

The Marriage 'Tune-up' Workshop

You can have a “Wondrous Marriage!” © Dr. Richard Joseph Krejcir

God’s precepts on building a great marriage and making marriage succeed even in times of stress and turmoil.

Introduction

The real authenticity of our Lord, will enable us to build a real authenticity of love and respect, that will in turn build a “Wondrous Marriage!”

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:33

Why this workshop? Yes, there are many good ones to go to, *Family Life*, *Gottman’s*, even *Marriage Encounter*, and *New Life* charges \$1,598 per couple, it is considered the best and it is, but this one is better. Why? It is based on 25 years of doing this, with ongoing research, and it is based on God’s timeless true Truth, not a psychological fad. Plus, we have practical, you can use now, information that will help you for many years to come. And you can do it in your church, do it cost effectively instead of outsourcing your ministry and people.

How to do a workshop

Typical format:

Follow any retreat Friday evening, Saturday through Sunday morning format, and feel free to divide up the material as needed and you can add more from our site and book too.

Open with prayer, a positive welcome in a nonjudgmental and confidential atmosphere. Use one of our open questions and or a get to know you question, also skits or role plays of couples arguing and miscommunicating are always good icebreakers, as well as clips from movies like ‘Couples Retreat’ or TV shows like ‘King of Queens.’ Make sure everyone has the book, “This Is Marriage” too. Make sure people feel welcome, in a non confrontational atmosphere.

This curriculum can be done personally in your marriage and in fellowship in small groups, you could also this in an interactive lecture or workshop setting. This endeavor will be in a seminar. I suggest that you have people read the book first, “This is Marriage” and or go to the blog, <http://thisismarriage.org/>. You can follow this syllabus, or you can just use the book.

If using the book, do one chapter at a time, and discuss the key points of need followed by the questions. You might go over one chapter for a day for a seminar or three chapters for a weekend retreat. Any chapter(s) can be used; however, the main ones I

suggest are, Chapter 3 *Building a Wondrous Marriage*, Chapter 6 *Marriage where Real Love is Practiced*, Chapter 7 *Cherish and Respect*, and you can have a seminar with a financial planner and do Chapter 18 *Marriage Money Matters* with the Appendix III on Budgeting ideas, or a seminar with Chapter 19 *Divorce Proof Your Marriage* or, Chapter 20 *The Marriage Tune-up*!

The passages, main points, and some applications are given; you can read, be challenged, equipped, inspired and encouraged to make a wondrous marriage begin! In addition, I will take you into a journey of what love is and what it is not. You will get an aspect of love and a session on what a biblical marriage looks like to work on at your own pace.

This book can be used as a personal guide for individuals and can be done individually; ideally, you would do this alongside your spouse or fiancé, small group, or with a qualified pastor or counselor. This book can also be used for a community workshop or class.

For the workshop

Have 1 or 2, 50 minute opening sessions Fri. Night, For Sat., 2 to 3, 50 minute session in the morning and 3 in the afternoon and 15-20 min breaks, 1 ½ hour lunch and a dinner date out. Close at 5pm, for a couples date night, then encourage couples to do some of the exercises at least one after the date. If meeting on Sunday, use a close speech, anything from the book or this handout, then you can have a time of worship. If time, have each couple take turns to read aloud some of the marriage tips on the site and book. For the sessions, any of the chapters can be used as a session or what we have here. Read it first and choose what is most needed. Like, read the teachers material and then, leave 15-20 minutes for the couples workshop assignments.

Or, read the book, “This Is Marriage beforehand. Read one of the Bible passages and use this curriculum, discuss with your spouse too. Let people know, things can get real, stuff will open up, that is OK, be committed to listen, be open for criticism, be forgiving and remember the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians, Chapter Five.

Throughout the workshop have couples read aloud the ‘Tips’ in the appendix as much as possible. Then, have a time of prayer and an attitude of *I can do this, we can have a wondrous marriage, we can make it work.*

Speakers introduction and Leader’s speaking material

Session I: *What we are facing:*

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Open Question: What were your hopes and dreams prior to getting married? How do they compare to now? Are you on track with what glorifies God?

The world tells you that it is all about you; your needs must be fulfilled. Marriage is about making me—yes, ‘ME,’--happy! Look at all the excitement of the pursuit, the proposal, the engagement, the wedding plans and so forth. Jump ahead a year, two years or ten. What do you have? Do you have the thrill, the rush, the anticipation? For most, not so much. The fact is that seeking to be self-fulfilled did not work out so well.

Why? There are two of you in the marriage, and you cannot be fulfilled and happy if you do so at the other’s expense; unfortunately, this can happen to the best of us, and it tends to happen over time. Blessedly, there is a solution to bring back that excitement, hope, and wonder. The Bible has a better plan, and the Bible gives all the instruction to make a marriage work—you can have a wondrous marriage! It is about understanding and applying what *love and marriage really is* to be about and the practice of *real* forgiveness. Of course, communication is important, too. If we do not know what marriage is supposed to be about and only focus on what we want it to be, we will fail. We will fail. If we refuse to know and practice real love, we will have only sadness and brokenness. If we are not willing to forgive, we have...nothing. We have nothing ahead, except broken expectations, disappointments, and hurts that create anger, bitterness, and a life of dysfunction ultimately ending in divorce or general unpleasantness!

