bring hope to?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Play an outdoor game like Bocce Ball.
- Make homemade iced tea and sit on a beach or patio while wearing brimmed hats.



## Day Twelve: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. <sup>7</sup> And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

### MEDITATION

On “that day” the LORD of hosts will throw a big party. All the best food and best wines (notice he repeated that in case you missed it!). Think of the big banquet in Isaiah 55 and all the meals that Jesus ate with sinners, tax collectors. Think of his last supper and the meal he ate with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Think of the wonderful wine that Jesus supplied for that young couple in Cana – at their wedding feast. Think of the great wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelations 19). There will be a big party to mark the end of the present evil age and the beginning of the age to come. What will we be celebrating? We will be celebrating the great act of salvation, the marriage of God and his people, Christ and his bride the Church and the defeat of death. Death will be swallowed up forever – our enemy will be defeated, and we will have a great big party.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- Describe one element of social distancing that has been a surprising joyful outcome.
- What does a great big party look like to you?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Go for a walk in a forest and shout at the top of your lungs that you love your spouse.
- Invite your spouse to lunch. Even if it is in your dining room or patio.
- Prepare a special dessert for dinner tonight.



## Day Thirteen: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: 2 Peter 1:2-7

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and **may become participants of the divine nature.** <sup>5</sup> For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.

### MEDITATION

The highlighted phrase draws our attention to one of the most remarkable truths of the kingdom of God. Jesus wants to share his own divine nature with us. He wants to be one with us. Two becoming one. Sound familiar? It should. It is the same mystery that we witness to in our marriages. Two distinct persons becoming one, all the while each person never loses his or her identity as a person. What a mystery, what a delight. Enjoy this day!

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- What signs of mutual affection and love have you observed lately?
- What is usually the first thing you think about when you wake up in the morning? When you go to sleep at night?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Notice and comment about something your spouse does that you like.
- Go on a picnic. Dress in matching shirts with your spouse.
- Go to a farmer's market together.



## Day Fourteen: S'more for your marriage

### PRAY

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### READING: Philippians 2:1-22

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### MEDITATION

For St. Paul, the sweet reward for his labor of love with the brothers and sisters in Philippi would be their unity. More than anything else, Paul longed for them to be like Christ Jesus, who emptied himself and was obedient to his father's will. This seminar offers us a chance to reflect on what the Father would have us do as a married couple. It is clear, from St. Paul's words that unity, living one life together is perhaps our highest goal. Why? Because that is the way in which we will witness to the world the great truth that God desires to live one life with us. It is in emptying ourselves as a couple that we will make God more visible and more present in the world. It is also the way in which the Father can raise us up and give us a place with Jesus to the glory of the Father. That is the ultimate fruit of love, our great joy.

**Quiet meditation:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*

**TALK:** The more we know about each other, the more we love, the more we love the more we want to know.

Try one of these conversation starters:

- If each day magically had 20 extra minutes added to it, how would you use that time?
- How has your experience of the Holy Spirit changed the way you think about your responsibility to spread the gospel as a married couple?

**ACT:** Regardless of the feelings of the moment, we have the power to do acts of love that will become habits of love. Try one of these today:

- Make chocolate hazelnut spread s'mores. (use chocolate hazelnut spread instead of chocolate and use the big flat shaped marshmallows)
- Come up with your own s'more creation.
- Watch the sunset together.
- Tell another couple about the Marriage in Christ seminar.