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, in Ephesians 5, 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, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

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. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the "devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:26)" in our marriages by keeping short accounts (1 Cor. 13)and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books (available @ The Porch or CCC Library)**:**

- ***It Starts At Home*** (by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) explains why marriage is a key path of our spiritual formation and provides practical advice for intentional couples.
- ***The Marriage Masterpiece*** (by Al Janssen) unveils the beauty of God's design for every marriage.
- ***Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem*** (by Dennis and Barbara Rainey) shows why one of the most vital ingredients in a marriage today is to build one another's self-esteem.
- ***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.
- ***A Celebration of Sex*** (by Dr. Douglas Rosenau) is a guide to enjoying God's gift of sexual intimacy.
- ***Sacred Marriage*** (by Gary Thomas) is a wonderfully engaging book that tackles the heart of Biblical marriage, which is to bring about HOLINESS in both marriage partners.

GOING FURTHER – Resources Cont'd.

- ***What The Bible Says About Love, Sex, and Marriage*** (by David Jeremiah) is a thoughtful interpretation of the intimate marriage relationship between Solomon and Shulamith as chronicled in Song of Solomon.

- ***Joy That Lasts*** (by Gary Smalley) is about discovering what it means to truly trust God, and how a deep relationship with Him can bring life and joy into marriage.

Websites: Listen to a free marriage podcast and discover tools for becoming an intentional couple at HomePointe.org

GOING FURTHER - CCC Support

One of the key components to ***Building A Strong Marriage*** is having others to walk with you on the journey. Here at Converse Church of Christ, we strongly encourage all couples to engage with others through Sunday school classes and other Bible study opportunities. For more information on how to get involved in one of these studies, please contact Joe Wisley, the Family Life Minister, @ jwisley@conversechurch.org.

If you as interested in talking more with someone, or another married couple, about the struggles that come along with marriage, please don't hesitate to contact Joe at the above address and we will work to connect you with the right people.

Building A Strong Marriage

HomePointe™ Pointers