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8	Wiedenmeyer's Open House		
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#### Save the Date

12/1	Communion Sunday- Emerge Yth STL Banquet
12/07	Kids Konnect Dress
	Rehearsal –Kids Choir
12/08	Kid Min Christmas
	Program
12/12	Deacon Meeting
12/14	Wiedenmeyer's Open
	House
12/15	Jamestown Community
	Choir
12/18	<b>Christmas Parties for Kids</b>
	& Yth
12/24	Christmas Eve Service
12/25	Christmas Day-Office
	Closed

<ul> <li>1/5-11 Week of Prayer</li> <li>01/11 Emerge Yth Sledding</li> <li>01/13 Deacon Meeting</li> <li>01/16 Sectional Council</li> <li>01/24 KK Game &amp; Movie Night</li> <li>01/20 CYA Bowling</li> <li>02/02 Emerge Yth Eatery</li> <li>02/7-8 Nerf-Lock In</li> <li>02/09 Super Bowl Sunday</li> <li>02/20-22 Men's Conference-Lakewood Bible Camp</li> </ul>		
01/13 Deacon Meeting 01/16 Sectional Council 01/24 KK Game & Movie Night 01/20 CYA Bowling 02/02 Emerge Yth Eatery 02/7-8 Nerf-Lock In 02/09 Super Bowl Sunday 02/20-22 Men's Conference— Lakewood Bible	1/5-11	Week of Prayer
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02/09 Super Bowl Sunday 02/20-22 Men's Conference— Lakewood Bible	02/02	Emerge Yth Eatery
02/20-22 Men's Conference- Lakewood Bible	02/7-8	Nerf-Lock In
Lakewood Bible	02/09	Super Bowl Sunday
	02/20-22	Lakewood Bible

#### LIFE IN REVIEW

Sometimes we get in a rut, become slothful and loose our passion. In the workplace many employers will do an annual
review to shore up any lack of focus or to
reinvigorate purpose, practices and passion for the job. In like manner, we
should consider doing a life review by
asking, "are we accomplishing with our
life all that God has intended for us?
Have we become spiritual slothful or apathetic to the presence and will of God.
Are we as passionate for the Lord as we
once where?"

Now you may be a hard at worker, and I don't doubt that for a minute, after all North Dakotans are known for their hard work ethic. We pride ourselves that we are good workers - we are conscientious worker's - but are we lazy spiritually? We are not reading the Bible. We are not really serving God with our heart. We are going through the motions, the rituals but we are tired. Joy is alluding us, and we feel life is quite mundane, routine and meaningless. Why? Because, maybe, like many, we are busy vocationally but sluggish spiritually.

Maybe for a long time now, your intentions never get translated into actions. That is a typical sign of that something has slid or drifted ~ you don't get started. Or maybe today you say "I want to read the Bible more. I want to pray more. And I've started that before but now I have slipped off." Another sign of that something has slid is that you get started but it doesn't get continued. You guit it halfway. Maybe today you are serving the Lord. You are helping in the kid's ministries. You are doing ministry for the kingdom, but you are going through the motions. Your heart is not there. You have no passion for what you are supposed to do. Those are the signs that you have stalled out, this can happen in anyone's life. Do you want to live a life like that? No, of course not! All of us recognize that Christian living is to be higher than that. We are not to be apathetic. We are to be a people fired up for God. You say then "how can we get there?" "How can we be a people passionate for the service of our King?"

Have you heard about the traffic jam year ago in China that reached 60 miles long and lasted more than two weeks?

Instead of hustling down the highway, cars came to a crawl and in some places, no vehicles were moving at all. Some drivers had given up and started playing cards with other stalled citizens and a few have just gotten out of their vehicles and taken naps on the pavement. Likewise, some Christians have stalled out and have either become spiritually sleepy or taken to just playing games. Are you spiritually stuck today? Are you in a spiritual standstill? Do you wonder where all your passion has gone? The Lord does want us to be productive with His will for our lives.

So, being a spiritual slacker is not really an option for us. Just ask the folks at Ephesus from the book of Revelation. Revelation 2:2-5 (NIV) "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."