Remember, though, you can have joy and real purpose in your marriage; you can escape a relationship rife with chaos and dysfunction. You and your spouse can have a successful marriage!

In this workshop, we will help guide you through the insights from God’s Word. Like the word, ‘Love,’ it may be a noun as a word, as in a person, or place or thing; but, love is more of a call to action, to be--a verb, an action. Marriage is also is a verb--a call to action.

In a great working Christian marriage, what we are to be doing is simple, the practice of real cherishing love and the acceptance of respect so you are both valuing each other. In this, you will be on the winning side of faith, family life and harmony!

1. **Love - cherish**
2. **Respect - value**
3. **Guard against lust**
4. **Control your pride**
5. **Pray together**

Love confirms the authenticity of Jesus’ and His followers!

The efforts and guidance for this endeavor are based on the Word of God and learning and distilling from more than 25 years of research and 19 (insert your testimony here) years of humbling practice. In addition to the Word, research, and experience, over 100 couples in fulfilling, long-lasting marriages were interviewed (this facilitated the “Tips”).

(Remember, you have no need to rely solely on what we say; look it up for yourselves in the Bible.) You can build a good marriage if you want to learn to love, respect, forgive, pray, and be humble in your relationship with Christ and with your spouse. You will succeed.

You CAN build a healthy marriage that glorifies Christ as Lord.

God tells us what makes a good marriage fun and enjoyable. The challenge in is for you who are already married and how to realize all the joy of a good marriage. If you are looking for advice and guidance about finding a potential spouse, I encourage you to still immerse yourself in God's Word and, perhaps, check out the book, "Healthy Relationships," by Dr. Krejcir.

The ultimate goal is for your marriage to be good. It can be fun. You and your spouse can be close best friends.

"What is the catch"? Okay, there is a bit of a catch.

Like anything worthwhile and important, a good marriage requires work, commitment, and maintenance to be effectual. Like anything worth doing, you have to be willing to do it. You have to want a healthier marriage. You need to work on better communication and forgiveness. You do need to pray with one another. You have to know what it means to cherish and what it means to respect. You must learn what love is and what it is not. You have to see what God has for you, not just what you want. Finally, you must want it to get it.

I encourage you to be bold and brave! In Christ, you CAN move from the darkness of hurts and live in the Light of Christ.

They key to make this all work? Surrendering to the Lord and reading God's Word with the Holy Spirit in you guiding you, you absolutely will behold a wondrous revolution in your lives together. If you are already blessed with a good marriage, consider this a tune-up, building upon the hard work and commitment that you have already realized in a good relationship. You and your spouse are worth this much.

I recommend that you read the book and keep referring back to it. Remember, this is a journey to be done together as a couple, and you can share with a counselor or a small group or marriage retreat. The appendixes are additional resources for you and for counselors. To continue what you have learned here. It is best to follow a sequence that looks like this: Read the book, "This Is marriage," read the Bible passages and curriculum, discuss with your spouse, be committed to listen, be open for criticism, be forgiving and remember the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians, Chapter Five. Try to practice the 'Tips' as much as possible. Then, follow through with a counselor or mentor, and remember to stay in prayer with an attitude of *I can do this, I can have a wondrous marriage, I can make it work.*

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. What does love mean to me, us?
2. What does respect mean to me, us?
3. What is mine, your fears?
4. What is mine, your hopes?

Spend time in prayer! Ask Christ, *how can we be more respectful and loving to one another?*

Session II: *Prepare and build*

Let us look at how to prepare and build for a successful marriage.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, again.... Try a different translation

Open Question: We are called to exalt Christ as Lord; He also calls us to exalt your spouse as His child, as you become one in Him. How can we do this? What would your home be like?

How can I have better? Having a better marriage is a matter of focus, effort, and a willingness to know a better image of what God has for our marriage. We must be able and willing to engage it wholeheartedly as an act of worship. Accordingly, Jewish and Christian marriages are acts of worship--an essential component of communion and community. We communicate our love, adoration, and gratitude to Christ, together as a church locally, as a Church universally, and with all of creation "in concert." When we realize we worship Christ as Lord first and foremost, we have better!

How can we do this? We must begin by seeing our marriages as an act of worship. How you view and treat God? How you honor and give Him praise is manifested in our relationships, especially that with our spouse. Your worship of Christ as Lord, will impact who and how you are in your home and family. To have better, we must honor Christ in our words and deeds, and pursue them with passion.

