

Drama and Divorce

WEEK TWO LEADER'S GUIDE

Big Idea

God remains faithful to us even though we are not faithful to him.

Format Overview (1 hour)

- I. **INTRO** // Provide some direction
- II. **ARTICLE** // Read Greek Things
- III. **DIALOGUE** // Discuss concepts together
- IV. **WRAP-UP** // Transition to next week

INTRO: *Currently, we are going through a four-week series talking about the similarities between God's story and the Greek story. Last week, we learned that there is a serious problem with both God's image and the Greek image. Things are messed up. Things meaning the world. Things meaning you. Today, we are going to explore the beginning of God's solution to this problem. How is he going to restore his image? Buckle up, because there is a lot of drama about unfold.*

ARTICLE (10 minutes)

Read the article together: Hand out copies to everyone and read it out loud together (taking turns at paragraph breaks). Tell your group to make notes or underline certain sentences that stick out to them that can be brought up during the discussion.

DIALOGUE (45 minutes)

Bride Gone Wild

1. Describe, without naming names, a friendship or relationship that has recently experienced some major drama. What caused the drama? Was there a lack of commitment involved?
2. If your parents have gone through a divorce *and* you are willing to talk about it, what kind of feelings does that memory bring up? Even though things may be fine now, what were the negative consequences that you and your family members experienced directly after the split? Or, describe a close friend or relative that has gone through a divorce?

Divorce is not an Option

3. For what reason does God tell Hosea to marry an adulteress? What does the analogy say about God and what does it say about the Israelites? In what ways does your life reflect the life of the adulteress?

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 2

4. We may be tempted to follow God's rules because we want to be accepted and loved by God. In other words, we might want to follow rules like the Ten Commandments so that we can get God to like us more. How should viewing the Ten Commandments as "marriage expectations" or "wedding vows" instead of "terms of acceptance" change the way we live? Hint: Explore the way a human marriage relationship operates.
5. If God does not accept us based on what we do (meaning that his love is not based on certain conditions), how should this change our thoughts, attitudes, and actions toward our Greek brothers/sisters?

WRAP-UP: *Well, for the sake of time we are going to wrap things up. The conversation went really well today. Thank you for sharing. To wrap things up, we've learned that God chose the Israelites to be his bride through whom he would radiate his image to the rest of the world. But, they kept messing things up. God remained faithful to them even though they weren't faithful to him – which is exactly the state that we find ourselves in today.*

Next week we are going to dive into a discussion about God's answer to our unfaithfulness. Stay tuned. Before we take off, are there any last thoughts or questions burning in your head about today's article or topic?

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 2

Greek Things

PART 4 OF 10 **BRIDE GONE WILD**

Keep in mind that every good story has a problem, a solution, a climax, and a resolution. Think of your favorite book or movie. It probably includes the elements above.

So, even though our ancestral parents blew it, there is a solution coming. We can be sure of that. However, it's starting to seem hopeless because many years go by before God seems to act.

Our first ancestors not only blew it, but made babies who blew it. And those babies made babies who blew it. At one point, there are so many people blowing it that God decides to hit the reset button.

This is where Evan Almighty (a.k.a. Noah) comes into the story. Remember Noah and the big boat? God brings the flood and wipes out everyone except Noah and his family... and the lovely pairs of animals.

Over time, the population of the earth gets bigger and so does their sin. And it is during this time when God decides to act, to bring about a solution.

Instead of working with the whole, he works with one group of people. The Israelites. Out of all the "fish in the sea", he chose the Israelites to be his bride. Any romantic would notice that God is pursuing them like a man pursues a woman. It is beautiful. He is simply giving them an invitation to be in relationship with him.

This launched the greatest love story ever told. Not between two people, but between a God and his people. And like any good love story, there is a lot of drama about to unfold.

The Israelites do all kinds of experimenting. They get snotty. Rebellious. They even prostitute themselves to other gods, other lovers.

At this point, divorce seems like the best option. We are pretty used to it in our society, even among Christian couples. With the divorce rate so high, there is a 50% chance that you have come from a broken home. You may have even watched one of your parents give up on the other.

The Israelites deserve to be divorced because they have done the unthinkable. They have left the protection, providence, and love of God for other gods. They physically build idols and worship them.

So, what does God do? Does he do what any average American would do?

No. Rather, he does the unthinkable.

He stays with them!

To him, divorce is not an option.

PART 5 OF 10 **DIVORCE IS NOT AN OPTION**

To us, however, divorce is the best option.

