**Relationship Goals – Week 4 – Commitment Goals**

**Message Big Idea**: We were not created to master commitment outside of our connection to God.

**Scripture:** 1 John 3:18, Romans 5:5

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**Introduction:** **Nobody Wants “Just OK”**

*(Series Graphic)* There is something inside all of us that does not want to settle for mediocrity! And the new AT&T commericals brilliantly and comedically make this point…

* Anyone looking for a mechanic? **Video: OK Mechanic** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLGTqeU12l8> Just OK, is not OK!
* Anyone thinking about getting a tattoo? **Video: OK Tattoo Parlor** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClXfWgKAIEI> Just OK, is not OK!
* This one is my favorite… **Video: OK Surgeon** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YT3erQZoq4>

Just OK, is not OK!

**Just OK, is not OK!** And this is never more true than when it comes to romantic relationships and marriage.

* I have never heard of a guy who who asked a girl to marry him and thought, “I guess I’ll ask her, it will probably be OK.”
* No one wants a girl to say “yes” to a proposal thinking to herself, “I doubt anything better will come along…this guy is OK.”

I’ve done tons of weddings and one of the reasons I really like doing weddings is because you get to be there upclose and in the moment when two people are absolutely positive that this person is amazing and this relationship is going to be remarkable and will no doubt last a lifetime!

When we are standing in front of friends and family saying, “I do,” we do not think this commitment will be just OK. ‘Cause when it comes to marriage, “Just OK, is not OK!”

**Series Recap**

*(Series Graphic)* Today we are wrapping up what has been an exceptional series, **“Relationship Goals.”** And today we want to specifically focus on marriage and what we are calling **“Commitment Goals.”** I want to talk to people who are married and those who hope to one day be married.

But let me say this - if you are currently in a season where neither of those things are part of your relationship goals, I hope that this talk will be an encouragement to you in relationships with other important people in your life as what I will share will make any relationship better. It will make your friendships vastly better, it will make work relationships better, and it will make all of your family relationships way better – I promise. So lean in.

So, let’s go back to our premise: “Nobody wants a “just ok” marriage. When it comes to marriage, “OK, is just not OK.” Can I get an “amen?” I’m glad you agree! ‘Cause nothing great is accomplished without enthusiam!

So, if we all agree – how come my marriage and your marriage often times feels “just OK.” And sometimes even feels NOT OK?

**Word: 1 John 3:18**

I want to start by sharing a verse of scripture that if you apply it and live by it will assure that you NEVER have a just OK marriage. Pretty big promise, huh? I’m convinced that what we are going to discover is something that will revolutionize some of our marriages and will take them from “Just OK” to awesome!

So, let’s take a look at what John, one of Jesus’ first disciples and closest friends, says in I John 3:18:

***“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” -1 John 3:18***

Now, if you and your spouse apply this scripture, I promise that you will never have a “Just OK” marriage! It will take both of you, but change always starts with me. Turn to the person next to you and say, “Change always starts with me.” *(“Change always starts with me.”)*

Are you ready to leave mediocre marriages behind? Are you ready to reach your Commitment Goals? Are you ready to never settle for “Just OK?” Let’s apply this verse, ***“…let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”*** What are the “actions” we can take to live out this word?

**5 Love Languages**

One very practical and relatively simple way we can take action to love the most important person in our life is by learning to love them the way the want to be loved. Dr. Gary Chapman spent years as a marriage counselor hearing couples share on a variety of issues; but regardless of the issue, he kept hearing a common theme – that one spouse or the other just didn’t **FEEL** loved. He began doing some research and discovered that most people **FEEL** loved when they are **SHOWN** love in one of five ways. He wrote a book based on his research called *(book cover)* **The Five Love Languages** which has sold over twelve million copies and landed on the #1 spot of the New York Times best-seller list.

Let’s take a look at the *(slide with all 5 symbols)* 5 Love Languages and as we do, try to identify the way you believe you best receive love. I believe most of us will be able to identify our love language just by listening to the descriptions I’m going to share. But if you still are unsure after we’re done today, there is a link on our app to an **online quiz** you can take to help you identify your love language.

