



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Two Week
Complex Devotional

DIVINE DESIRE

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Marriage is one of God's greatest gifts—but it's also one of the hardest to keep healthy. It's two imperfect people learning to love like Jesus, in a world that constantly pushes us toward selfishness, distraction, and pride. This devotional isn't polished or poetic—it's practical and real. It's about pausing for a few minutes each day to let God back into the center, to reflect, to pray, and to remember why you said “yes” in the first place. My hope is that these two weeks help you reconnect, refocus, and rediscover what God can do when two people decide to keep walking forward, side by side, with Christ leading the way.

Pastor Mike Brook

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Day 1

God at the Center

Ecclesiastes 4:12 – “A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Let's be real—marriage can be beautiful one minute and brutally hard the next. Some days you're laughing together and everything feels easy. Other days, you feel like opponents keeping score instead of teammates chasing the same goal.

The truth is, when we try to hold everything together on our own strength, it eventually unravels. We burn out. We drift. We start reacting instead of reconnecting. But God never meant for marriage to run on human effort—He designed it to run on His presence.

When He's the center strand, things that should break somehow hold. The arguments still happen, but forgiveness comes faster. The storms still hit, but you don't sink as easily. His strength becomes the thread that weaves grace through the mess.

Without God in the middle, marriage becomes about survival. With Him, it becomes a story of redemption—two imperfect people learning to love with His kind of love.

Reflection:

Where have you been trying to fix or control things instead of inviting God into them?

Prayer:

Lord, be the center of our marriage. Teach us to lean on You instead of ourselves. When we drift, pull us back to You—and each other. Amen.

Ask your spouse:

What's one area in our marriage right now where we could do a better job of inviting God to be at the center instead of trying to handle it ourselves?

Challenge:

Pray together tonight. It doesn't have to sound perfect—just honest.

Day 2

The Power of Covenant Love

Malachi 2:14–15 – “The Lord made them one... so guard your heart and remain loyal to the wife of your youth.”

There's a big difference between a contract and a covenant. A contract says, “I’ll stay as long as this works for me.” But a covenant says, “I’m in this because God is in this.” Contracts are built on convenience—covenants are built on commitment.

Marriage isn’t made of perfect people or perfect days. It’s made of two flawed people clinging to a perfect God. It’s built on a promise—a promise to love, forgive, and show up, even when the feelings fade or the road gets rough.

There will be seasons that stretch your patience, test your trust, and shake your faith. But covenant love doesn’t run—it roots deeper. It doesn’t wait to feel “in love” to stay faithful; it remembers Who you’re being faithful to.

God’s faithfulness toward us is relentless, even when we fall short. That’s the model. Covenant love mirrors that same grace—it keeps showing up, keeps believing, keeps hoping, keeps fighting for us.

Reflection:

What's one area where your marriage could use a little more commitment and a little less convenience?

Prayer:

Father, thank You for joining us together in something sacred. Strengthen our loyalty when life feels heavy. Help us keep choosing love over pride. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

When life or marriage feels hard, what helps you remember that we're in this as a covenant, not a contract?

Challenge:

Tell your spouse one way you still choose them, even when it's hard.

Day 3

Serving Like Jesus

John 13:14–15 – “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

Jesus didn’t serve because people earned it — He served because love humbles itself. He knelt down, picked up a towel, and washed dirty feet. That’s what love looks like when it stops talking about sacrifice and actually does it.

In marriage, serving isn’t about keeping score or figuring out who’s doing more. It’s about choosing the posture of Jesus—a heart that says, “I’m here for you, even when it costs me something.”

Serving looks like kindness when you’re exhausted. It’s listening when every part of you wants to defend. It’s making their needs more important than your pride. Those little choices—those quiet, unseen acts of love—are what build a holy kind of intimacy.

When both of you live with that servant-hearted mindset, your home stops being just a place you live in—it starts looking like the kingdom of God.

Reflection:

Where can you serve your spouse this week without expecting anything in return?

Prayer:

Jesus, make our hearts more like Yours—willing to serve, to humble ourselves, and to love through action. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What's one small, meaningful way we could each serve each other this week that would help our home feel more like the heart of Jesus?

Challenge:

Take the answer above and do that thing for them this week, purely out of love.

Day 4

Communication with Grace

Ephesians 4:29 – “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.”

Words can build a marriage—or quietly tear it apart. And honestly, it's usually not the big arguments that do the most damage. It's the little moments—the sharp tone, the sarcastic jab, the sigh that says, “I'm done with this.”

