



STRONGER FOREVER

Creating a Marriage That Goes the Distance

 **FamilyLife**
A Cru Ministry

Pursue what
matters most.

YOUR MARRIAGE...

healthier.

invigorated.

refreshed.

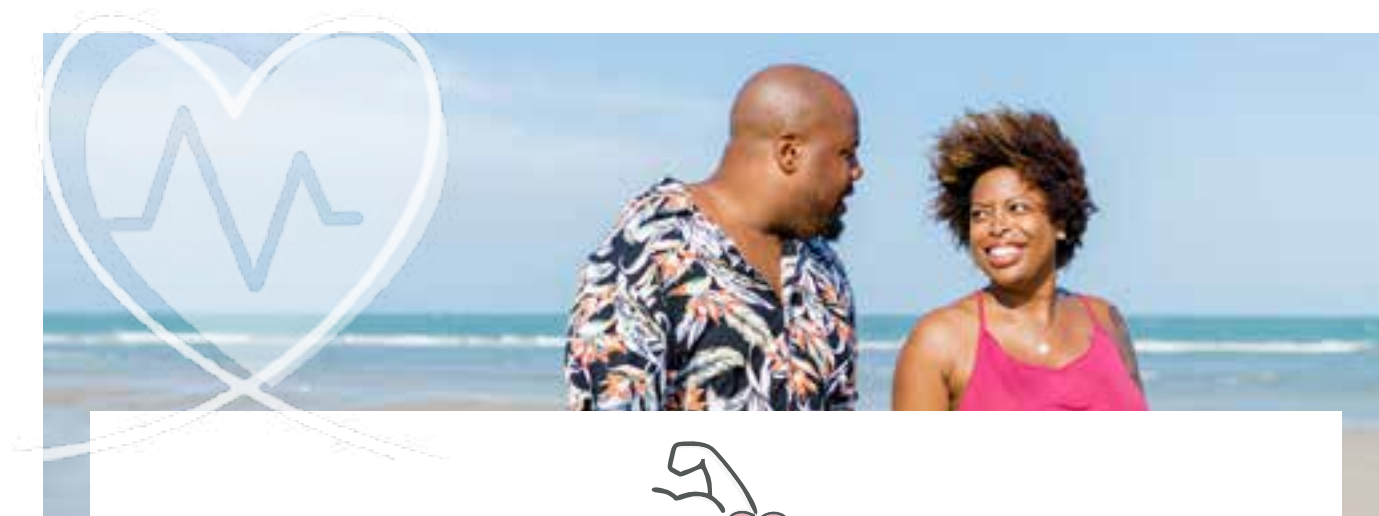
more resilient.

STRONGER.

Ready to kick off six weeks toward a stronger relationship? We'll be flexing those marital muscles (strength), while making sure you're focusing on building your spouse up (cardio).

And while you're doing the heavy lifting to make your marriage go the distance, tag us in your date night or "my spouse is so amazing" social posts using the hashtag below.

  #  **FOREVER**



STRENGTH AND CARDIO

With four creative activity options to try as a couple each week. You'll also find a Scripture and prayer to “cool down” together, plus optional resources to go deeper together.

