



Are There Biblical Secrets to a Good Marriage?

Genesis 2:24: (NASB) *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*



If you believe in the Bible, then you believe there are two institutions that have existed as long as humanity has been on this earth. First, there was the institution of obedience and honor to the Almighty Creator. God created and blessed Adam and he in turn owed his allegiance to God. The second institution was that of marriage. Upon the creation of Eve, it was declared that Adam would be committed and faithful to his wife, Eve. Loyalty to God and marriage: two God-declared necessities that began the human journey. Now as we look around at our present conditions, two new things become ominously apparent. First, we have all but lost our godly loyalty, and second, we are rapidly losing our marital bearings. For many, marriage still remains a vital piece of the human puzzle, so how do we keep its vitality relevant? What do

we do? How do we act? What do we avoid? Our best course of action to find answers is to go back to the book where it all started.

The Beginning:
This is where we see the
intention of God
for His human family.

God's Design - Our Relationship of Commitment.

Genesis 2:18-22: (NASB) ¹⁸*Then the LORD God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him. ¹⁹Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.*



Observations regarding the first marriage:

- (Verse 20) Adam was lonely! The noticeable absence of the woman revealed the emptiness man had without her.

²¹*So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man.*



- (Verse 21) God's creation of woman from man gives a sense of equality and companionship.
- (Verse 22) God presents Eve to Adam to be named as his own companion and "helper."

Wiktionary: helper: (noun) one who helps

**"One who helps," but certainly not one who has to be in a lesser position.
For example:**

Psalm 33:20: (KJV) *Our soul waiteth for the LORD: He is our **help** <5828> and our shield.*

Help: Strong's #5828 aid

The idea of "helper" is not lesser; it is to complete something. The original union of man and woman was designed to have the strength of working together.

We have several audio clips today from people who are in or have been in successful marriages. Each person met several prerequisites in order to qualify to make comments:



1. All are serious, dedicated Christians. These are not "go to church on Sunday" Christians, but Christians every day of their lives.
2. They have lived in a successful marriage and actually get along and do things together.
3. There had to be longevity. Being married two weeks or two years is exciting, but what about the doldrums of life, when you hit the pitfalls and things go upside down, when you are frustrated and angry?

Our "rookie" couple had to be married at least 20 years.

 **Doug, *Wake Up in the Morning and Make Your Spouse's Life Easier***

- *Hi! This is Doug and I have been married to Julie for 20 amazing years, going on 21. If I had any advice it would be that you should wake up every morning and try to make your spouse's life easier. If you promise to think about that and put it into practice and each of you can accomplish that, you should have a successful marriage.*

This is simple, straightforward advice. Wake up and think about how to make your spouse's life easier.

Genesis 2:23-25: (NASB) ²³The man said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.* ²⁴For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

- (Verse 23) At last, *bone of my bone* - Adam's deep companionship desire was now fulfilled.



- (Verse 24) Therefore a man leaves his home and clings to his wife - this implies a LIFE-LONG DEVOTION.



Imagine clinging to a life raft after your boat sank. This is not a casual hold.

²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- (Verses 24, 25) They become one flesh - inseparable and united in every way.

Julie, Money Marriage Management

- Hi, this is Julie from the CQ team. Doug and I have been married for almost 21 amazing years. Money issues are a huge cause of stress in a marriage - at least in the United States. Using the biblical principle of moderation in all things, my advice is as a general rule: If you CAN'T pay cash for it, don't buy it. But the REAL secret is, if you CAN pay cash for it, DON'T BUY IT. You don't need the latest this and that to keep up with everybody else. Be sober, be diligent, be honest and most of all COLLABORATIVE with money...and bypass all that avoidable stress.



This couple gives us the foundational principles of putting the other first and then making monetary decisions that will be beneficial to both in the short term and the long term.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. ¹⁰For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion...

**In this world, any godly institution is going to be tested.
Where and how do marriage tests come?**

Looking at this world we clearly see that the higher the godliness of the institution, the greater the testing and the greater the reward. Because marriage is pretty high up on God's list of sacredness, we can predictably observe and feel the magnitude of the testing and the intensity of the results.

Remember, marriage is a sacred covenant, a sacred promise made between a man and a woman with God and usually others as their witnesses. Inviting God to witness something is serious!