Many fights don't start because of what we say, but how we say it. We can say something true and still say it in a way that cuts deep. Grace-filled communication doesn't mean avoiding hard conversations. It means learning how to speak truth without wounding the person we love most.

That's hard. It takes humility when pride wants to win. It takes curiosity when we'd rather defend. It takes restraint when we just want to unload everything we're feeling. And if we're honest, we can't do that on our own.

That kind of grace only comes from the Holy Spirit softening our hearts.

Marriage gives us daily chances to practice dying to ourselves—to let God shape the way we speak, listen, and love. When He does, our words stop being weapons and start becoming tools that build something stronger than before.

Reflection:

When tension rises, what comes out of your mouth first—
grace or defense?

Prayer:

God, help us speak with love even when we're frustrated. Give us the wisdom to pause and the humility to listen. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

When we're in a tough conversation, what helps you feel most heard and loved instead of criticized or shut down?

Challenge:

Share one thing you appreciate about how your spouse communicates, and one way you can both improve.

Day 5

Forgiveness that Frees

Colossians 3:13 – “Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Forgiveness isn't weakness—it's one of the hardest things you'll ever do. It's strength that says, “You don't get to control my peace anymore.” Bitterness feels easier in the moment—it feels safer, like armor. But bitterness doesn't protect you; it poisons you slowly.

You can't have intimacy and resentment living in the same space. One will always choke out the other. And the truth is, forgiveness doesn't make what happened okay. It doesn't erase the pain, the betrayal, or the disappointment. But it does release the grip that hurt has on your heart.

Forgiveness isn't about fairness—it's about freedom. It's saying, “God, I trust You to handle justice, and I'm choosing to walk in peace instead of pain.” Sometimes forgiveness is a one-time choice. Other times, it's a daily battle to lay it back down again. But every time you do, a little more healing takes root. A little more peace finds its way back in. And a little more of Jesus shows up in your heart.

Reflection:

What's one thing you might need to forgive—or ask forgiveness for—today?

Prayer:

Jesus, help us to forgive like You do—fully, freely, and without keeping score. Heal what's been broken and soften our hearts. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

Is there anything—big or small—that we might still need to let go of or forgive, so our hearts can stay free and connected?

Challenge:

Say, 'I forgive you,' or 'Will you forgive me?'—and mean it.

Day 6

Faith in the Storm

Mark 4:39–40 – “He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’”

Every marriage faces storms—financial, emotional, spiritual. Sometimes they come out of nowhere. One day you’re laughing over dinner, and the next you’re barely speaking. Storms don’t mean you’ve failed; they mean you’re human.

It’s easy to panic when life feels out of control. We start grasping for answers, blaming each other, or wondering if we’ll make it through. But the goal of marriage isn’t to avoid the storms—it’s to remember Who’s in the boat with you.

Jesus never promised calm seas. He promised His presence. Faith doesn’t always stop the storm around you, but it can calm the storm inside you—the fear, the anger, the exhaustion, the “what ifs.” When you stop trying to steer everything yourself and invite Him into it, peace has room to show up, even if the waves don’t stop right away.

Maybe your marriage feels like it’s taking on water right now. Don’t jump ship. Grab your spouse’s hand and call on the One who’s never once let a storm sink His people.

Reflection:

What storm are you facing together right now? How can you face it with Jesus, not against each other?

Prayer:

Lord, give us peace in the middle of the storm. Remind us that You're present, even when life feels chaotic. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

When life feels chaotic or uncertain, what helps you feel anchored in faith—and how can I better support you in that?

Challenge:

Pray over one stressful situation together tonight.

Day 7

Rest and Sabbath Together

Genesis 2:2-3 – “By the seventh day God had finished the work... so He rested.”

Rest isn't a luxury—it's obedience. Somewhere along the way, we started believing that constant busyness equals faithfulness. But it doesn't. Busyness numbs us; rest revives us. When we never slow down, we forget what peace feels like—and we start running on fumes, emotionally and spiritually.

In marriage, that kind of pace can quietly erode connection. You stop talking about dreams and start only talking about schedules. You pass each other in the hallway like coworkers instead of soulmates. Taking time to breathe together isn't lazy—it's holy. It's saying, “We're not machines. We're people who need God and each other.”

When you stop rushing, you start noticing again—the kindness in their eyes, the warmth of their laugh, the gift of simply being together. Rest clears enough space to see what matters most.

So pause. Put the phones down. Go for a walk. Sit in silence together. Remember that rest isn't wasted time—it's worship.