—with exercises for

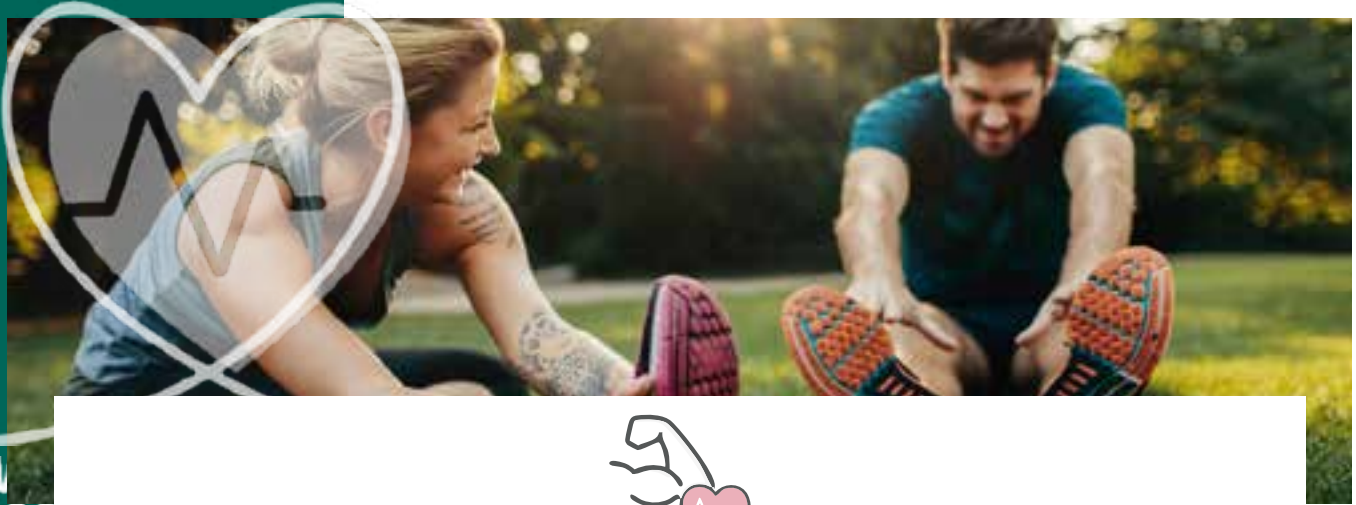
- Having fun together
- Expressing affection
- Taking your relationship to the next level of depth
- Gaining resilience in hard times

WHAT WE DO

We help you reach your next step of “marriage fitness.”

WHAT YOU DO

Pick the practical ideas that work for you.



STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK ONE

KEY



activity / idea



suggested time range



goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use #👉FOREVER in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



LOVE, ME



Text your spouse in the middle of the day:
You do so many things that make my life rich and happy.

Thanks for [insert something specific they've done recently].

Or, My love story starts like this: Once upon a time, God brought me you.

Or, You are so goofy. And I actually love it.



5 minutes



Remind your spouse you're thinking of them.



TOUCHING BASE



Accomplish a few spontaneous acts of affection.

- Get handsy.
- Hug from behind when your spouse is doing the dishes.
- Give a scalp or hand massage while you're talking or sitting in bed.
- Put your arms around your spouse's shoulders while they're sitting down.
- Use your facial expression to communicate you're happy to see your spouse.



5 minutes



Make physical affection a regular happening in your home.



GAME ON



Add a twist to your favorite board game. Every time one of you loses something in the game, make up a steamy "penalty."



20-30 minutes



Enjoy a little friendly competition.



PLAY DATE



Head out for a friendly game of pickleball or disc golf. Or if you're feeling adventurous, sign up for a tennis lesson or dance class (or take a cooking class if you'd like something less physical).



60 minutes



Learn something new with each other and about each other, strengthening your marriage through quality time.



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. [Read 1 Peter 3:8-9.](#)

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

PRAY TOGETHER

Remember to stretch yourself this week for the sake of your spouse, and stay flexible with your growth.

Lord,

*Open our eyes to see the goodness you've created in each of us—
and in us together.*

*Grow our affection and unity from our minds and hearts
outward.*

Help us respond with tenderness even when we're hurt.

Amen.

More options to help you get stronger!



[Married with Benefits season 4: Surprising Secrets
of the Happiest Couples](#)



[Romance for Dummies](#)



STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK TWO

KEY



activity / idea



suggested time range



goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use # **FOREVER** in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



FEAST ON A LITTLE ROMANCE



Order take out or make a meal together. What could make it pop?

- Bring her flowers.
- Pick a song to dance to in the park, sharing a pair of earbuds.
- Unveil something that reminds your spouse of one of your first dates.
- Bring out a candle or easy dessert.



1-2 hours



Make romance a regular happening in your home.



FUN LOVING



Make it a goal to get your spouse laughing. Keep a hilarious anecdote in mind from your day, share a YouTube video, refer to an inside joke, or look up a goofy joke and send it as a text.



5 minutes



Remind your spouse you two still know how to have fun.



