

Real Marriage - Key #5 Putting More Fun In Your Friendship

- You should do this, cause I keep messing it up. This is like our 57th take. Howdy, Pastor Mark Driscoll, here with my wife and best friend, Grace. And I want to thank all of you through Mark Driscoll ministries who give any amount, who pray at any time or encourage with any email or social media posts. We've got a brand new sermon series, real marriage. It's six keys to unlocking all of your relationships, including your marriage that we're teaching right here at the Trinity church, I'm preaching. We're doing Q and A and we'll give it all the way through markdriscoll.org. So thanks a bunch for helping us out. All right, how many of you are on social media? You're on social media, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. How many, how many collective, total friends do you have? How many of you are in the dozens? How many of you are in the hundreds of friends? How many of you are in the thousands or tens of thousands? Those are your friends. Okay, now brace yourself. Right, little heart funeral here. I'm going to give you a little bit of bad news. I don't think they're all your friends.

- I don't think they're all your friends. I don't think like when your birthday comes and be like, I totaled them all up and I called Costco. How big of a sheet cake do I need for my 3,127 friends. It's my birthday, I know they all love me. Oh, and we need ice cream and plates and I'll come pick it up. How big of a sheet cake do I need? They're not all your friends, right? They're not, when you're moving, they're not all going to get the other end of the couch and haul it out of your apartment. They're not all your friends, they're just not. If you break down at three o'clock in the morning, cause you blew a tire and you needed somebody to come pick you up, you can't be like: Oh, let's pick any one of my random social media friends. I'm sure they'll come get me after all, they're my friend. And they publicly declared it by liking me in the presence of others digitally. They're not all your friends, right? But here's what we've done. We've taken the word friendship and the concept friendship. And we've sort of applied it to any and all relationships. And let me just submit to you that a true friendship takes more commitment than this, right? How many of you, it takes more than that to have a real friendship. You're like, well, we're friends. I moved my thumb once we're friends. So a real friendship takes more than that. We have a whole host of relationships, not all of which are friendships. So today I want to talk a little bit about friendship and it starts with the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is one God, three persons, Father, Son and Spirit. What that means is that our God is a friend group, right? That God is loving and has relationship. God made us in his image and likeness to have relationship. We are relational beings by nature. And then the second member of the Trinity, God, the Holy spirit enters into human history and he doesn't have a wife and he doesn't have kids, but he picks 12 friends. We call them disciples, that's Jesus' friend group, and one's a total dud, Amen. You know what that tells you is you're going to have at least one dud in your friend group and it can't, and they couldn't blame it on Jesus. Some of you, you've had friendships go bad and maybe it was your fault, but maybe it wasn't your fault, but Jesus and Judas, it couldn't have been where we didn't get along. It was one of our faults, could have been either. I'm not sure which, Jesus was a perfect friend, was a perfect friend of Judas and didn't have a good friendship with Judas because Judas wasn't a good friend. A friendship takes two people. And

Jesus did have three friends that were his nearest and dearest friends, Peter, James and John. They were with him in special, sacred moments when other people didn't have access. So just looking at the example of Jesus, we need a relationship with God as He rules in Heaven. We need relationships with those who are around us. We can accept that some of our relationships will not end well. And in addition to a larger group of friends, we have those that we pull closest to us. Those who are friends that are nearest and dearest. And so as we get into friendships today, I want to start by saying, be friendly toward all and friends with a few. If you're looking for one book, actually the best book written in the history of the world on friendship is a book called Proverbs. It's a wisdom collection of sayings. And a lot of them are about relationships and Proverbs 18:24: 'He says a man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.' What he's saying is be friendly toward all and friends with a few. And what I say, you can't be friends with a lot of people. Somebody say, so I need to be mean to them. Not what I'm saying. Be friendly toward all and friends with a few. This is the example of Jesus. He's friendly toward all crowds of thousands, tens of thousands come to see him, but he's friends with a few. And the way that this works is that some of us tend to think that our relationships will last our entire lifetime. And this is the principle of seasonality that most of our close relationships are not for the duration of our life and every season of our life. They are for a season in our life and they come to an end or they have an alteration. So how many of you, when you were in high school, you had really good friends and now you're not close to them. How many of you have read? You've graduated, but you've read your high school annual. 'You're my best friend. I love you, never change, we're together forever.' Your like, who was that? I don't even remember who that was. Rock on, I don't even remember who that was. I couldn't pick them out in a police lineup. Apparently, we were besties and now I don't know who they are. So there are certain people you're close when you're in school with them or you're on a sports team with them or you're at work with them, or maybe you live near them or you're in a small group at church with them, or you've got a common shared activity or hobby with them, something of that nature. But when the relationship changes seasons, the relationship ultimately either alters or ends. So, and some of you put great pressure on yourself to think every relationship I ever had, needs to continue for the rest of my life. And you're exhausting yourself, trying to pull all of these relationships forward rather than celebrating the fact they were for a season, but things have changed. We were both single, now I got married and things are different or we moved or life circumstances. And as a result, I'm grateful for that friendship and that season, but it was a seasonal relationship. It's not one for all seasons of life. He says there is however, a friend who sticks closer than a brother, you know who your nearest and dearest friends are because they endure through all the seasons of life. My wife, Grace and I, we were best friends in our teens our twenties, our thirties and now our forties, right? And so we'd been friends for a long time. That's someone who sticks close. Also the principle of capacity. Some people tend to think the more friends I have, the better off I am. And it says the opposite here. If you have a lot of relationships that may actually cause harm because your relationships are very shallow, they're not very deep. Relationships take a lot of time, energy and money and friendships take a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money. There's just a lot of output. And you're a limited person. You only have so much time, so much energy, so much money that you can pour into a relationship. That deep relationships take a deep deposit. And if you have a

