



Marriage Growth-Track

Week 9 - Day 1

Two Are Better

by Chris and Amanda Watson

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

There's few people who would argue the point that marriage is difficult. Couples must learn to stand together through difficulties if they hold out any hope for a long-term and enjoyable relationship together. You've undoubtedly heard the saying, "There's no 'I' in team," but the same holds true for teamwork—there is no 'I' there either. For a marriage to succeed long-term, you have to learn to work together as a team.

This applies to all areas of marriage—raising the kids, finances, household chores, even intimacy. It's normal to fall out of sync in all of these areas occasionally, but working together and considering yourselves as a team most of the time is what ensures deepening and fulfilling marriages. This is what we see in these verses:

- The two of you—working together—can accomplish more than each of you separately;
- If one of you falls, you are fortunate to have someone always willing to come alongside of you to help you up;
- Those without trusted spouses to aid and support them can sometimes be without someone to help them in their time of need

Sometimes the smallest things can upset the rhythm of your daily life. A sprained ankle, a bout with the flu, or a car in the shop for repairs can bring with it far-reaching inconveniences and the need for flexibility and adjustments to your routine both at work and at home. When mom is sick, dad is called into action to cover her routine responsibilities; likewise, when he is sick, mom picks up the slack taking over his tasks. It's a give-and-take process that gets easier over time.

Most of the time these setbacks are temporary and unintentional, and while they may require somebody washing dishes who isn't used to doing so or helping with homework when you'd really rather not, it's all part of the privilege of service that comes with marriage. When we consider it an opportunity to take on some of our spouse's normal

responsibilities instead of begrudging them for being 'out of service' for a bit, we are earning a bit of 'street cred'—or credibility that backs up our casual 'I love you' as we walk out the door each day. It proves we mean what we say and that we're in this marriage bit 'for the long haul.'

It can be stressful when we hit a snag that disrupts our routines, but it can also be a terrific opportunity—an opportunity to let your actions speak louder than your words.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you pick up the slack for your spouse before they ask?
2. Does how your parents approach male and female roles in marriage shape your attitude toward your responsibilities?

Action Steps:

Make a chart and list of your partner's chores, and post it on your refrigerator. Pitch in and help when your spouse needs help without being asked.

Prayer:

Father, please grace us with the strength to get through those difficult times when they arise. We are so blessed that you gave us a partner to help share those hardships with. We are truly grateful to have you with us as we work together. Father, we ask that you strengthen our team as husband and wife and protect us from future difficulties.