LOSING THE WEIGHT



Pray. What annoyance or hurt have you chosen not to forgive your spouse for?

Ask God for the power to choose forgiveness whenever this arises in your mind.

Remember this about forgiveness:

- It is not excusing behavior.
- It is not without accountability.
- It chooses to bless rather than seek revenge.
- It chooses not to dwell upon, or gossip about.



Repeat as often as necessary



Forgive your spouse as you have been forgiven, setting you both free (Colossians 3:13).



WELL-HYDRATED



What is the greatest drain (or strain) on your marriage right now?

- Schedule?
- Kids?
- Media?
- Expectations?
- Out-of-control emotions?
- Constant anger?

Decide on a single step you will take to leave yourself more “hydrated” for your spouse.



Once daily



Isolate the extra weight or “empty calories” burdening your marriage, and make a definitive step to exchange it for something wiser, more loving, and more life-giving.

More options to help you get stronger!



[How To Keep the Romance Alive](#)



[10 Surprising Ways to Increase Romance](#)



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. **Read Ephesians 4:25-27, 29, 31-32.**

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

... Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

PRAY TOGETHER

Father,

Remind us constantly how much we're forgiven. Let us forgive that way in our marriage. Keep us from words that corrupt each other.

Amen.



STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK THREE

KEY

-  activity / idea
-  suggested time range
-  goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use # **FOREVER** in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



WORK IT, BABY

-  Complete one chore usually handled by your spouse.
-  20-30 minutes
-  Show love through an act of service.



TARGET AREAS

-  Kiss parts of your spouse's body one by one, thanking God for what you love about that part. *(These hands are so good with our kids. This hair is so thick and unique. The vocal cords within this neck speak life to so many people.)*
-  7-10 minutes
-  Increase your own appreciation of your spouse with affectionate foreplay.



HERE WE GO AGAIN



When your marriage is under stress, what patterns tend to repeat themselves? *(e.g. My spouse withdraws. I lash out. I get insecure. My spouse gets critical. I work harder. My spouse is immobilized.)*

Learn to identify stress indicators in yourself and your spouse and take time together to be proactive before those days hit.

- What's one destructive pattern that you could hijack for a more constructive one?
- What's one positive action you could take together while feeling stressed? *(e.g., Taking a date night. Praying together. Eliminating the yelling so you can work against the problem instead of against each other.)*



20 minutes



Interrupt destructive stress cycles and replace them with strengthening moves



IMPROVE YOUR IQ



How much do you know about what your spouse likes in bed? Begin by lying in bed with one another, clothes optional. Ask:

- What turns you on?
- What do you love that I do in bed?
- Is there something I could do to please you even more?
- What's one of the best memories you have of us in bed?
- What's an arousing area of your body that I might not guess?



Once weekly, minimum



Increase your sexual IQ of your spouse

More options to help you get stronger!



[FamilyLife Blended Minute: High Stress](#)



[When Your Spouse Has a Different Stress Response](#)



[Why Your Marriage Needs Sex](#)



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. [Read Song of Solomon 4:10.](#)

