



Building a **STRONG MARRIAGE**

How can believers become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE

Discover God's Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God's relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a "profound mystery" because the man represents Christ, the groom, while the woman represents His bride, the church. The marital union of husband and wife is a sacred reflection of the gospel itself.

PRIORITY TWO

Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today's civil marriages are much like business contracts—easy to get into and easy to get out of. God's covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people were not faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime—in sickness and health, for better or worse. They do not threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE

Pursue a Passionate Marriage

God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for

marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God. Prioritize a routine like date nights to fan the flame of intimacy in your marriage.

PRIORITY FOUR

Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ's sacrifice directly to marriage: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25) and "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands" (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

PRIORITY FIVE

Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the "devil a foothold" in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens. Prayer is a key part of fighting for your marriage. Statistics from Gallop and the National Association of Marriage Enhancement reveal that when couples pray together on a daily basis less than one percent would end up getting a divorce.

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

Lovology: God. Love. Marriage. Sex. And the Never-Ending Story of Male and Female by John Mark Comer

Gives a biblical vision for sexual intimacy and marriage and tackles difficult questions related to human sexuality.

Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

Helps couples appreciate and meet their mate's greatest need.

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

Helps couples understanding and speak their mate's "love language."

Have a New Sex Life by Friday by Kevin Leman

Encourages married couples to pursue the joys and pleasures of sexual intimacy.

GOING FURTHER

COLUMBUS CHURCH of CHRIST SUPPORT

Marriage Idea Cards

Free resources and date night ideas available at the Faith at Home Center.

Life Groups

Columbus Church of Christ offers a variety of Adult Life Groups for every season of life. Many of our church family have experienced what you're experiencing and will be helpful as listeners and as partners on your journey. To get involved with a LifeGroup contact Billy Ferguson Fergusonb@columbuscoc.com

Measure Your Success

Commit to evaluating your marriage and spiritual focus every 120 days. Schedule a time to discuss it with your spouse. Evaluation forms are available at our Faith at Home Center for free.

Professional Counseling

Christ-centered professional counseling services available in our area offered for adults, adolescents, and children. Both male and female counselors are available. All counseling is confidential. Bob Meek (662) 329-1444 Sondra Dowdle (662) 435-2293 Life Works (601) 790-0583

RightNow Media

Rightnow media is a free video library offered to all our members and visitors. You'll find Bible studies, and topical material that will help you understand where God is in your grief, grow your faith, and take the lead in your children's spiritual growth.