lot of relationships, it probably means you've made small deposits. Those are shallow relationships. And so that's the principle of capacity. Some of you are extroverts and you can handle more relationships. Some of you are introverts and you can't handle as many relationships, but we all have a relational capacity. How many of you, when we were kids, you like playing with Legos, any Lego fans? I've got a kid that loves Lego's. The capacity to build something in Lego's is contingent on the size of the base, right? So you get a four brick, you can only build so tall. You get a big brick, you can build a little bit taller but at some point there's a capacity. You can only stack so much. Relationships are like that, no matter how big your capacity. At some point you've maximized the places in your life that people can click on and know you and you know them, and you have a relationship with them and it's accepting and acknowledging your relational capacity. That at some point you simply cannot know any more people or have any more relationships. Now, the sociologists tell us that in an average year, the average American interacts with, has some sort of acquaintance or relationship with between 500 and two and a half thousand people. That's a lot, and this could be family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, people that are extended family relatives. If you're a student in a large school, that number is higher. If you're in a sales position, that number is higher. If you're like me in a ministry position, that number is higher. But 500 to two and a half thousand people a year you orbit with and have some involvement and interaction with and the sociologists tell us as well, that in an average week, 40% of our relational energy goes to just five people, just five. So I'm married with five kids, so that's it. I'm done, like my Lego's full and I'm an introvert. So my Lego's is totally full. And so it is this understanding that you should be friendly toward all, but for a variety of very practical reasons, you can only be true deep, real friends with a few. And what happens is, when we only have one category of relationship friendship, that leads to a lot of hurt because people think, well, if we were friends, wouldn't you be available and provide this or do that. Yes, I use the wrong word for the relationship. So I elevated the expectation and that led to the disappointment. So the next principle I want to hit is that relational priority is necessary. So your first relationship is with the Lord, right? The Father, Son, Holy Spirit. They've invited us into their friend group, okay? So you repent of your sin, you trust in Jesus. You receive the Holy Spirit. God becomes your Father, but ultimately your relationship with the Lord is the priority. This is why we started the whole series with that principle. Time with the Lord, relationship with the Lord, talking to the Lord, listening to the Lord. Bible reading, prayer, worship that establishes a healthy, safe relationship for which your relational needs to be met. So, that then you have love and grace and mercy and forgiveness to give to other people. And then if you're married, it's your spouse, it's your spouse. And then if you have children, it's your children and or close family, maybe it's your grandkids. They live nearby, or maybe your father died. And your mom's a widow and she's not doing well health wise. And so you're pulling her closer to invest in her and look after her because the Bible says that pure religion is to care for widows and orphans and those in need. And then close friends, these are people that we determine are safe and healthy. And we like them as you know what, we're supposed to love everybody. The Bible says we're even to love our enemies, but it doesn't say we're supposed to like everybody, amen. Isn't that good news? Aren't you glad the Bible doesn't say like everybody? It doesn't, the friends are the people, you like, everybody you love. But the friends are the people you like, and you determine I'm going to pull you close to me. I want access in my life available to you so that we