When I promised my wife I would be faithful to her, I also promised God I would be faithful to Him and not break the marriage covenant which He designed.

We are in the presence of God when we come to a point of joining two lives together. It is the most serious, sacred promise of any earthly nature we can make as human beings. If we do not treat it as the most important thing, we already start out at a disadvantage.

 **Andy and Val, 127 Secrets to Marriage**

- (Andy) This is Andy and Val.
- (Val) We've been married for 31 years.
- (Andy) And we are going to share 127 biblical secrets to make your marriage work!
- (Val) Or...maybe we'll just share two. The first one for me comes from Ephesians 4:26 that says, "Don't let the sun go down on your anger." We try really hard to make sure that our disagreements or misunderstandings don't last well into the night. We make sure we always kiss each other goodnight and that makes for a pretty nice way to go to sleep.
- (Andy) The second one comes from Philippians 2:3-5 and basically that means considering Val's interests more important than my own. So, that means, men, when Val comes and talks, I stop what I'm doing, and I give her my full attention because she matters to me.



The Testing Grounds: This is where we find the strengths and weaknesses of spouses. Testing comes from a myriad of sources, but we will suggest two character traits that support us through them all: God's Design - Our Relationship of Honesty and Communication.

The lesson is we need to stop and really listen to our spouse. We will talk more about Val's advice to not go to bed angry.



The hardest thing about coming home from a vacation or trip is not spending every minute together, because we miss each other when we have to go back to those routines of life like work. Honesty and communication, especially when you are together for days or weeks at a time, is just beautiful.

There is something to be said for that sense of togetherness. This is God's purposeful design.



The audio clips throughout the program by Allen Parr are based on Ephesians 4:25-32.

 **Dishonesty, *Marriage Killers/Things That Destroy Marriage*, Allen Parr**

- *And so, from this passage I want to point out four things that will completely destroy our marriages. #1: Dishonesty. Paul says here let each of you lay aside falsehood and speak truth to your neighbors. So, this could be anything as simple as exaggerating a story or making a false promise and saying you're going to do something but not following through, or coming up with an excuse just to save face just because somebody caught you doing something you didn't expect them to catch you in, so it's just easier to make an excuse rather than tell the truth. Or just straight up coming out lying straight to the person's face. Any of these things will damage trust, and as the old saying goes, "Trust takes years to build, only seconds to break and a lifetime to repair."*

Exaggeration, excuses and lying are all in the category of dishonesty. Why do we exaggerate? Because we are trying to cover up something or make it look different than it really is.

Here is Jesus quoting our theme text of God's design and our relationship of commitment:

Matthew 19:3-8: (NASB) ³*Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing him and asking, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?*

The Pharisees were testing Jesus to see what side of their interpretive debate on divorce and the Law he would fall on. The Pharisees often debated the interpretation of the Law amongst themselves.

Notice how Jesus steps far above the debate in his answer:

⁴*And he answered and said, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*

Jesus did not answer the question. He gave an honest statement but not about their question.

The Pharisees are not satisfied. They cling to the *right* that Moses gave for divorce:

⁷*They said to him, Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away? ⁸He said to them, Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.*

"Moses gave us the right to get a divorce - just give her a piece of paper and you are free! Why did Moses give us that right?" Jesus' response was profound: "That was because of the hardness of your heart; but that is not how marriage was supposed to be." When Jesus quoted that first Genesis text about the union of man and woman, he is quoting it to solidify the absolute importance of that covenant for life.

He did not enter into the argument. He was saying, "Why are you thinking about divorce, rather than discussing how to protect and increase the sanctity of marriage and the promises made?" He turned their argument on its ear.



What does this have to do with honesty and communication? Everything! Jesus' lesson is simple - why are you parsing and dicing words about divorce? Why are you not completely focusing on the sanctity of what God set forth?



Do we let our minds go to places like these of excuse and rationalization instead of honestly communicating with our spouse? We tend to get what we focus on!

The Pharisees, by focusing on what the right grounds for divorce were again and again set themselves up to have a mind to be able to do it. Our minds can go into places of excuses and rationalization, but why are you thinking that? This is not what marriage is supposed to be! If we maintain honest communication with our spouses, the whole scenario can change, even if it is rocky. And honesty is not just telling people how we feel. More on that soon.



