

Building a God-Honoring Marriage

No one plans to become a broken family or a miserable couple. We marry because we yearn for a life-long, thriving relationship. How can believers become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE – Discover God’s Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God’s relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a “profound mystery” because the man represents Christ, the groom, while the woman represents His bride, the church. The marital union of husband and wife is a sacred reflection of the gospel itself.

PRIORITY TWO: Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today’s civil marriages are much like business contracts—easy to get into and easy to get out of. God’s covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people weren’t faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime—in sickness and health, for better or worse. They don’t threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE: Pursue a Passionate Marriage

Couples aren’t supposed to just stick it out and find a way to make their marriages survive. God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God.

PRIORITY FOUR: Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ’s sacrifice directly to marriage: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25) and “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, for both husbands and wives, fulfilling our God-given roles in marriages requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve our spouse.

PRIORITY FIVE: Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout Scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness (see the book of Hosea). He forgives again and again!* No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the “devil a foothold” in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens.

**We are not speaking here about the case of physical abuse within marriage. This is a unique circumstance where a time of separation may be required for the safety of family members—see the card “A Difficult Marriage” for more information.*

GOING FURTHER – Resources

Recommended Books

Sacred Marriage (by Gary Chapman) What if God’s primary intent for your marriage isn’t to make you happy . . . but holy?

The Meaning of Marriage (by Tim Keller) This book shows the vision of what marriage should be according to the Bible.

Grace Filled Marriage (by Tim Kimmel) The missing ingredient in most marriages isn’t love but grace. We need grace to keep that love healthy, strong and committed.

Love and Respect (by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs) discusses a powerful biblical model for each spouse understanding and meeting the other’s most deeply felt need.

The Five Love Languages (by Gary Chapman) describes how to discover and serve your spouse’s unique love language.

GOING FURTHER – Resources Cont'd.

The Marriage Masterpiece (by Al Janssen) unveils the beauty of God's design for every marriage.

A Celebration of Sex (by Dr. Douglas Rosenau) is a guide to enjoying God's gift of sexual intimacy.

Simply Romantic Nights Kit (from Family Life Ministries) Discover intimacy in a new light using a series of his/her date night ideas.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Marriage counseling is available with any of our pastors by contacting the church office. We can also refer couples to biblical counselors in the area if needed.

RightNow Media – find free video driven Bible studies on this topic and many more at rightnowmedia.org. An account is required to access these resources. For an invitation to RightNow Media please email Pastor Jason Mole at jmole@fbcmel.org.

Building A Strong Marriage

