

## Twolgnite

TwoPlay

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Welcome back to Twolgnite. Turn to Genesis 3. If you don't have a Bible, we would love to give you one. We have these Bibles out at the Welcome Center. You can pick one up on your way out this morning. We are starting our first Igniter today – TwoPlay.

I have to ask the question. How many of you are Lego people. I was a Lego person when I was a little kid and now I have a four year old Lego person. Carson loves building things with Legos. He can spend all day playing with Legos. Do you know why? He ain't got a job. He can spend all day playing with Legos because he ain't got no duty or responsibility.

We had the opportunity two weeks ago to take him to a Lego store. Raise you hand if you've been to a Lego store. I walked in there and kind of went back to my childhood for a bit. I thought this is good. He walked up to the first one and it was a box about this big. It was a Volkswagen Beetle that you can put together. I felt challenged; I felt inspired. He goes, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, can we do this?" "Of course we can do this..." \$59.99? How do these people sleep at night? I was like "Well, I don't think we can do that one, Carson." We ended up with a little box that had a little car on it. Ten bucks was my limit. I just couldn't go there with it. They had one thing there with Star Wars and it was like \$249.00. I scowled at the people as I walked out the door. I was like "You people... these are children; these are small children who have no jobs."

My parents bought me those sets like crazy so Mom, Dad, thank you for spending all that money and now you have to work a couple extra years into your retirement. They were a lot cheaper then. I'm going to say, Dad, when I went in there and saw the price of them, I thought they had to be cheaper then, knowing you. There is no way my dad would have spent that kind of money on Legos. But I have a son that loves playing with Legos.

The bottom line is so many of you guys in here are creative. You can be creative. When you were a kid, you played with those Legos and those Lincoln Logs and pixie sticks and all of that stuff that they still have today. I watch my son do that and I think about what is going to start happening for him? Duty and responsibility. As he starts to grow up, he is going to take on more and more responsibility and he's going to forget how to play.

He's going to get married. We've looked at this. A lot of people think that they had goals and dreams and hopes for the future, but then they got married. You hear young couples say, "We had a lot of hopes, dreams, and plans for the future, but then we had kids." They think that as duty and responsibility comes into their lives, they are supposed to stop living or stop enjoying life.

Where I want to pick up today in the scripture... I am going to have you go from here to Ecclesiastes 3 in just a second. But I want to talk for just a minute in this message about the grind. We have looked at it in Ecclesiastes 1: 4. ***Generations come and Generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and it hurries back to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north...*** So we just get this cyclical picture of the earth being a grinder.

***All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.*** The earth is a grinder that you and I are born into and life is hard. Life is full of challenges; full of difficult times; full of pain. Then you get to the end of Ecclesiastes and you grow old and die. Then in the middle of the book you read that even after you're dead, we forget about you. So if you are new to Woodland Hills, welcome. Life is hard and then you die and then you're forgotten.

Let me tell you, the Christian life... Let me tell you words that ring out for all of us as followers of Christ. Death, dying, funerals, pain, suffering, blood, that's all part of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Scripture actually says, in Ecclesiastes, that sorrow is better than laughter. It doesn't say laughter is bad. It says sorrow is better than laughter and what it's really talking about is this: nobody ever walks out of a comedy club going "that changed my life; I'm a new person because of what I just experienced." But when you walk out of the funeral of a four year old, you go home and you are a little more patient with the bedtime routine that night. You are a little slower putting the kids to bed. I've walked out of the funeral of a 37 year old woman, struck down with breast cancer. You go home and you hug your wife a little bit tighter. You bring her in a little bit closer. Solomon says it's better to go to a funeral because you learn more from a funeral.

A lot of you guys are going "I've been through this whole series of Twolgnite and you've talked about death a lot." Sorrow teaches us something, but here's what the scripture says in Ecclesiastes 3: there is a time to mourn and there is a time to laugh. There is a season for everything under the sun and I want to kind of walk you through it. In Chapter 1 of Genesis, God creates the heavens and the earth and you see the statement quite a bit in there "And it was good." In Chapter 2, he creates man and woman, male and female, puts them in this playground called the Garden and says "You can enjoy all of this. Enjoy each other and enjoy all of this, but here's the one thing I don't want you to do: don't eat of that tree."