How do I make this work? We must not seek our fulfillment in being married, but in being fulfilled in Christ, who loves us so much that we are able to fully love in our marriages. Our joy is to come from our relationship in Christ, not from our spouses. Marriage was not designed to complete a person. Our completion can only be found in Our Lord and Savior—our One Foundation. Marriage is the place that we share the joy, love, and passion of full intimacy. Christ is the Foundation, and marriage is the structure in which we build our relationship with our spouses, children, and selves to, with, and in

Christ and each other. Happiness and joy are byproducts that may or may not always happen. Marriage is not about being happy and fulfilled. Marriage is absolutely about glorifying God. We can strive to be better and make our marriages better. Happiness and contentment may come, too.

What else can I do? It's necessary to see your marriage as a stewardship—you are to be a good steward, a proper manager, to be your best for His glory, your spouse and family. Why? They are created in the image of God, just as you are. Your spouse is a child of God, just as you are. God deeply loves your spouse just as Christ loves you. He wants you treated with dignity, respect, just as he wants you to treat your spouse.

We are called to exalt Christ as Lord; He also calls us to exalt your spouse as His child, as you become one in Him.

How to I keep centered on Christ? See your life as He wants to see it, as an expression of honor, glory, and gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done. It expresses our praise and honor for His glory. In Christ, we are like a bride married to a groom, as Israel was a bride of God. This is a celebration of our salvation in Him (Matthew 5:12; Revelation 21:2).

We must have the desire to make marriage work regardless of how we feel or what we can see. We have to *want* to be in a good marriage to *have* a good marriage.

We can't allow our pettiness—even an accumulation of it—to overwhelm and consume us. It all comes down to what we learned earlier: We have to realize *we can have better! We have to lead our hearts and not be led by them!* Look up and see our Savior. Allow Him to lead your will and heart. This is the essential aspect to growth: to be willing to grow, to be willing to work it out, to seek forgiveness and reconciliation just as Christ did with your very soul. We must pursue our spouses with real love—not pettiness and retribution. Lay down your burdens (your baggage, if you will) at the feet of Jesus, and ask Him to lead you. No matter what we have been through, we can turn this around if we keep our focus on the Lord and let Him work in and through us.

The question: Do you love and value Christ as Lord? If so, you are on the right track and more than halfway there.

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

Let your spouse know that you will do your very best to really pay attention and attend to his/her answers and concerns.

1. We are called to exalt Christ as Lord; He also calls us to exalt your spouse as His child, as you become one in Him. How can we do this? What would your home be like?
2. How is your marriage?
3. Is it working for you?
4. Are you working for it?
5. What if your marriage is not going according to plan?
6. What if you feel that you and your spouse are drifting apart or are already distant or feeling hopeless?
7. What if you feel you have tried with all of your might, yet you are still frustrated or overwhelmed?
8. Is there something we can do to repair and extend our marriages to be better than they were before—even on their best days?

The questions you do not have time for is your “homework.”

We face challenges and our inclination may be to give up, move on; unfortunately, what we give up is what God has made as His best for us.

Spend time in prayer!

Session III: *What does this all come down to?*

The key to being a good spouse, to being a great love is to get this one simple thing from 1 Peter 3 ,*in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.*

Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-11

Open Question: How can you ‘set’ your heart in your marriage?

The call for marriage is to revere, to respect, to worship, to place first Christ because He is Lord. Only then can we relate to and edify one another properly. If we can do this, we can serve and glorify our Lord and build our families and in turn build His Kingdom well. If we do not, we build dysfunction from our pride, torture our children, and thus disrespect our Lord. Sounds harsh, but this is true. I have seen this not only in myself when I lose focus, but I have seen it countless times by failing families and marital disputes who just do not get it and ruin their family and legacy (1 Peter 3:13-15).

A profile of a Christian home. We are called to live higher, not in money or power, rather to have nothing to do with evil or sin or any kind of anger, greed, bad language, lying, or any thoughts of impurity or idolatry. People look to the Christian home to set a tone, to be examples as shepherds to lead and care for them, not as examples on how to fight and fall. These things hurt God's heart and cause misery for many generations; we do not want that. When we have received His grace and forgiveness, why would we go back to what hurts others and us? Strip off this old nature of sin, set aside your pride and hurts so you can put on His nature of fruitfulness and renewal by clothing yourselves in His goodness with your new nature within you that He created. Only then do we lead our families and build our homes with authenticity and gratefulness, always pointing to Christ as He is real and true and lives in us all.

This is all about living the Christian life out as best as we can with His empowerment and grace. We are to make Christ primary in in our lives in order to receive His blessings and empowerment in the home and in the Church; only when we do this, can pass it on to others! Jesus is our focus and attention rather than our own agendas. In keeping Christ as our Focus, we will have a wondrous marriage and lead lives of distinction, maturity, and character (Matthew 6:33; Romans 6:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10).

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-11, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. How can we 'set' our hearts in our marriage?
2. How can we have better?
3. What is my profile of a Christian home? How does my view stack up to God's?
4. What are my fears?
5. What are my hopes?
6. What are some things you / I need forgiveness for? How can we work a plan to make forgiveness and let it go?

Spend time in prayer! The questions you do not have time for is your "homework."

Session IV: *Love Confirms the Authenticity of Marriage!*

Read Ephesians 5:1-33

“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Veres 1-2

Open Question: Why do you think, that according to Scripture and research, loving our wife is the most important call for the husband and the most important need for the wife. To respect is the most important call for the wife and the most important need for the husband?