can walk closely together. But then we have all kinds of other relationships, mentors, people we're learning from various friends, right? They live in our neighborhood, their kids are at our school. Some activity that's shared coworkers, when you go to work. Acquaintances, yeah, I know them. Or they're a friend of a friend or, you know, I used to know them or they used to live in our neighborhood. Neighbors, you know 'Hey, you live near me. So I'm going to say, hi.' Professionals, you're my doctor. You're my lawyer, you're my accountant, you're my mechanic, you know. I go to the grocery store and I started to do a little catch up with the teller. How's it going, how are your kids? Extended family, your in-laws, you're out laws, right? Some of you have got big extended families and divorce and remarriage and kids and adoption and foster. And it's hard to even get a chart together for all those relationships, distant relatives, right. They're far, far away. And you don't see them very often, but you hear about them. Former acquaintance used to hang out with them. I don't hang out with them. I don't know, our lives have changed. And also enemies, people who want a relationship, but you don't because they're going to hurt you. Amen. So you think about all these relationships and relational priority is necessary. Now let me say this, jealousy is what happens when someone takes my place. Jealousy's not always bad. It totally can be but the Bible tells us that God is a jealous God. In fact, God says, I am a jealous God. He said, well, God, why are you jealous? He gets jealous when someone takes his place, right? When it's like, well, my boyfriend is more important than God. And so I'm a Christian, they're a non Christian. So I'm going to walk away from God so I can walk with him. And God's like, that makes me jealous. You just leapfrog boyfriend over Jesus as the most important relationship, right? Sometimes it's well, we used to go to church, but you know, my husband, doesn't like to go to church. So we stopped going to church and God's like, I'm jealous. You're you're my daughter and those are my kids too. And wait a minute, what about our relationship? Jealousy is what happens when someone takes my place? And you could sense this in a relationship, let's say it's a marriage relationship. For example, a wife will start to get jealous, when it's like, you know what? The kids matter to you more than they matter, than I matter to you, your job matters more than I do. Your hobbies matter more than I do. And I'm not against golf. I'm not against, you know, season tickets to the football or basketball game. I'm not against hanging out with your buddies to watch cage fighting, but it seems like your hobbies are more important than me. And if there is, if there is a conflict between your hobbies or your buddies or your work and me, I get leapfrogged and they take my place. And that makes me jealous. Same for the husband. Husband comes home from work, let's say. And all of a sudden the wife is on the phone all night with her girlfriends and with their mom and with her sisters and just talking and chatting and texting and social media posting it. And the husband's like, Hey, how come we don't talk? How come you're not emotionally present and available for me? Other people are a priority and what'll happen is then an argument ensues. And then, it is: no, no, no, no, your more important. Actions, actions, reveal priorities. Actions reveal priorities. And so, if you're at dinner and you're with your family and you're with your spouse and the phone rings and it's not urgent, and somebody picks it up and walks away. What they're saying is they are now a priority and you are not, they now leapfrog you. And that leads to jealousy, do you get it? So relational priority is a necessity. Some years ago I was talking to somebody and I had to get home to help Grace with something. I said, I need to get home and help Grace. And they literally said, Oh, so she's more important than me?

- Oh, jeez.

- Yup. Yes, yes, yes she is. And don't make me, my guilter is broken, right? I've been preaching 20 years, my guilter is broken. It's just been totally maxed out. You can't make me feel guilty. Yes, she is more important than you. And the fact that it shocks, you says more about you than me, okay? Like I didn't buy you a ring. So you know, we're, we're in a different relationship, okay. Now let me ask this, what makes a bad friend? Proverbs talks a lot about this. So I'll give you a couple, smothering. Smothering, Proverbs 25:17. 'Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house. Lest he has his fill of you and what, hit you.' Okay, Okay. This is where he like enough already too much, too much information. You're at my house again, right? You're in my wallet again, you're on my phone again. You're you're you're killing me, smalls. You're killing me, you too much. Okay, here, let me explain this. The Bible only has one relationship, human relationship. That's defined as one, what is that? Husband and wife. So a friendship is; you have a life, I have a life. You have a bank account, I have a bank account. You have a house, I have a house. You have a car, I have a car. And occasionally our lives intersect, that's a friendship. A marriage is we have a life, we go on vacation. We have one bank account, we share one car. We live in one house, we do one life together. People who smother you, they don't understand the difference between a friendship and a marriage. And they want the same level of access and intimacy as a marriage. But they're not, they're not a spouse, right? They're not a spouse and then they get hurt. They're like, well, I thought we were friends. We are, we're just not married. So you got to go to your house now and you've got to go there in your car. And if you can't pay the rent, you need to go to your job and figure out how to get money, to pay your rent. So you could stay at your house and eat your food. You can't move to my house, you can't drive my car. You can't sleep in my bed, I'm not scooting over, right? We're not married. If we were married, we would have one life. But since we're friends, we have two lives that intersect. A friend who smothers, they're wanting the same kind of relationship that only should be found in a marriage. Number two, flattering. Proverbs 26:28, 'A flattering mouth works ruin.' Some of you have the gift of encouragement. You're naturally encouraging. You like to help people and give them joy and hope. Flattery is almost the manipulation and the falsity of that gift. A flatterer compliments, you look great. You're so smart, there's no one like you. You're the, you're the best person I've ever met. You know, I would go talk to someone else, but, but no one's as wise as you, there's no one else I trust, you know what? I really need your help. Thank you for being the kind of safe, dependable, generous person that I can count on. Can I have a thousand bucks? What a flatterer does, they butter you up to set you up. That's what they do. Some of you have children like this, right? I just outed your kids. Your kids are like, mom, you look beautiful. You're like, what do you want, okay? A flatterer is someone who they pretend that they care about you, but they're really just seeking to manipulate you. That's a bad friend, that's actually not a friend. That's a fake friend, that's a pretend friend. How about a gossip? Proverbs 17:9, 'Whoever covers in offense, seeks love, but he who repeats the matter separates close friends.' Gossip is triangulation. So you tell me something, you tell me something, okay, a little secret, you told me a little private information. I'm supposed to be a bank vault and hold it so that we have a safe relationship. And you can tell me about your struggles. Now, gossip is when I take that

