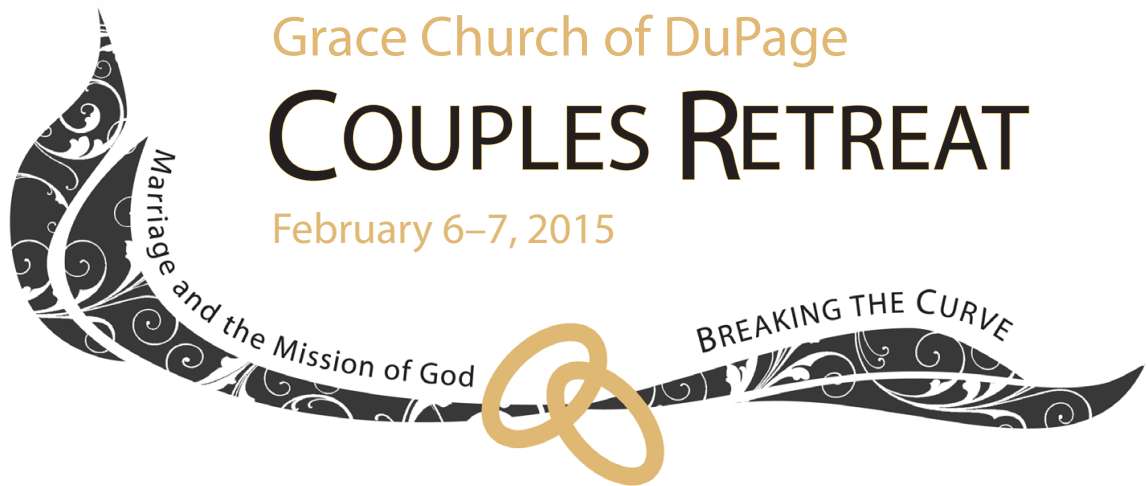




Grace Church of DuPage

COUPLES RETREAT

February 6–7, 2015



SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

5:00 - 9:00 PM

Check In

Dinner 6:15 pm

Truly-Wed Game

Message #1: Marriage and the Mission of God

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

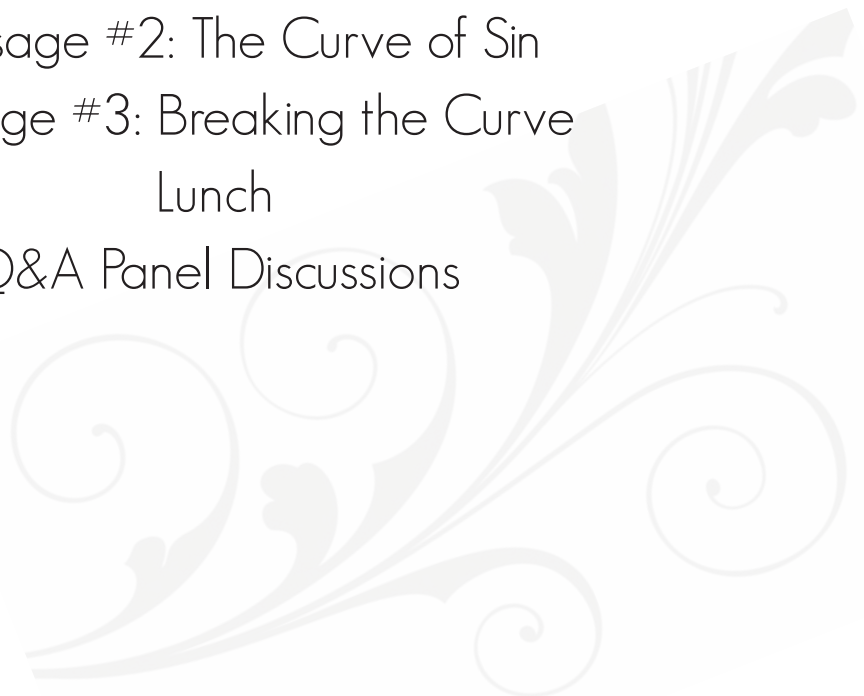
9:45 - 3:15 PM

Message #2: The Curve of Sin

Message #3: Breaking the Curve

Lunch

Q&A Panel Discussions



Marriage and the Mission of God: Breaking the Curve

2015 Grace Church of DuPage Couples Retreat

Ordinary Time — February 6–7, 2015

Summary and Plan for the Weekend

In Session 1, we'll spend most of our time considering the identity and mission of God, providing in conclusion one fitting and helpful articulation of how marriage fits into the big picture. Then we will shift from the ideal, from God's purposes in creation and history and through marriage, to our present experience, which is far from ideal. We'll focus tomorrow on ways in which sin distorts and disorders and destroys God's purposes in the world and in marriage, using the specific metaphor of "curving in on ourselves." All sin, we will suggest in Session 2, is a curving inward rather than a bending outward in self-giving love and relationship, and this "curve of sin" unleashes all kinds of chaos and sadness and deadness upon our marriages and the world. Finally, in Session 3, we'll consider the most crucial questions that arise from our considerations of marriage and the mission of God and the curve of sin—namely, what might breaking the curve of sin look like (that is, what are some ways in which might a marriage that harmonizes with the mission of God be lived), and how is the curve of sin itself broken?