*How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!*

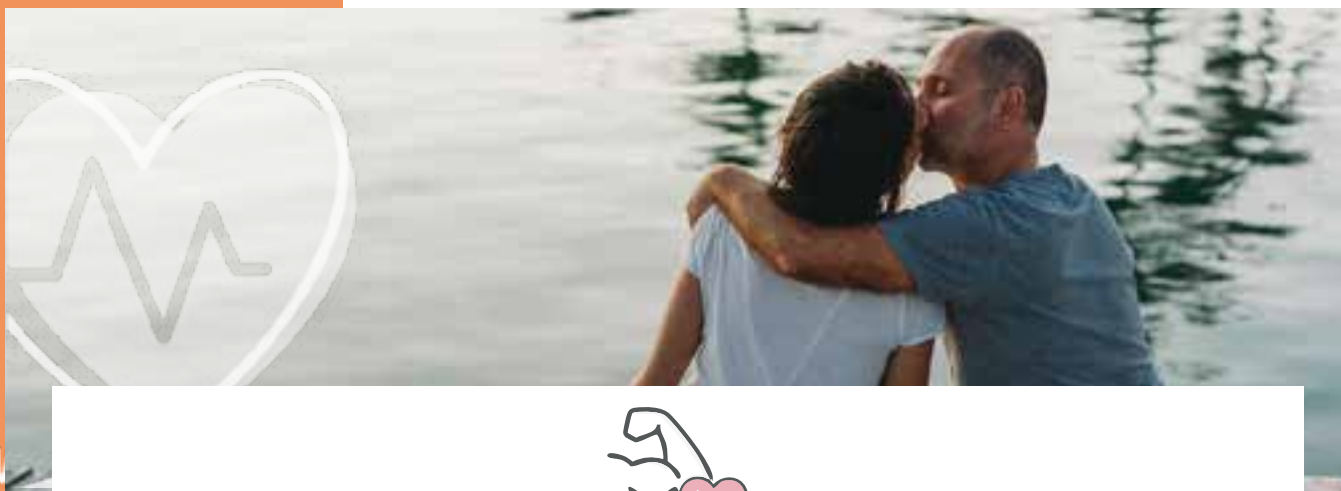
PRAY TOGETHER

Father,

Help us celebrate what's going right. Create gratitude in us for each other and what we have.

Amen.





STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK FOUR



OFF-ROADING

KEY



activity / idea



suggested time range



goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use # FOREVER in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



Do at least one off-the-beaten path fun activity. Ideas:

- Have a Nerf war.
- Finger paint each other in the shower.
- Try a new restaurant with foreign food and atmosphere.
- Slow dance together.



Monthly



Create fun, varied memories while keeping boredom at bay.



PUSH YOURSELF



Create endurance for the sake of your spouse by stretching yourself one step further than is easy. Ideas:

- Initiate sex or try something new.
- Give a massage when you're tired.
- Reflectively listen to your spouse even if you can't see their point of view or feel like they are overly emotional. Try phrases like, "So I think you're saying..." or "That's understandable."
- Allow his or her parenting style to travel a bit beyond your comfort zone.
- Forbid your insecurity from taking over.
- Choose not to pigeon-hole your spouse, seeing them instead as capable of change.



Once weekly, minimum, for a lifetime



Continue to lay down your life for your spouse.



GOOD RHYTHMS



Set a reminder on your phone to pray a single-sentence prayer for your spouse every three hours. Ask your spouse how you can pray for them that day.



30 seconds or less once every three hours, over the course of 48 hours.



Make prayer for your spouse—and seeking the Living Water—a regular part of your day.



HAPPY DAYS



Create a custom blast-from-the-past date. What's a happy, repeatable memory from childhood? Did you love ping-pong, silly putty, or a flavor of ice cream? Was there a snack a parent bought for you, or a movie that makes you feel 12 again? Ask your spouse about their childhood.

- What did you love to play?
- At different ages, who was your best friend? What made them great?
- What's one fantastic day, vacation, or birthday you remember?
- What's one pleasant smell that takes you back?
- What's one thing you would tell your childhood self?



2-3 hours



Explore territory you haven't before—and celebrate what went right in your childhood.

More options to help you get stronger!



[The Power of Praying Together](#)



[5 Prayers for Couples When You Don't Know What To Say](#)



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. [Read Song of Solomon 2:15.](#)

*Catch the foxes for us,
the little foxes
that spoil the vineyards,
for our vineyards are in blossom.*