Let's take a look of some essential key words for a great wondrous marriage:

Cherish! The type of love that is to be practiced is the kind the Bible speaks of. This love becomes ‘our treasure,’ an unconditional love that helps fuel one another’s desire to return that love. To give a picture of what ‘cherished’ means, I need to bombard you with more adjectives, and while that still will not fully color in the picture, it is that deep. It means to hold our love dear, so we don’t just feel, but honor and show and our affection. In so doing, we will be able to cultivate care and affection with tenderness. This is like the cup to First Corinthians Thirteen.

Respect! This is the other essential aspect of love is respect. A wife respects her husband and can show his value because she feels protected and cherished. This is like the saucer for the cup to First Corinthians Thirteen.

To cherish our wife is the most important call for the husband and the most important need for the wife. To respect is the most important call for the wife and the most important need for the husband. When these are in synergy, the magic of marriage happens.

In practice, the husband receives his value and honor by the respect and feels enabled to love. The wife responds to the love because she knows she is cared for and cherished. This kind of real effectual Love is often, the husband loves and the wife responds with respect and honor and so conversely. When we do this, then your relationship will vastly improve! This happens when we are being *imitators of God* (Ephesians 5:1-2; John 14:15).

Following God’s plan is not easy. The world’s way is!

However, when we indulge in the world’s way, the *easy* will quickly turn into *hurt* and *chaos*! So, the *easy* ends up being very difficult indeed!

You must have respect for your spouse, even when they do not deserve it! The most important things: a man needs is respect and a woman needs to be cherished. If you can’t respect, you can’t have a healthy loving marriage. Get help and work on developing respect, but know how much God loves and cares for you both.

Remember the characteristics of love from 1 Corinthians 13 and apply them to your marriage. Focus on the patience. At the same time, do not sit on the couch and wait. You have to step up and take risks and endure hostility and rejection. You have to go where he or she is. We need to be working on ourselves; we must be open and vulnerable. If you are not willing to take a risk or work on yourself, you will be trading a little hurt from the rejection and pride for the unwillingness to build your character, and that will result in broken relationships and/or a lifetime of hurt and loneliness. You will miss out on what God has for you and your marriage.

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read Ephesians 5:1-33, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. What does it mean to you to, *"Follow God's example?"*
2. How can your marriage be, *"a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God?"*
3. How can you the husband, "love your wife, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her?" What does this mean? How can you apply this? What gets in the way?
4. How can you the wife, submit (respect and value) yourselves to your own husband as you do to the Lord?" What does this mean? How can you apply this? What gets in the way?
5. What does it mean to, "make her / him holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word?"

Spend time in prayer! The questions you do not have time for is your "homework."

Session V: Recovering from Hurt

Read John 13:34-35

Open Question: How and why do you push each others 'buttons?'

Recognize each other's boundaries! You know the buttons; do not push them! Instead, honor and value them as God's child to respect them enough to love them enough, as Christ has done to us all.

Sometimes we do all we can and our marriages still do not improve. To be honest, after over 30 years of doing counseling and decades of research, this is rare. Yet, it happens. Sometimes, there are chemical imbalances in the brain and one can't control their thoughts and actions well and refuse medical help. Sometimes, people are so

damaged they can't get beyond their hurts. And, in most of these cases, they also refuse to get help and choose to stay in their dysfunction. If they will not get help, and you can't force them, then you get it for yourself.

Don't allow disappointments to consume you.

The essential tool to help you manage distress and conflict is how you view it. Disappointments can be defined as the collision between our expectations and our experiences, while ignoring the signposts of God's promises. Our expectations will collide with our experiences and then create a wrecked life of self-pity and resentment. Or, it can lead to a triumphant life. The choice is ours; the key is where we look for our hope! This is about our circumstances and how we look at our Lord. This is about how we see adversity; His sovereignty will totally affect how we learn from and deal with adversity.

You must understand what God has said and called us to in marriage; read and know *God has called us to live in peace.... in order that we might bear fruit for God.* Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.

As Christians, and even more so in marriage, we are called to protect and be affectionate, being kind and nurturing to our spouse.

(Deuteronomy 22:6; Proverbs 4:2-9; 19:8; Ephesians 5:28-30; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-8)

We are to revere God because He cherishes us by His grace and care. Then, He tells us to play it forward.

Our love to our spouse is predicted by God's love to us. Being respectful of and cherishing someone are both responses from God's love to us and how we react in that love to one another. These are the key cultivation tools for nurturing and caring that God gives us to form us in Him. This nurturing compounds and builds with time and kindness to build up our vital relationships. Imagine what this means for your family!

Cherish means a more direct effectual cultivation and application of love.

Look at it this way, when you apply the word "cherish", you are applying God's model for love as depicted in 1 Corinthians 13. This is a love that builds up and takes our hearts and attitude beyond the confines of our pride or hurt or will or plans. This is so we can hold dear our loved ones, even when they hurt us. We can nurture them and be tender. We can be devoted to their time and needs, even those they may disappoint us. We can have a deeper care, and adore, even when times get tough (1 John 4:8).

