

What did you Expect?

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bibles, if you would, and open them to 1 John 4, verse 7.

1 John 4, verse 7. And if you do not have a copy of this book, the church is giving you a copy, and they'll have them, I guess, out there at the entrance.

It's one per family. And this book is called What Did You Expect? And we want to talk to you a little bit about marriage. This is the second and the last in this particular series. Somebody recommended this book to me a long time ago, months ago, and I read it and put a post up about it on my blog.

And John Pearson sends me an email, and he says, that book, we all need to read it. He bought the book after reading the post. He bought the book, read the book, and said, you should talk about that book, and you should help our couples get into it.

So I want to challenge you to get into it. It is well worth investing in your marriage. Amen? Amen? You're going to live together a long time. Absolutely no reason not to enjoy living together all your life.

[1 : 06] You're going to be, I mean, with Betty and I, it's been 40 years. Now, I'm alone this week. I'll be honest with you. I would give my right arm to have her back. I feel incomplete. I left the house without my glasses.

I had to run back to the house. She called. We were talking on the phone about her on FaceTime a little after 6, and she said, I figured you'd already be at church if I wasn't there. Well, I had to pick out my own clothes.

Man, that is a burden. Amen? And I had to pick out, and then I had to get Jeff to go in and find the tie that would go with it to make sure the tie would match, and I picked out my own underwear. Say amen.

So I've been married a long time, and I definitely very much enjoy being married. But it is definitely not like the fairy tales we were told when we were kids, and they lived happily ever after.

It is almost like when you read those fairy tales or you listen to them or you watch those cartoons, that these two people walk off into the sunset, and they never have another issue.

[2 : 02] They never have another problem. Nothing ever goes wrong again. And so the title of the book that Paul Tripp has written is, What Did You Expect? And the book is built around six commitments.

And so you don't have to read the book all at one time. Some of you see a book this thick, and the first thing you think is, I am not reading a dictionary. That is way too many pages to read. But it is not too many pages.

Big words. Not that big, but kind of big for those of you who don't read. And you can read it slowly. You can read a chapter at a time, but the six commitments are. And I'm sure Jason probably went over some of these.

We will give ourselves to a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness. We will give ourselves a regular lifestyle of confession. And forgive us, marriage is not about emotions.

Emotions will run out fairly quickly. Betty and I got married at eight. I was 18. Betty was 19. It was three days before I turned 19.

[3 : 01] Betty is six months older than I am. And so Betty was 19. I was 18. I cannot tell you how idealistic marriage was. From the time I was, I'm not sure, maybe 10 or 11, right in there, I knew I wanted to get married.

And other kids my age didn't know it. And I knew I wanted to have a son. My favorite TV show was The Rifleman. If you've ever seen Lucas McCain and his son Mark, and if you haven't, you should watch the TV show.

How many of you have seen it? Say amen. If you've not seen it, repent and get right with God. It is a great show. And I just wanted to be Lucas McCain. Number one, I'd like to have been that good with a gun.

And number two, I would have really enjoyed having that relationship with my son. And I did have that relationship, but not without a lot of the problems. His problems are all over in about 22 minutes.

I mean, if you take out the commercials, he can solve anything. And every now and then he needs two programs to solve them. If it is a major catastrophe, he's still through in 45 minutes.

[4 : 02] And it didn't work that way for us. We've been through major heartaches. But here's marriage. Marriage is commitment. Marriage is me looking at Betty and saying, I make some promises.

I make these promises to God, number one. And number two, I make these promises to you. The first commitment he challenges you to make in the book I would like you to read about is that you would have a regular lifestyle of confession and forgiveness.

And that's a hard issue to deal with in our lives. Because I have this concept that I'm pretty good and I do all right. And I like to compare myself.

But I choose to always compare myself to people that aren't quite doing as well as I am. I've told you that because I'm overweight, and I've dealt with that a lot since I was about 32, whenever I see a, whenever I'm in a, you know, I love to go to Golden Corral.

Because when you go to Golden Corral, you can feel good about your size. Say amen. Somebody's coming in weighing 450 pounds. And I'm sitting over and I'm poking Ben. I'm saying, now that's fat.

[5 : 05] I am not fat. And your problem in your marriage is you won't confess your sin. And you won't confess to your wife, I messed up and I'm not doing right. And here's the reason you don't confess is because you don't see yourself for who you are.

