

**Think It Over:** This section is about turning what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions, and scriptures are designed to help you take your own next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out those questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group.

- Alan Alda's wife, Arlene, wrote: *"It is real easy to leave your spouse, it's not easy to leave your best friend."* Why is that such a powerful statement? How do couples grow as best friends? What happens when that is not the case? If you're married or in a relationship, brag on something positive your better half did this week. What's the worst/best relationship advice you've ever received? Why do you think so many marriages fail?
- Discuss the first three passages in your Message Guide. What do you hear Jesus and Paul saying? How hard are these directives to accept? What are the "yeah, but"s you have regarding what Jesus and Paul instruct?
- Read Hosea 3:1 from Message Guide. Give a synopsis of the book of Hosea (for some help- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Hosea.html>). Briefly, how does this real-life marriage connect with our relationship with God? What are the applications?
- Read the "Jesus is not saying" and "Jesus is saying" sections. What are your impressions? How have you seen Jesus' words misused? How has your understanding changed over time? What are the implications for life?
- Review the ➡ *What we should do?* section in the Message Guide. How do you practice reconciliation until it is impossible in all your relationships (see 2 Corinthians 5:11-21) Why is this so hard? How does a person move from being unwilling to open? Have you seen that happen?
- *"A growing relationship with God is the pathway for you to take your relationship with your spouse from love broken to love restored."* What does this concept look like on a daily basis as a Christ follower?

**Next Steps:** Look at the Bottom Line. How would you say it in your own words? What steps are you taking to become a "righter" person? What obstacles are in the way of that process? How are you becoming second so Jesus is more first (see: <https://youtu.be/mqwj2OaXxx4>) in your life?

**Changing Your Mind:** Choose one of the verses listed in the Message Guide and commit it to heart.



If you missed a message, visit [www.scc.website](http://www.scc.website) or request a CD at Guest Services.



<sup>31</sup>...Any man who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.  
<sup>32</sup>But I tell you that any man who divorces his wife, except for the problem of sexual sin, is causing his wife to be guilty of adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman is guilty of adultery.  
 Matthew 5:31-32 ERV

<sup>12</sup>Just because something is technically legal doesn't mean that it's spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my whims.  
 1 Corinthians 6:12 MSG

<sup>10</sup>And if you are married, stay married. This is the Master's command, not mine.  
<sup>11</sup>If a wife should leave her husband, she must either remain single or else come back and make things right with him. And a husband has no right to get rid of his wife.  
 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 MSG

### ➡ Love broken in Jesus' day:

#### ➤ Leaving for any reason (Hillel)

<sup>1</sup>If a man marries a woman and then it happens that he no longer likes her because he has found something wrong with her, he may give her divorce papers...  
 Deuteronomy 24:1 MSG

#### ➤ Leaving for adultery (Shammai)

<sup>14</sup>"You shall not commit adultery."  
 Exodus 20:14 NIV

#### ➤ Leaving is adultery when...

<sup>32</sup>Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are 'legal.' Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you're responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you're automatically an adulterer yourself. You can't use legal cover to mask a moral failure.  
 Matthew 5:32 MSG

➔ Jesus is not saying:

- Adultery is the only reason for divorce.

<sup>10</sup>If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. <sup>11</sup>If he fails to do any of these things, she must be given her freedom without cost. Exodus 21:10-11 NIV, CEV

- Anyone who remarries commits adultery.
- Adultery always needs to end in divorce.

<sup>1</sup>... “Start all over: Love your wife again, your wife who’s in bed with her latest boyfriend, your cheating wife. Love her the way I, GOD, love the Israelite people, even as they flirt and party with every god that takes their fancy.” Hosea 3:1 MSG

➔ Jesus is saying:

- A certificate for divorce is setting the bar low.

<sup>8</sup>Jesus said, “Moses provided for divorce as a concession to your hard heartedness, but it is not part of God’s original plan. <sup>9</sup>I’m holding you to the original plan, and holding you liable for adultery if you divorce your faithful wife and then marry someone else...” Matthew 19:8–9 MSG

- Divorce is a matter of your heart.

<sup>11</sup>... “Not everyone is mature enough to live a married life. It requires a certain aptitude and grace. Marriage isn’t for everyone. <sup>12</sup>Some, from birth seemingly, never give marriage a thought. Others never get asked—or accepted. And some decide not to get married for kingdom reasons. But if you’re capable of growing into the largeness of marriage, do it.” Matthew 19:11–12 MSG

➔ What should we do?

- Reconciliation is always the goal until it is impossible.

<sup>15</sup>... if the unbelieving spouse walks out, you’ve got to let him or her go. You don’t have to hold on desperately. God has called us to make the best of it, as peacefully as we can. 1 Corinthians 7:15 MSG

- A growing relationship with God is the pathway for you to take your relationship with your spouse from love broken to love restored.

<sup>33</sup>More than anything else, put God’s work first and do what he wants. (Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out-MSG). Then he will give you all these other things you need. <sup>34</sup>So don’t worry about tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

Matthew 6:33-34 ERV, CEV, MSG

Love broken is not a problem

you solve in a vacuum. It is a desire

you direct from a growing soul.

<sup>23</sup>“...If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, <sup>24</sup>abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God. <sup>25</sup>“...Make the first move; make things right with him...” Matthew 5:23–25 MSG

<sup>7</sup>...so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7 NIV

Bottom Line:

A Christ-centered marriage

is more about becoming the right person

than finding the right person.

Resources for this message include a message by James Emery White at Mecklenburg Community Church, Northpoint Church, and Christ’s Church of the Valley.

To help you turn what God is saying to you into action steps, consider using the Think It Over section on the back.