

VERTICAL Marriage

WEEK ONE

I'VE LOST MY feelings FOR YOU

Welcome! (Read this out loud)

Hello Everyone.

Thanks for jumping into this Vertical Marriage series with us. We are thankful to see you join this group! We believe that the community found in circles can help us grow beyond sitting in rows on Sundays. We know that for some of you, this is a big step – a first step. So, thank you for being willing to take a risk. For others, you have been in a group before, so thank you for joining again and continuing to grow in relationship with others and with God.

Now, before we start, here are a couple guidelines for our group.

Our group is meant to be a discussion, an opportunity to encourage each other. We believe that God will use this experience to teach us about who we are and bring us closer to Him through the combination of weekly teaching, challenges, conversations, and our group community.

As a reminder, this isn't a time to tell others how they need to change. It is a time to listen, share about what God is doing in you, and encourage others as they take steps of faith in their journey. Everyone in this room is at a different stage of their journey with God and has had many different experiences along the way.

We hope this study helps you move toward a life-giving relationship with Christ and with your spouse in the upcoming weeks. We believe this will be a catalyst for marriage and your own life. We believe that the best is yet to come, and that these 5 weeks of investment can have a life and legacy changing impact on your life.

OK, are you ready to go vertical?

Flip to the next page and let's get started!

Ice Breaker

Prep work: Have ready two small pieces of paper for each group member, pens, and a medium-sized bowl.

First, let's get to know each other a little bit before we jump in.

Everyone grab two pieces of paper and a pen. On each sheet of paper, write a fact about yourself that no one in the room would know – not even your spouse (write a different fact on each sheet). Fold the two pieces of paper in half and put them into the bowl.

Hand the bowl to the person in the room who got up the earliest today. That person will pick one piece of paper from the bowl and read it out loud. Go around the room and have everyone guess out loud who they think the paper belongs to. After everyone has guessed, the person whose statement it was reveals themselves. Every person who guessed right gets a point. If no one guessed correctly, the person whose paper it is gets 5 points (keep track of your own points).

Pass the bowl to the next person and continue. Enjoy laughing and learning a little bit about each other as you go one time around the circle (there will be extra pieces of paper at the end).

For the competitive people in the room, find out who had the most points!

Answer - EXPECTATIONS

How has an expectation of a date, vacation or the cleanliness of a home caused some stress for you and your spouse? How do you naturally deal with those situations as a couple?



We go into marriage and relationships expecting to find happiness and life from our spouse. When they don't deliver, we believe that we married the wrong person.

Dave & Ann Wilson



Watch the video message

then *flip* to the next page

for discussion questions



Discuss

1. Read this quote and discuss:

“The only way a horizontal relationship will work is if you go vertical first.”

- Dave and Ann Wilson

- In what ways have you experienced this in a relationship in your life?
- How has the horizontal relationships in your life been affected by your vertical relationship with God?

2. One of the scriptures that Dave and Ann mentioned was Jeremiah 2:12-13, it says,
¹²“Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror,”

declares the Lord. ¹³“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

- What are your thoughts about how Dave and Ann connect the “broken cisterns” to our unhealthy expectations of happiness and fulfillment from our spouse/relationships?
- How does this scripture connect with the statement “We think we married the wrong person but we are actually looking in the wrong place”?
- How do you notice in your own relationship that you create “broken cisterns” instead of choosing “a spring of living water”?

3. Dave and Ann said, **“When we go vertical first, God quenches our thirst.”**

- How could this perspective impact your relationships?
- How could this perspective impact your view of yourself, your relationship with others, your spouse, or your kids?

4. Dave and Ann talked about how to Divert Daily, Withdraw Weekly, and Abandon Annually.

- Which one do you do best? How does that allow you to keep a vertical-first relationship?
- Which one do you want to improve?
- Share one way you do this in your relationship or in your own life. This is a great way to learn from each other.

5. How did you connect with the Tandem Bike illustration? How can you choose to go vertical first this week?

6. As you reflect on today’s topic of going vertical first, what is your biggest takeaway or realization? Why?

Challenge

Read this Proverb together a couple times this week.

**In everything you do, put God first,
and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.**

Proverbs 3:6 (TLB)

Try to apply a new routine of using the Divert Daily method:

- Ask two questions at the end of the night.
 - What is one thing today that encouraged you?
 - What is one thing today that discouraged you?
- Pray together (out loud)
 - Thank God for the encouragement
 - Ask God for help with any discouragement or resentment.

Talk about a withdraw weekly rhythm
and how you can use the framework that Ann mentioned:

- Where are we on a scale of 1-10?
- What can we do to make it better?

Start dreaming about what Abandoning Annually would look like. A Marriage Retreat?
Weekend to Remember? No-Kids Weekend Away? Camping Trip? Vacation?

Read More

For those of you reading along with the book *Vertical Marriage* by Dave and Ann Wilson, **Part One: Going Vertical** (chapters 1-4) compliments this week.

