

Peacemaking in Marriages & Families – a summary & discussion guide

In this session Scott and Terri-Lee share the story of their 25-year marriage — a journey marked by brokenness, infidelity, separation, and ultimately restoration through faith in God.

They begin by describing their very different childhoods. Scott grew up in a home shaped by alcoholism and little Christian influence, while Terry was raised with strong faith influences through her grandparents. They married young, determined to avoid the dysfunction they had seen growing up. In the early years, they avoided conflict and appeared to have a strong marriage.

However, unresolved grief from miscarriage and the loss of their premature son, busy schedules, working opposite shifts, and emotional distance slowly weakened their connection. Terry, who equated peace with avoiding conflict, suppressed her feelings instead of communicating honestly. Over time, she developed an emotional relationship with a male coworker that became an affair. Eventually, she left the marriage.

Scott was devastated but chose to honor his covenant to God and Terry. Instead of retaliating, he sought spiritual growth and accountability through a group of Christian men. For nearly two years, he prayed and worked on becoming the husband God called him to be, even as he considered divorce.

A turning point came when Scott told Terry he still loved her and would not give up on their marriage, though he would not force her to return. The Holy Spirit began softening Terry's heart. Through conversations with trusted church mentors and deep conviction, she chose to surrender to God and work toward restoration.

Their reconciliation was slow and intentional. They dated again, rebuilt trust, established “guardrails” to protect their relationship, confessed fully, and recommitted their marriage vows in 2013. Through humility, confession, forgiveness, and Christ-centered leadership, their marriage was restored.

They share five key lessons:

1. **Complacency vs. Intentionality** – Guardrails and daily spiritual discipline are necessary to protect a marriage.
2. **Silence vs. Strength** – Spiritual leadership requires active, sacrificial engagement, not passivity.
3. **Peacekeeping vs. Peacemaking** – Avoiding conflict is not true peace; healing requires honest confrontation with grace.
4. **We Can't Do This Alone** – Community, accountability, and mentorship are essential.
5. **God's Grace Restores What We Cannot** – True healing and reconciliation are only possible through God's grace.

They also emphasize the vital role of the church — prayer, small groups, honest mentorship, and courageous engagement — in supporting broken marriages.

Today, their marriage is strong, not because they are perfect, but because it is grounded in Christ. Their story stands as testimony that no relationship is beyond God's power to redeem.

On the next page is a **streamlined small group discussion guide** to use as your time permits. It includes suggested time blocks and themes to help you stay on track.

0–5 Minutes: Opening

- Opening question – *What part of the story impacted you most?*
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5–15 Minutes: Drift & Complacency

Key Theme: Strong marriages rarely collapse suddenly — they drift.

1. What are subtle signs that emotional distance is forming in a relationship?
 2. Where can complacency quietly enter a marriage?
 3. What one intentional action you could take this week to strengthen connection?
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15–25 Minutes: Conflict & Communication

Key Theme: Peacekeeping is not the same as peacemaking.

1. Why is avoiding conflict often easier in the moment?
2. How can unspoken hurt create long-term damage?
3. What does healthy confrontation look like in marriage or close relationship?

Personal Reflection (optional share):

Is there a conversation you've been avoiding?

25–35 Minutes: Temptation & Accountability

Key Theme: Isolation increases vulnerability.

1. Why are emotional affairs often subtle but dangerous?
2. What boundaries are wise in opposite-sex friendships?
3. Who has permission to ask you hard questions about your life?

Application Question:

What step could you take toward greater accountability?

35–42 Minutes: Grace & Restoration

Key Theme: Confession + forgiveness + humility = rebuilding.

1. Why is full honesty necessary for healing?
 2. What makes forgiveness so difficult?
 3. What does “dying to self” look like practically in marriage?
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42–45 Minutes: Closing Reflection

- Share one insight you're taking with you.
- One practical step you want to implement this week.
- Pray for protection for marriages, courage for honest conversations, grace to forgive, etc.