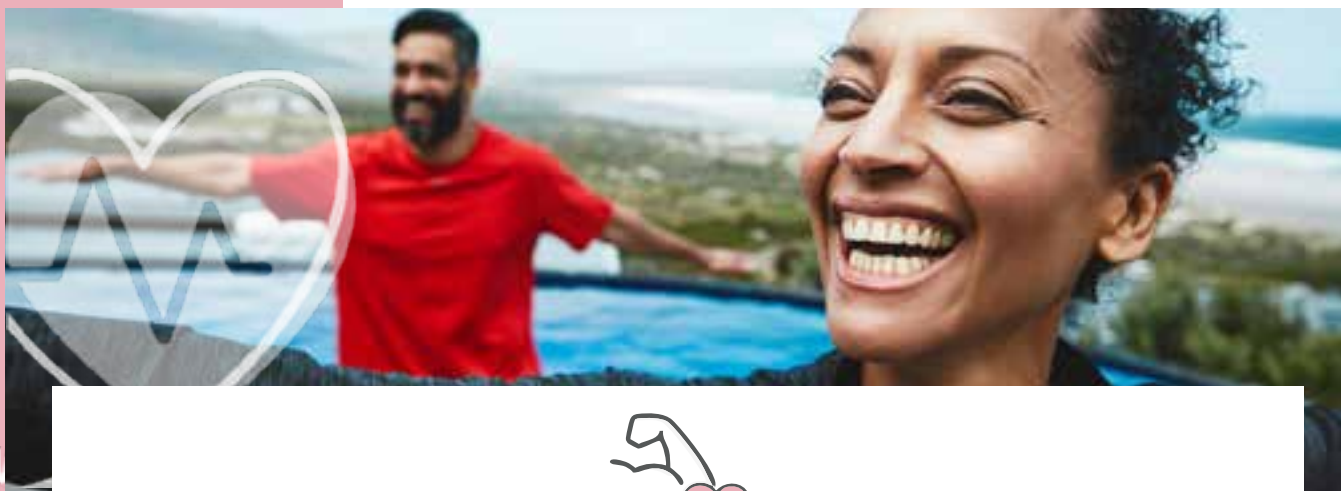
PRAY TOGETHER

Lord,

Show us what's getting in the way of us being one flesh. Be jealous for our marriage; give us the courage and wisdom to address what's eating away at our love for each other.

Amen.





STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK FIVE

KEY

-  activity / idea
-  suggested time range
-  goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use # **FOREVER** in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



DEEPER DATING



Increase your date-night lifting power. Make them count by creating a goal to complete three “reps” by answering three in-depth questions each date. Ideas:

- What’s one thing I do that makes you feel respected, loved, or connected to me?
- What’s one of your best memories of us together?
- What kind of activity makes you feel closest to God?
- What do you pray about most often?
- What job(s) could you do that wouldn’t feel like work?
- What do you like—or what are you most grateful—about the way God has made you?
- What’s one way I could be more of the person I want to be?



15-30 minutes



Take your dates to the next level of connection.



POSITIVELY CHARGED

-  Struggling not to complain? Make it a daily goal of 10: Thank God for 10 things your spouse is doing right.
-  10 reps daily
-  Acknowledge your spouse is more than the sum of his or her weaknesses.



LABOR OF LOVE

-  Choose to serve together. What's one activity in which you could give of your time as a team? (Tip: Wives, consider letting your husband choose the activity.) Get creative. If this is your first time, choose something in a natural area of interest.
-  Varies
-  Bond spiritually and in quality time as you move your marriage outside of yourselves.



IN YOUR CORNER



Have your spouse's back. How can you protect him or her? Ideas:

- From overly needy kids (“Can you solve this problem on your own, buddy?”) or kids in conflict.
- From letting work wins/losses dictate identity. Remind your mate that they’re more than what they do.
- From an overreaching schedule. (“I would love you to have more white space on this calendar. Is there one thing you could say no to?”)



5-10 minutes, repeated periodically



Run some interference for your weary ally.

More options to help you get stronger!



[Physical Intimacy Issues for Stepfamily Couples](#)



[Spiritual Intimacy: 3 Ways to Forge a Stronger Marriage](#)



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. [Read Colossians 3:12-14.](#)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