Deb, From First Date to Long Marriage

- My name is Deb and I was married for 38 ½ wonderful years. One piece of advice that I had gotten was to always be honest and open, and I was from the very beginning. I met my husband in the promiscuous 70's - sex, drugs and rock and roll. I guess I was tired of playing the dating game so on our first date, I announced to Michael that biblical principles are a huge part of my life. Part of the list I fired off at him was, I go to church every Sunday and I do not believe in premarital sex. If he wanted to date me that was the package. Yes, that was on our first date. I really didn't think I would hear from him again. But I did! Two years later we were married, and we had a most beautiful marriage for over 38 years.*



(Michael passed away in 2015) Total honesty! Deb's values were more important than making an impression, and she therefore made an impression!

Ephesians 4:25: (KJV) *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

Honesty and communication! Both come from a heart that is open to godly righteousness.

Luke 8:15: (KJV) *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

This word for honest means "beautiful, good, virtuous." This gives you a bigger sense of what we normally think - honesty being "beautiful." Honesty can be brutal but can be beautiful when framed with compassion and mercy.



Moral honesty is often harder up front and easier in the long run. Deb's example made an important impression on her soon-to-be-husband, Michael.

Communication is simply a learned skill that begins with the high value of your spouse, slowing yourself way down and listening with your heart, mind and body.

**We constantly see marriages tested and failing.
Infidelity is everywhere. What do we do to avoid it?**

Here is one of those areas where honesty and communication have been overridden and replaced with secrecy, selfishness and a desire to find fulfillment, excitement or numbness by way of illicit behavior. No two ways about it - infidelity is as contrary to God's design as you can go. A key understanding point is that it is *usually* as a result of a breakdown on both sides of the relationship.

When you hear, "He cheated on me," or "She cheated on me," we know there was not, for a period of time, honest communication and depth of commitment. Usually there are difficulties on both sides for that to happen.

We have to look in the mirror and ask, "What am I responsible for?" This takes a lot of integrity to look at ourselves. *You can find a way through such trials.*



Deb, His and Her Towels

- A secret to the success of our marriage was we never got "His" or "Hers" towels. I'll explain. We didn't live our marriage with "His" or "Her" anything. We chopped and carried firewood together; we cleaned house together. We worked side by side. Nothing was "His," nothing was "Hers." Everything was "Ours." We were helpmates. I believe we came to appreciate each other not only for what we did as individuals, but for what we did for each other.*



The metaphor is clear. Everything is "ours." We work at everything together, doing things together, helping one another.

The Pitfalls - Infidelity: Here is where we see the ugly and destructive results of a lack of honesty and communication coupled with a lack of determination and discipline...



God's Design - Our Relationship of Respect.



We do not complain about each other outside of our relationship. We should protect each other's integrity and not bring down our spouse to others. We cover each other's faults.

Infidelity is the exact opposite. While both parties may have contributed to the cause of infidelity, one person decides to break that covenant made before God. That is a serious thing. They have to carry the weight of that sin. That person finds solace in another who does not belong in that marriage. The cheating spouse often complains about their spouse; that protectiveness and sacredness is gone.

Our original theme text is AGAIN cited here! It makes you realize just how important it is:

1 Corinthians 6:14-20: (NASB) *¹⁴Now God has not only raised the Lord but will also raise us up through His power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?*

Your bodies are members of Christ - this is a spiritual context; there would be no thinking of infidelity here.

Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! ¹⁶Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, the two shall become one flesh.

The Apostle Paul takes that high, spiritual teaching that *your bodies are members of Christ* and says do not get involved in immorality, because you are taking that body that has been given to Christ and are being unfaithful to your "marriage." Why would you do that?

¹⁷But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. ¹⁸Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

The city of Corinth was a very sinful, corrupt place. Bringing Christians out of that environment was a real task. The Apostle worked hard to explain how high the morality levels of Christianity are compared to what they were used to.

He uses a dramatic example of our commitment to God through Christ, saying you cannot sin against your marriage, because you are sinning not only against the covenant but your own body.