Satan comes in and tells them they can eat of it and that what God told them wasn't true. Actually he said their eyes would be opened and they would become like God. So Eve takes it and then Eve asks her husband to take it. I always like to picture this when I read this text. It's kind of like when my wife will ask me a question that there's really no a right or wrong answer to. You can always tell when a guy feels stuck. When you ask him a question, he kind of does this dance because he is playing out on his body what is going on in his mind. He doesn't know what to say in this moment in time. If he lies she'll know it. If he tells the truth... He doesn't know what she is looking for. This is why men look at women and

say, "Tell us what you want to hear and we'll say it." So Adam is the last one. He takes of the fruit and I want you to see what it says in Verse 17.

### **God knows about the grind.**

men, God knows the struggle of providing for your family. He knows that it is a challenge. He's the one that gave it; he's the one that proclaimed it. He knows about this grind that Solomon talks about in Ecclesiastes 1. He knows the duty and responsibility in that mantle that has been placed on you and how much of a challenge it truly is.

***<sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life."***

Solomon says all the days of your *meaningless* life. We never ask for first time guest, but how many of you have only been here for a couple a months. See; they don't usually come back. They think they went to a marriage series to be encouraged and this guy stinks.

***<sup>18</sup> "It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken for dust you are and to dust you will return."*** Genesis 3:17-19 Work is going to be hard. Providing is going to be very, very difficult for you, Adam.

If you flip over with me to Ecclesiastes 3, it says this in Chapter 3, Verse 9. Keep in mind God knows about this grind. ***What does the worker gain from his toil?*** Let me give you some words for toil. If you have the New American Standard Bible, it actually uses the term *labor*. It's the same thing we talk about when we're talking about giving birth, which is what was put on woman. Women will have labor during childbearing. Men, when you work it will be labor. The word means trouble, anguish, misery and sorrow – hard work. He says what does the worker gain from all of this trouble, anguish, misery and sorrow?

***I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time.*** That's the whole first part of Ecclesiastes 3, a time for everything. A season for every activity under the sun. He says this: ***He has also set eternity in the hearts of men.*** We move beyond this earth; we move out of the grind, knowing that the grind doesn't last forever. ***Yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*** You and I don't see the big picture. ***I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink...*** We see in Ecclesiastes 9 that you are to eat your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart. ***...and find satisfaction in all his toil*** (trouble, anguish, misery and sorrow) ***--this is the gift of God.*** It's hard and it's painful, but enjoy times in the grind.

As we looked at in the very first week of getting a smoking hot marriage, we are to enjoy life with our wife. We don't have to choose between a life and a wife. Here's the kicker. God did not give you your spouse... Guys, he did not give you your wife to be a part of the grind. He gave you your spouse to go

through the grind with. If you've turned your spouse into the grind, here's what you've done. You've turned your spouse into the enemy. You've turned your spouse into the problem and now, in your marriage, you are working against each other.

Your spouse is not intended to be the grinder. "Well you don't live with her." I know. "And you don't live with him." I know. I'm telling you what the plan is. From the beginning, the plan was that you enjoy life. That was the only thing. When God created man, it was the first time he didn't say it is good. Think about it. When he creates the heavens and the earth, he said it is good, it is good, it is good. When he created man, he said this ain't good. This man can't be alone. He needs someone so he creates Eve as a helper. Please, please, I beg of you, get out of your mind... in the midst of the grind... that's not what your spouse is for. You are to be teammates. You are to be going through the grind together. You are to be working through the grind together.

***I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.*** God knows about this grind, but here's the deal... he says it here in just a second. ***He has set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*** You're in this grind and here's the next point.

**You're in the grind all the way to the end.**

Here's what I've noticed and I've seen this lately in some of my maturing friends. I mean some of the really older guys like those 40 plus year olds that I know are struggling. How many of you will say amen to this? Age doesn't allow you to escape the grind. And everybody said... The older you get doesn't mean the easier it gets. That's what we get in Ecclesiastes 12.

Pat Kershaw came in this morning. This was so great. The band is just playing loud and I love it. Pat is now in her 70s. I love this woman. Pat hugs me and she puts her hands on me and goes, "Ted, I'm old!" I go, "Pat Kershaw, you are not old." She said, "I said I'm home!" She's been gone for a couple of weeks. I was getting defensive for you, on your behalf, Pat. Pat, would you say age causes you to escape the grind? No, it doesn't.

