

**Break Free**  
**Series: 5 Words --- Week 3**  
**Genesis 2:24**

**Dr. Matt Cassidy --- September 5, 2021**

Well, good morning. Thanks for joining us today. Do you know this guy from Princess Bride?



Please, tell me ... you have to have seen this movie. “Mawwiage is what bwings us togetheh today. Mawwiage, the blessed agweement, a dweam within a dweam. Wuv, twue wuv, will follow you foweveh.”

It occurred to me just this month that people outside the church who don’t know me probably think I’m this guy, that that’s what I do. And it wasn’t a flattering moment. But I’ll tell

you, some of the most surreal and transcendent blessings I've had in my life are because of my career as a pastor. When I get to officiate a wedding of someone that I've known for some time, or of the children of someone I've known—sometimes the children in our church that I saw grow up and then they get married—you have to have done it.

And I'm sorry, this is a terrible illustration, but when you're up here, it's just three people. It's you and you're talking to a bride and a groom, and they're sealing a covenant with Yahweh God. And there could be hundreds of people watching, but it's this small, quiet, sacred, special conversation. It's this intimate thing that you can't experience any other way. Sometimes I just kind of drift off...

So, anyway, during a musical interlude or something I'll turn off my microphone and they're usually kind of scared and all, and I'll settle them down and say, "Be in this moment. Slow down and drink this in." And sometimes I'll say some encouraging words about marriage. "Marriage is going to bring you into an interdependent relationship with God that you could not imagine to experience physically or emotionally; that there will be times when you will find yourself completely lost in the 'us'—that you are 'us' now—just the two of you." And I'll say, "This day right here is the least you're ever going to love each other for the rest of your life." And they're shocked.

There are other things I could say that are also true: that "Marriage will crack your soul to the magma and marriage will push you into places that you don't even know to fear. And the words of your husband or your wife will pierce you deeper than any javelin. So, don't mess this up."

I don't say that second part.

How do you not mess up a marriage? Here's something just to start with. Just keep it simple. Just keep marriage simple. Marriage is simple. The essence of marriage is simple. It's hard, but it's not complicated. It's difficult.

Life is simple. A lot of life is simple, but it's just painful. Life is suffering—the Buddha, he's right—but it's not complicated. It doesn't have to be.

That value is all around us. Look at all the individual sports. They're not all that complicated. They're just really difficult. Golf: I know nothing about this sport, but it looks like there's about five strokes. You master those five strokes and you'll be in that Masters wearing a green coat.



I know a little bit about tennis. Tennis has got about, I don't know, five swings to it. If you're really good at those five swings you'll be playing before the Queen of England and holding up a plate at Wimbledon.



Now jujitsu—I know some things about that. But there are 23,642 moves in jujitsu. But if you're the greatest of all time and your name is Roger Gracie who won international world championships ten times, he would say, "You only have to know"—guess—"five moves." You only have to know five moves.



I mean, I'll admit, if you can win the jacket or the platter or wear the belt, you have to be an exclusive athlete and you have to have a work ethic that's compulsive. Okay, that's true. But I'm just saying that the sports themselves are not complicated. In these sports, people aren't coming up with new ways of doing things, they're just doing it better than it's been done before. They're simple, but it's difficult.

Marriage: simple and difficult. Marriage: five words. That's it. Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect. Let's say them together: Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect.

## Genesis 2: God's Blueprint for Marriage

It all starts in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis. God is defining what marriage is. In Genesis chapter 2 verse 24, He's going to roll out what sometimes is called the blueprint for marriage. Keep in mind, a blueprint isn't a road map; it's not how to get there. It is the destination itself. This is what it's supposed to look like.

### Genesis 2:24

**Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

He says this: "Therefore shall a man leave"—we're using the word *break* here—"shall a man break with his father and mother, and shall cleave"—we use the word *bond*—"to his wife. And they shall be one flesh."

This passage is called a passage of primary reference. And what that means is that it is a definition of something that's consequential and is so simplistic and true that it transcends millennia and cultures, epics. It will always be the definition of marriage. It's used in the Bible five times—the sentence itself is used five times in the Bible as the definition of marriage. Jesus teaches on marriage and He uses Genesis 2:24. Paul uses it in his Book of Ephesians when he has a section on marriage. He goes to Genesis 2:24. It's timeless, it's relevant. What God says to Adam and Eve still applies to us today.

