



GREATER  
JOY  
TWOGETHER

A 52-WEEK MARRIAGE  
DEVOTIONAL

TED CUNNINGHAM



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DAVID  COOK®

*transforming lives together*

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Week 1

# ENJOYING LIFE TOGETHER

*Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.*

Ecclesiastes 9:9

God did not give you a spouse to be a grind that hinders you. He gave you a spouse to accompany you *through* the grind of life. When your spouse becomes the grind, your marriage drifts.

Most marriages start with two people enjoying life together. So when someone tells me, “I’m not happy in my marriage,” I hear, “We don’t have what we once did.”

I am not one to respond with, “Marriage isn’t about your happiness,” or “Marriage is hard ... deal with it.” I would rather paint a beautiful picture of marriage, point the couple in the direction of marital satisfaction, and provide practical steps toward enjoying greater joy together.

Marital satisfaction is a choice, not an outcome. You cannot discover it online, and it will not find you after a series of serendipitous events, as depicted in movies. It is based on decisions, factors, and skills that couples can do something about in any season of life. You

decide your way into marital satisfaction by choosing it, or else you drift from it. Those are the only two options.

Dear friends of mine listened to me preach on marriage for six years before they had their first child. Several of my sermons had included the challenge to eradicate the kid-centered home. My friends would say to each other, “That will never happen to us. We will be careful to never have a kid-centered home!” Guess what? After the birth of their first child, everything changed. That child became the center of their universe. As my friend so eloquently put it, “We stopped being us.” As a result, their marriage drifted from what they had once enjoyed.

Children certainly bring couples into new stages of life, and for some, it leads to marital drift. The seasons of life change us. Jobs, age, health struggles, pandemics, social unrest, and tragedy all contribute to this change. Some marriage experts believe that over the course of your marriage, it will seem like you had been married to five to seven different people. Enjoying life together requires that you do not turn your spouse into the grind but rather live in curiosity and fascination with the changes you see in each other.

Amy and I caught ourselves in drift in April of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had shut down the world a few weeks prior, and everything about our comfort and routine had come to a screeching halt.

As we sat in lawn chairs in our garage staring out into the woods, Amy asked me, “We’re spending a lot of time together. Would you call it quality time?” That was the wake-up call we needed. When decisions we’d made for our marriage and family were tossed in the trash in March 2020, we, like most of the world, stopped making decisions for our future. We recognized drift that day and created a new path forward.

That's our desire for this devotional. For some, it will be a new discipline for your marriage. If you've never read or discussed the Bible together as a couple, start now. Maybe prayer other than at mealtime has never crossed your mind. I pray this devotional is where that spiritual discipline begins for your marriage. If you once read the Bible together and prayed together but now are in drift, there's no better time than the present to restart those practices. For many, this will foster a continuation of good habits you already have in place.

Wherever your marriage journey is right now, I pray this devotional is a pivotal resource that brings greater joy to your relationship with Jesus and each other.

## Let's TALK about It

Discuss the following questions together, today or throughout the week.

- What season or stage of our marriage do we look back on with great joy?
- What was the most difficult season or stage?
- What are some big changes we navigated early in our marriage?
- Which ones brought us closer together and which ones led to drift?
- How quickly do we recognize drift?

## Let's DO Something about It

To start, let's keep it simple. The following three decisions will get you started in this devotional time together. For each question below, circle the option that works best for you as a couple, and commit to that time and format for the next year.

1. We will read this devotional *together / individually*, then discuss.
2. We choose S M T W T F S as the best day of the week to read and discuss it.
3. The best time of the day for us to read it is *morning / afternoon / evening*.

## Let's PRAY about It

Prioritizing prayer will bring you closer together and pave the way for God to work in your life and relationship. Use the following prayer as a jumping-off point.

*Father, our desire is to glorify and enjoy you forever. We also want to enjoy each other. We will not allow the seasons and stages of life to determine our joy. We choose joy because we choose you and each other. Thank you for our marriage and for giving us one another to go through each season and stage of life with. We love you, and it is in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*