Christians are human, too, and are subject to difficulty, lust, desires and our own faults. Sometimes we find ourselves in mentally compromising situations. *This can lead to physically compromising situations.* Following this reasoning of the Apostle Paul can help us pull back and see what is higher.

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.

Your body is the temple of God's spirit. Within your person, if you are a true, dedicated follower of Christ and you have been called, you have answered that call and you have been given God's spirit - His power and influence, *that power and influence dwells in you!* This means Jesus' ransom has now been paid for you and guaranteed by giving you His spirit.



You have been bought with a price - If you are a Christian, **YOU DO NOT EVEN OWN THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INFIDELITY!** You have been bought and paid for! You belong to God through Christ. Glorify God in your body.



This is very serious for the Christian.
You have committed yourself to act in a godly fashion.
This is another level of thinking to combat infidelity.

We can have disagreements, resentments, dissatisfaction and frustrations at home, and these things can play all kinds of games as they work their way into our thinking.



Anger, Marriage Killers/Things That Destroy Marriage, Allen Parr

- #2: Anger. Notice Paul says here, "Be angry but do not sin." So, he's not suggesting here that you have no right or reason to be angry, but rather when you do get angry that you do not sin. How do we do that? One of the ways that we do that is to remain angry and refuse to resolve conflict. Paul goes on to give us a time frame in which we should resolve all of our conflicts. He says, "Do it before the sun goes down." Why should we do that? It's because whenever we don't do that, he goes on to say that we are giving the devil an opportunity. An opportunity for what? It is to fill our minds with thoughts of anger, thoughts of bitterness, thoughts of revenge, thoughts of unforgiveness, thoughts of temptation, negative thoughts about the other person. So, remember the principle that when you and your spouse are not speaking to each other, the devil is speaking to both of you.



**When you and your spouse are not speaking to each other,
the devil is speaking to both of you.**



Christians, take that to heart! *Infidelity is not an option* for those following Christ, and anger is a reason we can talk ourselves into infidelity.

When you are angry and refuse to resolve the conflict, you give yourself permission to stay angry and permission to take another step and another step.

Ephesians 4:26-27: (NASB) 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.

To ask for and grant forgiveness, humility is required. Sometimes it is hard to admit you are wrong. Sometimes it is hard to take the first step, but it is worth it. If we can take that first step with humility, we can begin the slow, tedious but fruitful process of making things right.



How do we get to a point of infidelity? Slowly and carelessly. We scarcely listen or communicate, and that leaves us with a relationship that is based on ME and therefore disrespectful to my spouse. When we disrespect our spouse, we have given ourselves permission to go where we do not belong. "I am more important than my spouse. I was hurt, I was wronged, so it does not matter about them."

Song of Songs 2:15: (KJV) *Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.*

It was said the little foxes could not reach the fruit so they would gnaw away on the vine and kill the vine. *One of the hardest things to do is to stop what starts out as something small.*

Matthew 5:27-30: (KJV) ²⁷*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:* ²⁸*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Do not allow an improper thought to take root. Instantly pray for forgiveness if a lustful thought comes in. Honor your spouse. Develop integrity of the heart. God knows all, hears all and sees all.

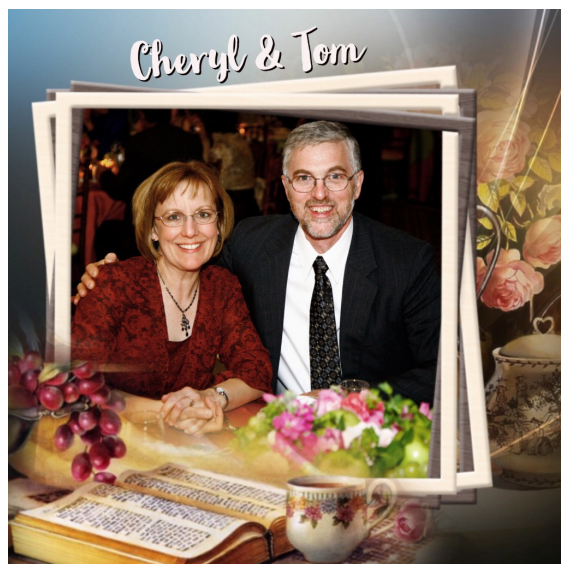
Once something evil takes root in our heart it can only produce a poisoned plant.