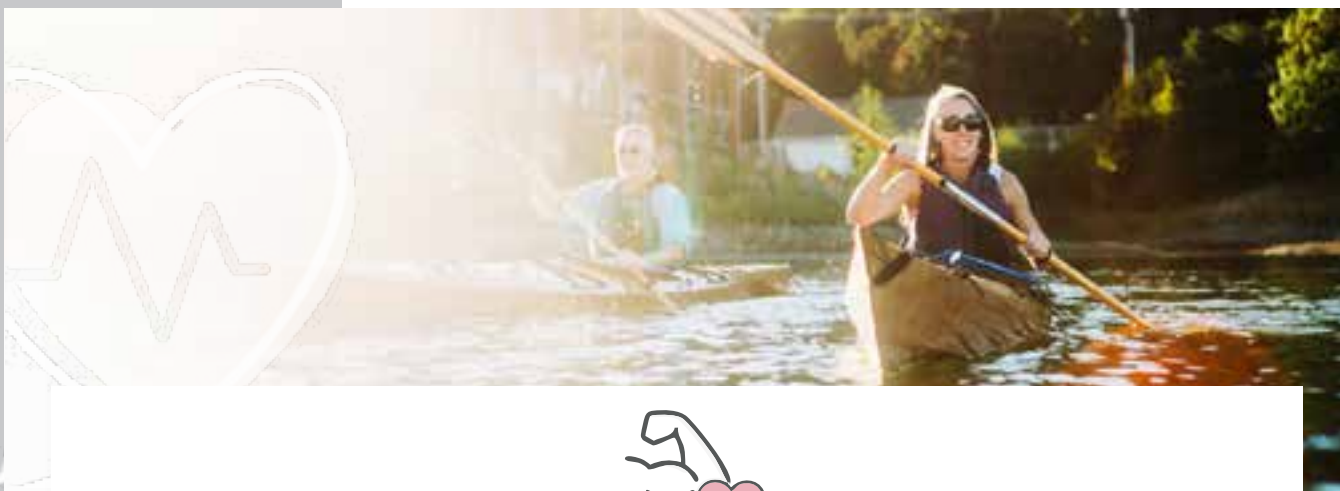
PRAY TOGETHER

Lord,

Help us both to truly enjoy each other. Make gratitude a habit in our marriage.

Amen.





STRENGTH AND CARDIO

WEEK SIX



SWEET SPOT

KEY

-  activity / idea
-  suggested time range
-  goal

Are you inspired to improve your relationship?

Use # FOREVER in your social media posts.

We'd love to see how you and your spouse are working toward greater marriage fitness this year!



-  Make a special dessert together. Share it with a side of playful flirtation: Wipe some whip cream on his cheek. Feed her a cherry. No-cook options are great too (custom sundaes, anyone?).

It's the together-time that counts.

-  60 minutes
-  Create a mini date night. Share some sweets while being sweet to each other.



TIME SHARE



Look through old pictures together. Create a contest:

- What was the worst outfit?
- Worst hairstyle?
- Picture you most hope to hide?
- Picture that reminds you how good lookin' your spouse is?



30 minutes



Laugh at great memories and all those clothes you can't believe (or admit) you wore.



AFTER HOURS



Have a date after the kids are in bed, making the shared activity something other than movies or TV. Ideas:

- A version of your favorite board game where the winner gets a backrub
- Picnic in the bedroom: candles, take out, blanket
- Stargazing
- Indoor s'mores
- Complete a jigsaw or crossword puzzle while enjoying a playlist



1.5 hours



Strengthen your marriage through quality time.



BREATHING DEEPER



Does your marriage—and your life—feel out of breath? What is one activity you could say “no” to this week, so you have more energy for your spouse and your relationship (e.g., “I may have unfolded laundry, but at least I’m not so worn out that sex feels like one more box to check off”)?



Once weekly, minimum



Create breathing room for the things that matter most.

More options to help you get stronger!

Where do we go from here?

We’d love to continue helping you along your journey to creating a stronger marriage. Did you know we have a weekend getaway designed to do just that?

With 75 locations to choose from, join the 1.5 million marriages made stronger at [FamilyLife’s Weekend to Remember®](#).



LIVING WATER

As you cool down, it's time to reflect. [Read Song of Solomon 2:10, 16.](#)

My beloved speaks and says to me:

*“Arise, my love, my beautiful one,
and come away...”*

*My beloved is mine, and I am his;
he grazes among the lilies.*

PRAY TOGETHER

Father,

Refresh our relationship--not just with romance that comes and goes, but with You, the Living Water. Be the source of our life as a couple. Help us make Your priorities ours. Show us how to invest wisely and generously in all the things we can't see.

Amen.