Then some of you, like my friends in here who you take your pills. I love picking on my senior friends when we go out to lunch. We sit down and before we pray I'll say things. They have perfect hearing, but I'll yell at them "DO YOU NEED TO TAKE YOUR PILLS BEFORE WE PRAY?" Because even staying alive in old age is work. When you grow old... seriously... and you retire, all you are retiring to do is take care of yourself. The anguish and the misery and pain is doctor visits and foot pads and all of that stuff.

Here's what Moses says... the only Psalm Moses writes. Psalm 90:10 – ***The length of our days is seventy years or eighty if we have the strength.*** I have fallen in love with this passage. You have 70 years, but if you are strong and you can really make it through the grinder, you may get 80. So some of you have surpassed this and blessings to you. Some of you are a few years away from this. He says, ***Yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*** Life is hard, you die, and you mourn. So the grind is there, it's hard; it's difficult; it's a challenge, but here's why we are talking about TwoPlay.

TwoPlay is to find joy with your spouse in the midst of the grind, to no longer look at your spouse as the problem, to no longer look at your spouse as the one that God gave you to destroy your life and he gave you divorce so you can get out of the grind. Some of you have left one spouse and you find yourself with another spouse and now you're in a new grind. You never escape it. We are not to look at our spouse as the enemy. Let's look at this last point.

### **Play in the midst of the grind**

The primary text for this is *...Enjoy life with your wife*. Ecclesiastes 9:9 This is the only place in the Bible where it says this. In Proverbs it says we are to enjoy the wife of our youth and have her breasts satisfy us always. So we are to enjoy our wife. Ephesians 5 is probably the primary text people would take us to, we hear that wives are supposed to obey their husbands and husbands are to love their wives. But in this text, it says in the midst of this grind, if you are among the living, you have hope. You can have a great marriage. You can enjoy life with your wife, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine a joyful heart. Always be dressed in white, speaking of festivity, and anoint your head with oil. Live life. Don't fall in defeat as a follower of Christ.

The follower of Christ is to look like somebody who has given up their life in pursuit of Christ and his kingdom. That's what I love about our worship here. It is very celebratory. You can come in here and now matter how difficult your life is or how many challenges face you today, you can celebrate the fact that there is hope beyond this world. There is hope beyond the grave because Christ has defeated the grave. You can enjoy this life. You can be as Paul was when he found himself either in prison or starving. He said, "I am content. I have learned that my joy and my strength is in the Lord and it's not found in me." If I'm the source of it, it's over. The source is in the Lord and I am to enjoy life with my wife.

I think does life doesn't get any better than for a man to get up in the morning, go and put his hand to the plow and work, come home and enjoy time with his family, make love to his wife, fall asleep, and get up the next day. My problem is this: I get up wanting to conquer the world and I have plans and dreams and goals. If I'm not careful, I can allow duty and responsibility and moving forward in life to destroy the moments I have right now.

I've been with some athletes lately who were stars of a big game. They have the rings to prove they won the big game and here's what I'm seeing in them. They are not enjoying today because everything about their life is defined by a moment two, three, four or five years ago. My biggest challenge to them is make sure you realize God has more in store for you than just that. That was great; I'm not putting that down at all. Enjoy that time.

Amy and I have wondered how we going to do this when our kids have great moments. I don't want to say things like, this is going to be the greatest moment of your life. This was a great moment, but if you're not careful, you're going to spend the rest of your life trying to live up to this moment. That was a moment, but now you have all of this ahead of you.

You are now married and you have children and there are going to be more great moments. Let me tell you Dad, you are going to win super bowls at home that are better than anything over here. You're going to have plays at home that are better than anything you did in that bowl game. Enjoy today and to know that... This is what Solomon is saying. It is set before us that man would enjoy what he does today and he would enjoy his wife today and take those moments in the grind to enjoy life.

I like this in Deuteronomy 24:5. It's heading in your Bible is simply *Miscellaneous Laws*, but it's a law and it's a whole list of miscellaneous laws. ***"If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married."***

Think about this, ladies, for just a second. God is saying keeping you happy is a full time job. Are you picking up on that? Now my generation loves this law. "I'll take a year off." They do it anyway. But think about it. Guys, you can relate to this because you have a full time job, you married a full time job, and you've had a couple of full time jobs. I get it, guys, and I want you to know I'm not telling you this is really easy and simple. It takes work and it takes what we looked at last week in *Live the Adventure*. You have to work play and laughter and fun into your marriage. You have to make that a commitment. You have to put that in and say this is important.

