

CHOOSING

SESSION 2

• TO WARM UP

 **To warm up:** Tell each other about a decision you are glad you made slowly.

• CHOOSING

Most people slide. You are about to decide.

Almost every major step a couple takes can happen two ways. You can decide it, out loud, on a date you could name afterwards. Or you can slide into it, one convenience at a time, until one day it is simply true and nobody remembers agreeing to it.

Researchers who study this call it sliding versus deciding, and the finding that matters is not that sliding is sinful. It is that sliding is *sticky*. Every step taken without a decision makes the next one harder to reverse, not because you chose it but because leaving got more expensive. A life can accumulate that way. So can a marriage.

You are in the one season where this is still fully in your hands.

This session is not about what you have already done. It is about doing the next part on purpose.

• THE BIG IDEA

A covenant is made. A contract is negotiated.

A contract says: if you hold up your end, I will hold up mine. It is fair, it is reasonable, and it has an exit written into it, because that is what contracts are for.

A covenant says something different. It is not conditional on performance and it does not have an exit clause, because it was never a trade. It is modeled on the way God commits to people who cannot hold up their end.

You are not being asked to feel differently about that. You are being asked to know which one you are about to make, and to say it out loud to each other before anyone says it in front of a crowd.

“Choose this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

JOSHUA 24:15

That verse is a decision, spoken aloud, in public, on a particular day. It is not a mood.

• WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED, AND WHAT HAS SIMPLY HAPPENED

Be honest here. Nobody is grading this, and almost every couple has some of both.

SOMETHING WE GENUINELY DECIDED,
TOGETHER, OUT LOUD

SOMETHING THAT JUST BECAME TRUE
WITHOUT EITHER OF US CHOOSING IT

Looking at that second one: what made it easier to let it happen than to talk about it?

• THE DECISION IN FRONT OF YOU

In my own words, what I am promising, and what I am promising it regardless of

The day we decided to marry each other

If you cannot name that day, that is not a failure. It is worth deciding tonight, and then you will have one.

• COUPLE CONVERSATION

1. What is one thing we should decide out loud in the next month rather than let happen?
2. What does “no exit clause” actually mean to each of us on an ordinary bad week?
3. Who in our lives made a covenant and kept it? What did it cost them, and what did it give them?

4. Is there anything either of us is assuming has been decided that has never actually been said?

• KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✦ Sliding is not a moral failure. It is sticky, and that is what makes it dangerous.
- ✦ Every step taken without a decision makes the next one harder to reverse.
- ✦ A contract is conditional and has an exit. A covenant is neither.
- ✦ Say it to each other before you say it in front of a crowd.

GO DEEPER — OPTIONAL

For couples who want to linger. Skip it if you'd rather keep things light.

1. Where in your own family did you watch someone choose, and where did you watch someone drift?
2. What are you most afraid of promising without conditions?
3. What would need to be true for you to be certain you are deciding rather than continuing?

• THIS WEEK

Decide one thing out loud. Something small and real: a rhythm, a boundary, a plan you have both been assuming. Name the day you decided it.

• A PRAYER TO CLOSE

“Lord, keep us from drifting into the life we are meant to choose. Give us the courage to say things out loud, on purpose, to each other and to you. Make our promises the kind that hold when they cost something. Amen.”