²⁹*And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out...* ³⁰*And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.*

How determined am I to hate sin to the point of severing that which is an evil temptation in my life?

 **40 years, Marriage Support, Tom**

- *My name is Tom. My wife Cheryl and I have been married for about 40 years now. One thing that has helped our marriage is that when we went into it, we believed there was no turning back. We were determined to make it work, so we had no "Plan B." And, of course, that meant being sure we had chosen the right person. Another factor that has helped us tremendously is that we had both made an individual commitment to serving God before we were together. So, when we did get married we had a set of principles that we both believed in and which has helped mold our own relationship. But of course, these are only starting points. Success comes in trying, as best we can, to put godly principles into practice.*



1 Peter 4:8: (NASB) *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*



We have to have that fervent love for one another and be willing to cover the sins of the other and not expose them.

**Enough of the infidelity discussion.
What about the polar opposite - marriage's highest standards?**

Let's remember that the road to the lowest low we were just speaking about is unfortunately a common denominator for many people in their lives. They can identify with the feelings that bring you there. The highest high of marriage standards will therefore, by definition, not be so common, for the steps needed are uncommon and difficult but incredibly rewarding.



I often receive texts at work of "Thinking of you," "Love you," "Miss you" from my wife to keep that connection going. Do the things necessary to keep the connection going.

Unhealthy communication, Marriage Killers/Things That Destroy Marriage, Allen Parr

- **#3: Unhealthy communication.** I want you to notice four things here. First of all, Paul says, "Do not let any unwholesome word come out of your mouth." So, this could be cursing at the person, being overly critical of the person, being judgmental of the person or just outburst of anger. Any of these things will ultimately destroy and deteriorate your marriage. Second of all, he says, "Instead of that, be intentional about using your words to build the person up, affirm them and encourage them." Third, he says, "According to the need of the moment," so, he is basically saying here that we need to discern what is the right time to say whatever is on our heart. And finally, he says, "So that our words will give grace to those who hear." So, now he's not talking about what we say or when we say but how we say it. The tone of voice that we use can determine whether or not it is received positively or negatively.



Communication is a great learned behavior but can be unhealthy. In terms of marriage or parenting, one of the basic principles I have tried really hard to follow is to have anger be used only as a tool when it was something that needed to be expressed for a specific reason - not because I felt angry. Just because I felt angry did not mean it was right. It helped me look for healthy communication.

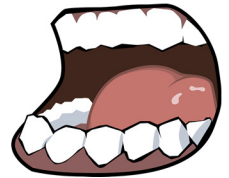
Ephesians 4:29: (NASB) *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

Selfless love is what provokes the ability to live and speak according to this text:

- *No unwholesome word* (meaning "rotten, putrefied"), but instead use words of *edification* (coming from the word "edifice," meaning building a structure; "architecture, confirmation"). Your words have to be building something intentionally good. If something is putrid, it is disgusting with nothing good left in it.



- Speak words that are valuable according *to the need of the moment*. Not only valuable words but according to the need of the moment. How do you know what the need of the moment is? You have to truly LISTEN. If you have been listening, you will understand the moment. If you have not been listening, you will just react.



- The end result of our words should be grace to the hearer. Favor, goodness to the hearer. Even things you have to say that are difficult can still come across in a graceful fashion if we do not use those putrefied words. Look to build something positive and focus on the need of the moment.



Paul and Joyce, Married 41 Years



- (Paul) *Hi, this is Paul.*
- (Joyce) *And this is Joyce and we've been married for 41 years.*
- (Paul) *And I guess the secret to our longevity is we try to follow Ephesians 5 that says, "Husbands ought to love their wives." So, what that means to me is that a husband should tell his wife that he loves her as often as possible.*
- (Joyce) *And it also says that, "Wives should respect their husbands," and this really does not mean there should be an abuse to the wife that she should respect her husband, but when we do have important decisions in our life, we discuss it to the end of the end and then whatever my husband decides is what we go with. Sometimes I don't always agree, but this basic scriptural concept is something that does seem to work in the long term. When you marry for a long time you really have to commit to the concept of longevity.*

Our Relationship of Compatibility.