information and I use it to broker my relationship with you. "Ooh, do you want to know something?" I know something now I've triangulated and what people do, they will, they will use information to negotiate and barter, unholy alliances and ungodly relationships. That's why the Bible talks a lot about gossip and it has nothing good to say about busy bodies. And let me say this to you busy bodies, social media for a busy body is the same thing as a liquor store for an alcoholic. Can I just pray about that? Take it home, pray about it, right? Social media is for a busy body, what a liquor store is for an alcoholic an endless supply. Okay, I've got a friend of mine, very safe, trustworthy, and they taught me something great. He said, well, if people ask me about you, he said, I just want you to know what I'm going to say. Great, I'm going to tell him, he says, that's my, not my news to tell. So if anybody comes up, Oh, you're friends with Mark. What's going on today. He's like, that's not my news to tell. See a gossip is someone who feels like it's their job to get a megaphone and tell your news. It's your news to check to tell, if you're sick. If you lost your job, if your marriage is struggling, if things are going great. If, if you've got a big inheritance and the windfall of cash, whatever it is, good or bad news. Whose news is it to tell, it's your news to tell. You know you're the gossip when everybody calls you to figure out what's going on with everybody else. A gossip is a very bad friend. They're actually a very dangerous friend. And then anger, Proverbs 22:24 and 25. 'Make no friendship with a man given to anger.' Some of you have learned in relationships that if you're angry, grumpy, or like a grenade with a pin pole. You can control and manipulate and people won't ask you for things and they won't confront you. And they won't talk to you about things because they know you're just kind of volatile. And that's your way of kind of just being stubborn and selfish. Others of you, it's your way to become domineering, high control and that is, fear and threat of punishment. Don't make me angry, I'll raise my voice. I, there'll be consequences, right? That's, that's a domineering overbearing person. And for those of you who sometimes, it's the woman who's angry, but let me speak to the men. Hypothetically, some men, the breathing ones can be a little overbearing and domineering and can rule their family through anger. And 1 Peter 3:7 says, not to be harsh with your wife because she is the weaker vessel. That is not a denigration. Every morning I get up and I have a cup of coffee in a mug. Okay, it's actually a baseball mug. And my son, Calvin had one and I liked his mug. So he got me a mug, so we got the same kind of mugs. I get up every morning, I drink my coffee out of my mug. Occasionally, if I'm going somewhere I'll put my coffee in a thermos, okay. Now I could take two thermoses and I can slam them into each other. I could throw one on the floor. They'll get dented up, but they'll still function. Men are like thermoses. That's what 1 Peter 3 is saying. How many of you women, you've seen men have a conversation with like, I can't believe they still have a relationship. I can't believe you actually said that to him. He's like, yeah, well that's the way he is. He's a, you know, and women are like I could never, you know why? Because women are like coffee mugs. Can you take two coffee mugs and slam them into each other? No. Can you throw one on the floor? No. Can you take one and slam it into a thermos? No. And it's not because there's anything wrong with a coffee mug. It's just different than a thermos. Men need to understand that emotionally many or most women are like a coffee mug and they're like a thermos, Amen. And if you're a guy who's angry, you're like, wow, she's too sensitive. What, you hit her with a thermos. So maybe don't do that and she is. How many, I'll just say this guys, you don't want your wife to be tougher. A lot of guys like she isn't tough enough. I'm like, no, no, think that through to its logical conclusion. Just