Reflection:

What would it look like to build rest into your marriage rhythm—not as an afterthought, but as a habit?

Prayer:

God, teach us to rest in You. Slow us down enough to reconnect with You and with each other. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What kind of rest helps you feel most connected—to God and to me—and how can we make more space for that together?

Challenge:

Take an evening off this week. No work, no phones—just each other.

Day 8

Love That Reflects Christ

Ephesians 5:25–33 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

Real love looks like self-sacrifice. It's not about who wins the argument or who gets their way—it's about who's willing to give first. That's not easy.

Everything in us wants to protect our pride, prove our point, or wait for the other person to move first. But love doesn't keep score; it keeps giving.

Christ's love wasn't built on convenience—it was built on commitment.

He didn't wait for us to deserve it. He chose to love us when it was messy, costly, and undeserved. That's the kind of love marriage is meant to reflect.

Sometimes loving your spouse means apologizing first. Sometimes it means holding your tongue, serving when you're tired, or forgiving when it feels unfair. It's not weakness—it's worship. Because when love costs you something, it starts to look more like Jesus.

That kind of love doesn't come from trying harder—it comes from staying close to Him. The more we receive His grace, the more we have to give away.

Reflection:

What's one area where pride keeps you from showing grace?

Prayer:

Jesus, help us to love each other the way You love us—deeply, humbly, and sacrificially. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What's one way we can both show love that costs us something this week—love that looks more like Jesus' kind of love?

Challenge:

Choose one act of love this week that stretches you—something that requires humility, patience, or sacrifice—and do it quietly, without pointing it out or expecting anything in return.

Day 9

Emotional Intimacy and Vulnerability

Genesis 2:25 – “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

Being known is scary. It's one thing to be loved for what you show people—it's another to be loved for who you really are. Most of us wear emotional armor because somewhere along the way, being honest cost us something. So we hide behind humor, busyness, or silence.

But real love can't grow where walls stay up. Emotional intimacy means choosing honesty over image. It's the courage to say, “Here's what I'm really feeling,” and trusting your spouse to handle that truth gently.

Vulnerability isn't weakness—it's the soil where connection grows.

God designed marriage to be a place where we can be fully known and still fully loved—just like Adam and Eve before shame entered the picture. That's what healing looks like: standing uncovered before someone who chooses to stay.

So talk honestly. Listen with grace. And when your spouse opens up, don't fix—just care. That kind of love echoes Eden.

Reflection:

What's one emotion or fear you've been hiding that you could share with your spouse?

Prayer:

God, help us drop our walls. Teach us to be honest and gentle with each other's hearts. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What helps you feel safest opening up to me—like you can share what's really going on inside without fear or pressure?

Challenge:

Share something real today—not small talk, but heart talk.

Day 10

Gratitude in the Daily Grind

1 Thessalonians 5:18 – “Give thanks in all circumstances.”

It's easy to notice what's missing. The undone chores. The short tempers. The same routines that make every day start to blend together. Marriage can slip into autopilot before you even realize it. Gratitude is what pulls you back.

Gratitude doesn't change your circumstances—it changes your vision. It shifts your focus from what's wrong to what's right. From what you wish your spouse would do to all the quiet, everyday ways they already show up. When you start thanking God for what's in front of you, you begin to see your marriage differently—less like a grind, more like a gift.

Thankfulness is powerful because it softens the heart. It reminds you that the person beside you isn't your opponent; they're your partner. Gratitude turns ordinary moments—morning coffee, shared laughter, even tired silence—into reminders of God's goodness.

When you practice gratitude, your marriage moves from surviving to thriving—not because everything's perfect, but because your heart is.

Reflection:

What's one thing about your spouse you've stopped appreciating?

Prayer:

Lord, give us grateful hearts. Help us see the gift You've given us in each other. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What's something small or ordinary in our life together that you're especially thankful for right now—and how can we remind each other to notice those moments more often?

Challenge:

Say three specific things you're thankful for about your spouse today.

Day 11

Guarding Your Marriage

Proverbs 4:23 – “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Marriages rarely collapse in a single moment—they wear down one small compromise at a time. A missed conversation here, a distracted evening there. Little cracks form when we stop paying attention, and before long, the distance feels normal.

Guarding your marriage means being proactive, not reactive. It's protecting what matters before it breaks. It's choosing to fight for connection even when you're tired, to tell the truth when it's uncomfortable, and to protect trust like it's treasure—because it is.

Sometimes guarding your marriage means saying no—to busyness, to screens, to anything that steals your focus from each other. It means building boundaries that keep your relationship safe and sacred in a world that constantly pulls at it.