We are in a society that doesn't really know what commitment means - in relationships or in life in general.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 2

You, as a Greek, have felt the pain of a lack of commitment in your fraternity or sorority. You see your brothers and sisters publicly committing themselves to your fraternity and sorority and to the ideals for which it stands. Then, perhaps after a semester, or after a year, they take off. They give up.

They break the commitment.

After the infatuation stage, they come to the conclusion that the fraternity or sorority can no longer meet their needs. They paid the fraternity or sorority like a prostitute - gaining a few short-term friendships and perhaps a few good parties and then take off.

Pain is echoed throughout the House. Everyone knows that this is not how it is supposed to be.

In Greek Houses, the word love gets tossed around so much - in dating relationships and in speaking of one's affections for their fraternity or sorority. The word love has come to mean a "feeling" rather than a "commitment". It is actually both. But, the feeling always follows the commitment.

We have all seen a guy who loves a girl, but then breaks up with her two months later. We have all seen a girl who loves her sorority, but then leaves after a semester. They had a feeling, but it didn't last.

There is confusion because love can mean different things. In the bible there are three types of love. The Greek word phileo means a companionship or friendship type of love. The Greek word eros means an admiring type of love. And lastly, the Greek word agape means an unconditional type of love.

When God says that he loves us, he is saying that he agapes us. He loves us without conditions. He loves us, even with all the junk in our lives, with all of our imperfections. This type of love is rooted in commitment.

God loved the Israelites, his bride, in an agape way.

One of my favorite bible stories is when God radically reveals his definition of commitment to his people.

He tells a guy named Hosea to marry an adulteress. He does this to give the Israelites an analogy of their relationship with him - Hosea representing God and the adulteress representing the Israelites.

Sounds like the abundant Christian life, doesn't it? How would you like to marry an unfaithful spouse so that God can use you as an example! But Hosea obeys.

After Hosea's wife showed continuous unfaithfulness, I'm sure that Hosea got ticked off. I'm sure that he wanted out on many occasions. I'm sure that divorce was on his mind.

But divorce was never on God's mind.

God said to Hosea, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods..." (Hosea 3:1)

This is unthinkable. God tells Hosea to agape his wife because God agapes the Israelites. Even after all of their sin, He still loves them unconditionally because he chose them first and has chosen to stick with them to the end.

Loving unconditionally is a rather hard thing to do in our fraternities and sororities. We all have those guys and those girls who continually mess up our image on campus. Whether it is a group of guys who get caught with drugs or a group of girls who get alcohol poisoning at a party, our love for them runs out quickly.

During my junior year, a few guys had been warned about smoking marijuana near our fraternity House. The President caught them a second time and decided to expel them on the spot. I couldn't have been

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 2

happier with the decision. Everything inside of me wanted them out. Their lack of respect for the image of the fraternity angered me and I wanted them divorced from the group.

It is a lot easier to let go than to hold on. It is a lot easier to cut the rope than to pull someone up.

Loving conditionally means that you'll cut the rope if your brothers or sisters don't get their act together. Loving unconditionally means that your only option is to pull them up no matter how hard the task may be.

Some of us view the Ten Commandments as a threat to cut the rope. We think that God will let us go if we don't follow his rules to perfection.

IF we follow the rules

THEN God loves us and pulls us up

ELSE God doesn't love us and cuts the rope.

This perspective couldn't be more wrong. We know this because God had an infinite amount of chances to cut the rope on the Israelites but he didn't. So, if following the Ten Commandments wasn't a condition by which they were accepted, then what was the purpose?

I like to think of the Ten Commandments as marriage expectations.

God is essentially writing marriage vows for the relationship between him and his people. He is taking their relationship to a whole new level. He is saying, "If you do these things, you will stay under my protection and we will have great intimacy together. If you pursue life outside of this marriage, you will run into trouble all of your life."

The Israelites said, "We do. We do. We will love you and not love another." They publicly proclaimed their vows just like a husband and wife proclaim their vows on their wedding day.

But, repeating the same pattern throughout history, they cheat on God and run after other lovers. The Israelites proudly put "in a relationship with God" on their facebook profile and then continue to flirt with other gods and idols.

Even still, God does not divorce them. But, he allows the consequences to sink in and the Israelites experience great pain for hundreds of years.

After many years, when God is nowhere to be found, when it seems like he has taken off and deserted his bride, he does another unthinkable thing.

He shows up, in person, on earth.

DIALOGUE

Describe, without naming names, a friendship or relationship that has recently experienced some major drama. What caused the drama? Was there a lack of commitment involved?

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GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 2

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