

Built to Last!

Good Marriages Don't Just Happen

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 15, 2000

God's original design for marriage is still the same today: harmony, intimacy, unity, and permanence.

Genesis 2:24 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

The harmony, unity and intimacy will not happen by osmosis. Good marriages just don't happen. They're intentional. They take time, commitment, sacrifice and most of all hard work.

Ephesians 4:3 "Make *every effort* to keep the unity of the spirit." (NIV)

1st Building Block: COMMUNICATION

Prov. 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."

Ephesians 4:15, 25 "But speaking the truth in love..." "Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor..."

Prov. 29:11 "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back."

Prov. 29:20 "Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

Prov. 15:28 "The wise man ponders (studies) how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked spouts evil words."

Col. 4:6 "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person."

2nd Building Block: CONSIDERATION

Phil. 2:3-4 "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

3rd Building Block: COMPROMISE

I Cor. 13:5 "[Love] does not behave rudely, does *not seek its own*, is not provoked, thinks no evil." (*"Love does not demand it's own way."*)

Romans 12:9-11 "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor *giving preference* to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

More marriages die from prideful and selfish inflexibility than adultery, alcoholism, or physical abuse.

James 3:16 “For where envy and self-seeking (selfish ambition) exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

J.B. Phillips uses the words “...gentle, approachable, full of tolerant thoughts and kindly actions...”

4th Building Block: COURTSHIP

Proverbs 5:19 “As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love.” (*“Let your mate's affection fill you at all times with delight.”*)

Physical affection is vital to your marriage. The real problem with many marriages is that you have not continued to do what you originally did to win your mate’s love. You've got to intentionally plan for courtship.

Eccl. 9:9 "Enjoy life with your wife whom you love."

5th Building Block: COMMITMENT.

Mal. 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the Lord, "Make sure you do not break your promise to be faithful to your mate."

You'll never build a great marriage if divorce is always an option for you. If it's always back there, lurking in the back as a potential option, you will never build a great marriage. Most people do not understand the meaning of commitment. Commitment means being willing to be unhappy for a while until you can work things out.

Myth of Incompatibility. That word is used so freely and yet it's so unscientific. Incompatibility. What does that mean? It is the trump card for everyone who is determined to get out of their marriage! The issue is not incompatibility; the issue is selfishness, stubbornness, an unwillingness to compromise, an unwillingness to change, an unwillingness to work to save the relationship. Don't call it incompatibility, **call it what it is -- self-centeredness.** "I want my way or I want out."

6th Building Block: CHRIST

Only Christ can give you the power and the desire to do the other five. He gives you love when you run out of love.

Romans 5:3 “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

You need Christ in your life. Ask Him to put His Spirit within you, to help you think the way He thinks, to treat your husband the way Jesus would treat him, to treat your wife the way Jesus would treat her. The greatest thing you can do for your husband/wife is become a godly person, become like Christ and treat that person like Jesus Christ would. Christ must be the center of your relationship. When both of you love Christ, even more than you love each other then the husband focuses on growing toward Christ and the wife focuses on growing toward Christ, it automatically brings them together.

Self Evaluation

Rate yourself with 1 being extremely poor and 10 being great

1. COMMUNICATION: I work hard to communicate lovingly and truthfully with my spouse. We have specific times set aside for communication.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. CONSIDERATION: I look out for the interests of my mate and try to show common courtesies.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. COMPROMISE: I do not demand my own way. I avoid prideful, selfish, and stubborn inflexibility.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. COURTSHIP: I still date my mate. I make them a priority and look for ways to show affection and delight in them.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. COMMITMENT: I am committed to my mate regardless of feelings. I don't entertain thoughts of 'incompatibility' and I do not use the threat of divorce as a weapon in our marriage.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. CHRIST: Jesus Christ has ownership of my life and I want to please Him by being the best mate that I can be.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10