Has your love for the Lord cooled, drifted, or diminished your love for the Lord in any way? Are we just checking boxes and going through the motions with no passion? Or are we fervent will zeal in our pursuit of the Lord? Many of us are way too passive either because we no longer care or maybe we think that somehow we'll just become this super Christian with the passing of time

This idea of passivity has crashed into our pop culture as well. Google's CEO Eric Schmidt, years ago in an interview with the Wall Street Journal, predicted that in the future, Google will know so much about its users that the search engine will be able to help them plan their lives. Using profiles of its customers and tracking their locations through their smart phones, it will be able to

provide live updates on their surroundings and inform them of tasks they need to do. Here's what Schmidt said, "I actually think most people don't want Google to answer their questions. They want Google to tell them what they should be doing next." Wowzer, that is pretty passive living.

Wayne Cordeiro, made a statement that I haven't been able to shake and I hope it sticks with you as well: "Life will not give you what you want, neither will it give you what you think you deserve, life will give you what you're willing to settle for." He went on to illustrate this point by telling the following story...

A college freshman named Smitty became the field goal kicker for the football team. At the end of a game he was called on to go in and kick a game-winning field goal but Smitty wanted to make his mark so he changed plays in the huddle. The ball was hiked directly to him and he started running and was clobbered and fumbled the ball. The ball was picked up and the opposing player started running toward the other end zone. The other players couldn't catch him and then out of nowhere someone starting gaining ground on him. He was running like a streak of lightning. It was Smitty! He caught up to the other player and tackled him before he could score.

The assistant turned to the head coach and remarked, "Did you know Smitty had wheels like that? He beat our best athletes and made the tackle!" The head coach replied, "I'll tell you why. The other guys were running because they were supposed to. Smitty was running because his life depended on it."

Friends, you and I must live like our life depended on it. And we must live wholeheartedly for Christ because the lives of others depend on it.

I've been contemplating something for quite some time, and I want to address it in this article. I think in general sense, though certainly not across the board, many have lost some of their passion for the Lord. Now, if my assessment is correct, then many of us have lost our zeal.

So, I want to propose that if you know that you lack, and you want to get back, then you can't slack.

If you think about passion and zeal and fervor, there are some characters in the Bible that we can learn from. In Joshua 14 we have this old man. He is 85 years old. And he is a man on fire for God. 85 years old, living in a time when most people lived till 70. But he lived till 85 and at the age of 85, he said "let me have this mountain. I want to go out for war. I want to claim this mountain for myself because God promised it to me." And you know who his enemies were? His enemies were giants. Huge giants. And he says, "I am 85 but I want to go out to war and take what the Lord has for me." Anybody knows who this man is? 85 years old, fighting against giants, claiming the mountain even when he is past retirement age? Who's this guy? What's his name? Caleb! Yes, Caleb. Caleb was a man full of fire and zeal. Another man I can think of full of fire and zeal is Elijah. Elijah, the Bible tells us, prayed earnestly and fervently. His prayer life was not that of a sloth. His prayer life was all fired up. Another man I can think of with passion in his soul is the Apostle Paul. The Bible tells us Paul says (Philippians 3) "I press towards the mark. I stretch out. I'm always laboring, I'm toiling. I labor more than the apostles because of the grace of God that is working in me." Here is a man who did not live a sloth like life but a man who was all fired up.

In Revelation it talks about the people of Laodicea that had drifted in their fervor for the
Lord. In Revelation 3:15-16 (NIV) I know your
deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I
wish you were either one or the other! So,
because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor
cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.
Is our heart divided as theirs was? Have
there been days before you were on fire for
the Lord and now the flame is only a flicker?

The Bible says in Romans 12:11 (NIV) "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

How does the Lord want us to live? Maybe it is time for a life review. What will it take for you to get your zeal, fervor and passion for the Lord back? Commit it to the Lord and then go for it!

Sincerely,

Jeff Wiedenmeyer

Lead Pastor Jamestown First Assembly



# GROWGROUPS



Tuesdays 7:00 PM Leader: Pastor Shawn & Cami

701-269-7778 1122 11th Ave. S.E. Jamestown



Mondays 6:30 PM
Leader: Pastor Zach
& Karen
701-269-4454
509 2nd Ave. N.W.

Jamestown



Wednesday 6:30PM Leader: Joe & LeAnn Beckstrand

701-269-9662

Host: Gordy & Marva Entzminger

1116 Western Park Village, Jamestown



Wednesday 6:30PM Leader: Pastor Jeff

701-252-4092

Jamestown First Assembly



Wednesday 6:30PM Leader: Pastor Tamra

> 701-252-4092 Jamestown First Assembly



Wednesday 6:30PM

**Leader: Curt Hill** 

Host: Monte & Connie

Morast

510 8th Ave. SW Jamestown



Sunday, December 1st- Emerge Yth "Speed the Light Banquet"-

Festive Turkey Dinner—6PM

Sunday, December 8th Little Sparks & Kids Konnect Musical-

"The Power of the King" - 6PM

Saturday, December 14th- Wiedenmeyer's Open House- 12:30-3:30 pm

Come and go as you wish!