... To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish...

The reason why cherish is in the classic marriage vows, is because of the previously said reasons. It calls us to be kinder and deeper than the word of 'love'. "*To have and to hold..., to love and to cherish, till death us do part,...*" This way, in public, we have the call and accountability to hold dear our spouse, and this is a reminder for others to do the same.

To cherish our wife is the most important call for the husband and the most important need for the wife.

Remember, most of the ideas people have about the heart, marriage, and love are artificial and insincere. The world's ways do not work and serve only to create strife and chaos.

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read John 13:34-35, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. How do I respond to God's command to one another? How should I?
2. Each spouse asks each other, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another," How have I done this? How have I messed up?
3. What can I do for you to know that I am His disciple?
4. How can I "love one another," better?
5. Work on forgiveness, how can we both confess guilt and accept responsibility?

Spend time in prayer! The questions you do not have time for is your "homework."

Session VI: *The Marriage Tune-up!*

Read Colossians 3:12-14

Look to God's precepts for building a great marriage.

The practice of Christianity is a journey of our faith development as we encounter more of Christ through our learning and discoveries from His Word. We can also discover from our discipleship in Him. We grow in our knowledge and faith but we are not always ready for the deeper truths until we understand the basics and foundations. There are many truths and precepts in God's Word to be discovered and applied into our lives, marriages, and churches.

Marriage is not about pursuing one's happiness; rather, it is about how we continue the work of God in your marriage. Only then the happiness will come.

Selfishness will never make you happy, and you can't expect others to fulfill only what Christ can. Please do not expect your spouse to fulfill you; rather, seek how to be less self-centered and more centered on how to build your family up. Only then will you be more fulfilled and happy.

The question we need to ask to stimulate a great marriage is this: Will you live out your Christian life into your marriage, even when things get tough? This will be a prime motivator to build a legacy of many generations of successful marriages, doing it, modeling it and keep it up in times of doubt, frustrations, hurts and setbacks.

In a triumphant marriage, what we are doing is simple, the practice of cherishing love and the acceptance of respect so you are both valuing each other. In this, you will be on the winning side of faith, family life and harmony!

1. **Love - cherish**
2. **Respect - value**
3. **Guard against lust**
4. **Control your pride**
5. **Pray together**

Remember, love confirms the authenticity of Jesus' and His followers!

Show me a marriage where there is real love, and I will show you a marriage that is connected with Christ and a family that is connected with one another, resulting in a marriage that is a power in the church and community! Show me pride and lust, I will show you dysfunction and strife.

In your marriage, there is a responsibility to do Good!

First Peter Chapter 3 gives us the primary theme to make a better purpose of marriage in functioning and in joy. As we stated in previous chapters, basically there are two main themes that tie together. The first is the essential role of the husband whose call, is to love, as in cherish his wife intimately, and with precious care. We are called to see her as precious and not take her for granted.

For this to work, you must embrace good listening and communication. Just be willing to listen without speaking and care enough to love enough to make this happen. Good, lasting marriages are built on communication; divorce is the result of the breakdown of our hailing frequencies.

The second theme is like a bookend holding up the theme of obedience to God, and by His call and lead, harmoniously relating to others. This is the theme of submission. Remember, real submission breeds closeness when it is formed from love. If it is subjugated, such a barrier to God is formed that even our prayers will not be heard! Thus, compassion, care, and love pave the way to effective, relational harmony and blessing from God. Pride and our strong-willed attitude set up a barrier, making all we do

ineffective, destructive, and meaningless. If we want God to be attentive to us, we must do our part by being attentive to others without iniquity (1 Peter 2:1-12).

Lasting and happy marriages are about finishing the Word that God has begun in you both! Philippians 1:6

This is not about being served or even serving each other; rather, it is about co-serving with God to each other and for others! This is to be a partnership, not a dictatorship. The theme poses the question *do we see our spouse as someone just to take care of our needs or do we see her as our helpmate and co-laborer with Christ?*

In a godly marriage, we are stewards of the precious love that God has extended to us; it needs to flow from us to other people in our lives, especially a spouse. This is to be our utmost responsibility, and done with care. It is a call to careful, steadfast love, like caring for a precious, priceless object (1 Peter 3: 1-12).

To make this work, you must 'create' the effective triumphant marriage, and this depends on our heart and will to put it into play. Just thinking about it or postponing it or waiting for the other to respond will not bring a good marriage.

To clarify, submission is respect, and thus is not to exceed the parameters of the will of God or of love and righteousness. As an example, submission is not an excuse to batter or put one's wife down in any way. In this passage, Peter was originally speaking to converted wives who had unbelieving husbands; now, it is the other way around. The directive to husbands is even more daunting than that given to the wives! Husbands are called to *love*, which is much greater in importance and prominence than submission!