Sometimes people get married who are not totally compatible. We submit this can be built, mastered and put in place even if there is not a natural compatibility.

As women seem more capable to love, they are instructed to focus on the relationship building exercise of finding compatibility in acknowledging headship of their husbands:



Ephesians 5:22-27: (NASB) ²²*Wives, 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.*

This biblical advice certainly does NOT seem like something that would foster love and compatibility. On the contrary, it seems to be something that would foster resentment and disunity. Taken without context, these verses can easily fall into the unhealthy communication trap.

A deep respect underlies these verses. There is a need husbands have to feel respect from their wives that helps them to move forward, to build their lives together and make the marriage work. It is important to acquiesce to these scriptural principles. It is God's design.

Russ and Camille, Married for 15,826 Days

- (Russ) *This is Russ and Camille. We've been married for 15,826 days. (Camille) That is over 43 years. We have learned to smile at the idiosyncrasies of each other.*
- (Russ) *We believe the reason for our successful marriage has been a commitment to "forever" with each other.*
- (Camille) *We had a lot in common in our upbringings as kids, so our expectations for marriage and raising our own children were similar.*
- (Russ) *There is a constant, respectful evaluation and acquiescence to each other's needs and wants within our marriage.*
- (Camille) *The ability to adapt and change as situations dictate has also been valuable.*
- (Russ) *With the Lord and Scriptures as our guide, we try to fulfill God's will in all aspects.*



They talked about smiling, a commitment to "forever," adapting when the situation required it - all of these things in the context of each other. That is one of the secrets of building compatibility. Part of it is the wife showing respect and headship towards the husband.

Our Relationship of love.

A wife shows selfless love by deeply respecting her husband as in Ephesians 5:22-24.

A husband must be respectable and reciprocate by deeply loving his wife:

²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her,*



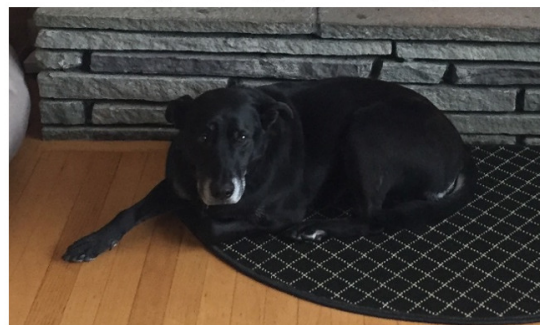
Because men can so easily be all about themselves, or their work or their team, this verse is a resounding reminder of where their *truest earthly loyalty and sacrifice* is to be focused.

As a man, you may have a demanding job or something that takes a lot of your energy, focus and determination. You may come home from all of that exhausted. (Wives can go through the same thing, but we are now speaking from the standpoint of a man.) You come home and *the exhaustion is no excuse to not deeply love and cherish your wife*. Remember, Jesus, throughout his earthly ministry, was on a continual downward spiral of the loss of his energy as he healed people. But he kept on giving until there was literally nothing left to give. That is our example.



I still get excited when I hear the garage door opening when Jewel is coming home. I say to our dog, "Mommy's home!" and he wags his tail and he runs to the door. We are waiting for her to come up the stairs so we can greet her and show her how much we love her. It is the feeling that I have. When I pull in the driveway, I cannot wait to come upstairs and give Jewel a big hug and say, "I am home!"

Beta the dog, waiting for Jewel to get home



It is the sense of coming together because you are coming back to what has completed you; to the honesty, integrity, compatibility and the love.

What else did Jesus do in this example that we need to learn from and emulate?

²⁶*so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

Jesus gave his bride the highest spiritual honor - sanctification! To sanctify something means to set it aside for a holy purpose. As a man, do we set our wives apart and treat them with that kind of high, cherished respect?

²⁷*that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

Jesus set his bride up to be glorious and blameless! Do we cherish our wives and see their glory? Do we appreciate all they are and all they do? If not, the marriage can fall apart.

**Marriage is clearly central in Scripture.
Is there even more to its importance than the relationship?**

As we begin our conclusion, we need to examine the other part of marriage for Christians - the part where it is used as a sacred symbol of something that is heavenly, higher and hopeful - not only for us but for the entire world. First, let's finish our discussion of the men's role and responsibility with and to their wives.