And so let me just real quickly, I've got a whole outline, but I'm just going to walk you through some of this. You know, the first step is to know who I am. And you know who I am? I am as low on the totem pole as you can get.

I am scum. I am septic tank level. I am a sinner and a failure and a problem. I am egotistical and I am selfish.

Now, in Jesus, I am a new creature, but I sure brought a whole lot of baggage over. I wish I lived out every... I wish I was doing... How is it? What is it?

I do... Huh? I do... I wish I would do who I be, but I don't do who I be real good. Amen? And so what ends up happening, when Betty and I first got married, I just really didn't think I did anything wrong.

[6 : 11] I'll be honest with you. I mean, I really thought, man, she's lucky. I mean, I'm a good husband and I don't do wrong. And I got this...

I mean, really, I'm nice to her. I mean, I give her clothes to pick up off the floor. I mean, I give her life meaning. She gets to wash my underwear.

I mean, really. And one day after we've been married about six months, we didn't even have a fight. Not even one argument all the time we were dating. Not one. That was because I'm such a good guy.

Can you say amen? And then after we've been married just a little while, we had our first fight. It had probably been almost six months that we had our first fight. And that started it. Bless God.

I mean, once she figured out she could fight with me, she decided she would get good at it. Amen? Y'all think she's not. She's not here to defend herself. Let me just tell you, she's not as sweet as she might always act in public.

[7 : 07] Amen? And so she told me that night, she said, you know, you never say you're sorry. And I thought to myself, I think you're right. You know, I don't recall saying I'm sorry.

What have I got to be sorry about? The reason is who I compare myself to. And if I compare myself to you, I think I'm doing pretty good. I've seen some of you. You ain't doing that hard yourself.

But when I compare myself to Jesus, I'm not doing too good. Amen? And I'm not loving my wife like I could. And so the first commitment is that I would confess. That I would say, I'm sorry.

I've been wrong. I won't do it again. And I'll work on it. That's the first commitment. That's a commitment. It is a commitment that you would honestly look and say, if we're going to make this marriage work, I've got to be honest about myself.

I've got to be careful. You do know that. What did you expect? And here's what, you know, Wayne Cofield is famous for saying. And I'm sure you got it from somebody because we all get stuff from somebody else. Nothing new under the sun. But Wayne Cofield, Pastor Wayne Cofield always says, what do you expect when you put two selfish people living in the same house?

[8 : 06] You've got two selfish people living in the same house. You can only expect some problems. And so I need to learn how to confess. And I need to learn how to forgive. I need to learn how to confess. And I need to learn how to forgive.

And before I go on, can I just say when we forgive, that means we put it behind us. When we forgive, it's off the table. When we forgive, it's not brought up again. When we forgive, it's not put in their face again.

When we forgive, we separate that from that person. If you continue holding on to something somebody did, you have not truly forgiven them. The beautiful thing in the scripture that I really love about what Jesus did, I'm going to get to this passage, Lord willing, I hope.

But the beautiful thing that he did, he separated our sin from our person. So he put my sin over here. That works real good in Spanish because sin starts with a P and person starts with a P. But it don't work. The sin from the center, that's what he did.

So here I am, I sinned. And he separates from as far as the east is from the west. And so if Jesus is looking at me, my sin is behind him. And if he looks at me, he never sees my sin because it's always behind him.

[9 : 06] He's separated. So he never looks at me and says, Austin, you are a liar. Because lying is my sin and it's on that side. He looks at me and says, you're my son and I love you and I forgive you. And you get the point?

Can you say amen? Amen. Work at confessing. First step. First step. I know this. I figured out this much after being married 40 years. I do say and do ugly things.

I am inconsiderate. I only, I mean, I try to work at being a good husband, but I mess up. I need to say I'm sorry and I need to forgive when she messes up. It goes both ways. Number second commitment.

I think you probably went over last time. We will make growth and change our daily agenda. We will make growth and change our daily agenda. Jason and Charity are getting married.

And I told them this week in a counseling session that in a few years, he won't be the same Jason and she won't be the same Charity.

[10:05] Because as they're married, if they have this plan, if they are committed to growth and change as a daily agenda, Jason will change and learn to be a better husband.

He will change things. He will put things out of his life. He will grow. Charity will change in charity. He will put things out of his life. And they will both become who they ought to be. They'll grow. Can you say amen right there? When Betty and I got married, there's a gazillion things.