For me it means... I haven't played golf... I like playing golf. I enjoy golf. Should I go play golf more often? Maybe. But I just look at everything going on in my life and I realize there are some things I can't do right now that I will be able to do later. Now this is just me. If you dare go home and tell your husband to give up golf, you are no longer allowed back here. I am just saying for me. Every one of us has to do that to say now I have a four year old and a six year old and a wife and a church. I have to make sure that I make some priorities in my life.

Do you know what we did as a staff this week that was so much fun? On Tuesday, we went kayaking. We went kayaking as a staff so there are 12 of us out there on the water. It was the first time ever kayaking for me. How many of you have never been kayaking? You have to go. It was Taneycomo, 49 degrees, and fall colors. They put Ted Burden and Ted Cunningham... single kayaks... in a moderate kayak, which means we have some skill. I don't know if the 50 times I told them I had never done this before didn't click with them. But I get in this kayak and then he pushes me into Taneycomo. Ted and I are the last ones to go. I was thinking this is not... we're doing six miles of this? But then I had to turn the kayak around to watch Ted Burden. They had given Ted Burden the only kayak that you don't get in. You sit on top of the kayak, on top of the water. I thought I was going to tip from the laughter. Ted, you go on back out. I'm going to tell this story.

Ted gets on the water and I'm about 20 yards from him. He gets on it and I could just see him. All I hear is the guy say, "I'm sorry sir, it's the biggest one we have." This was so good; for five and a half miles here was Ted Burden going down Taneycomo. A boat would come by and he'd go "Oh, Dear Jesus, here we go!" We pull up to the shore and I've never laughed so hard in my life. Ted was just sitting there... he was just trying... he's supposed to hold it at about arm's length. I became a pro by the end of the time and Ted was still "Center of gravity, center of gravity!" I looked over at him and go, "Ted, are we having fun yet?"

Do you know what was great about that? It was only like an hour and a half or two hours. We just left from staff meeting to do that. In the midst of everything going on, in the midst of all the difficult times, we had more fun just getting together and playing and being together.

Now I want to take you to the Song of Solomon 7. We have looked a lot at this book over the last couple of weeks. They were dating for a couple of chapters. They got married in Chapter 3. They had a honeymoon in Chapter 4. They got in a huge blow up fight in Chapter 5 over sex. He wanted it; she didn't want to give it. I can't believe that stuff was going on 3,000 years ago. They make up and now we are to the endurance and commitment part of the book.

**<sup>6</sup> How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love, with your delights! <sup>7</sup> Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit.** He is saying I'm going to climb me the palm tree and take hold of its choice fruit. Bowm, bowm, chicky, chicky, bowm, bowm. **<sup>8</sup> I said, "I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit." May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, <sup>9</sup> and your mouth like the best wine. May the wine go straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth. <sup>10</sup> I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me. <sup>11</sup> Come, my lover, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. <sup>12</sup> Let us go early to the vineyards**

We've seen vineyards used like crazy as a word picture in this book. She compares her body to a vineyard. She worked in the vineyards because her brothers were angry with her and so she neglected her own vineyard. In Chapter 2, they compare their marriage to the wine that will come out of the best of the vineyard. **Catch for us those foxes before the vineyards are destroyed.** Here they are in the literal vineyard. Let's just go and play for a little bit and see what's going on down in the vineyards **to see if the vines have budded if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom—there I will give you my love.** She ain't talking about poetry. She is saying, we are going to go visit the great outdoors, we are going to take a little adventure together, and we are going to enjoy each other. We're going to go make love in the vineyards. We're going to go make love out in the orchards. We're going to go spend time together. Come away with me my lover.

That's what TwoIgnite is all about. It's not about handing you a list and saying here are the 14 things you're doing wrong on a daily basis in communication and our treatment for those 14 things is stop it. Then here are five things we'd like you to try and if you'll do this, your marriage will be so much better. Some of you, your marriage is at the exact same place and you've read every curriculum, every book. You've watched every video, you've attended small group, and you've done therapy. You've done it all and you go right back into the grind and you forget how to play.

**<sup>13</sup> The mandrakes send out their fragrance, and at our door is every delicacy, both new and old, that I have stored up for you, my lover.** Let's get away. Let's spend some time together.

So here's what we want to do. We want to start these adventures. TripFire is not up yet. It's going to be up soon, but here's what we have planned for you. It's in the back at the Youth Booth. We want you to sign up for these adventures. These adventures are one time deals. It's not something you're signing up to do for the next year. We are not doing these adventures to replace small groups.