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read Colossians 3:12-14, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. You as man and wife who are in Christ are God's chosen people! How does that make you feel? How does this motivate you?
2. Each of you is "holy and dearly loved," so how can you be better to show each other compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience?
3. When things get tough, how can you, "Bear with each other and forgive one another?"
4. Can you each make a commitment to Christ to pray, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you?" Then do so.
5. What can we do better to "put on love," how will this give you "perfect unity?"

6. How can we 'create' our effective triumphant marriage?

7. What can we do to have God lead our heart and will to put this into play.

Spend time in prayer! The questions you do not have time for is your "homework."

Session VII: *Setting the tone*

Read Colossians 3:15-17

Open Question: We are called to *be considerate*, so what get in the way?

Real love is what sets the tone and standard for the relationship.

This is all framed in the key phrase, *be considerate* refers to treating a spouse with the utmost care and love. Because, submission is also a response! Because the husband loves, because the husband cares, because the husband puts his wife's best interests forward, the wife submits, and he earns her devotion. It is the husband's responsibility to set the tone of love and care! Keep in mind that this was called for in a time and culture that considered women lower than farm animals! It was taught in a culture where the "alpha" male (i.e. the lead man of the family) ruled in absolute dominance for order, organization, structure, protection, and community.

The mandate to love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) was, and still is to some, an extreme wake-up call that commands the husband to thoroughly exhibit all of the qualities of biblical character in his relationship with his wife.

It is my sincere prayer that you are both in a solid, growing, Christ-centered relationship! If not, be willing to build one. Too many Christians have given up on godly values and caved in to desperation and desire when it comes to marriage. They just want someone and when they do not satisfy, they are given up like a worn out coat. Mend the coat, fix it, and make it better than new! I have seen this cycle, over and over for years and years, and people just do not seem to learn, or else just do not want to get it. They end up in dysfunctional relationships and pass those dysfunctions on to their children, and the cycle goes on! Marriages could be so much more wonderful, so romantic and solid, if only God's values and precepts were brought into it.

Do not let yourself become a statistic, imprisoned in a world of stifle and chaos, when God has such a better plan for you. So, before you react to something, take some time out to pray and think it through first.

Remember that the prime key to building a healthy marriage is this: Love is reciprocal!

The husband loves and the wife responds with respect and honor--in the midst of their relationship with Christ as LORD!

Christ and the church are the prime models for us in a lifelong commitment of monogamous marriage.

How to make this work? Seek Christ, place Him first and foremost in your life, and He will provide. Seek yourself, and you will be sad and lonely in so many ways! Remember that the heart of any healthy relationship is love and respect!

Hebrews 13 tells us that we can do it, we can love. We can treat others as Jesus does: feel their pain, have compassion, and do something to help. We can also give honor to our marriage, even helping others to build their marriages and fight against immorality and adultery.

We can have confidence in Christ, for He will help us; we need never be afraid of situations or peoples. We are not in this life or our marriage alone; we have Christ and one another. He gives us all we need to run this race of life and faith successfully. Do not forget to respect your leaders, receive the Word from them, and remember all of the good.

Remember, Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and tomorrow—forever.

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read Colossians 3:15-17, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. What do we need to do to, "*be considerate* to each other?"
2. How can we treat each other with the utmost care and love?
3. What would our home be like if we, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts?"
4. What can we do to be more proactive to bring about, "peace?"
5. What can we do to be more proactive to bring about, "be thankful?"
6. What can we do to be more proactive to bring about, "the message of Christ dwell ... in your hearts?"

Spend time in prayer! Focus on giving thanks to God!

Session VIII: *In the marriage bed*

Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Open Question: Why is betrayal so hard to overcome? Psychologists say this is the hardest thing to overcome, why adultery is so bad in real life; yet, so frequent in the entertainment world.

A key word in Scripture, the *marriage bed*, means the personal, intimate relationship of a man and wife, which adultery, prostitution, and now pornography will defile. The word meant a virgin's bed where no one had sat on until her husband came into her life. The context is that the Church is called to teach God's values, not compromise with the world, and to strengthen marriages and families by role modeling, encouragement, and help (1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Ephesians 5:22-33).

Remember, sexual immorality will seek to destroy what God has put together. This is a grievous sin and destroys. Thus, God calls us to guard against lust and whatever else destroys relationships and marriages. Sexual immorality is extremely dangerous. When Jesus walked and talked, when the New Testament was written, the Roman and Greek civilization was very loose morally, which led to their fall. So, what did Jesus focus on to circumvent this culture? He focused on knowing and modeling authentic love.

The love of money, temptations of gathering wealth, and the desire to be rich has led astray and destroyed countless people over the centuries! We are called to be content with what He provides and not bend to greed or coveting. The point is that our real and true treasures are imperishable and eternal. Thus, our security is who we are in Christ, not what we have or want of money and/or "things." How one handles his finances are a real reflection of their spiritual life (Matthew 6:19-34; 19:16-26; Luke 12:15, 21; Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 3:3; 6:6-19; 1 Peter 1:3-5)!

How do we know we can do this?

