

BE LIKE JESUS!

Scripture used: [II Corinthians 3:18 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Dan Monroe, who leads our Pastoral Care and Families team, and his wife Rebecca, offered a powerful sermon using their own marriage as an example of how we can grow to be more like Jesus. 53 year ago, they met in high school and immediately started “going steady,” then married 4 years later. Through many celebrations and challenges, Pastor Dan and Rebecca have steadily improved in their faith. They didn’t know much about being married at first, and it took years before Pastor Dan realized how important it was for him to be vulnerable with his wife. He didn’t need to be macho in front of her and pretend he had all the answers. As he learned to lean more on her, she started growing in confidence. The two of them became equal partners, ministering together and supporting each other in difficult times. They learned to pray together daily to be on the same team when help was needed in their lives. Throughout their walk with God, Pastor Dan and Rebecca lived more and more like Jesus. They learned to support each other, to forgive each other, and most importantly to pray for each other!

KEY POINTS

- 1) **God is trying to draw us nearer to him.** Every single thing that happens to us can be used to draw closer to God. It could a crisis or a blessing. What’s important is that God wants to train us in righteousness, which can be a painful process. That is why he describes it as iron sharpening iron in [Proverbs 27:17 \(NIV\)](#).
- 2) **Every relationship is an opportunity to be more like Jesus.** This is especially true in family relationships and in marriage, but it is also true in relationships we have at work, with neighbors, and with friends. Pastor Dan learned this as he struggled with his role as a new husband. God answered his prayer for wisdom by directing him to [I Thessalonians 5:11 \(NIV\)](#). From this passage, he focused on building up Rebecca instead of trying to tell her what to do. She shared how important this was for her own growth, and for their marriage to grow into a true partnership.
- 3) **Forgiveness is a part of our walk with God, and each other.** Rebecca shared a quote from Billy Graham’s wife Ruth: “A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.” We get frustrated with little annoyances, and sometimes we wound each other by saying hurtful things. But when we commit to each other, we must be ready to forgive.
 - a. **We can forgive anytime.** Rebecca shared the story of needing to forgive someone who had already died. She struggled for years with this problem, then heard from God that she should write a letter. Forgiveness flowed out of her as she wrote it. She thought about how God forgave her, and how she needed to reflect that forgiveness to others as it says in [Colossians 3:13 \(NIV\)](#).
 - b. **We should pray for those who need it, not just those we like.** [James 5:16 \(NIV\)](#) tells us that our prayers are effective, especially when we are in right relationship with God. We should combine this with [Luke 6:28 \(NIV\)](#), which tells us to pray for those who “curse” and even “mistreat” us. There is no one beyond forgiveness because Jesus loved us and forgave when we were at our absolute worst. Our relationships are opportunities to prove that we truly believe this!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Rebecca reminded us that we can hold true to our values without condemning or mistreating others. Do you think this is harder in the age of social media?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Pastor Dan and Rebecca courageously offered their testimonies from almost 50 years of marriage. They spoke about their unique challenges individually, as a couple, and as parents and grandparents. Reflect on your own life. Where do you struggle the most in your relationships? How would you behave differently if you were behaving like Jesus?
- 3) **DO** - Be specific about how you want to be more like Jesus, especially in your relationships. Go through [the “One another” scriptures in the Bible](#) that Pastor Dan and Rebecca mentioned. Select 2-3 that resonate with you, then write them down. Every day this week ask God to help you put them into practice in your life.