Number one, I come from a farm. I come off the farm. And when I come off the farm, in our house, when I was a boy, I never got my own glass of tea in my life. I never got my own glass of milk.

I might get daddy's, but I never got mine. My sisters were taught, girls take care of guys. That's the way it works. So when my glass got empty, I shook it and the glass bounced around. The ice bounced around and my sisters got it and got my drink.

Now, my sister didn't have to milk the cow. I did. And my sister didn't. So I get married. Betty and I are sitting there at the table. I run out of tea and I just go. That don't work good.

[11:04] It'll do with your sister. Say amen. It don't do that good with your wife. And then I had this philosophy. We got married. I admit, it was my house. I never had anything nicer in my life.

I came to the door. It was hot. We didn't have that much air conditioning. I came in the front door and I'd take my shirt off and toss it here. I'd take my t-shirt off, toss it here. My pants would go here. And by the time I got to wherever I was going, there was a trail leading all the way.

And one day Betty walked up to me and she said, You reckon you could pick up your own clothes? She said, You don't think I can find you? Are you trying to leave me a trail to find you? Now I put down the potty seat and pick up my clothes.

I am a well-trained puppy. Amen. By the way, when I married Betty, she never went on time anywhere. The Fergusons will be late to their funeral. That's the truth.

When Betty was a little girl, she never went to Sunday school because they always got to church at least 30 minutes late, maybe 45 minutes late. So as a little boy and girl, her brother would go to the boys' restroom, she'd go to the girls' restroom, and they would hide.

[12:01] Because it was so embarrassing to go into Sunday school the way they got there late. Now I'm a preacher. That don't work for us. Do you know what's happened over the years? Because now Betty is so frustrated whenever she's around her mother.

She's like, That little woman is late everywhere she goes. And I say, Whoa, can we talk about you? And she says, I'm a gardener. I'm not like it anymore. And she's not. She changed and I changed.

It's a growing process. Can you say amen? That's what commitment number two is about. You're going to work at growing. You're going to say, I have not been as kind as I should be. I haven't said the things I should.

I haven't said I'm sorry. There are things I could work on. And by the way, if you won't study and read books and go to conferences or whatever you can, you're not going to work on your marriage. What in the world do you have that's as important as your marriage?

If you buy a house and you don't take care of it, I don't care how much you invest in it, it won't take many years so your house is in bad shape. Is that a fair statement? Talk to me.

[12 : 58] You know, if you buy a house and you don't take care, if you don't paint it, you don't take care, it just slowly degenerates and it gets wrong. Your car is the same way. You have got, I bought a Corvair.

My first car was a Corvair. I did not say Corvette. I said Corvair. Sam, do you know what a Corvair is? You don't even know. It was a joke of a car. That was my first car.

I paid \$300 for it and I borrowed \$400 from the bank. My daddy co-signed for that massive loan down at the bank and I had payments, I think, for a year on \$400. A hundred was to get me some, to fix the car up, to get the insurance, pay for it for the whole year.

I never could figure out how to change oil in it. I mean, the motor was in the trunk and I couldn't figure out how to change the oil. I couldn't figure out how to change the breather. That car kept getting worse and worse.

I mean, I figured out where to put more oil in. So I just pour all in as it blew all out. And I couldn't change the breather. And Betty's daddy bought a brand new battery for it. He bought four new tires.

[13 : 57] And I'd come home pushing that car from school. It was on my way home from college and I pushed the car. And so I got in the house and I was soaking wet with sweat. I sat down and somebody knocked on the door and said, is that your Corvair out there?

And I said, yeah, it is. He said, would you sell it? I said, if you're fool enough to take it, give me 50 bucks and you can have it. He said, so? No, when he walked out the door of the car, because I said, swear to you, on hurt, change not.

He walked out the door of the car. My wife looked at me and said, daddy just put more than \$100 in tires and battery on that thing. I'm like, didn't think about that. But you know what? If you don't maintain, you mess up.

That's why the car got so bad off. It was not that bad. It was a bad car. Don't get me wrong. It was a bad car. But still, maintenance. What's going on in your marriage? You can't expect to get married and live together all this time and let little bitty granules of problems and hurt and indecisiveness and bitterness be in your life and not expect you're going to have problems.

Work on some growth in your life. Number three, we will work to build a sturdy bond of trust. We will work to build a sturdy bond of trust. We will work to build a sturdy bond of trust. You're two brand new people.