Sunday, December 15th- Jamestown Community Choir Concert-6PM

Sunday, December 22nd - Christmas Message

Tuesday, December 24th Christmas Eve Service by Candlelight, 4PM



# Wiedenmeyer's OPEN HOUSE 2024

Saturday, December 14th—

12:30-3:30pm

217 19th Ave. NE, Jamestown

Food >Fun> Fellowship

Jamestown Community

Choir

Concert

Sunday, December 15th,

6pm



## KIDZ KONNECT WINTER NEWSLETTER

**DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBUARY** 

MIGHT

#### **Kidz Konnect Recap**

#### **Wednesday Night**

At the beginning of the fall, we began our Wednesday night program called Kids on Trak. We have been having a blast diving deep into God's Word together.



We had fun eating s'mores and playing board games. We also introduced the new BGMC Trading card game with the kids.

#### **Harvest Party**

This year's Harvest Party was a hit! We loved seeing everyone! Families had a great time playing games, earning candy, and eating delicious soup! We even had a special guest show up, Dr.

#### December

- Dec. 1: Christmas Musical Dress Rehearsal @ 12:30pm
- Dec. 7: Christmas Musical Dress Rehearsal @ 10am followed by a pizza Lunch
- Dec. 8: Christmas Musical performance @6pm
- Dec. 18: Christmas Party @6:30pm

#### **January**

Jan 24: Kidz Konnect Game and Movie Night @ 6:30pm



#### **February**

 Feb. 7-8: Nerf Lock-In @ 6pm-10am





DS ON **TRAK** 





#### STL BANQUET

TIS THE SEASON AS WE MAKE OUR FINAL PUSH TOWARDS OUR \$20,000 SPEED THE LIGHT GOAL! WOULD YOU JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FOOD AND FUN AS WE SERVE A THREE COURSE MEAL, RECAP THE YEAR, AND HAND OUT OUR YOUTH GROUP AWARDS! THERE WILL BE A SPEED THE LIGHT OFFERING TAKEN AT THE END OF THE NIGHT. WE ARE SO CLOSE TO OUR GOAL!

#### EMERCE YOUTH CIFT EXCHANCE

ON DECEMBER 11TH WE WILL BE DOING A GIFT EXCHANGE AS WE BEGIN TO WRAP UP 2024! EACH STUDENT MUST BRING A GIFT IN ORDER TO PARTICPATE IN THE EXCHANGE. THE LIMIT FOR EACH GIFT IS \$10! WE WILL PUT EACH GIFT UNDER THE TREE SET UP IN THE SLATER CENTER!

#### EMERCE YOUTH SNOW DAY

WE WILL BE MEETING UP AT THE BUNKER FOR SLEDDING AT 10AM ON JANUARY 1 1TH! PARENTS, YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR THIS FUN MORNING OF SLEDDING! FROM THERE WE WIL GO TO THE SLATER CENTER TO ENJOY HOT COCOA AND A FUN CHRISTMAS MOVIE!

#### SUPERBOWL PARTY

JOIN US FOR THE BIG GAME ON FEBRUARY 9TH FROM 5PM-9PM AT THE SLATER CENTER! WE WILL HAVE OUR SNACK SHACK OPEN WITH ALL SORTS OF GOODIES AND DRINKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE!

# MINITER NEWSLETTER





# Meek of Prayer

ROMANS 12:12

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer"

JANUARY 5-11, 6:30 PM

Jamestown First Assembly



### **Bob and Jennifer Frith**

MISSIONARIES TO URUGUAY

#### September, 2024

When you take the time to invest in someone, you never know what God will do with their life.

In 1995, we hosted an intensive discipleship camp in our home to prepare for the plant of Cordón Christian Center, which would eventually become the largest Assemblies of God church in the country of Uruguay. At that time, we had eight Bible college students living with us, who would serve as the nucleous of the team that would help us launch the new church.



Church Plant Team, Yenny, top row right January, 1996 One of those students was Yenny Peralta, an 18 year-old who had not yet graduated from high school. Within the first few years of the church plant, Yenny demostrated administrative talents and quickly emerged as our youth pastor, a ministry role she continues to fulfill today at Abundant Life, the church we planted and presently pastor.

