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Are There Secrets to Staying in Love?

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: (NASB) ⁴*Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...*




So Valentine's day is just a few days away. Another opportunity to outwardly express your love and devotion to that special someone. What if every day was such an opportunity? What if we, instead of using a holiday as an excuse to be self-absorbed for the other 364 days of the year, what if we used each day of the year as a reason to outwardly express our true devotion to that special someone? Stay with us as we look into love and marriage and the truly unique and important role they play in our lives!

What is the marriage institution all about?

The first marriage: Genesis 2:18-25: There is a conspicuous absence here - all of the animal kingdom had mates and were there to share the garden with their earthly master Adam - he named them - they were a joy to him, yet the absence of a mate for Adam was not overcome...

 **Man's responsibility - first interruption, joelandkathy.com**

- *(A man goes to a marriage seminar by Dr. Paul Hagstrom) For the first day I listened to man's responsibility in marriage is to love his wife, lay down his life for her and listen to her heart and meet her needs, I sat there for the whole day and the next morning I couldn't stand it any longer. I stopped the class, raised my hand and said...when are we gonna talk about the wife?*

 **Bill and Kay married 43 years, best marriage advice I've heard, youtube.com**

- *Every day if you have a disagreement or problem, you correct it before you go to bed, then you never wake up with a carry-over. That is to me good advice.*



Observations regarding the first marriage:

- The noticeable absence of the woman revealed the emptiness the man had without her.
- God's creation of woman from man gives a sense of equality and companionship.
- Adam's desire for companionship was now fulfilled and he expressed this by saying, "*at last...*" and "*bone of my bone,*" etc. There must have been some time without Eve, thus allowing him to feel the contrast.
- "*Therefore a man leaves his mother and father and clings*" implies a lifelong devotion - not just for a moment or until you get tired.
- They become one flesh, inseparable and united in every way.

What kind of promise is the marriage vow?

Mark 10:6-9: (NASB) *What God has joined together* - what does this actually mean? Pinky swear? Cross my heart? When we ask God to be a witness to something, we need to take that very seriously.

 **Man's responsibility - second interruption, joelandkathy.com**

- *By 2pm of the second day, I'm itching again... Everything he is saying up to this point went like water off a duck's back, because it wasn't my fault! It's all her fault! So I thought, this is all great, but in my case, I'm a wonderful husband, this great man of God I just can't get her to submit! It's her fault!*
- *(He points to his wife) Dr. Paul, it's not always the man who is the problem, sometimes it's the wife!*

Hebrews 10:24: How about instead of trying to change a person, change your thinking to how you can help that other person become their best - not who *you* want them to be, but who *God* wants them to be.



Marriage is a "covenant" (contract) but not just any covenant, it is "a covenant of God":
Proverbs 2:11-17

Bill and Kay married 43 years, best marriage advice I've heard, youtube.com

- *Be realistic that sometimes our marriage expectations are so high - most of marriage is lived in between the ups and the downs and it's hard work!*

Malachi 2:13-14: (NASB) ¹³This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. ¹⁴Yet you say, For what reason? Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

Marriage is not "I do until I decide I don't." Don't take this lightly because God does not take it lightly. You have made a vow to stand by your spouse through all parts of life. Marriage takes work!

Are the marriage roles of men and women really all that different?

Ephesians 5:22-24: (NASB) ²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Man's responsibility - third interruption, joelandkathy.com

- *It was the third time I interrupted the class and again said, in some marriages it's just not the man's fault - what about the wife!!! And he nailed me to the wall publicly. He said, Joel, if you would ever grow up and deal with your issues, your wife will deal with whatever issues she has on her own!*

The "submissiveness" of the wife CANNOT be taken out of the context of the required submissiveness of the husband.

Husbands must be worthy of being submitted to: **Ephesians 5:25-33:** (NASB) This is a high standard the husband must take on! ³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Notice how the wife need only be given a one line admonishing regarding her behavior while the husband is given a paragraph!

Introduction, couple dies holding hands, KCCI 8 News Iowa

- *Gordon and Norma Yeager lived a love story up until the moment they died. They married May 26, 1939. Norma accepted Gordon's marriage proposal on her high school graduation day. They're very old fashioned. They believed in 'til death do you part...*

We should make our commitment based on maturity, commitment and that we will do our part no matter what. By our actions and focus, we can change things if we are in a rough spot.