We want you to have that biblical supportive community that we looked at last week that many of you had at your wedding. You came home from your church wedding and you have neglected a church marriage. You haven't surrounded yourself with biblical supportive community and that's what we want those adventures to be. We want you to sign up for these adventures. Pretty soon, in a matter of weeks, you are going to be signing up for these adventures on line. We won't do all this paper stuff. What I would like to do is share with you the adventures that are available for you today to sign up.

Here they are:

**Couples massage 101.** I love the detail here. *With your clothes on...* thank you very much. I don't know if that will grow our church or hurt our church. I can't figure it out. *...couples will learn how to massage hands, feet, scalp and neck.* Let me explain to you that my name is not on this list. I won't be going to the couple's massage 101. How many of you love massages? Wow! How many of you can't stand them? That's what is great about these adventures. That's in the back. It's with Abby Lewis. She is a great member of our church. She hates what I think about massages, but we love her and believe people love it.

Supplies needed... when was the last time you went to church with a pillow and massage oil or lotion. You need to bring those with you. Ten couples.

**Dream Big Together.** *As artist Janice Hawkins leads the process of discovering your passion through collage. This event will ignite insight and help fully embrace your dreams together.* Twenty-Five couples can sign up for this one.

**Hands-On Barbeque and Ping-Pong Tournament.** This is going to be lead by the Bevins. They are going to ask for 12 couples. They will finish the night with a barbeque feast. Let me tell you they do know how to do barbeque.

There is a Beatles Rock Band. They are allowing five host couples.

How many of you enjoy ballroom dancing. There are two types of people that like ballroom dancing. There are the ballroom dancers who are really good at it and then the other group that says wouldn't it be hysterical if we went ballroom dancing. I'm in that second group.

[Ted Burden enters]

There he is... professional kayaker right there. Here's the part I didn't tell you. This guy is a fly fisherman like you've never experienced in your life. We are in the kayak shop and it's kind of like going to a fly fishing shop. We were shopping like crazy.

Ted has a pretty cool adventure coming up. Trail head and tailgate for single adults. Do you want to share that?

Ted Burden: Yea, we're going meet at the Henning State Park at 10:00, Saturday, October 24. Come dressed appropriately. We're going to do a hike down on the trail, come back and tailgate. All you have to do is bring whatever you want to grill, a lawn chair, and your best life adventure story. We are going to sit around and share stories. It should be a lot of fun.

The Watsons put together the amazing race at various places around Branson. Some of these hosts are hospitality people in an extreme way. Stephanie Watson would be one of those individuals. They are looking for six couples.

**Branson home football game** – Sam Hoover – 15 people. I think we can have more that 15 people go to that if they want to go to the football game. \$10.00 for tickets and money for food.

**Tuscan Culinary Adventure with Candlelight Dinner.** There is only one spot open. People have already signed up on this list before we even mentioned it today. That's Jennifer White. Bring your apron and an appetite. She is bringing in a professional chef.

This one Amy and I are doing because we are pretty much professionals now. We did have a lot of fun doing this one and we are going to have a great time. We're going to do it a little bit different. We went from the dam down to Cooper Creek. This time we are going to be a little more adventurously. It's Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. We will end up at The Landing. They pick up the kayaks. If you own your own kayak, it will be a cheap night; you'll only have to pay for dinner. If you don't own your kayak, it will be \$25.00 per kayak to rent. They drop us off and pick us... they won't need to pick us up; they will just pick up the kayaks. We will land at The Landing and go eat. They can accommodate up to 15 couples.

These are the adventures. They are going to be purposeful and meaningful, building that biblical supportive community. We want to invite you out to the Youth Booth today. All of these sign ups are out there. Let me just see a show of hands. How many of you are kind of getting it and are kind of getting excited and you want to do an adventure with another couple in this church. Very good. Let's close in a word of prayer. I do want to say this. The meeting that we were going to do tonight is being moved to next Sunday night. There is a reason why we are going to do that with the technology and stuff.

Father,

We do thank you that you know about the grind. It's not a surprise to you. So many come in here each week and leave out and go to work on Monday full of challenges. There are people right now looking for work, looking for that labor. So we know it's a time in which it can be very challenging for couples and families, yet we know who sees it all from beginning to end and it is you. You know the plan. We have many desires in our heart, but you are the one that orders our steps ultimately. We submit our lives to you. It is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said...

Amen