

David Dickson
Senior Leader



THE MESSAGE

4TH OCTOBER 2026



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

“To love at all is to be vulnerable.”

C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*



Wholehearted Love

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health





BIG IDEA FOR SERIES

**God created us for wholehearted love —
first to receive his love, then to learn to love
others faithfully & maturely,
whether married or single.**

Wholehearted Love



My encouragement is to come with an:

- Open, teachable spirit into this series
- Allow God to deal with the obstacles, wounds & losses
- Use it to grow up - *“until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”* Ephesians 4:13 NIV
- Prayer Ministry Session

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health

Part 1 God's Design

Genesis 1–2; Matthew 19:4–6; Ephesians 5:31–32



Wholehearted Love



WHOLEHEARTED LOVE MEANS KNOWING WE ARE CREATED FOR LOVE

Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:18

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love

Image-bearer.

- **Genesis 1–2** God created us in his image and for relationship with him and others.
- Being an image-bearer of God (imago Dei) means that every human being is created to reflect God's character, glory, and nature to the world.
- The image is marred by sin BUT restored through the work of the second Adam (Jesus Christ)





ACTIVITY PACKS HANDOUT

Intergenerational & Intercultural

- Learning Together

Wholehearted Love

KEY TRUTH: *I WAS CREATED FOR LOVE, BUT MARRIAGE ISN'T THE ONLY PLACE WHERE LOVE IS FOUND.*

The Holy Spirit doesn't simply make us powerful Christians; he makes us **people who increasingly look like Jesus**. We are supposed to be transformed and transforming.

The fruit of the Spirit is relational: (Galatians 5:22-23)

- love
- joy
- peace
- patience
- Kindness
- goodness
- faithfulness
- gentleness
- self-control.

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love

The evidence of spiritual maturity isn't simply how much power we experience in worship; it's how much love we carry into relationships.

What if God is more interested in who I am becoming in my relationships than how impressive I look in my ministry?



Wholehearted Love



Genesis 2:18 *“It is not good for the man to be alone.”*

- But we need to be careful here. It doesn’t mean “Therefore everybody needs to get married.”
- Genesis is establishing something deeper: **We were not created for isolation.**
- Adam needs relationship, community, companionship and shared vocation.

Wholehearted Love

THE OPPOSITE OF LONELINESS ISN'T NECESSARILY MARRIAGE. **IT'S MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY.** THIS IS WHERE CHURCH BECOMES ESSENTIAL.



The New Testament vision isn't simply:

husband + wife + children = Christian family

but: **Christ + his people = the new family of God.**
(Ekklesia)

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love

THE CHURCH AS THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD.

- N. T. Wright teaches that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God is creating a new people for himself, drawn from every nation, culture, generation and background. In the Old Testament, God called Israel to be his covenant people, with the purpose of bringing his blessing to the whole world.
- Through Jesus, this promise is now being fulfilled as people from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds are welcomed into God's family. The Church is therefore not simply a collection of individuals who share the same beliefs; it is a new community shaped by Jesus, united by faith, and called to demonstrate God's kingdom in the world.
- Our identity in Christ becomes more important than the cultural, ethnic or social differences that might otherwise divide us.



Wholehearted Love



**WHOLEHEARTED LOVE MEANS KNOWING
MARRIAGE IS A CALL TO COVENANT**
Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4–6

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love



Genesis 2:24 is the foundation for Jesus' words in Matthew 19.
Notice where Jesus goes when talking about marriage: **CREATION.**

Marriage is:

- **Leaving** - A new primary human relationship is established.
- **Cleaving** – KJV, “**be united**” A deliberate commitment to one another.
- **Becoming one** -A profound physical, emotional and spiritual union.

Wholehearted Love



There is an important distinction:

Marriage is a good gift from God. (Heb 13:4)

But no good gift was ever designed to take God's place.

**QUESTION: AM I ASKING MY SPOUSE TO GIVE ME
SOMETHING ONLY GOD IS DESIGNED TO GIVE ME?
*(security, significance, self worth)***

Wholehearted Love



Key truth:

Biblical love isn't primarily about finding the right person; it's about becoming the kind of person who can love faithfully.

Wholehearted Love



Matthew 19:4–6

- Marriage is God’s good design:
a faithful, exclusive, self-giving covenant.

Covenant love is different from contract love

- **Contract says:** “I’ll love you as long as you fulfil your side.”
- **Covenant says:** “I give myself to you in faithful love.”

Wholehearted Love



Let me turn that into a discipleship question:

***Holy Spirit, what are you forming in me
through my relationships?***

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love



Jesus also radically dignifies singleness

- Immediately after Matthew 19:6, Jesus talks about those who don't marry.

Matthew 19:11–12

- Jesus describes people who remain unmarried “because of the kingdom of heaven.”
- Message in November to develop this further

Wholehearted Love

I want to say this explicitly:

- If you're single today, you are not an incomplete Christian.
- If you never marry, you have not missed God's plan for your life.
- Your Christian calling does not begin when you find a husband or wife.
- You don't have to wait for a wedding ring before you start living wholeheartedly.
- **THE DEEPER ISSUE IS NOT "MARRIED OR SINGLE?" BUT "WHOLEHEARTED OR DIVIDED?"**

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health





WHY IMPORTANT?

It is **WHOLEHEARTED LOVE**
because our relationships
are meant to point to Jesus

Ephesians 4:25-32

Ephesians 5:31-32



60 seconds of silence for personal reflection after I read out these onscreen questions.



Wholehearted Love

JESUS, HOW AM I CURRENTLY LOVING?

- 1. Where am I healthy?***
- 2. Where am I hiding?***
- 3. Where am I controlling?***
- 4. Where am I avoiding?***
- 5. Where do I need to learn to say yes?***
- 6. Where do I need to learn to say no?***
- 7. Who are you asking me to love more intentionally?***

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love

CONCLUSION:

What does wholehearted love look like for you?

- *For the married person:*
- *For the single person:*
- *For someone dating:*
- *For someone lonely:*
- *For someone carrying wounds:*
- *For the church:*

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love



I INVITE YOU TO PRAY:

“Holy Spirit, make me wholehearted.

Holy Spirit, make me more like Jesus in the way I love.”

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health



Wholehearted Love



PASTORAL PRAYER:

Marriage, Singleness, and Emotional Health

