

UNCOMMON MARRIAGE

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by finding a church and making time to talk about spiritual things. What do you think it means to build a spiritual foundation? What steps are you taking to build a spiritual foundation in your family?

2. From the redecoration of his bachelor pad to new dogs in the house, Tony had to adjust to a lot of changes when he married Lauren. How has your wife or fiancée changed your activities and lifestyle?

Chapter 3: Hail to the Chiefs

1. When Coach Noll asked Tony to step down from his position with the Pittsburgh Steelers, Tony's plans were dramatically altered and suddenly he was looking for a job with another team. Explain a time when you experienced significant, and even painful, redirection in your life with your wife or fiancée. How did you involve her in the change of plans? Did that situation strengthen or hurt your relationship?
2. In relocating, Tony made sure to carefully consider the needs of his entire family. When have you considered your family or your spouse when making a big decision? What helps you consider them in the middle of a decision?

In Summary

In these chapters, Tony and Lauren talk about the beginnings of their marriage: how they met, their wedding, and the joys and challenges that came in their first few years together. Tony and Lauren learned a lot about each other, about communication, and about how to make decisions together even when God's redirection was difficult. As you think about these chapters and how Tony and Lauren learned to understand and love one another, consider these verses:

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.



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1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

“Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’” And he said, “‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”

Matthew 19:4-6

Week 2: Read chapters 4–6

Chapter 4: Welcome to the Neighborhood

1. When Tony was pulled over even though he wasn’t speeding, he was angry with the policeman for profiling him because of his race. However, when he was taken to jail for forgetting his appeal, Tony learned a hard lesson about respecting authority. How difficult is it for you to respect authority? Why? Which authority figures in your life do you need to pay more respect to?
2. In Kansas City, Tony and Lauren learned the importance of carving out time for one another, even during a busy season of life. Have you and your wife or fiancée set aside a specific time for each other? What might you do with your spouse during that time? If you haven’t set aside a time, talk with your spouse or fiancée about when you could set aside several hours to spend together.
3. As a leader in the home, Tony believes his job is to help he and his wife be the best they can be, not to make the rules and enforce them. What do you think it means to lead in your home? How can you be a better leader for your wife or fiancée?

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Chapter 5: Into the Cold

1. When Marty Schottenheimer hired someone else for a position Tony had expected to be offered, Tony felt hurt by what felt like his coach's betrayal. Explain a time when you felt hurt or betrayed by your boss. Did you talk with him or her about it? What did it take for you to put that hurt behind you?
2. When Tony decided to leave the Chiefs and move the family to Minnesota, he thought he was communicating clearly with Lauren; however, Lauren felt left out of the decision. Explain a time when either you or your spouse felt left out of a decision in your family. How did the two of you resolve that situation?

Chapter 6: Spousal Support

1. One of the toughest situations Tony and Lauren faced was when they had a difference of opinion and there was no right answer; however, Tony and Lauren learned that instead of figuring out who was "wrong," it was helpful to consider the other person's point of view. When have you gotten hung up on figuring out who is "wrong" in your relationship? What was the result? How could you learn to consider your wife or fiancée's point of view instead?
2. Tony knew Lauren didn't like Minnesota, so he tried to be there more for Lauren. In what situations have you needed to be there more for your wife or fiancée? What steps can you take to support her better when life is hard?

In Summary

In these chapters, Tony and Lauren come face-to-face with the hardships attached to a life in football. After settling in Kansas City, they were uprooted and moved to Minnesota, despite Lauren's displeasure with the change. During this difficult time, they both learned how to communicate and set aside time for each other, and how to make the best of difficult circumstances and stay together in love. As you think about these chapters, consider these verses:



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And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body.

Ephesians 5:21-30

The second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." No other commandment is greater than these.

Mark 12:31

Week 3: Read chapters 7–9

Chapter 7: A Warm Landing

1. After waiting a long time for an opportunity to be head coach, Tony finally got the top coaching job with the Bucs. Explain a time when you feared you'd never stop waiting, only for the Lord to spring a great new opportunity on you. How do our experiences of waiting prepare us for the answer God wants to give?
2. Now that he was head coach, Tony had a lot of more responsibilities coming his way, and he and Lauren grounded themselves in prayer. Do you turn to prayer when you feel overwhelmed? Why or why not? What overwhelming circumstances can you bring before God this week?



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Chapter 8: Tampa's Team

1. Soon after they arrived in Tampa, Tony and Lauren realized that they had to work as a team to complete all the projects thrown at them; and this meant they had to make time for each other. How do you and your wife or fiancée work as a team when life is busy? How can you do a better job of making time for your wife and fiancée even when it feels like you have no time?
2. Rather than abiding by rigid gender roles, Tony and Lauren try to divide tasks by who is good at what. Operating as a team, they consider each other's strengths and weaknesses. What strengths and weaknesses do you and your spouse have that do not align with gender stereotypes? How do you organize your lives to optimally use both of your strengths?

Chapter 9: Living the Dream

1. With all of the opportunities Tampa presented, Tony and Lauren quickly realized that they could not do everything. Rather, they learned to ask what only they could do, in order to discern what was important. When you think about the opportunities in your life, what can only you and your spouse do? How does that help you sort out what's important?
2. Though he was unsure about it, Tony eventually agreed to adopt more children; he realized that it was important to honor Lauren's passion as she honored his. Do you feel like both your passions and your spouse's passions are honored in your marriage? Why or why not? If not, how can you address that with your spouse?
3. When Jordan was sick, Tony noticed that he and Lauren had very different ways of seeking treatment for him, frustrating both Tony and Lauren. What differences in personality cause conflict between you and your wife or fiancée? How do these same differences help your decision making?