The Highest Standard:
Here is where we see
New Testament biblical principles
bring us to the heights
of the marriage covenant.

God's Design -
Our Relationship of Compatibility and Love



Treat your spouse every week to a date night. Make time to talk about the week and show each other you care. Enjoy a meal and good conversation. Find those moments, make them special and cherish them.

Ephesians 5:28: (NASB) *So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;*

For men, the loving of their wives has to be put into the context of their own self-care. Men, think of it as taking care of your wife just like you take care of yourself. We can be self-absorbed. Instead, be spouse-absorbed.

Unforgiveness, Marriage Killers/Things That Destroy Marriage, Allen Parr

- #4. *Unforgiveness. Notice Paul says here to forgive each other just as Christ has forgiven you. Let me speak to the singles for just a moment. If you're watching this video and you know you get your feelings hurt quickly, you get offended quickly, and it takes you a long time to extend forgiveness to someone else, you may want to consider whether marriage is for you, because things come up even on a daily basis that will require you to extend forgiveness to your spouse. Marriage, as one person defined it, is a continual act of forgiveness.*

We have been focusing on the principles of marriage and how important it is. But what if you are a Christian and you are single? What if you are single because something tragic has happened, or what if you never found someone who has the same Christian principles as you? That is such an important question that we will be doing an entire podcast on this in a few weeks.

Ephesians 4:31-32: (NASB) ³¹*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.* ³²*Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

For both men and women, this is a piece of fundamental living advice! Focus on the most important thing.



Bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander - We must rise above those negative things. They cannot drive our life and how we treat our spouse.

Ephesians 5:29-33: (NASB) ²⁹*for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,*

Here is where we are beginning to truly see a higher meaning and purpose than the highest earthly relationship. The Apostle is telling us there is something more to marriage we might not have thought of - there is a higher picture and purpose for marriage.

AGAIN our theme text appears:

³⁰*because we are members of his body. 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.*

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh - we have had this verse quoted as the standard for marriage. We have had it quoted as "this is the thing you should be thinking about instead of divorce." We have had it quoted in context of running away from immorality. Now we have it quoted as a picture of something much bigger. This is powerful! Not only is marriage the highest earthly covenant of all time, but the human institution of marriage is also a picture of the unity and combined power of the true church united with Jesus as ambassadors for the kingdom to come.

One of the many reasons we need to focus on the marriage covenant and its importance of commitment, honesty and communication, is not only for the sake of what we are doing but *for the sake of what we are representing*. The Apostle tells us we are representing something higher - the unity of Christ and the church. That is breathtaking!

³³*Nevertheless, 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.*



Rick and Tricia have been married for 37 years.

Jonathan and Jewel have been married for 30 years.

Giving is one of the most important qualities in a marriage. First, give your lives to God and work together to serve Him. Further, give your spouse your time, attention, care, trust, respect, support and talents. Giving is sacrificial, "agape" love. If you focus on giving and not receiving, it will lead to a loving, God-honoring marriage.



My wife is an incredible giver. Sometimes life is very demanding and she plows the road ahead for me without a complaint. Every day, she asks, "What do you need? How can I help?" This gives me the next level of inspiration to think, "Maybe I can do this," even when it feels too heavy and difficult.



Florence and George, 65 Year Marriage Tips

- *George and I have been married for 65 wonderful years. There is much that could be said, but these are a few hints that might be helpful to you. Throughout each day strive to show your love by watching for little things that would be a helpful blessing. Try not to wait until you are asked for assistance but take the initiative by having a constant lookout to see how you can be a greater help to one another. Even in the little things like taking out the garbage, help in washing dishes, making the bed, going grocery shopping, helping in putting on one another's coats. Try to completely remove from your thoughts something is a "man's work" or a "woman's work." The willingness to do whatever is in the realm of possibility to assist one another, whether it's cutting the grass, painting a wall or by preparing supper, this manifests a love from the heart that is sure to be appreciated and reciprocated on. Occasionally surprise your mate with a "not for any reason" small token of your love for them. Could be one rose, a box of candy, a new tie, etc.*



The little things - take initiative. Do "our" work. Resentment gets built behind walls. If we can break down those walls and not have those reasons, resentment will not come. We can build a powerful relationship, an edifice that is spectacular.