Some further scriptural principles regarding our roles in the marriage relationship: **1 Peter 3:1-4:** Even if the husband is not naturally a leader, a wife can build him up to that position. He should know that you respect him in that role and see him that way. By your actions, he can start fulfilling that role. Look at the intent, not the action. Our spouse might express appreciation in a way different than we do.

1 Peter 3:7: What is meant by weaker? Trish always reminds that she "is a delicate flower." Doesn't this fit right in with how Jesus loves the church?

Always together, couple dies holding hands, KCCI 8 News Iowa

- *Of course everyone argues once in awhile, but he said, "I can't go until she does. I will stay here for her." She would say the same thing. Last Wednesday they left home to go into town and there was a car accident...*



What causes marital strife?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: (NRSV) ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; ⁴that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

We have to want what we have. It's easy to look elsewhere and allow your mind to go down that path. Unfulfilled needs are a great opportunity to let the Lord fill those needs. Any void is an opportunity to work on you.

The point of no return bog, fulfilledcouple.com

- ...the wife is in the point of no return bog - a dark and foggy place...In the bog a wife sees her children as resilient kids who will be fine after the divorce- she imagines that life after the divorce will be filled with happy times, happy children, financial security and everything will work out just fine... It's her new hope...

Good or bad, every marriage has a foundation... 1 John 2:15-17: Every marriage is built on something, some foundation. What is your marriage built on and does it need to be repaired? Every problem in marriage will come from one of these three things: *the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life.* Knowing this gives us a huge advantage in dealing with those difficulties! By God's grace there are a lot of things that can counteract marital strife.

Proverbs 5:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well. ¹⁶Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? ¹⁷Let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you. ¹⁸Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Stay at home with your thoughts and desires where they belong.

Intensive care, couple dies holding hands, [KCCI 8 News Iowa](http://KCCI8.com)

- At the hospital, nurses knew not to separate Gordon and Norma. They brought them in the same room in Intensive Care. They were holding hands, on morphine and not really responsive.

Proverbs 19:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression. ¹²The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass. ¹³A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

Holding grudges and constant complaining are not good for the marriage. We have to rise above those things that pull us down.

Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Generally it is pride that is behind our martially destructive behavior: Proverbs 16:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. ¹⁹It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

What is the most important secret of marital success?

Is there only one "most important secret" for successful marriage? Probably not - there are several and the best news is, they aren't even secrets!

Let's look at the attributes from our theme text to begin our answer:

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: (NRSV) ⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

The secret: Love in its highest form!

For our married lives, it is important that God is called in to witness our covenant. If you are a Christian, you have dedicated yourself to following after His son, Jesus. If you are a true Christian called of God, you are given a gift of God's power and influence, the Holy Spirit. That helps us and guides us through those difficult times. When you take God as the Creator, His Son



as the sacrifice for all sin and the power and the influence of God in our lives, that is what can help us through the difficult times.

1 John 3:17-18: (NRSV) ¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? ¹⁸Little children, *let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.*

Your words won't be believed unless followed by action.



Mutual heartbeat, couple dies holding hands, KCCI 8 News Iowa

- *Gordon died at 3:38, holding hands with his wife, the family they built surrounding them. He stopped breathing, but the heart monitor was still going. When questioned, the nurse told the family that because they were holding hands, Norma's heartbeat was beating through him. At 4:48, exactly one hour after Gordon's death, Norma passed too.*
- *Neither of them would have wanted to be without the other.*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: (NIV) ⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ¹¹Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? ¹²Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The secret: Weaving God into every part of your married lives.

Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Forgiveness is a necessity!

Ephesians 4:32: (NRSV) *and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.*

The secret: Forgive with liberality!

Mark 10:6-8: (NASB) ⁶But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

The Secret: Commitment!!!

If you are truly committed to your marriage, then it matters not how anyone feels, what your circumstances are or who is right. If you are truly committed to your marriage, then you will selflessly love, humbly give and joyfully endure first, then ask questions later!

Marriage is a lifetime commitment, a promise made before God. The potential of a marriage is to give you a happy, peaceful, tranquil, wonderful life if you focus on doing your part and allow your spouse to focus on their part. If we just put scriptural principles in place, we can be a shining example.

***So are there secrets to staying in love?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***