back up the truck deck. Just like, no, she's good. I don't, I don't want like a well armed, resilient, you know, thermos of a gal. I'm okay, I'm all right, right. Cause I'm the one that keeps getting hit in the head with the thermos and I don't want that. So anyway, so what makes a good friend? Friendliness, Proverbs 18:24, 'A man who has friends, must himself meet.' Somebody like, I don't have any friends. Why? Well, I came to church and I looked at the ground and then I sat over in the corner and I was texting on my phone talking about how lonely I am and somebody come up to, are you okay? And I ignored them and I just, I don't feel like I have any friends. I can tell you why ,you're, you're weird. You're weird. You're like really? Like, I don't have any friends. Nobody ever talks to me, I don't know. I don't know why, but you know, you're not very friendly. You don't make eye contact, you don't return phone calls. You're not available, right. I've got a buddy, I've got, maybe he's a friend of mine. I call him all the time, he never answers the phone and he disconnected his voicemail. So I text him and he never responds. And I email and he never responds. And then he'll call me like months later and it'd be like, man, I never talked to you. I could tell you why, you don't answer your phone. You don't answer texts, you don't answer email. You're in the witness protection program. It's hard to have a relationship with you. You're not friendly, okay. Some of you, you need to understand to have a friendship, you need to be friendly, okay. You're like, are you sure? A hundred percent I'm sure, okay. And also helps to have a good friend, is one who is wise. Let me say this, it's a lot of effort to have a relationship with a foolish person. It's less, less effort to have a relationship with a wise person. The drama factor is lower. Proverbs 13:20, 'Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise and a companion of fools, suffers harm.' Fools have community, wise people have community. Foolish community leads to harm. Wise community leads to life. If you pick somebody who's wise and you seek to be wise, let's pray for each other. Let's hold each other accountable. You know, I'll tell you what I'm reading and learning and you tell me what you're reading and learning. And we're going to spur one another on to love and good deeds. And that's the basis of our relationship. Wise people are a lot easier to have a relationship with. And those relationships tend to have less drama and conflict and demand and expectation. And also they tend to go deeper, faster. So if you want to have better relationships ask how can I be a wiser person and seek relationships with those who are wiser. And also a devotion, a friend loves at what times? All times, and a brother is born for adversity. The bad days, your friends are the people that are walking toward you when everybody else is walking away from you. Okay, right, Oh, you got cancer. You lost your job. Wheew, you're getting a divorce. Hey, let me know if you need anything. Which is Christianese is for, you're on your own. Real friends do things, they don't put the burden on you of asking all the time, okay. The Puritans would talk about swallow friends. Swallows are birds that leave when winter comes. Swallow friends are like, well it's winter. See you when it gets nice again. Oh, you beat cancer, you're getting remarried. You won the lotto, hi friend. Hard times don't change your friendships, they reveal them. Hard times don't change your friendships, they reveal. So you're like, I lost my friends. Can't lose your friends. Your real friends are there for the hard times, the adverse seasons. How do I know Grace is my friend? She's still there. Okay, and I always say we're a drama queen. She's a queen, I'm drama. She's still there. She's still there. Thank you, baby, for still being there. She's still there and you're not going, right? Okay, Okay. So she's still there. It's devotion. Here's ,here's the good news about a friendship. A friendship makes good times twice as good and bad times half as bad. A real

