

‘Marriage with intentionality’: Hodges shares the impact of marriage ministry

Brad Hodges, Groups Pastor at Temple Church in Hattiesburg, joined Tanner Cade, Director of Communication Services, and Jon Martin, Chief Strategy Officer, on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board’s (MBCB) “Around the Table” podcast. They discussed the importance of marriage ministry in the church, the Reengage ministry started by Hodges and his wife, his own testimony from marital struggles to a Christ-rooted relationship, and the testimonies he has witnessed along the way.

In college, Hodges assumed few vocations could truly make an impact in God’s kingdom, and those were either to serve as a missionary, a church planter, or equip other pastors as a professor. As he grew in his understanding of the Lord’s will for his life, however, he began to see God open impactful opportunities outside of this opinion.

“As I started working in churches,” Hodges related, “I realized that marriage affects so many things in our society. Obviously, it affects people’s lives and how they grow up; it affects our church, how our picture of God gets colored from the way we grow up, whether our parents have healthy, unhealthy, broken, or complete marriages. When things got crazy in my own marriage, we got help from other believers in our church, and man, I just wanted to help other marriages. From a church perspective, I really learned that marriage ministry is so important.”

After having served in various pastoral positions for adults

across multiple churches, Hodges now serves as the Groups and Discipleship Pastor at his home church, Temple, where he has worked for nine years. He is currently working on his Doctor of Ministry degree with Emphasis in Marriage and Discipleship at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

“For the last 12 years,” Hodges shared, “my wife and I have started a ministry called Reengage. It was started at a church called Watermark Community Church in Dallas years ago, and it has gone nationwide and even international at this point.

“What it looks like on a Wednesday night at our church is in a large group setting, but this will work in any size church. We’re all together, and I find couples willing to share their story. There are videos you can use, but it’s better if it’s people in your church.

“For 20 minutes, they tell their story. I give them a little something to help them put it together, I ask them to type it up, and I’ll help them edit it a little bit. They don’t have to be a great speaker; they just tell their story, a little bit about how they got together, and then pick out something in their marriage that they feel would be relevant for other people. It’s usually something messy and hard. They talk about that and how God has redeemed that, and it sets the stage for the rest of the night.

“We break up into groups of four to six couples with a facilitator couple. You’re in that same group for the semester, which is 16 weeks for us. You go through a curriculum, through different topics each week, like humility, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, conflict, intimacy. Each week, they do homework. It takes about 20 minutes at home to go through it. They discuss as a couple, then they come to the group, they hear the testimony, and we talk about what they discussed as a couple that week.

“So they’re doing three things that most couples never do,”

said Hodges. “They’re hearing a very real story once a week. They’re actually talking about their marriage with intentionality every week, and they’re talking with other couples. Best part about it is, you’re going home every night thinking, ‘We’re not the only ones. We’re not alone.’”

“When you look around on Sunday, it feels like everybody’s perfect. Everybody’s dressed up, but everybody’s got issues and you don’t know it. Through Reengage, we’ve seen divorce papers torn up and thrown away. We’ve seen people come to know the Lord. Just watching God change people is so fun.”

How a Church can Plug into Reengage

“If you go to Marriage Discipleship Ministry | re|engage | Watermark Resources, they are so generous and can help you get started. The other thing you can do is contact me, and I can help you if you’re in Mississippi, said Hodges. “I’ve helped several churches with that. You can come and watch it and experience it, and I can help you walk through how to launch it. I’d love to get some more churches in Mississippi doing this, working together to heal some broken marriages. It’s not just for marriages that are falling apart, it’s also for any marriage.”

For More Information

To hear more about the six reasons marriage ministry is so important to the church, Brad Hodges’ marital testimony, and other testimonies of God redeeming marriages, listen to the full “Around the Table” podcast.

For more information on the Reengage marriage ministry, visit Marriage Discipleship Ministry | re|engage | Watermark Resources.

To contact Brad Hodges, visit Groups | Temple Baptist Church | Hattiesburg MS (tbclife.net) or email him at bhodges@tbclife.net.