In time, Yenny met Adrian, a young man who was serving as our church drummer, and they married in 2000. Both were from homes in which the father had abandoned the family, and over the years we unofficially adopted them into our family. They now have two boys, Lucas and Joaquín, who are both very talented and active in ministry in Abundant Life.

After graduating from Bible School, Yenny went back to finish high school, studied psychology in the national university, and will become a licensed counselor by the end of this year.

In addition to youth ministry and counseling, however, something that has always been close to Yenny's heart is world missions. She has been actively involved on the local and district level for many years, and in 2022 she was elected

as Vice President of the Uruguayan World Missions Department. Two months ago, she was ordained, and in that same month was named as the President (Executive Director) of Uruguayan World Missions. We ask that you pray for Yenny as she steps into this exciting and challenging new role.

When we first met Yenny almost thirty years ago, we had no idea of all that God had in store for her life. But when you take the time to invest in someone, the impact can be more far-reaching than you could have ever imagined!



Adrián, Yenny, Lucas and Joaquín August, 2024

Bub and Jennifer

U. S. ADDRESS: 214 Cross Breeze Drive, Cordova, TN 38018 FOREIGN ADDRESS: Leopardi 1576 - 11.400 - Montevideo, Uruguay

E-MAIL: bobfrith.agwm@gmail.com





#### December | January | February

12/28

01/04 01/04

01/10

01/15

01/17

01/17

01/18

01/23

01/31

02/05

02/12

02/17

02/27

Sara Meza

Fran Geisler

John Jones

Keith Veil

Carol Elhard

**Rob Carlson** 

Matt Meza

Valerie Hill

Monte Morast

Faith Sutherland

Ken Halvorson

Tyler Halvorson

**Holly Nicholson** 

Katie Ringer

Birthdays		Anniversaries	
Benaiah Johnson	12/01	Matt & Christie Meza	12/17
Terry Entzminger	12/05	John & Gemma Schaller	01/27
Darrell Losing	12/06	Justin & Lindsay Hoff	02/12
Kelsey Mittleider	12/14	Nathan & April Johnson	02/17
David Sutherland	12/14		
Nathan Johnson	12/16		
Jeff Wiedenmeyer	12/21		

# December 2024 JAMESTOWNFIRSTASSEMBLY

1720 8TH Ave SW

www.ourheartispeople.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9am Worship practice— Communion-Pastor Jeff 10:30am 12:30pm Dress Re- hearsal Kids Musi- cal 6pm-STL Ban- quet 2:30pm African Prayr	2 Grow Groups	3	4 7 am Deacon Prayer 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Youth Church Grow Groups	5	6	7 Christmas Musi- cal Dress Re- hearsal
8 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am 2:30pm African Prayer Kid Min Christmas Program @ 6pm	9 Grow Groups	10	11 7 am Deacon Prayer er 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Emerge Yth Gift exchange Grow Groups	12 6pm Deacon Mtg.	13	14 Wiedenmeyer Open House 12:30-3:30pm
15 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am 2:30pm African Prayer  6pm Jamestown Community Choir	16 Grow Groups	17	18 7 am Deacon Prayer er 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Youth Church Grow Groups- Christ- mas Parties	19	20	21
22 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am 2:30pm African Prayer	23	Christmas Eve Service 4pm	25 Christmas Day-Office Closed	26	27	28
29 9am Worship practice Pastor Shawn 10:30am 2:30pm African Prayer	30	31 New Years Eve- games nights				

~ Sunday ~ Worship Practice

CYA Grow Group

9:00 am

10:00 a.m. Prayer 10:15am Greeting & Coffee 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Kidz Konnect & Nursery

Tuesday ~ 7 p.m. Grow Groups meeting at various locations For more info contact 252-4092