So let’s look at each of the love languages.

**Quality Time**

The first Love Language is *(highlight this symbol by greying out the rest)* **Quality Time**. If Quality Time is your love language or the love language or your spouse, nothing says, “I love you,” like full, undivided attention. Being present for this type of person is critical, but it means really being present —with the TV off, the phone down, and all chores and tasks on standby. This makes your significant other feel truly special and loved.

The action of loving someone with this love language involves things like…

* Going for a long walk
* Playing a game
* Or having an in-depth conversation.

Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful.

So just in case “quality time” is the love language of the person sitting next to you, do me a favor and give them your undivided attention for the next 5 seconds. Go ahead, stare deeply into their eyes. Alright, that’s creeping some of you out so let’s move on…

**Receiving Gifts**

The second Love Language is *(highlight)* **Receiving Gifts**: If this is your love language or that of your spouse, love is felt through the thoughtfulness and effort behind a gift. The perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you.

The action of loving someone with this love language involves things like…

* Purchasing a favorite treat.
* Something small purchased in the person’s favorite color.
* Or giving a gift unexpectedly for no special occasion.

All of these things feel like love to a person with the love language of gifts.

A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift can be disastrous in your relationship with someone who feels loved through receiving gifts.

If you are sitting next to someone with the love language of “receiving gifts,” I probably caught you unprepared. Tell you what, share your program with that person.

**Acts of Service**

The third Love Language is *(highlight)* **Acts of Service**. If this is your love language or the love language of someone you love, hearing the words, “I’ll vacuum” or “I’ll clear the table,” followed by action is truly an expression of love! Anything done to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an “Acts of Service” person will speak volumes. The words he or she most wants to hear are “Let me do that for you.”

Laziness, forgetting to something you said you’d do, and making more work for someone with this love language says to them that their feelings don’t matter.

To make sure we love the people with the love language of acts of service well today, we’re going to take a little break and I want you to go out to the parking lot and wash the car of the person sitting next to you. What? That’s impractical? OK, we’ll put that on hold, but now you know how to love a person whose love language is “acts of service.”

**Words of Affirmation**

The fourth Love Language is *(highlight)* **Words of Affirmation.** This is one when the action of giving and receiving love involves words. If this is your love language or the love language of your spouse, unsolicited compliments mean the world. Genuine compliments are not just praise, but love. Hearing the words, “I love you,” are important—hearing the reasons behind that love means even more. Loving someone who feels loved through words of affirmation means taking action to speak or write words that build them up.

 Words that might sound like…

* “You are an amazing cook!”
* “You are so fun to spend time with!”
* “You look awesome in that color.”

Insults and careless words can shatter the heart of someone with this love language and are not easily forgotten.

On the chance that the person sitting next to you has this “words of affirmation” love language, turn to them right now and say, “You’re awesome!”

**Physical Touch**

The fifth Love Language is*(highlight)* **Physical Touch.** Contrary to what you might think, this language isn’t all about the bedroom. A person whose primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy. If this is your love language or the love language of your significant other - hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face can all be ways to receive or show love.

Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be unforgivable and destructive.

To show love to all the people with this love language, give everyone around you a high five!

**Personal Example**

*(1 John 3:18)* Ok, now that we understand our primary love language; but more importantly, our spouse’s love language, let’s bring it back to that relationship revolutionizing verse in I John 3:18 which says, ***“… let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”***

How do we love our husband or wife “***with actions and in truth”*?** We love them the way the way they want to be loved! A huge reason that so many marriages get mired down in mediocrity is because we love our spouse the way WE want to be loved and not the way THEY need to be loved. Let me say that again so you do not miss it: A huge reason that so many marriages get mired down in mediocrity is because we love our spouse the way WE want to be loved and not the way THEY need to be loved.

Rarely do couples share the same love language, so it takes intentionality and a desire to live out 1 John 3:18 to make relationships work.