And we're going to use this as a way of making great marriages. And one of the things that I'd like you to consider as a supplement in our journey together for the next couple of weeks on making great marriages is a thing called the Couples Checkup. The Couple's Checkup is put together by a group called Prepare/Enrich. We've used that organization for over twenty-five or maybe thirty years here at Grace Covenant Church. It is the primary relational diagnostic organization in the world. It's very good data. And you can go. There's a link on our webpage, I think even on the home page, that will take you to that. It's \$35.00 and it takes about fifteen minutes. It's for anybody in a significant relationship with someone else, whether you're married

or pre-marriage or engaged or just dating. And it's going to break up where you guys are on working together on things like communication and conflict and financial ambitions and spiritual life. Please consider spending about as much time or money as you would on a happy hour date and look into this. And it will print it out for you and let you know the areas where you might need some work.

## To Break Means Cutting the Cords

Today we're looking at the five words. And the word we're looking at today is the word **Break** ... or leave. What does it mean to break? What does it mean to leave your father and mother? This is going to sting. This one's hard on you parents. Here's the saying: a parent's job is to say goodbye. That's fundamental. A parent's job is to say goodbye, and a child's job is to leave. They've got to leave.

Break means cutting cords. That's a great definition. It's the idea of cutting cords. The umbilical cord is an obvious reference here when that cord is cut. But as parents you have these safety cords and emotional cords and various cords that are connecting, for protection, for physical needs and financial needs. And your life as a parent is constantly cutting those cords. And you're saying, *I don't want you to be connected to me in this area anymore. I want you to connect to God in this. I want you to trust God for your provisions now. I want you disconnect with me and learn how to trust God for your protection, not just your provisions.*

And as a parent, you're constantly working your way into cutting these cords. And it would be great if you didn't have too many cords connected on the day your child gets married. As little kids you can teach them about financial responsibility and have them start a lemonade stand when they want to buy a skateboard. So, you help them do that and you teach them how to trust in God as to if they ever get sales or not. You teach them to trust God for contentment. Because if they're content, then they're already rich.

And then it morphs on, later on in the teen years, as well. You teach your children how to have conflict. We don't come knowing how to do that well. We know how to do it poorly and instinctively. But you could show them in your own modeling at home, and then you have something with their brothers and sisters each time you're training them. But at some point, you say, *Look, I need you to learn how to trust God in your relationship with your friend. Two years ago, I would have called the mom and we would've sat down, but I'm not doing that anymore.*

*And I want you to trust God to understand the power of this verse. And this verse is that as much as it's up to you, you need to be at peace with all men.*

You do this when you're teaching them the power of community and how to make friends. So, when you're young and super connected to each other, you have playdates. What are playdates? It's all but arranged marriage in some respects. You arrange friendships. *I'm going to make sure you pick the right friends and I'm going to pick them for you.* And so, you do these playdates, and all that's good, because they see the power of community. Somewhere in there, junior high or high school, you're saying, *Okay, now you're going to have to learn how to make friends on your own, and you're going to have to learn that if you run with the wrong crowd, you're going to die with the wrong crowd. If you run with the right crowd, you could end up doing things you couldn't do otherwise. And you need to learn how to trust God for this, because there's a tuition that's paid for good friends, and that's loneliness. And so, you'll need to learn how be alone without being lonely. Because if you're willing to endure that, God will bring you some really great friends.*

So, marriage is this idea of cutting cords. It's disconnecting these cords throughout your parenting and your childhood. You try to do that too: *Let me try this, Mom, I think I can do this now.* And a great gift parents can give to their children when they get married is to not have a lot of cords left that are connected. You have an interdependent adult getting involved in this relationship.

### **Why Leaving Is Important**

Why is it so important that to break or leave is involved in this? Why is it first? Because the purpose of marriage is intimacy. It's intimacy with this person you're saying these sacred vows to, but also, it's intimacy with God. And intimacy grows in a soil of trust. This new couple needs to learn how to trust each other at deep levels now. And the trust they're getting involved in requires more than they've ever had before. They haven't needed to do that.