Wednesday~

7 am Deacon Prayer at the church

6:30 p.m. Ladies Evening Break GG Men's Bible GG Kids On Trak

5pm -6:30 pm service/Emerge Yth at Slater

phone: 701-252-4092

Center

Grow Groups meeting at various locations

Mondays~

## January 2025

#### **JAMESTOWN**FIRSTASSEMBLY

1720 8TH Ave SW

www.ourheartispeople.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 No wed. nigh classes	2 School Resumes	3	4
5 9am Worship practice 10:30am Pastor Jeff 2:30 pm African Prayer	6	7	8 7 am Deacon Prayer /JEFA 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Emerge Youth	9	10	11 Emerge Yth Sled- ding
			Week of Prayer			
129am Worship- practice 10:30am Pastor Jeff BGMC Sunday 2:30pm African Prayer	13 Grow Group	14 Grow Group	6:30 pm Kidz On Trak 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 Men's GG 6:30 pm Emerge Youth Grow Groups	16 Sectional Council	17	18
19 9am Worship Practice 10:30am Pastor Jeff 2:30pm African Prayer	20 CYA Bowling Grow Group	21 Grow Group	22 7 am Deacon Prayer 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 Men's GG 6:30 pm Emerge Youth 2pm Ava Maria Grow Groups	23	24 Kids Konnect Game & Movie Night 6:30pm	25
26 9am Worship Practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am National Pie Day & 2pm Ava Maria 2:30pm African Prayer	27 Grow Group	28 Grow Group	29 7 am Deacon Prayer 6:30 pm Kids On Trak 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 Men's GG 6:30 pm Emerge Youth Alive Team—TBC	30	31	

~ **Sunday** ~ Worship Practice 9:00 am

10:00 a.m. Prayer 10:15am Greeting & Coffee 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Kidz Konnect & Nursery Mondays ~ Kids Workers
Grow Group

7

Tuesday~ CYA Grow Group

Wednesday~

7 am Deacon Prayer at the church

Grow Groups meeting at various locations For more info contact 252-4092

phone: 701-252-4092

6:30 p.m.
Ladies GG
Men's GG
Kids On Trak
5pm –6:30 pm service/Emerge Yth at Slater
Center

## February 2025

#### **JAMESTOWN**FIRST**ASSEMBLY**

1720 8TH Ave SW

www.ourheartispeople.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff Communion– 10:30am Emerge Eatery 2:30pm African Prayer	3 Grow Groups	4 Grow Group	5 7 am Deacon Prayer 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kidz on Trak 6:30 pm Emerge Youth Grow Groups	6	7 Kids Ko Nerf Lo 6pm-1	
9 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am Emerge Yth /CYA Party-5pm Super Bowl Sunday 5:30pm 2:30 pm African Prayer	10 Grow Groups	11 Grow Group	12 7 am Deacon Prayer 6:30 pm Ladies GG 6:30 pm Men's GG 6:30 pm Kidz on Trak 6:30 pm Emerge Youth Grow Groups	Deacon Meeting 6pm	14	15
16 9am Worship practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am 2:30pm African Prayer	17 Grow Groups	18 Grow Group	19 7 am Deacon Prayer 3:15 pm JBQ 6:30 pm Awanas 6:30 pm Ladies Evening Break 6:30 Men's Grow Group 6:30 pm Emerge Youth Grow Groups	20 Me	21 n's Conference-Lak	22 xewood Bible Camp
23 9am Worship Practice Pastor Jeff 10:30am 2:30 pm African Prayer	24	25	26	27	28	
	Grow Group	Grow Group				

~ Sunday ~ Worship Practice

9:00 am

10:00 a.m. Prayer 10:15am Greeting & Coffee 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship Kidz Konnect & Nursery

Mondays~ Kids Workers GG Tuesday ~ 7 p.m. CYA GG

Grow Groups meeting at various locations For more info contact 252-4092

Wednesday~

7 am Deacon Prayer at the church

6:30 p.m.
Ladies Evening Break GG
Men's Bible GG
Kids On Trak
5pm –6:30 pm service/Emerge Yth at Slater
Center

Grow Groups meeting at various locations For more info contact 252-4092

phone: 701-252-4092

Helping you thrive in Life & Relationships

#### 3 steps to make your marriage better...

We all been there. Something in our marriage needs attention, and we want to do something about it.

But ... what?

Maybe we've been in a generally good place, but we can tell that issues are creeping up on us. Or maybe we're stuck in a "just okay" place (or worse), and that's not what we signed up for. After all, we stood dreamy-eyed at the altar, imagining the "for better" part of our vows, not holding a laundry list of all the things that needed to change. (If we did the latter, that's a whole different blog series!)

Thankfully, there's good news. Yes, "for worse" will arise from time to time in any marriage between two imperfect people. But in more than 20 years of research I've seen that there are almost *always* steps we can take to move our marriages toward the delight and connection that God created marriages to enjoy.\* The question, of course, is HOW?

In this Part 1, we'll look at the key steps to begin any change process. Brian Goins and I dive into this in the so I hope you'll listen! Then next week, in Part 2, we will tackle the first secret covered in the podcast – one of the most important habits for changing a marriage from good to great (and three steps you can take to reinforce that habit).