*(Each teaching pastor or couple will need to give their own example here. Example: Dave and Sue Ferguson)*

*(slide with all 5 symbols)* Dave’s primary love languages are physical touch and words of affirmation, and mine are acts of service and gifts. Totally different! When Dave comes home while I am fixing dinner, he always interrupts what I’m doing to kiss me and say hello – usually he wants to hug too. In my mind I’m thinking, “Umm I’m a bit busy here, how about you fill some glasses with ice?” But if I’m living out 1st John 3:18 well, I stop and hug and kiss him because that is how he feels loved. After dinner if he gets up and clears the table, I feel loved. Later in the evening if I sit right next to him and snuggle on the couch while we watch the news, he feels loved. And if he gets up to fix me a cup of tea, I feel loved.

In full discloser, we haven’t always lived this way. I have tried to love Dave the way I want to be loved – by doing lots of tasks like laundry and cleaning; and he has tried to love me the way he wants to be loved – by complimenting me and hugging me. There have been seasons where I did not FEEL loved because I didn’t feel like Dave pitched in around the house, and there were seasons he didn’t FEEL loved because taking time to snuggle next to him on the couch wasn’t on my to do list. But the old saying, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” is totally wrong. We’ve been married 31 years now, and we are still learning and making conscious choices to love each other better.

We have to love our spouse the way they need to be loved. To drive this home, let’s say this key verse out loud together:

***“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” -1 John 3:18***

**Emotional Bank Account**

We have to take action to love our spouse the way they need to receive love.

But now here is something else you have to be aware of – and that is the **Relational Bank Account**. If you have not heard this or it’s been awhile, this is crucial part of loving your spouse the way they need to be loved!

Each “action” of love is like 1 deposit in your relational bank account and it takes 5 of these deposits for every withdrawal. So, you need 5 “actions” of love for every time you screw up, tick off the other person, mishandle a conflict, let your spouse down. The ratio is 5:1!

Now, you might be thinking, where did you get that? It comes from Dr. John Gottman who has done decades of research on successful marriages. He is one of the foremost experts on commitment goals. And rather than going into all his research, the Gottman institute made this short video to explain how the relational bank account works…

**Video: Relational Bank Account** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHN2EKd9tuE>

**Conclusion**

For some, today’s talk has been very encouraging and it is just the boost you need to take a step toward your commitment goals. You want to see your marriage go from mediocre to marvelous; from just OK to awesome!

But I know for some of you, your spouse is not here. You are not sure you have the energy or the motivation left to give it another try. It’s just hard for you to imagine your marriage will ever be more than “just OK.”

Hear me on this – ‘cause what I’m about to say is very important! You don’t have to do this on your own! God wants to give you the ability to love when you don’t feel like loving, when you feel like you can’t try again, and when you are ready to give up. There is a source of love we can tap into when we feel like we are depleted of the ability to love. That source is God.

The Apostle Paul assures us of this truth when he writes:

***“God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” –Romans 5:5***

I hear God saying, “When your heart is empty, when you have no love to give, when you have given and given and given and there is no more love inside you, don’t worry, I will pour my love into your heart. I will provide you with love.” He will love you and he will love you so much that you will have extra love to give to those around you. God is so good that not only does he tell us how to love each other and move our relationships from “Just OK” to awesome, he also says he will give us the love we need so we can love one another!

I want to end by praying for each of the marriages in this room. I want to pray that we will love “in actions and in truth.” That we will love our husband or wife the way they want and need to be love and not just the way we want to be loved. AND I want to ask God right now to pour love into all of our hearts; enough love so that we have a reservoir of love that can flow out of our hearts and into our marriages.

If you want that, I’m going to ask you to hold your hands out like this in a posture to receive it.

If you are here with your spouse, I’m going to ask you to hold hands with one hand and hold the other hand out in a posture like you are ready to receive it.

Let’s pray.

**Communion Idea**

1 John 3:18 which says, ***“… let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth -***  Jesus lived it out by laying down His rights to stay with the Father in heaven and became fully human and made His dwelling among humankind. And then He willingly went to the cross and gave His life for us. He showed the truth of His love through action. And He established the practice of communion so that we could in gratitude take action in response. We invite all to join us in communion as a way to take action that shows you have said yes to following Jesus.