In Summary

In this section, Tony and Lauren's time of waiting in Minnesota finally came to a close, and they



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moved to Tampa where they faced new challenges such as busyness, new responsibilities, and a larger family. They learned how to sort out what was important in life, and how to communicate well even when life was hectic. Furthermore, they learned that they needed to honor each other's passions and personalities and that their strengths and weaknesses brought balance to their marriage. As you think about these chapters, consider the following verses:

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:17

Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Philippians 2:2-4

Week 4: Read chapters 10–12

Chapter 10: An Unsettled Season

1. One lesson Tony learned in his marriage was to carefully guard his words, because once words are spoken, they can't be taken back. Explain a time when you hurt your wife or fiancée with something you said. What steps did you take to right that wrong? What steps do you take to control your tongue before you say something harmful?
2. Tony has noticed that Lauren is usually right when she feels something is wrong; and Lauren was right about the Glazers not being happy with him. Is it hard for you to listen when other people have a feeling about something or do you also get feelings about situations? What kinds of questions could you ask to better understand the feeling your wife or fiancée has about something?



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3. Tony and Lauren reacted very differently emotionally to the events with the Glazers. While Tony prepared to move on, Lauren was very upset. Explain a time when you and your spouse were at odds in how you reacted to a major change. How did you communicate and try to understand each other through that experience?

Chapter 11: Long-Distance Marriage

1. When Tony accepted the head coaching position with the Colts, Tony and Lauren decided that Lauren and the kids should stay in Tampa so Tiara could finish school. This was a big sacrifice for Tony. What big sacrifices did your parents make for you? What kinds of sacrifice have you made or do you anticipate making for your own kids?
2. Even though the Bible says not to go to bed angry, Tony and Lauren found that it was sometimes better to resolve conflict in the morning when they weren't both exhausted. What happens when you try to resolve conflict with your spouse late at night? When do the two of you best communicate?
3. Tony and Lauren stress the importance of being committed to one another, no matter the distance or circumstance. What do you think it looks like to be that committed? How can you embody that each day with your wife or fiancée?

Chapter 12: Together Again

1. Tony knew Lauren was his biggest fan, and that always encouraged him. How does your wife or fiancée demonstrate that she's your biggest fan? What can you do to be her biggest fan?
2. Over the course of their marriage, Tony and Lauren worked to find common interests—even though they both knew they wouldn't like all the same things. What common interests have you and your spouse developed? What things that you enjoy do you know your wife or fiancée will never like doing with you?



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In Summary

In this section, Tony and Lauren experienced another major change—leaving the Bucs and Tampa for Indianapolis. They learned to listen to each other’s insights and respect each other’s reactions to difficult circumstances. They braved long-distance marriage for a season and reflected on how they support each other and focus on their common interests to maintain the strength of their marriage. As you reflect on these chapters, think about the following verses:

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.

1 Peter 3:8

If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it.

1 Corinthians 12:17-18

Week 5: Read chapters 13–15 and Afterword

Chapter 13: Remembering Jamie

1. When their son Jamie died, both Tony and Lauren were heartbroken, though they expressed it in different ways. Their distinct ways of grieving sometimes caused conflict, as they wanted to mourn at different times. How do you and your wife or fiancée grieve differently? What can you do to be sensitive to her way of grieving?
2. Jamie’s death put life in perspective for the Dungys. The loss of the playoff game and other disappointments paled in comparison to the tragedy. Explain a time when a tragedy put your life in perspective. How do hard times shape our understanding of success and what’s important?



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Chapter 14: Champions

1. The Colts wrapped up the 2006 season by winning the Super Bowl, which was a huge encouragement for both Tony and Lauren. After the game, both Tony and Lauren were up on the stage, celebrating their accomplishment. What has been the biggest success you and your wife or fiancée celebrated together? How important is that memory to you?
2. Despite the criticism Tony had gotten for recording The Villages PSA, the thank-you note he received for that PSA after the Super Bowl showed him that God was honoring his commitment to godly priorities in the midst of enormous success. What priorities do you commit to that aren't always popular? How has God honored those commitments?

Chapter 15: New Arenas

1. After the Super Bowl, Tony had a lot of opportunities, but he felt that his most important job was to love his wife and work with his family—because only he could do that. Is it difficult to think of family as your highest priority? Why or why not? What place do you think family should occupy on our priority lists?
2. Tony and Lauren are very different, both because of their personalities and because of their upbringings, but they've come to realize that their differences are a blessing. What differences in your marriage are hard to see as blessings? What differences are clearly blessings?

Afterword

1. According to Bill Cosby, “The heart of marriage is memories.” As you reflect on Tony and Lauren’s story, take a minute to think about your own story. At the beginning of this discussion guide, you considered your story so far. Now, think about the most important lessons you’ve learned along the way. Where do you want to be in your marriage in five years? What areas do you want to grow in? Share your thoughts with your wife or fiancée this week.



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In Summary

In this section, Tony and Lauren ventured from the heartbreak that came with Jamie's death to the booming excitement of winning the Super Bowl and beyond. They learned how to honor each other's methods of grieving and see their differences as blessings. They are still growing in their marriage, but they've come a long way since their wedding. As you reflect on these chapters, think about the following verses:

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

Philippians 2:1-2

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7