[15 : 06] You don't know each other that well. Betty and I met in December. Betty and I married in August. I had met her a little bit quicker than that. I saw her across the campus, and I had my first date with her in December.

When I took her out on our first date, she only went with me because I was going with Juergen Bailey, and she thought she liked Juergen Bailey. And she figured if she was in the car with Juergen Bailey, maybe Juergen would notice her, and Juergen would ask her out later.

I didn't find that out after we were married. But after we were married, she said, I didn't even want to go with you on that first date. I only went because she told me Juergen was going. I let that guy be in my wedding. I let that guy be in my wedding.

And my wife was probably looking at him when she said, I do. I don't know. But you've got to build a sturdy bond of trust. You've got to work at saying, you know what, I trust my spouse.

But, you know, I've got to earn that. That's what the commitment is. I've got to earn my wife's trust. Can I just say some men, men, we don't work at building trust.

[16 : 05] We don't handle the money very well. We don't make decisions well. And Trent always makes fun of me. But, honestly, if you're a Christian woman, that's a hard position to be in.

I tell the young people all the time, it takes a very special person to be a woman. Because, you know, of course, if you're a liberated woman and you get to make your own decisions, but if you marry and he decides where you live and he decides, well, what a way to have to live.

You need to earn some trust. You need to decide, I'm going to, my wife ought to know that I'm a man of God. If anybody knows that I'm a man of God, it ought to be Betty. It ought to be Betty that says, when Austin wants to talk to God, God listens to him.

It ought to be Betty that says, Austin knows how to keep his word. I ought to have won some trust. I ought to have earned trust that I'm not going to be looking at porn. I'm not going to be talking to other women. I'm not going to be misusing the money.

I ought to work at building trust in my life. That's what the book's going to talk to you about. Now, that's what you went over last week. This week, there are three more commitments, and I will quickly run through them, and then I'll give you some Bible verses.

[17 : 07] The fourth commitment is we will commit to building a relationship of love. Because I've wasted so much time. Love's not an emotion. You know, love is not the most...

My three sons was a TV program when I was a kid. And on my three sons, one of the boys was at school one day, and he saw this girl. They were at college. They saw this girl.

And when he saw this girl, he heard wedding bells, and he heard the wedding march, and he looked over at her, and she was fully dressed from head to toe in a wedding gown. And he went home, and he told his daddy, I'm not sure what's going on.

But when I look at her, I hear wedding bells, and I see her in a wedding dress. His dad said, well, she must be the one. And they got married. And it's all romantic, and it's all...

You know, it takes love to make a marriage work. And love is giving. Love is making a commitment. Love is making a payment. Love is working on it from my end to be who I ought to be.

[18 : 09] Love is not something I feel. You get feelings after you do things. You don't feel things to do things. You start with doing so you do right. But the King James word for love in 1 Corinthians 13 is a ridiculously funny word to you if you don't even have an understanding of it.

But that word is charity. It's a beautiful word. You know what it says? God loved me with charity love. You know what charity love is? I'm totally and completely undeserving. You know what charity love is?

Loving me when I'm not going to pay it back. You know what charity is? Charity is what... We even know that today. You go by the person with the little red pot and the tripod holding it up and he's dressed maybe in a Santa outfit or whatever.

He's working for the Salvation Army. He's ringing a bell. And you know if you put money in there, you ain't getting nothing out of it. The fact is, you ain't even getting that good a feeling. Say amen. You drop \$100 in there and you're not going to go away and say, whew, I feel real good.

No, you're not. You're going to feel like \$100 poorer. Say amen. But that's what charity is. And guess how God wants me to love Betty? God wants me to love Betty saying, you don't have to deserve my love. You don't have to earn my love.

[19 : 14] I love you. I don't give you love because of what I can get. I give you love because I love you. Because I'm supposed to. Fifth commitment.

We will deal with our differences with appreciation and grace. And you know, we are different. How many of you would like to be married to somebody like you? Well, I can promise you this.

Number one, I would definitely not like to be married to a guy. That would really go against my grain. Say amen. And number two, if I was married to somebody like me who couldn't even pick out my clothes, I know we'd be in trouble.

We're very different. But those differences cause a little bit of friction. But in 40 years, I can tell you I've learned to love those differences. And so we deal with our differences with appreciation and grace.

And then the last one is that we work at protecting our marriage. And you can get a copy of the book. And I want to take you and walk you through a couple of verses and you'll be out in the eight minutes that my watch says I have left to talk to you.