Guarding isn't about fear—it's about value. You protect what you love most. When your heart stays guarded by God, your marriage stays grounded in grace.

Reflection:

Where do you need stronger boundaries or better rhythms to protect your connection?

Prayer:

God, show us where we've let other things creep in. Help us guard our hearts and prioritize what matters most. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What's one boundary or rhythm we could put in place that would help protect our connection and keep our hearts focused on each other?

Challenge:

Set one new boundary this week that protects your relationship. (Example: No phones after 9 p.m., dinner at the table without screens, or a weekly "no plans" night.)

Day 12

Unity in Purpose

Philippians 2:2–4 – “Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”

Unity doesn't mean you agree on everything. You won't—and that's okay. Real unity isn't about perfect alignment; it's about shared direction. It's remembering that you're on the same team, even when emotions or opinions pull you different ways.

Every marriage drifts at times. Work, stress, parenting, and exhaustion can make you start rowing in separate directions without realizing it. That's why shared purpose matters—it gives you a compass when feelings fluctuate. When you remember your why—why you chose each other, why you're building this life together—the what gets easier to navigate.

Unity takes work. It means listening more than talking, praying more than planning, and choosing “us” over “me.” It's setting your hearts on the same mission: to love God, love each other, and reflect His grace to the world.

When your marriage is united in purpose, you may not always see eye to eye—but your hearts will still face the same direction.

Reflection:

What shared goal or calling do you believe God's given your marriage?

Prayer:

Father, align our hearts with Yours. Give us one purpose, one mission, and one love. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

What do you think God's bigger purpose is for our marriage—and how can we live that out together in everyday ways?

Challenge:

Write a one-sentence mission statement for your marriage together.

Day 13

Praying as One

Matthew 18:19–20 – “If two of you agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”

Prayer unites hearts like nothing else. It's hard to stay angry at someone you're praying with. When you invite God into the middle of your mess, it's amazing how quickly walls start to crumble.

Prayer doesn't fix everything overnight—it's not a magic formula. But it changes you. It softens pride, quiets fear, and reminds you both that you're on the same side, facing the same storm, with the same Savior. When you pray together, you stop trying to control the outcome and start trusting the One who holds it.

Even short, simple prayers can shift the atmosphere in your marriage. A whispered “God, help us,” or “Thank You for each other” can turn tension into peace. Because when you talk to God together, you begin to see each other through His eyes.

Prayer isn't the last resort—it's the lifeline. And every time you reach for it together, heaven leans in.

Reflection:

What's been holding you back from praying together regularly?

Prayer:

God, draw us together in prayer. Make it a habit, not a last resort. Amen.

Ask You Spouse:

What helps you feel most comfortable and connected when we pray together—and how can we make prayer a more natural part of our daily rhythm?

Challenge:

Pray out loud together tonight—just five minutes of honesty before God.

Day 14

A Love That Lasts

1 Corinthians 13:4–8 – “Love is patient, love is kind... Love never fails.”

Real love isn't glamorous. It's not candlelight and movie moments—it's choosing grace when you're exhausted, forgiveness when you've been hurt, and kindness when you'd rather be right. It's gritty. It's stubborn in all the right ways. It holds on when feelings fade and fights for connection when it would be easier to pull away.

The kind of love that lasts doesn't depend on emotions—it depends on faith. Feelings come and go, but faith stays steady. It's the anchor that keeps you grounded when the waves of life hit hard.

Every day, love gives you a choice: lean in or pull back. Real love leans in. It shows up, even when it's inconvenient. It listens when it's uncomfortable. It forgives again, and again, and again. That's the kind of love Jesus shows us—the kind that never quits, never gives up, and never runs out.

Love like that doesn't just survive—it transforms.

Reflection:

How has your definition of love changed since your wedding day?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for loving us faithfully. Help us to mirror Your kind of love in how we treat each other. Amen.

Ask Your Spouse:

How has our love grown or changed over the years—and what can we do to keep choosing that kind of lasting, Christ-centered love each day?

Challenge:

Spend 10 minutes together tonight talking about one way you've seen your love grow—and one way you want it to grow next. Then pray, thanking God for how far He's brought you.



As you wrap up this devotional, I want to remind you of something deeply important: we live in a culture that is relationally starved and often struggling to navigate dating, sex, and marriage. But God really does offer a better way—a way that leads to wholeness, joy, and flourishing. I’m believing with you that as you lean into Him, He will strengthen your relationship, deepen your connection, and rewrite the places where you long for renewal.

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