



## Better Together, Week 1 February 2 & 3

**Speaker:** Joel and Nina Schmidgall

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, Luke 11:17, James 4:1-2

### Sermon Overview

*Your quality of life isn't just dependent upon WHAT you do, but WHO you do it WITH. The author of Ecclesiastes said, "Two are better than one." The fact is this: We're not made to do life alone - we are better together! This month, we'll talk about all kinds of relationships, but today we focus in on being better together within marriage. Joel and Nina Schmidgall will share some founding principles as well as a few thoughts out of their book *Praying Circles Around Your Marriage*.*

### Sermon Series Questions:

1. Share about a relationship that is currently making you better?
2. What did God reveal to you about your relationships this week?

### Sermon Specific Questions:

1. Growing up, what were your pictures of marriage?
2. What would you say are some of your relational values?
3. Relationships all vary in proximity – marriages, close friendships, business partnerships, and even family relationships. However, what are some practical ways you can have a shared vision with them?
4. Conflict is normal within all relationships. Therefore, how can you disagree well? What is the most difficult thing for you in conflict?
5. What strengths do you have that contribute positively to your relationships? What weaknesses are you aware of that make relationships more difficult for you?
6. As we focus on building healthy relationships, which relationship do you want to be more prayerful and intentional about for the next couple of weeks?

## Better Together: Same Team, Shared Vision

The word division translates into “*two visions*,” and Ecclesiastes 1 talks about how we can help one another along better when we are in alignment in value and vision. Below are two exercises to help you explore your relationships with others. Do these exercises with a spouse, friend, partner, or family member this week!

### Values, Vision Purpose:

- **Values:** Identify three to five values that are *most* important to you in your relationships. Write down each value and what it means to you.
- **Vision:** Discuss which values you share with each other and which values differ. How well do you two work together as you pursue these values?
- **Purpose:** Vision births from values and help us walk towards our purpose. Discuss ways that you can impact the greater community together.

**Conflict and Differences:** Joel and Nina shared that the “true source of conflict is not getting something we want” and “unmet expectations”. Here are a few exercises to help you navigate conflict in a healthier way:

- **Celebrating Differences:** What are types of differences do you have with one another? Share how you celebrate your differences and use them to complement one another.
- **Differing Responses:** Do you have a tiger or turtle response in conflict? (Tigers confront, turtles retreat). How can you respond healthily when someone differs in response? When do you have the same response?
- **Remembering Truth:** Inner voices can sometimes tell us lies about another person that is damaging to the relationship. What do you *know to be true* about those closest to you? As a way to remember truth in the midst of conflict, write down a few truths about your spouse and/or a few friends.

## Resources

Check out Pastor Joel & Nina Schmidgall’s new book ***Praying Circles Around Your Marriage***. Their new book is currently available here:

**iTunes Books:**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/praying-circles-around-your-marriage/id1400067036>

**Amazon:**

<https://www.amazon.com/Praying-Circles-around-Your-Marriage/dp/0310354889>