But furthermore—it's not just trust by itself—it's abandoning the old trust that you had in a stable—hopefully—let's just say “stable”—family where provisions and protections and those sorts of things are good, and now you're going off by yourself. This new couple has to start all over again in new ways. And it's not trust for trust's sake. They're going to have to learn how to

trust God together in a new journey that God has for this couple to become connected and intimate with one another.

And so, this is a greater trust that's required, and it's an unknown trust into the scary part, and you're leaving a known trust behind. And so, listen, it's a trapeze act. I mean, you're swinging from something you do know that works just fine, and you've got to let go to grab onto the next one. You've got to break that relationship tie and confidence to go on to the next journey in your life. You've got to break to move on.

Probably it's easy, when you look at the passage about leaving your father and mother (that's the King James version)—it sounds like you're just leaving. In many cultures, modern cultures, it means "leave"—physically. But when it was written, it didn't mean to leave physically. It meant psychologically or spiritually. As a matter of fact, in the ancient Near East, especially when this was written, but for five hundred years or whatever, the people of Israel were like nomads. They lived in tents and were ranchers and farmers. And so, when your son or daughter got married, they just moved into the tent next door. That's about as far as they moved, and they're still working the family farm. Later when things became more civilized, they moved into the cities and would live in a single house and they would have a room to themselves, but they were still part of the family household. Sometimes, if they were wealthy, they would have maybe a series of houses and they would live on the plantation or on the ranch and have their own house altogether. But the point of that is that it was never about distance, physically. It was about allegiance. It was about how the day after those vows are taken, your primary loyalty is not to parents or siblings or extended family or even the family business; it is to this man or woman that you swore to God that this is the person who is most in your life.

And so, it's not like cutting off your parents because you said some words to God that you would leave. No, it's a dynamic change in the definition of the relationships. So now the parents aren't like parents. What are they? They're friends. Now you can be friends. And you're kind of cheating and going to the head of the line. Now you're friends that have known this person their whole life and hopefully, you love them more than anyone else and you know a lot about who they are and what they like. But you're just friends. And when you act like friends, then there are not as many obligations. They can come over to the house or not come over to the house. If you make them mad, they might not come back for a while. So, you're nicer to friends than you are family, right? Why don't you treat them like friends?



Breaking. Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect. Break: it means cutting the cords of dependence a lot.

### **To Break Means Building Boundaries**

It also means building boundaries. Breaking means building boundaries. Before we think of it metaphorically, let's look at it literally. Boundaries are a great thing. You buy a house and one of the first things that happens is that you have a surveyor come over and he puts flags in the grass or the dirt or the rocks, and he says, "This side is your house and your property line, and this side is their house and their property line." And that's for truth, but it's also for peace and safety. Now there's no kind of question about who's going to be responsible for what happens where. It's like, *This is my side and I'll take care of that. This is your side—that's great.* And it's to protect.

And so, the idea of a boundary—now we're talking about in a marriage where you're cutting or breaking---if you would think it's in this soil of trust, this deep-seeded trust, this new trust—think of it as this little seedling that's just getting started. And it needs protective custody, especially when it's young, and so the boundary is like setting up something around plants so the deer won't eat it and nothing comes and tramples it. And the boundaries are to make it strong. They are to keep it safe.

Now I'll just say on the side—boundaries where you're asking some people in some circumstances to stay out of your life, when you're newlyweds especially, and it's based on jealousy or possessiveness, to stay away from family or friends—that's not biblical. And I remember early on in our marriage I was jealous of some of Melinda's friends and her sister because they had so much more fun together. And so, we couldn't set up a boundary there—that's just pettiness that needs to be confessed.

So, it's a purposeful boundary to protect the delicacy of this newborn trust together. The point of the boundaries is to uncomplicate so that the two can bond to one another. Next week we'll talk about bonding—breaking and bonding—and the cleaner the break, the cleaner the bond. The more entangled the break—you still have cords not cut—then the more difficult the bonding is going to be.

So, breaking away, setting these boundaries, can have to do with old stuff that just gets in the way. It could be family—family members and siblings. It could be your past—you should

break ties with your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend. Yes, absolutely. Maybe you need to break ties with your old hobbies—hunting and fishing—or something that took up a lot of your time, whatever that might be.