friendship makes good times twice as good. Hey, let's celebrate together. And the bad times, half as bad, I'm not alone. And what makes a good friend ? Love and many of you when you got married, if you are married, this was your marriage verse. Okay, love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never ends. Just so you know, that's Jesus. Jesus is patient and kind, Jesus does not envy or boast. Jesus is not arrogant or rude. Jesus does not insist on his own way. Jesus is not irritable or resentful. Jesus does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but Jesus rejoices with the truth. Jesus bears all things. Jesus believes all things, Jesus hopes all things. Jesus endures all things and the love of Jesus. Amen. Never ends. And if you ask, am I a loving person, well put your name in there and see if it sounds like you. Am I patient and kind? Do I envy or boast? Am I arrogant or rude? Do I insist on my own way? Am I irritable or resentful? Do I rejoice at wrongdoing or do I rejoice with the truth? Do I bear all things, do I believe all things? Do I hope all things, do I endure all things? Can you count on me or at some point is my commitment to you going to come to an end. Love is an action before it is an emotion. If you're going to love someone, you love them until you feel it, not when you feel it. That's why the Bible says we can even love our enemies. It's a decision of the will over the emotions. And a real friend says, I am going to love you the way that Jesus loves me. That's a real true friend. That's a real true friend. And I don't want you to hear this and out of your hurt say, yeah, they don't love me. No, no, no, no. We'll talk about them another time. For you, are you a loving person? If so, you will have better deeper truer relationships, especially friendships. And that being said, I want to talk about marital friendships. And my big idea is you need to connect before you correct. The first friendship humanly speaking is between a husband and a wife. So God makes Adam in his image and likeness. God says that everything that he's made is good. Sin is not yet entered the world. There's one thing that God says is not good. And God says, it's not good that the man should be alone. And so I'll make a helper fit for him. He needs somebody else. So Adam, our first father, he's got God above him. He's got creation beneath him. He doesn't have anyone alongside of him. And God said, that's not good. That's very Trinitarian. That's not an equal partner and friend. So I'm going to make a woman and then they will get married and that'll cure the loneliness problem. Okay, so the first human friendship is between a husband and a wife. And I love this definition of marriage. It comes from the lips of the bride in Song of Solomon, the great love story, Chapter 5, Verse 16. The second half of the verse, she says of her husband. This is my lover, this is my friend. That's a great definition of marriage. Lover that's unique, emotional, intimate, private, not for every relationship. And friend, and you men need to understand this. A lot of guys are like, I wish we had better intimacy, well friendship. So it's the friendship outside of the bedroom that really transfers to safety in the bedroom. It's friendship that leads to intimacy. And this is why when the Bible says, husbands love your wives. The wives here be my friend. When, when Timothy is told that older women should train younger women to love their husbands, the husbands here, what that love means is be my friend. Now, I don't know if you know this about men and women. They're different, have you noticed that? Have you noticed that, if you haven't, you've not been paying attention. Men and women are different and they're equal, but they're different. They're complimentary, and men and women oftentimes want the same thing, different things I should

say for marriage. But there is one thing that sociologically both men and women want. There's a researcher named John Gottman. He is a sociologist who says that he can predict divorce with a 93% success rate. He is sort of one of the leading experts in the area of sociology and marriage. And he says that 70% of men and women want the exact same thing in marriage. And that's a friendship, that's a friendship in the context of the marital relationship. Now let me say this. We've talked about in this series, praying together. You'll do that if your friends. Worshiping together, you'll do that if your friends. Reading the scriptures together, you'll do that if your friends. Forgiving one another, you'll do that if you're friends. That friendship, we believe, Grace and I is the foundation upon which a lot of the marriage gets built. Of course its friendship with God. But then it's friendship with one another. What happens to a lot of couples is they don't have a friendship. And as a result, nothing else ever really comes together. So let me use an analogy that maybe men will understand for friendship. We'll talk about a gun, we're in Arizona. So I am gonna use a gun analogy, okay. In, in a, in a gun ,you've got, you've got the round and the round has a certain caliber. That means there are varying degrees of explosive rounds. Okay? You've got the chamber that you load the round into. And then the chamber has to be aligned, synchronized unified with what? The barrel, the barrel, if there's not absolute precision connection, unity alignment between the chamber and the barrel. What happens when you fire the round? It literally blows up in your face and the higher, the caliber, the round, the more dangerous, the more tremendous the explosion. And let me say this, issues are bullets, issues are ammo, issues are rounds. There are certain issues in your relationship that are sort of lower caliber, meaning they're not as explosive. And you're like, okay, we can deal with that, we can. Boy, every time we touch that, it just explodes, am I making sense. And if you were in a relationship, you're like, we don't talk about that. Why? Because every time we do it literally blows up in our face. It explodes and we're both just bleeding and crying. This is where we're fighting, we're arguing. Voices are raised, cops are called. Counselors are paid, doors are slammed. People are leaving, couches are being slept on. Like it blew up. I know this doesn't happen at your house. But I'm saying for other people, this'll be really helpful to share with them, okay? Now here's the problem. If, if there is not alignment, unity, integrity, and agreement between the chamber and the barrel, you can't handle, you can't handle the higher caliber rounds. And what happens is, couples literally will boom. And some of you, you just keep pulling the trigger. Okay, we're going to talk about your weight and your mother and your mother's weight. And we're going to talk about your acts. And you're like, wow, okay, wow. Now it's nuclear, right? The chamber and the barrel are not aligned and you're going to literally, you're going to blow every round up. And then it just explodes into a war. Has this ever happened, is it just me?

- It happened.