[20 : 10] But let me say, please, your marriage is worth it. Could you say amen? Your marriage is worth it. My goodness, I got married at 18 and I'm 59. You know what that means?

I've been married two-thirds of my life. Over two-thirds of my life. And let me just give you the, I want to make, I want to be happy at it.

Just let me give you a flip side. If you get a divorce and good friends of mine have been through divorce, it rips their heart out. It destroys them.

And I would do anything. I want to maintain my relationship. I don't want to get that hurt. A good friend of mine got a divorce. I stopped by to see him. And he's never had a dog in his life.

And he's got a dog in his house. Now, I grew up where dogs don't go in the house. And I know some of you, Sherry, don't shoot me. But we never had dogs. We never had animals in the house. It's just not the way. We're farmers. We shoot them.

[21 : 07] We eat them. We feed them. And we get stuff from them. But we don't have them as pets. That's just, my daddy said, if you can make that calf your pet, all you want will be eating him come December. So that's how I grew up.

So I go in the house and this buddy of mine has his dog in there. And there's no place to sit. There's dog hair everywhere. And I reach down. I push the dog off there. And I start moving hair so I can find a place to sit down.

And my buddy says, my buddy says, don't be pushing the dog around. I said, you ain't never liked dogs. He said, well, now that's the only friend I have because he's divorced.

Another friend right now just spent Thanksgiving alone. That's a big family day. He has two children. But his children with the mom. Your marriage is worth work.

Say amen. I don't want to deal with it any other way. Now the first commitment that we talked about for tonight that we talked about was a commitment to building a relationship of love.

[22 : 07] So would you look at 1 John 4, 7 with me. Let's just look at this verse. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love. Those are some ridiculous verses. Look at them. Do you see what they say?

They say, hey, God is love. Love is of God. Love is of God. It says, and God is love at the end of verse 8. And then it says, everyone that loves, if you really have love, if you understand love, you've been born of God.

Normal people can't love. Love's of God. So natural people, people that don't know God, don't really understand love.

So the first place I'm going to start, if I want to learn how to love, I've got to know that I've got a relationship with God. And that's how I'm going to have a strong marriage. My strong marriage is going to be based on, first, God's working in me.

[23 : 08] And I'm working, I'm serving Him. And I'm looking to Him. And I'm trying to be a follower of God. Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 1. And God is love. And I'm trying to be a follower of Him. And look what it says. It says, God is love.

You can't understand what love is, and you can't love if you don't know God. You know, you'll change your whole marriage if you work on your relationship with the Lord. Verse 10.

Herein is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation, a payment for our sins. We ought also to love one another.

Let me just give you some real quick love things out of the Bible that I know. I'm to love like God loves. That's what the passage says, but my time's out. So watch this. Love is willing. That's the first thing I wish you'd write down.

Love is willing. Jesus is love. God is love. The Holy Spirit is love. The Godhead is love. And here's what the Bible says in John 10, 18. No man takes my life from me.

[24 : 06] No man takes it from me. I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received in my Father. You know, Jesus didn't die because He had to.

We all know that. Everybody in this room knows that. Everybody in this room, I think you're spiritually strong enough and grown enough to understand that Jesus died on purpose. Every movie you see made about it is totally wrong.

Jesus didn't get snatched away, grabbed, falsely tried, and drug off there. And He was out of control. He was in control all the time. He came to earth to die. He wanted to die for me.

He had a promise for me. He was willing to pay the price for me. And then He looks at me and He says, Austin, you know how I love you, buddy? That's how I want you to love Betty. And love is willing. Love says I'll pay the price.

Love says I will sacrifice myself. Love says I will think about the good of another. Love says I will give without thinking of what I get back. Love is loving when it's undeserved.

[25 : 05] By the way, that's how every one of us got saved. Did anybody in this room get saved because you was good enough? Did anybody in this room have one smidgen, one tiny bit, one tiny spot of goodness in you that made God save you?

No, you didn't. God saved you when you were undeserving. Have you realized you can't love like what the Bible teaches until God does a work of grace in you? Love is of God.

But everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. Do you see how love has more to do with a commitment than with a feeling? Will you commit to work on the action and wait on the emotions?