Breaking is not like leaving everything behind—*We're not doing anything for our first year except being with each other*—ugh! It just means that you're looking at your husband or your wife and saying, *I'm willing to give up anything for the sake of our marriage. I want to do whatever I have to in order to make the growth of our trust a priority. That's what I want to do. It's first.*

### **How to Break: Primacy**

So, how do you break? Breaking is about primacy and power. Breaking in primacy means that I will forsake all others for you. You are first in my life—first, the primary thing. And so, sometimes—especially when it comes to a new family and we're talking about in-laws—it's not the big events, but they just kind of show what's a priority. Sometimes it can be the little events. Classic, right? Christmas. Where are you spending Christmas morning? Whose house and why? How about in ten years from now? Okay, how about this? When are you going to have your own Christmas at your house with your children where they wake up? Because friends, when you have your own Christmas with your little kiddies in their jammies, you determine the tone—whether you're going to have cinnamon rolls by a fireplace. This is your event. You're going to love that day. How do you get there? How many people are you going to upset by making those decisions? And who's going to take point on that? That's just an example of letting other things go.

Sometimes it's a choice between extended family and a job. This job is going to take me out of state and away from all my family. What are you more committed to? Because breaking is boundaries. And that needs to be discussed.

Sometimes it's child-raising. If you were raised by being home-schooled, does that mean that your kids have to be home-schooled? If you were in public school, does that mean your kids are going to go to public school? You break those. You put boundaries on that. It's your new family. You start with what you want to do.

Here's the thing. Breaking, leaving, cutting cords, setting boundaries—all of that is saying this: *I will no longer try to win the approval of my parents and my family. I'm primarily trying to win our togetherness.* That's what it's saying. *They don't count like you count.*

It's great if both parties are in on this together. It's great if the parents are saying, *Hey, no, no, you don't have to come here for Christmas. You can do whatever you want. If you want to come, that'd be great! But if you don't want to come, that's great. You just do what you want to do.* Because a parent's job is to say goodbye. A child's job is to walk away.

It's asking the question: *Will you live or die for me in this new relationship, or are you still in pursuit of your parents' pat on the head?*

Primacy means this: you would rather upset your parents or your big brother than upset the fledging trust that we're working on together. You're willing to bear the phone calls or the snarky e-mails because you would rather us grow strong.

### How to Break: Power

Breaking is primacy. Breaking is about power. The idea where you obey your parents—that doesn't matter anymore. I mean, those days are gone because you have a new family. You have a new umbrella of authority to sit under.

**My wife must know that no power exists outside of us that has sovereignty over our lives other than God. My allegiance is not to kin, ethnicity, country, company, church, or social standing. It is to my wife. Any other perspective puts my wife in the role of competing for my loyalty and love.**

--- Dan Allender

I want you to listen to this quote by Dan Allender. It's about how his wife should expect him to behave. And I want you to listen to this: listen to how she can rest, how she can trust, how she can be safe, how she's not threatened. Because this is Dan Allender's view about breaking when it comes to power and primacy. He says this: "My wife must know that no power exists outside of us that has sovereignty over our lives other than God. My allegiance is not to kin,

ethnicity, country, company, church or social standing. It is to my wife. Any other perspective puts my wife in the role of competing for my loyalty and love.”

No husband and no wife should have to compete for primacy, whether it’s family, or a job, or ethnicity, or whatever it might be. Safety comes, assurance comes, rest comes. It means letting old loyalties and values be left behind. When I was single, I was primarily loyal to work. Honestly, I didn’t have anything else to do. And so, when I got married, I had something a lot better to do. She should not feel like I’m having an affair with the workplace.

Sometimes it’s just values. You grow up in a very affluent family and you can have the value in your stuff, that *I will never not be rich*. That’s above your mate, and you’re making decisions based on that value. Sometimes the opposite is true. You grow up in poverty and you say, *I will never be poor again*. And you’re making decisions based not on what’s best for the two of you, but how you get out of this *I’m never going to be impoverished again*.