- Okay. That'd be your house. Two honest people. The rest of you are welcome to join us at any point, okay? Now here's the issue, how do you get the chamber? And, and ultimately the barrel lined up? Well in a marriage, that's like a husband and a wife and it's friendship. You need to be aligned, you need to have integrity. You need to be in agreement, you need to be together. You need to be one, building the friendship. And then you're like, you know what? That is a high

caliber round, but we can handle that issue. We can talk about that pain, we can forgive that past hurt. We can overcome that obstacle. And a lot of times what happens is people will come into my office and I've been doing this 20 years. I'm a beat up old preacher, but they'll sit down. And all of a sudden, literally I feel like I'm in the middle of a gunfight. Literally, here we go, man. And they're just like, all right, which one of us is right? Both of you need to put the guns down because here's the issue. You're not friends and until you are friends, you can't deal with any of these issues that you have to connect before you correct. You've got to be friends before you can load this volatile issue into the relationship. I'm not saying that it should never be dealt with, but I'm saying it can't be dealt with until there's integrity between the husband and the wife between the chamber and the barrel. Does that make sense? And that explains the pain point for a lot of relationships. So let me say that there's three kinds of marriages back to back, shoulder to shoulder, face to face. Back to back is, literally, I'm done with you. How many of you, now don't raise your hand, but you've literally done this. Like you're talking to your spouse or you're like, Hey, I'm out, I'm out. And sometimes with the woman, you know, you've reached that point where you're like, you get the hand, right? You know, you're in danger with a woman when the two hands do this, hip ,shut up. When you get, that's a universal symbol for, it's not going well, right? This, this is where you're back to back. You literally turn your back on each other. They call, they text, they email. And you're like, I'm not even talking to them. Bedtime comes, not a word, silent treatment, rollover, pretend you're sleeping. Hopefully they leave you alone. Or you go sleep on the couch or better yet you, when they lose, they sleep on the couch. Okay, that's the back to back. That means you're adversarial, your enemies, there's conflict. Shoulder to shoulder, this is where we get a lot of work done, we're coworkers. Now marriage has a lot of shoulder to shoulder. We got to pay the bills, we got to get the groceries. We got to raise the kids, we got to clean the house. We need to serve the Lord. Like we got a lot of work to do, a lot of it's shoulder to shoulder. And what happens is what holds many, if not most Christian marriages together as shoulder to shoulder, raising children, being parents. This is why when couples get older, you're like, well how did that marriage? Why did they get divorced? They're Christians, they didn't commit adultery. They raised their kids. You know why, it was all shoulder to shoulder. We're raising the kids, the kids left. I don't even know you, good luck, goodbye. Cause there's not a friendship. Not shoulder to shoulder, shoulder to shoulder is required. But if it's all you have, it's not going to be enduring or endearing. Now let me say this for you, women, you women need to understand that most men's relationships are shoulder to shoulder. Literally. Tell me about your friends, husband. We're all Tom and I. We, we were in the war together and Tim and I would go duck hunting together. And then Johnny and I eat chicken wings and watch cage fighting and as men bleed, we feel close. Men, we're going to sit down and know chickens gave their life for the super bowl, but we're going to sit down and watch it. And you're like, huh? Yeah, we go out, we ride in the golf cart. Jimmy sits there and I sit here. We ride to work together, Johnny sits there and I sit here, shoulder to shoulder. Wife will be like, well, tell me about him. Like, what do you mean? Is he tall or short? I don't know, I don't know? Does he have a beard? I don't know, I don't even know if he's got a head. I've never looked, I've never looked. You guys don't look at each other? No, no, no. If Johnny gazes into my eyes, he's fixing to get hurt. So we don't that. Shoulder to shoulder, right? So here's the key ladies, you want to have a relationship with your man? You've got to go do what he's doing. You got to go do what