God leaves us a promise that He will never leave you. We have freedom from fear, as our Lord is our partner in life and faith. This was a great comfort that was originally given to a people in distress. Thus, a good marriage, a contented marriage, a triumphant marriage is centered on how we are trusting in our Lord! A bad marriage is centered on when we trust in other things, like hurts and fears or hopes and plans.

If you just focus on your hurts and losses, you will not be able to focus on Christ and making a better marriage.

We are called to love and to continue to do so no matter what the circumstances or oppositions.

Know this important point: "I am sorry," are the pleasantest words you can ever say to simulate that connectives and restoration!

Our confidence is in Christ and not our situations (Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Jos. 1:5; 2 Chron. 15:2; Psalm 37:28).

There will be change! Anticipate change, prepare for change, realize life is always changing. This is good, what is wrong can be set right or just will be temporary. Life becomes an adventure as you grow. There are the stages of life, careers, moving, kids, aging, health, family, life and death, there will always be change, your spouse will change, so will you, beware, embrace it, be willing to adjust and you will triumph through it with your focus on Christ.

A real mature Christian is willing to be controlled and filled by Christ and not by apprehension, selfishness, turmoil, damaged past, or uncertainty.

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

1. Why is betrayal so hard to overcome?
2. What can we do to safeguard our *marriage bed*?
3. What can we do to model real mature Christianity and not be controlled by hurts, disappointment, fears, apprehension, selfishness, turmoil, damaged past, or uncertainty....?
4. What can we do to be filled by Christ instead?

Remember: To cherish our wife is the most important call for the husband and the most important need for the wife. To respect is the most important call for the wife and the most important need for the husband. When these are in synergy, the magic of marriage happens.

Spend time in prayer!

Session IX: *Closing session*

Read Ephesians 5:25-27

Open Question: How can we not let our pride and hurt control us; rather, allow Christ' love to motivate us?

Each couple take turns to read each line and discuss:

Love confirms the authenticity of Jesus!

- *Whoever loves much, does much!*

- How much God has so loves you!
- How much He so loves your spouse!
- How much He so loves your marriage!
- How much He so loves your family!

When you are loved much, you will love much and then you will do much, so much more—in your life and in the lives of others!

Love confirms the authenticity of Jesus' followers!

John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:12-14— at home encourage couples to read John chaps14-15;

Now you need to take His love and let it infuse you so it can come out of you. You need to have a desire to grow in your faith and knowledge to lead your heart effectively. We have to take our nuptials seriously, be willing to work for it just as a soldier is willing to die for his or her country. Are you willing to live for your Lord and your spouse? We can be committed to solving our problems. If not, we will fail in our marriages and disappoint our Lord and Savior!

Let your spouse know that you will do your very best to really pay attention and attend to his/her answers and concerns.

- How is your marriage?
- Is it working for you?
- Are you working for it?
- What if your marriage is not going according to plan?
- What if you feel that you and your spouse are drifting apart or are already distant or feeling hopeless?
- What if you feel you have tried with all of your might, yet you are still frustrated or overwhelmed?
- Is there something we can do to repair and extend our marriages to be better than they were before—even on their best days?

Couples Workshop Assignments

Read Ephesians 5:25-27, be committed to learn, forgive and engage God's Truth and apply His precepts to your life. The revolution for the healthier marriage begins.

Let's look at these questions again:

1. How can we have better?
2. What are my fears?
3. What are my hopes?

Here are some going deep questions? First have ground rules, no button pushing, no arguments or voice raising, have a prayerful attitude and a listening year, be vulnerable and be kind, take each one slowly:

4. What is it like to live with me?

Be in prayer about your response and how you listen.

5. How do I hurt you?
6. How do I help you?
7. What are your joys, fears, and hopes?
8. What do you need from me?
9. How can we make 'us' better for God's glory?
10. How can I help you respect me and love me better?
11. How can I respect and love you better?

Make a covenant to choose to walk with surrendered, Lordship faith in Jesus Christ: "I choose to be filled with His Spirit. Since I choose to be filled with His Spirit, **I choose to love and honor my spouse!**

Be a builder, not a taker. Keep spending time in prayer and commit to pray for your spouse when you first wake up, when you go to bed and throughout the day! Now also see if you can pray with your spouse, too--at least 5 minutes a day to start. If they are not open to it, do not push it, just pray for it.

At Home Couples Workshop Assignments

This can also be used in Couples Small Groups, questions to challenge, inspire, and equip you to be better in your commitment, love, and marriage:

Questions to Ponder Together

Passages to Read together (just do one at a time) Psalm 86 ; Matthew 19:6; Hebrews 13:4.

More passages to consider: Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14-16; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3; Luke 16:18; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; 12:13; Ephesians 4:29-32; 5:8-6:9; 5:20-33; Colossians 3:19-4:1

In a wondrous working marriage, the practice of cherishing love and the acceptance of; respect, so you are both valuing each other. In this, you will be on the winning side of faith, family life and harmony!

1. **Love - cherish**
2. **Respect - value**
3. **Guard against lust**
4. **Control your pride**
5. **Pray together**

Remember, love confirms the authenticity of Jesus' and His followers!