Breaking means putting away, a boundary, cutting off even past injuries. Boy, wouldn’t it be something if we had weddings where people walk down the aisle and they literally carried the baggage that they have. Because we all get beat up, we all have a lot of deep wounds when we say our vows. And it’s because in those times of injury and hurt, as single people, we say, *You know what? I’m just going to adapt. I’m going to make this work for me*. And it’s usually maladapting and it works nicely.

But when you get married, your mate should not have to inherit your baggage. That’s not fair to them. And so, wait—watch this. Marriage is the means that God uses to make us like Christ in all of life. Marriage is the primary means that God uses to make us like Christ. Marriage is the primary means that God uses for us to finally get rid of that dadgum baggage, to get it done with. And so, your mate gets to the voice. Whereas the voice in your head was the only thing you were listening to, now your mate gets to say, *What would happen if you completely surrendered to the grace of God? What would happen if the power of the gospel were to be injected into this addiction? What would happen if—what we sang about—if the Lord were to become the Lord of your shame? What if I brought honor into that? I could be the voice of God saying to you, “Honor replaces that.”*

When I was in my doctoral program, I had a class—I forgot the name of it, but it was about terrible counseling situations, distressful counseling scenarios. And this one was about sexual abuse. So, our professor brought his wife in because his wife had been sexually abused as

a child and as a teenager. And they just told their story. She came into the marriage and, as you would imagine, had considerable difficulties with expressing intimacy with her husband. But that wasn't what hurt her deeply. What hurt her was this thought: *That man sinned against me and now he sinned against you. You're having to pay the price for his sins.* And she didn't know what to do about it. And she couldn't fix it. And this prof was such a saint—oh, I love the man. He said to her, “But baby, that's what I'm for. You see, yeah, you can't deal with that without--- God sent me to you so I could be the voice of the Gospel, so the Lord could be the Lord of your past. And we'll work through this, and we'll show how what you once felt was shameful now gives honor to God. And we're going to work through this together and we are going to become like Christ in our marriage, in all of our life.”

When she heard that from him, it was like a road opened up that had never existed previously. And they walked down that road together, that journey of healing. That's what they did. Because they knew their place. She knew she had to get rid of that, but she couldn't do it. But they knew they could do it together.

Marriage is simple, but it's not easy. It is hard. Break, bond, one, love, respect. And break means cutting cords. It means setting up boundaries. It means starting all over again, starting anew. And everybody needs to know that.

Chip Ingram teaches on this, and when he was teaching at a conference—he's a nationally known guy—a woman came up after and said, “I want to tell you a story about breaking, about leaving your father and mother. We were married about two months and we had our first real argument. We were yelling and crying and everything, and I got in my car and drove home to my mom and dad's house. It was one o'clock in the morning and I'm banging on the door. My mom comes the door and looks over through the window. She said, ‘Jenny, what are you doing?’ I said, ‘We just had this terrible fight and I can't believe this, so I just wanted to come home.’”

And the mom said, “This isn't your home. This is where Dad and I live. Your home is with him. Drive safe.”

She swallowed her pride and went back, probably slept, and then had a talk and worked it out. But she said to Chip, “That was the best marriage present we got for our whole wedding time. I learned that that's not my home.”

Where do you go when things get tough? You're not supposed to run home. Well, that's the whole point of the church. I mean, that's why we're connected through communities here. That's why we're in this thing called relational discipleship. That's why all of our ministries are based on some kind of mentoring, trickle-down-wisdom sort of thing—every one of our ministries. That's why we have pre-marriage ministries, we have marriage counseling, we have individual marriage counseling, we have ReEngage counseling. All of those are in the context of mentoring. You can join a men's group or a women's group. All of those are going to be talking about marriage issues. Someone older than you or the same age (but has been through more stuff) is there for you. But it doesn't work unless you get involved in a local church. It's a big system. It's the way it all works.

## Exceptions

Let me tell you two exceptions, and this will carry on for the whole series. I just need to say a couple of things that make the five words not so simple. And running home to mom and dad? Not the worst thing to do. One is when there is domestic abuse and domestic violence involved. Now those are two different words and they're purposeful. If you're in a relationship or know someone in a relationship that has had domestic violence—they've been choked or pushed against the wall or been slapped or punched by their husband or their wife—that incident is not in isolation. That's called domestic violence, but it's preceded sometimes by months and years of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is wearing the soul down to take that hit later. And it gets very complicated.

