

It Takes Two

Building a better marriage

Intro: It takes two...

Who are willing to commit to living a godly life

There must in every marriage an underlying moral and spiritual foundation. This is important because each person in marriage must have an inward motivation to do what is right. It is this spiritual motivation that brings about growth.

Or to put it another way: Marriages fail because people fail. Sin, a lack of respect for the law of God, is the at the root of all marital breakups; whether the cause is selfishness, lack of self-control, pride, anger, or a host of other causes. The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous will stand. (Proverbs 12:7)

He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, And the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted. (Proverbs 11:29)

The point is that being foolish, ignoring the will of God, will bring trouble to our homes.

And so "it takes two" who will commit to a godly life.

Who are willing to learn how to meet the other person's needs

Marriage is the ultimate spiritual growth opportunity. It is a training ground for love. It teaches you how to love other people.

Love is a central command in marriage.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; (Ephesians 5:25,28) that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (Titus 2:4)

The essence of love is meeting the needs of another.

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

That involves being informed

Men and women have different emotional and physical needs.

Learning to listen to what our mates tell us, doing the work to find out how to be a good husband or wife

It involves being unselfish and compassionate or caring

It involves changing and giving and investing yourself in others

Who will keep balance in the relationship

Appreciate the balance between giving and taking.

I've seen people who look to their partner to receive; look to everyone else to give. And the result of that is a very unhappy husband or wife.

It may be the root of Paul's remarks to husbands in Col. 3:19. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. (Colossians 3:19)

Bitterness is internalized anger that results from feeling cheated or short-changed.

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

Again we see the importance of equality and consideration. Think of your relationship as a bank account in which you make deposits and withdrawals. If we ask too much and give too little, we bankrupt the relationship, leaving our partner feeling neglected or cheated. Keep a balance and there is healthy interdependence.

Appreciate the balance in respecting the other person's core values.

There is an irony about relationships. Opposites attract. There is something about another person that is different from you that is exciting and charming. But then there is a flip side. It is the same features of the personality that attracts us that holds the potential to lead us to marital conflict and crisis. People who commonly divorce for "incompatibility" are many times unwilling to respect each other's core values.

Some people are aggressive and assertive; others passive and yielding. Such issues become challenging in a context where leadership is involved. Leadership involves the delicate balance of harmonizing core values of two people and making things work. A husband must consider his wife's thought and feelings in leading the family and a woman must consider her husband core values by allowing him to lead and working to make his plans succeed.

Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)

When balance is lacking in a relationship there is competition and feelings of bitterness. However, when we restore balance:

Each partner feels respected and there is growth.

One person is saver; another a spender. One wants to be generous with everyone. Get the most out of life now and give money and gifts to everyone they know; the other wants to make provisions for retirement. Who is right? Well, they both are in measure! The Bible teaches both generosity and present enjoyment of life and providence for the future.

The giving person may help the saver to be more generous and perhaps more trusting. The saving person may help the giver to be more provident and responsible.

Here's the real challenge. We cannot change who we are; but we have to learn how to respect and adjust to another person's values.

Who will forgive the other's imperfections

There are no perfect husbands; perfect wives. There are no perfect people.

It takes time to build a great home like it takes time to build a great house.

While you getting there, you have to learn to forgive.

“For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. “But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14-15)

See our own faults and be willing to acknowledge them

Remember our own sins against God and how He has forgiven us

Conclusion: Second to our relationship with God, probably no relationship is more important to our personal happiness than our relationship with our mate. We can all make this year the best year of our life by implementing these principles into our marriages.