1. How do you react to certain situations with your spouse? How should you? How would your spouse like you to react? How would Christ want you to react?
2. Read Psalm 86 slowly and carefully. Then, read it again in prayer, and then read it as a prayer.
 - a. Now try this with your spouse and ask each other *how is this like us?*
 - b. Go verse by verse asking *how is this like us* and *how can it be like us?*
 - c. *Where are we in this?*
 - d. *Where do we fail?*
 - e. *Where do we thrive?*
 - f. *Where would we like to be?*
 - g. *What do we need to do?*
 - h. *How can the principles of this Psalm help heal our marriage?*
 - i. *What are we going to do about it?*
3. Each spouse asks the other:
 - What would you like to see happen in my heart?
 - What do you think God would like to see happen in our hearts?
 - What is 'your' goal for our marriage?

- Do you feel it is possible to get there? What do you think it will take? What do I need to do?
 - How can we be better at our love and respect?
4. **Pray!!!** Keep spending time in prayer and commit to pray for your spouse when you first wake up, when you go to bed and throughout the day! Now also see if you can pray with your spouse, too--at least 5 minutes a day to start. If they are not open to it, do not push it, just pray for it.
 5. Keep reading the 'marriage tips' in Appendix I of "This Is Marriage," I have researched these for over twenty years, and wrote them, and I too have to read them often. We all need reminders and encouragement.

Keep in mind that a good soldier is willing to die for his or her country. Are you willing to live for your spouse and Lord? If so, we can come together and be committed to solve our problems. If not, we will fail our marriage and disappoint our Lord and Savior!

The Lord is my helper. A quote from the Psalms to encourage people not to be afraid, but to put their confidence and trust in the Lord (Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Psalm 56:11; 118:6; Philippians 4:11-12; Hebrews 2:15; 4:16; 11:23, 27).

Yes, you can have a wondrous marriage!

A good marriage does not just happen. You have to work it. You must push forward, and move away from pride and into the Fruit of the Spirit. Cultivate communication and listening to each other. You will have set backs, so always play it forward, play it hard and push in love.

A real mature Christian is willing to be controlled and filled by Christ and not by apprehension, selfishness, turmoil, damaged past, or uncertainty.

Here are some replacement words you can use to create a better marriage environment; this also works at work, school, and church.

Substitute Negative Words	With	Positive Words
"I can't" and "I won't"	With	"I haven't yet."
"I don't know"	With	"I will find out for you."
"If I"	With	"When I."
"That will be a problem"	With	"That's going to be a challenge."

"I will try"	With	"I will do"
"You are...or, I am...a failure"	With	"We are a success because we learned something."

How many more can you think of?

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. 1 Peter 3:13-15

Read Matthew 22:1-22; Ephesians 4:29-32

1. What are you grateful to God for? What happens when Christians forget to be grateful? How does ingratitude affect the church and call that Christ gives us?
2. Do you love and value Christ as Lord? How can you take His love and let it infuse you so that you are living Christ's love and sharing it?
3. How do you feel when you are cherished? How do you think your spouse will feel?

Where do I go from here?

Read and use the book, "This Is Marriage." You use this book easily--just read it and be in prayer. Ask, *How can I change and apply these precepts and be humble to make it work?* You can discuss this with your spouse and/or in a small group. This book has a 'tag-team' approach. I will present a biblical description, such as an aspect of Love--what it is, how to know it, and apply it into your life and marriage. Next, I will present a key aspect on how to build an effectual marriage. In addition, we have discussion questions to challenge, inspire, provoke and help you process these true Truth from Scripture and the ideas distilled from those passages. Then, we have dozens of "Marriage Tips," that will help you focus in the right direction, give practical help, and encouragement. You might consider reading and practicing one tip each day. (See the Appendix I for a complete listing.)

- Go over any of the previous questions and seasons, as you grow in the Lord and to one another, it helps to revisit these.
- Spend time in prayer and commit to pray for your spouse when you first wake up, when you go to bed, and throughout the day!

A real mature Christian is willing to be controlled and filled by Christ and not by apprehension, selfishness, turmoil, damaged past, or uncertainty.

(Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; 12:13; Ephesians 5:8-6:9, Colossians 3:19-4:1)

Remember that LISTENING IS ESSENTIAL! Good friend-makers are good listeners. Be the person who listens (John 8:47; James 1:19-25)!

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:29-32

A for more see the site and Book: “This Is Marriage,” Dr. Richard Joseph Krejcir
<http://www.thisismarriage.org/>

© Into Thy Word Ministries, 2014, Pasadena, California, USA www.intothyword.org

© 1990, 2014, Rev. R. J. Krejcir, Ph.D., Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org and www.thisismarriage.org/

Want more resources and helps, see the link below, and my book, “Field Guide” ... (<http://www.intothyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=53504>).

Be Blessed, Rev. Richard J. Krejcir, Ph.D.



Into Thy Word Ministries
129 South Lotus Avenue
Pasadena, Ca 91107
www.intothyword.org
www.thisismarriage.org