And here's the advice. If you're in that kind of relationship, you need to not call the pastor or your friends; call the police. Because a second-year police officer knows more about how to deal with domestic violence and the abuse that preceded it than a ten-year pastor or your childhood friend who has known you your whole life. They can be kind of a support, but it is too complicated and it's layers deep. And certainly, stay in touch, because the abuser will usually try to isolate the victim so they can talk them back into redefining what really happened in that event. So, stay in touch, but if you're one of the friends, you need to get that person to a professional counselor that specializes in this. And if there's ever a doubt, you call the police.

The church—what do we do? Man, we want to come in and help every way we can. But we're in over our heads. But we can pay for the counseling, we can maybe find you a place to

stay. We'll do everything we can do. But domestic violence with domestic abuse—that's the answer. Call the police.

A second exception that makes things difficult is called an overconnected family. And there are a lot of overconnected families in our church. We seem to attract them, for recovery purposes, because we try to show them grace and where boundaries are supposed to be. But if you're an overconnected family, it means that, maybe for generations, or just this one generation, no one leaves. No one leaves. And we do what mom and dad say or else everybody punishes you. And honestly, one of the best things you can do is move a thousand miles away. And two, get a mentor that has survived an overconnected family, because a mentor is going to come in and say, "That's false guilt. That's illegitimate grief. They're playing you. Let me answer your mail for you."

So, those two—domestic abuse and violence, and overconnected families—those are over there. We're talking about the rest of us.

## Summary

Here's a summary of applications. Marriage is a sacred journey of interdependence, intertwining, where God places His Spirit in us so that we could co-journey together in this event of redemption. And it's a place where we're leaving almost everything that's comfortable and enjoyable and safe and going into a whole new we-don't-know-what financially, physically. We don't know where it goes. We're going to trust God in whole new ways. And it's a beautiful experience.

## Application Parents: Start Letting Go ...

So, let's talk about application. When we talk about parents, start right now cutting some cords. Start right now training and teaching your kids to be independent, or interdependent—whichever. Teach your children how to fail. Read one book with the word "grit" in the title—on parenting. Teach them how to fail. Teach them how to take responsibility. Tell them, *Look, no, this one's going to be on you*. Teach them how to trust God for these things. Because the parents' job is to say goodbye. And a child's job is to leave.

**Application**  
**Teenagers, Singles: Take Responsibility**

Teenagers, junior high and above—take responsibility. Here are some key life goals: learn how to make good friends; learn how to be alone without being lonely so you earn good friends; learn how to be financially content, because then you're rich; learn how to develop your own spiritual life. Don't ask your mom to wake you up in the morning. Whatever this is, start becoming your own adult. Grow a spine. You're going to need that.

**Application**  
**Married People: Have a Conversation**

And then for the married people—here's what I'm asking you to do. Married people, kindly, gently, sweetly, with a lot of grace, have this conversation: ask your mate, "What do I need to break from? What do I need to leave? Is there something I need to do or something I need to stop doing? How fast?" Be nice. "What do I need to stop? What do you think is more important than me? I don't want to have to compete with your \_\_\_\_." And then talk it out. Have that conversation. And watch the trust grow and the roots grow deep, and see your spiritual life grow, and your relationship grow.

Parenting is simple—and it's so painful, just like life. I don't know what year it was, because I don't know what year it is—it's this COVID thing. Anyway, a couple of years ago—maybe last year, I don't know—anyway, the point is, sorry—Melinda and I have two daughters out on the west coast. They live in Los Angeles. They both drive these little convertibles. And when we go out there we just drive around the Pacific coast highway with the top down, listening to music and stopping at various beaches, constantly playing these fourteen songs over and over again. We have bonfires at Huntington Beach and then somewhere else, everywhere we go. And the playlist has a lot of really great classic rock 'n' roll. And then they have these brand-new songs on there from a band called One Direction.

So, every time One Direction would play, I'd say, "Wow, that's a fun song. Who's that?"