So let's jump in today, with the first three steps that will help you begin powerful, positive change in your marriage.

#### Step #1: Learn from the "pros."

If you are on the varsity basketball or volleyball team, and you want to go from good to great, what do you do? As my podcast co-host Brian Goins rather hilariously put it in you don't put a poster of Michael Brock or Megan Hollister on your bedroom wall. Who are Michael and Megan? Well, they are the best players on your varsity team, of course!

Instead, you put up a poster of a great NBA player, and practice mimicking his stance for free throws. You watch the perfect jump and spikes of the top women's Olympic volleyball athletes and try the same thing over and over.

To head toward change in marriage, we have to know where we want to go! So, identify a few "Olympic greats" in your life and begin to study them. Ask them questions. What do they do differently? "Pro" couples tend to have really good road maps.

Here's the key: Learning from the "pros" is a completely different way of approaching change, and addressing the areas of your marriage that need attention. There's nothing wrong with the usual pattern of trying to fix things by unearthing and examining problems. But if that's all we look at, we're only looking at the problems! If you want to look like Jesus, you study Jesus, not the Pharisees.

One of THE most important shifts toward change for the better, is to know what works to change marriages for the better! For example, our research for shows that the happiest couples don't expect things their spouse can't deliver (episode 7 of the podcast) and contrary to conventional wisdom they do "keep score" – they just do it completely differently (episode 5).

Yes, very real hurts may have happened in your marriage. If you need to dig into those things to address them and move forward, then do so! But the *only* way to actually move forward is to ensure you don't get stuck in a cycle of blame or regret. We must ask: What do we want to do differently? One couple in the research told me that their journey from troubled to terrific happened when they decided, "We need to start *creating* the marriage we want. At some point we've got to stop focusing on the past."

#### Step #2: Do the little "pro" habits consistently.

Often, in marriage, we look for a magic bullet that will solve everything. When I was working on , my staff director's pastor, Mo Huggins, reminded me of something profound:

"It is not about doing the amazing things occasionally, but the simple things consistently."

My research for bears this out. In fact, it's where the tag phrase for our entire ministry was born: we are all about the little things that make a big difference.

Regular blog readers will already be aware of some of the most simple but powerful actions that will help you pull this off. But I'm repeating two powerhouse actions here, for men and women who haven't heard them yet:

Wives: Look for things your man does and sincerely say "thank you." Even better, say you "did a great job at \_\_\_\_\_." Statistically, this is a powerhouse emotional statement for most men.

Husbands: Do little things during the day that tell your wife you love her. For example, take your wife's hand when you're walking into the restaurant. Or text her just because you're thinking about her. Statistically, this is a powerhouse emotional statement for most women.

If the above examples don't apply to you and your spouse, find what does and be intentional about those statements and actions.

As my husband Jeff and I often say from the stage, we have to remember that it's usually not the big-ticket issues that cause either the wonderful opportunities or the hard heartache in marriage: it's the little day-to-day decisions. Jeff and I always see lightbulbs of hope come on when we share this with couples at marriage events.

#### Step 3: Give yourselves grace – new "pro" skills may take time to learn!

Some of the habits of the happiest marriages will be things you're already doing! Awesome. Do them more purposefully.

But some will come with an "oof" feeling: We're going to have to work on that one.

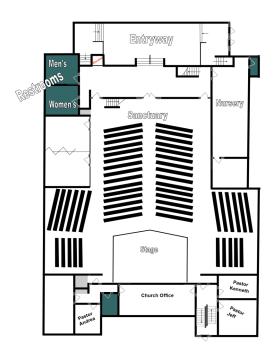
You would never expect to just nail your first few attempts on the office's new engineering design software. You would never *expect* the complicated soufflé to work perfectly the first few times you attempt it. You expect to have to practice and get better at most things.

Same thing in marriage. Yes, you have to practice new habits and skills. But if you persevere, most couples will see change. One key is to plan for the long game, not see it as a short-term strategy. That way, when "stuff happens" – and it will! – you'll be able to resist the urge to throw out the whole plan, *especially* if you've been making progress. (Keep an eye out for an upcoming blog, where I'll dive into other ways to persevere instead of getting discouraged.)

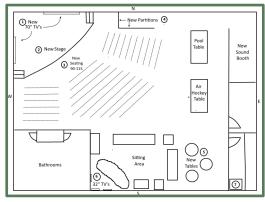


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