If you told me tonight our marriage has a problem, here's what I would tell you. Then go home and do some loving. That doesn't mean go home and have intimacy. It means go home and practice giving, practice being selfless, practice dying to yourself, practice putting the other person first, practice showing what Jesus showed towards us.

And that will strengthen your marriage. So that means if I love my wife, I make no personal decisions or choices that might harm my marriage or my spouse.

[26 : 13] I make no personal decisions. That's all straight out of your book that you're going to read. You don't have to pay for the book. It's yours for free. But I make no decisions. I mean, I'm married. Betty and I are two people but one flesh.

Now we're one person. I no longer have the right to say this is what I like, this is what I want, this is what I want to do. We're not Austin and Betty. We're Austin and Betty. We're not I got plans and she's got plans and we'll see if we can work them out.

No, we're one person. You're no longer independent. You cannot make personal decisions. Don't be self-focused or demanding but see what you can do to serve, support, and encourage.

Acknowledge your need of God and his help to be the spouse that you ought to be. Let me give you one other thought because I've got two minutes by my watch. Let me give you the other thought.

The next one, which is the fifth principle that he asks you to be committed about, is that there's differences between you and you're going to work on them. And this is one of the points he makes in the book.

[27 : 13] I hope you'll read it. This one he says, did you know God uses your spouse to grow you spiritually? Probably more than any other thing he does. God gives you a wife or God gives you a husband.

They really know you. They really know you. And by the way, Betty doesn't know the Austin who comes in here with a town and hopefully it matches. And the guy that comes in here stands in front of you and talks.

Betty knows the guy sick. Betty knows the guy out of his head on drugs. Betty knows the guy because I had surgery. No other way. Just to clarify that one. I haven't been drunk and I haven't used drugs except then.

But I was out of my head and did a lot of stupid stuff and I've been laughed at immensely for it. But anyway, Betty knows that guy. Betty knows the guy that had a bath in the morning. Betty knows the guy.

Betty knows me. Betty knows the guy. But as I try to love my wife, that's a motivation for me to grow. For me to get my wife to want to lovingly follow me means I've got to lovingly lead.

[28 : 12] I've got to grow. God didn't put you people together by accident. Now you listen to what I'm going to tell you real quickly. None of you are together by accident. You say, what's my first marriage?

I don't care. God didn't wake up and go, oh, stink. I didn't know he was going to get married twice. But I made a better plan. That's not what happened. God knows. It didn't ever surprise him at how you're married. It didn't surprise him who you are.

And God's at work forming you. In Romans chapter 8 and verse 28, he says, He does all things. He works all things together for good. To them that love God and are called according to his purpose. And he says, because he's conforming me to the image of his son.

Every person God brings into my life, God's using to help form me and mold me to be who he wants me to be. But guess who's in my life more than anybody? Betty. I mean, good night.

40 years. Mr. Ferguson, my wife's dad, one day before he died, this is probably, he's been dead a little over 10 years, probably 15 years ago, 18 years ago.

[29 : 11] We were sitting there one day talking. And he said to me, he said, you need to do this for Betty. That's what she likes. I said, she don't like that. He said, yes, she does. I said, no, she don't. He said, that's my daughter.

I think I know. I said, she's lived with me a lot longer than she ever lived with you. I think I know. And so I called her in. I said, what's the answer? And she sided on my side. Amen. See, here's the deal.

God's used Betty to grow me. I think I would have quit more than one time. I think I would have walked out of the ministry more than one time. I have been a mess. I've messed up in my marriage.

I've not been loving. I've not been kind. I was rude to her. I've been rude to my kids. I've not been the best dad. I mean, I've made a lot of mistakes. I know y'all haven't. But Betty, sometimes being ugly to me, sometimes with nagging words, but God's used all that in my life.

God is at work in your life. Decide now. God's using your partner more than anybody. Maybe your partner has just been pathetic. Okay, good.

[30 : 14] God's teaching you how to learn to love people like he loved you because you were pathetic when he saved you. Say amen. So this is a great thing. Get the book. If you don't have the book, get the book.

It's free. Church is paying for it. I think there's 10 more copies or 8 more copies. Not sure. I think it was 10. So there ought to be enough for everybody. Read the book. Spend some time. Read it together. Read it alone.

I don't care how you read it. Read the book and work on your marriage. It's worth it. Father, I love you and I thank you for the chance to serve you. I pray you would grow our marriages. I pray you would strengthen us. I pray you would draw us to you. And I will magnify you and glorify you for all that you do.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.