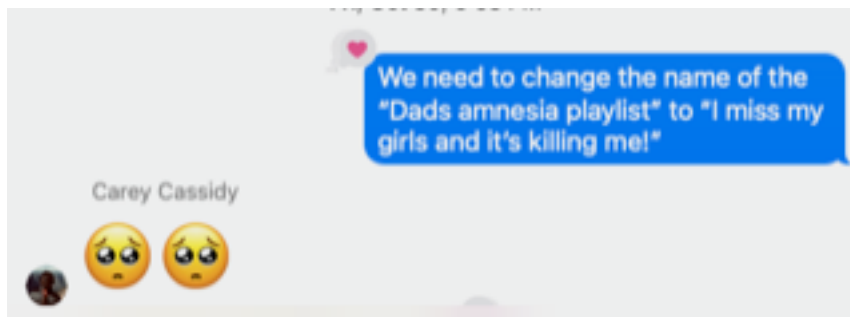
And they'd say, "Dad, that's One Direction."

I'd say, "I don't know about ..."



So, the point is that we're playing these songs all the time and everything we're doing we're having a lot of fun. And I kept forgetting that Harry Stiles One Direction guy. So, they named the Spotify playlist "Dad's Amnesia Playlist." And I think I keep forgetting One Direction because it's a boy band and I don't feel like I should be following a boy band, okay? I'm a snob, okay?

So, what's great is that after the event, I go home and the girls are playing this playlist while they're driving around and having their dreams come true, and I'm listening to it while I'm doing yard work and when Melinda and I drive around for fun. But in October I was studying in my office and I was playing "Dad's Amnesia Playlist." And all of a sudden, this cold front of melancholy just hit me. And I felt like this wave of sorrow was coming over me, and I was just choking back these tears, because I was just looking at the house and it was so empty and quiet. And my girls are gone. And it's this playlist to remind us of how much fun we had together, and all I'm remembering is the vacuum that's been left.



And so, I sent to the girls a message saying, "Hey, change the name of this playlist to 'I Miss My Girls and It's Killing Me Playlist.'" So, Carey sent these little sad faces, and then they did. There's the new playlist. It's called "I Miss My Girls and It's Killing Me Playlist."



But this is parenting in a playlist. They listen to that and they are reminded of their dreams coming true. I mean, if they told you what their life is like, they would start crying, because one of them is working at Disneyland and the other one is working in fashion, living in southern California. They're enjoying each other and having a great time. And they weep when they tell the story.

And when I hear that soundtrack, I just see that they're gone. And I'm crying. But it's a good grief. This relationship that I've had with these girls is the way it's always been. They're always walking away from me. When they learned to walk, they walked away from me. And they have new freedom and I have new loss. When they crossed the street for the first time, it was to go to the other side, a new freedom at my cost. In kindergarten, we left them and they made new friends. And when we fixed their dorms up, they were making it like where they were going to live. And now that they're living in apartments, they're calling that home. And every time they left, they experienced new freedom at my expense.

And then someday I'll be wearing this suit, and I'm going to walk them down an aisle. And I'm going to say the only thing I'm supposed to say: "Her mother and I do." And then I'm going to go and sit down. And that'll be that.

A parent's job is to say goodbye. A child's job is to walk away. It's simple. But it hurts. But it's good grief. Let's do this right. Let's pray.

*Lord, it's hard to pray to You about parenting. I guess You understand all about that. We watch our children lose their innocence as they become grown adults and that weighs heavy. We miss them when they were kittens and puppies. That's heavy.*

*Lord, I'd ask that You would allow us to rise above how we feel, and rather, be responsible for what we've been asked to do; that You would help us as parents cut cords, and as young marrieds cut cords, build boundaries; that we might exemplify what a marriage is--a new adventure of trusting You and living by faith in ways that we couldn't do if You weren't involved.*

*Lord, let us be the healer of our mate. Let us be the special person that You've brought into these lives so that we may become like Christ in ways that we couldn't do otherwise. Let us focus out on how to serve, how to care, how to gaze, how to love, how to know. Lord, we want to make you proud about what You meant when You said, "You're going to break that bond with mother and father so you can bond with your wife and the two would become one to the glory of God."*

*And all God's people said ... Amen.*