



Marriage // The Struggle is Real // Part 3

Introduction:

This week continues the series “**Marriage (The Struggle Is Real)**” with **Part 3**. Jesus tells us to “love one another as I have loved you.” But what kind of love is that? This series contrasts Eros—passionate or romantic love—with Agape—a sacrificial, committed spiritual companionship. While Eros is a good and beautiful part of marriage, it is Agape love and deep friendship that can endure through all the different seasons of life.

Questions:

1. What does Jesus mean when He gives the **Unique Command** to “love one another as I have loved you”? What makes the *kind* of love Jesus commands unique? How can this kind of love shape the way we approach our closest relationships? **John 15:12-17**
2. What are **Phileo, Eros, and Agape** love, and how are they different? Why can't Eros alone sustain a marriage through all the seasons of life? Why is Agape—spiritual companionship and unconditional commitment—so foundational?
3. What does, “**Eros says what can I get, Agape says what can I give**” mean? How does that contrast challenge the way our culture often thinks about love? Where have you seen the difference between love based primarily on feelings and love demonstrated through commitment? **Proverbs 17:17**
4. What can we learn from **Fred and Betty's 74-year marriage** and Fred describing Betty as his best friend and companion? What allowed their friendship to endure so many different seasons of life? What can their example teach all of us about lasting relationships?

5. Jesus describes a **New Relationship** when He says, “I no longer call you servants...I have called you friends.” What does Jesus' friendship with His disciples teach us about being a true friend? What does it mean to be fully known and fully loved? **John 15:15**
6. Matt used the picture of people living **back-to-back, side-by-side, and face-to-face**. What do those three positions illustrate about relationships? How is it possible to spend a lot of time around someone without really *seeing* them? What helps us develop deeper, face-to-face relationships with the people closest to us?
7. In marriage, it's important to be able to **laugh together and cry together**. Why are both important to genuine friendship and companionship? What makes sharing our joy, sadness, fears, and struggles with another person an act of vulnerability?
8. Why can **praying together** create a different kind of connection than simply talking together? What makes praying with another person potentially vulnerable? How have you seen prayer deepen a relationship or friendship?
9. **Communication and spending time together** are important ways of cultivating friendship. Why can we sometimes treat the people closest to us with less patience or kindness than we show acquaintances or coworkers? What helps us become more intentional about listening, communicating, and simply being present with the people we love?
10. Five practical ways of cultivating friendship: **laugh together, cry together, pray together, communicate together, and spend time together**. Which of these stands out to you personally, and why? How could practicing one of these more intentionally strengthen an important relationship in your life this week?

Key Takeaway

Agape love as a sacrificial spiritual companionship that endures through the changing seasons of life. Whether we are married, single, divorced, or widowed, what can this picture of Christlike love and friendship teach us about the relationships God has given us? How can we become people who are better at truly seeing, knowing, loving, and walking alongside others?