he's doing. I told this to some gal a year ago, a couple of years ago. She's like, I, my husband gets up on his day off and he goes fishing and he gets up early. I don't understand there's fish at the store. You could sleep in and just go get it. And I said, well, go with them. She's like, I don't like the fish. You want to be with him, just go do what he's doing. So she gets up and he's like, what are you doing? She's like, I'm going fishing. He's like, really? He was actually really happy. Like, Oh my wife's going go, so it's in the boat. I said, how'd it go? She said it was awesome. He had to look at me and talk to me the whole time. And he couldn't go anywhere, it was fantastic. He was stuck in the boat, win-win ,okay. So, face to face. Women build their relationships face to face, right? How many of you guys, when you talk to your friend that lives out of state, you don't do FaceTime. What's a good time to FaceTime you? Ah, never, never, never. I don't need to see your face. I for sure. Don't need to see your face. Can we Skype? No. Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. I'm not looking at your head, no. Women do face to face, right? Women don't do this, they're like, well, we need to get together and have coffee. Why? So we can see each other and talk and get caught up. And I don't know how they're doing, unless I can see their facial expressions. And they're like, huh, interesting. Okay. Women do face to face, right ladies? You do, you do. Then that's why that's like women will be like a woman will get her makeup done. She'd go get her hair all down. She'll come home, do I look different? He feels very like, I don't know, I don't know. This is a trick question, I know this is going to, this is going to end badly for me, not super observant. So, but you men need to understand, to have a friendship with your wife. You've got to do some face to face, which means date night is now, 'Oh, we watched TV and we watched a movie and we went for a drive.' Face to face, face to face. And a lot of men will say, no, no, I'm a good husband. I do, I work hard for my family. And I would say, thank you, let's add the emotional work. Oh, I heard a woman say right okay, great for that guy. He's he's going to be doing some face to face time a little later. But the face to face, this is the Bible's language for friendship. Exodus 33:11, 'The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend.' First Corinthians 13 says that one day we'll see Jesus face to face. That's the Bible's language for friendship. So let me, let me close with this. How do you have a friendship, specially in marriage? And some of you are single. I want you to think if you ever do marry, pick somebody who's a friend, Amen. Cause it's not all just, you know, romance. Sometimes you're going to go to the grocery store, have gas or do the laundry, like it is life together, right? So, what? Okay, so anyways, Ecclesiastics fun is, you gotta have some fun. That's my point, fun is fundamental. I don't know why fundamentalists got the name fun. They're no fun, but they are the last half anyways. Think about it, that's hilarious, okay, please. Ecclesiastes 9, seven through nine, right? So Ecclesiastes is one of my favorite books of the whole Bible. It's about relationships and marriage. Go eat your bread with joy. Bread, bread, some of you are like that's gluten. Well, okay, find a gluten free bread and eat it with minimal joy because it doesn't taste nearly as good. Oh, but I'll get fat and die and go to heaven and see Jesus full of bread. I don't see the downside. Okay, go eat your bread with joy. Drink your wine with a merry heart. We're Baptist Pastor Mark. Okay, enjoy your juice box with a semi-merry hear, okay. For, for God has already approved, you see God loves you. He already forgives you, right? He already adores you. Let your garments always be white. You're forgiven, you're clean. You're righteous in the sight of God. Get over all your past hurts and get dressed up and go do something fun. Let oil not be lacking on your head. That's the symbolism of the power and the

presence of the person, The Holy spirit. Enjoy life. Woo, I'll tell you what. I'm not a legalist, I don't like rules, but whoever the committee is picking Christian rules, they miss that one. Amen. I say we put that at the front of the list. Like I'm here to have fun. Oh, you know, like not, not, I can't find my pants. You know, where's my car keys. The lampshade is an interesting hat fund. I'm talking, obeying God, doing the right thing, walking with a clear conscience spot, okay. Enjoy life, how many of you don't enjoy life? You're like, what's the Hebrew word for enjoy? I don't know, I didn't have time. I was having fun, I couldn't look it up. I was busy, okay, I was busy. Enjoy life with the wife, okay. Yeah, not live-in girlfriend. We're married in God's eyes. No, you're not. They're red and he's not even blinking. He's very upset. Enjoy life with the wife, who you love all the days of your vain life. Some of your translations will say meaningless and it's this Hebrew word, Hebel. It appears 38 or 39 times in Ecclesiastics. And it means fleeting or brief. And what it means is this, that life goes so fast. How many of you have noticed that? Like you're like I went to bed, I woke up, I went to kindergarten, I went to bed. I woke up and I'm in a convalescent home. What happened? That was two days, I went from diaper to diaper. That was so fast, that was so fast. Life goes quick and some of your thinking we'll have fun once we do the dishes, we'll have fun. Once we do the laundry, we'll have fun. Once we cut the grass, we'll have fun. Once the children obey, we'll have fun. Once the dog stops peeing in the house, you're going to die before any of that, even remotely approaches a hypothetical possibility. I'm just telling you. So put fun up toward the front of the line, okay? All the days, your vain life that has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil, at which you toil under the sun. Life has a lot of work. You got to find the fun, you got to grab it. You gotta make memories, you need date night. Need to spend some money. Cause let me tell you, some of you guys are cheap. You're like I won't spend the money. You could spend it on date night or divorce attorney either way, it's coming out of your pocket, Jack.