Read this text as though it were designed primarily as a marriage guide. Think of this as a guide to true commitment, which was our first and most basic marriage ingredient:

Philippians 2:1-4: (NASB) ¹Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any *fellowship of the Spirit*, if any affection and compassion, ²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, *maintaining the same love*, *united in spirit*, *intent on one purpose*.

All of the above and below shows us compatibility and sacred, selfless love in action.

³*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit*, but *with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves*; ⁴*do not merely look out for your own personal interests*, but also for the interests of others.

2 Peter 1:10: (NASB) *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;*

We have talked about several things we need to do in order to be clearly focused on creating success in marriage. We do not often talk about "success" and "marriage" together, but they have to go together in such a way so that



our lives are reflective of what God meant, intended and designed for our relationships. Rededicate yourself to your commitments.

*So, are there biblical secrets to a good marriage?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Join us next week for our February 19, 2018, podcast,
"Has the Gospel Been Corrupted?" (Part II)



A few more Scriptures that can be easily and appropriately applied to the marriage covenant:

Ephesians 4:1-3: (NASB) ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philippians 4:8: (ASV) ⁸Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Romans 14:13-15: (NRSV) ¹³Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another¹⁴I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died.



A few texts that pinpoint issues in marriage:

Holding grudges and constant complaining - never good things. It is often based in misinformation.

Proverbs 19:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹*A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression...* ¹³*A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.*

Letting anger or resentment fester - that's going to hurt tomorrow! Anger is often based in misinformation.

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

Generally, it is pride and ego behind our maritally-destructive behavior:

Proverbs 16:18,19: (NASB) ¹⁸*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.* ¹⁹*It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

Scriptural principle that applies to the marriage union:

1 Corinthians 8:1-3: (NRSV) ¹*Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that all of us possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.* ²*Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge;* ³*but anyone who loves God is known by him.*

A quick look at a great example of a great married Christian team:

AQUILA-PRISCILLA

Some married couples know how to make the most of life. They complement each other, capitalize on each other's strengths, and form an effective team. Their united efforts affect those around them. Aquila and Priscilla were such a couple. They are never mentioned separately in the Bible. In marriage and ministry, they operated as one.

Priscilla and Aquila met Paul in Corinth during his second missionary journey. They had just been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius's decree against Jews. Their home was as movable as the tents they made to support themselves. They opened their home to Paul, and he joined them in tentmaking. He shared with them his wealth of spiritual wisdom.

Priscilla and Aquila made the most of their spiritual education. They listened carefully to sermons and evaluated what they heard. When they heard Apollos speak, they were impressed by his ability but realized that his information was not complete. Instead of open confrontation, the couple quietly took Apollos home and shared with him what he needed to know. Until then, Apollos had only been aware of John the Baptist's message about Christ. Priscilla and Aquila told him about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and the reality of God's indwelling Spirit. He continued to preach powerfully—but now with the full story.

As for Priscilla and Aquila, they went on using their home as a warm place for training and worship. Back in Rome years later, they hosted one of the house churches that developed.

In an age when the focus is mostly on what happens *between* husband and wife, Aquila and Priscilla are an example of what can happen *through* a husband and wife. Their effectiveness together is the result of their good relationship with each other. Their hospitality opened the doorway of salvation to many. The Christian home is still one of the best tools for spreading the gospel. Do guests find Christ in your home?

Strengths and accomplishments

- Outstanding husband/wife team who ministered in the early church
- Supported themselves by tentmaking while serving Christ
- Close friends of Paul
- Explained to Apollos the full message of Christ

Lessons from their lives

- Couples can have an effective ministry together
- The home is a valuable tool for evangelism
- Every believer needs to be well educated in the faith, whatever his or her role in the church

Vital statistics

- Where: Originally from Rome, moved to Corinth, then Ephesus
- Occupation: Tentmakers
- Contemporaries: Emperor Claudius, Paul, Timothy, Apollos

Key verses

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila. They have been co-workers in my ministry for Christ Jesus. In fact, they risked their lives for me. I am not the only one who is thankful to them; so are all the Gentile churches" (Romans 16:3, 4).

Their story is told in Acts 18. They are also mentioned in Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19.