

Follow-up Studies: Christian Marriage

A Cord of Three Strands

God's Word and power provide us with everything we need for happy, godly, fulfilling lives in every area (2 Timothy 3:17, 2 Peter 1:3, John 10:10). The area of marriage is crucial, and if marriage is not going well, serious spiritual problems will also be present. Indeed, Christian marriage is one arena in which disciples of Christ will dramatically outshine the many worldly examples surrounding them.

God's plan

- Marriage meets many of our deepest needs (Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 18:22).
- Marry a Christian! (1 Corinthians 7:39).
- Marriage is for life (Matthew 19:9).
- Take advice! (Proverbs 15:22)

Worldly vs. Spiritual marriages

- Communication
 1. Time together (meals, spiritual talks, unscheduled time)
 2. Listening (especially needful for husbands)
 3. Express, don't suppress feelings
 4. No festering resentments (Colossians 3:13)
 5. Co-ordinate schedules; don't leave each other in the dark about the other's plans!
 6. Communication may increase conflict; expect it, don't avoid it!
- Selfishness
 1. Harsh husbands? (Colossians 3:19) Husbands must serve their wives, being considerate. (1 Peter 3:7). Husbands should help in housework, cleaning, taking care of children...
 2. Nagging wives (Proverbs 21:19, 25:24, 27:15). Wives must be submissive (Colossians. 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1-6).
 3. Weak husbands? (Unsure and indecisive) The man must be the spiritual leader (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- Hospitality
 1. Is home life centered only around each other, life in a cozy, selfish, private world?
 2. Hospitality is God's will (1 Peter 4:9)! Open your home.
 3. Use hospitality in evangelism.
 4. This is the husband's responsibility even more than the wife's (1 Timothy 3:4)!
 5. An untidy home isn't inviting! (Proverbs 24:30-34)

- Spirituality
 1. Talk about spiritual things when together.
 2. Pray with spouse daily.
 3. Don't "protect" each other when there is lukewarmness or compromise (Acts 5:1-11);
Speak the truth in love! (Ephesians 4:15).
- Romance
 1. Don't deprive one another (1 Corinthians 7:5).
 2. Remember the special touches! (cards, flowers, presents, surprises...)
- Input
 1. Are you (two) closed to input? Festering problems?
 2. Every marriage needs counseling! No one is above it!

Practicals

- Pray together every day!
- Share your faith together.
- Share Quiet Times from time to time.
- Work on the church classes together. Expect the best of each other!
- Spend time showing your love for each other and really communicating.
- Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 13.
- Read *Song of Songs* to one another! (Lover and Beloved parts).
- Pray daily that you will be able to study with one couple together.
- "Double dates."
- Discuss your schedules together.
- Plan an overnight trip together (without the children).
- Read a great book on marriage and discuss it.