Session 1: Marriage and the Mission of God

- 1. Welcome and Introduction**
 - 1.1. Plan for the Evening**
 - 1.2. A Word on Theological Knowing and Knowledge**



2. The Identity of the One True God

2.1. The Name of God

Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

2.2. God Is Love

1 John 4:7-8: Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

2.3. The Unnecessary Act of Creation: An Overflow of Infinite Love and Joy

Jonathan Edwards, *A Dissertation concerning the End for Which God Created the World*: “The disposition in the sun to shine, or abundantly to diffuse its fulness, warmth, and brightness, is only a tendency to its own most glorious and complete state. So God looks on the communication of himself, and the emanation of his infinite glory, to belong to the fulness and completeness of himself ... Surely, it is no argument of indigence in God, that he is inclined to communicate of his infinite fulness. It is no argument of the emptiness or deficiency of a fountain, that it is inclined to overflow.”

3. The Mission of the One True God

Jonathan Edwards, *End for Which God Created the World*: “Indeed, after his creatures are *intended* to be created, God may be conceived of as being moved by benevolence to them, in the strictest sense, in his dealings with them. His exercising his goodness, and gratifying his benevolence to them in particular, may be the spring of all God’s proceedings through the universe; as being now the determined way of gratifying his general inclination to diffuse himself.”

One Way to State God’s Mission: *To shower real others with his glorious love, to dwell with his creatures in an everlasting relationship of communion and love, to welcome all creation into the life and enjoyment of his supreme love.*

3.1. In the Beginning ...

3.1.1. Eden as a Temple-like Paradise Where God Dwelt with His People

3.1.2. God's Intention for the Spread of the Garden

Genesis 2:4–9, 15: 4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. 5 Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. 6 But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. 9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ... 15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Genesis 1:26–28: 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

3.2. After the Fall ...

3.2.1. God's Mission Continued: *Gracious* and *Merciful* Love Extended

***Genesis 3:21:* The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.**

3.2.2. Excursus: What *Kind* of Mercy Is Taking Place in Gen 3:21?

***Galatians 3:26–27:* 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

3.3. In the Exodus from Egypt ...

3.3.1. Redeemed in Love and for Love

Deuteronomy 7:7-13: “7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; 10 but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. 11 Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

“12 Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. 13 He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-5: “4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

3.3.2. Who Came Out of Egypt in God's Love to Receive God's Love?

Exodus 12:37-38: 37 Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. 38 A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock. 39 They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.



3.4. In Israel's History and Exile ...

Zephaniah 3:15–17: 15 The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, / He has cleared away your enemies. / The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; / You will fear disaster no more. / 16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: / “Do not be afraid, O Zion; / Do not let your hands fall limp. / 17 “The LORD your God is in your midst, / A victorious warrior. / He will exult over you with joy, / He will be quiet in His love.”

3.5. In the Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension of Christ ...

3.5.1. A Mission of Trinitarian Love

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

3.5.2. Delivered into the Life of Love of God and Neighbor

Ephesians 5:1–2: 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.



3.6. In the Church Age ...

Acts 2:42-47: 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

3.7. In the End ...

Revelation 21:1-5: 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

3.8. Four Summary Points about God's Mission

3.8.1. Outward and Expansive, Not Limited and Narrow in Scope

3.8.2. Hospitable and Aiming to Be Fully Present

3.8.3. Self-giving, Even Self-sacrificing, for Our Good

3.8.4. Resulting in the Glorification of God

***Ephesians 1:5-6:* 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

4. Marriage and the Mission of God

4.1. Back to the Beginning: Created in the Image of God

Genesis 1:26–28: 26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

4.1.1. Social

Peter J. Leithart, *A Great Mystery: Fourteen Wedding Sermons*: “The Bible teaches that marriage is a covenant relation: a binding, personal relationship that demands love, loyalty, and faithfulness from all parties ... And that covenant relationship pictures ... the relationship of the persons of the Trinity. Father, Son, and Spirit constitute the original, the eternal covenant community, an eternal fellowship of love, loyalty, faithfulness.

“In fact, it’s only because God is triune that marriage is possible. Since the world is created by a triune God, the world is not made up of unrelated individual things, nor is it simply one big thing. Since the world is created by the triune God, creation, like God Himself, is a harmony of difference, a dance, a polyphony. Because God is triune, it is possible to make a we from two Is, to make a we where each I remains an I.

“Marriage forms a union that reflects the inner life of God. God is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God; yet the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father, and there are not three gods but one God. So in a marriage, two are united into one and yet remain two.”

4.1.2. Fruitful

