

Directions for Healthy Marital Relations within a Covenant Home

Our Marriages are under siege and families are affected adversely. There are about 27,007 marriages a year in 2018 in Singapore, and about 7,344 ended up in divorce that year and Christians are not spared.

Is it possible for Christians to have a God-honouring and vibrant married life in the midst of a hostile, tempting and unhelpful secular environment? It is noteworthy that Divorce is never God's will for us but it is permitted by the Lord as he said, due to the hardness of our sinful hearts (Matthew 19:2). Do not be too quick to call off a marriage in anger or revenge. Seek divine counsel and wait upon the Lord. We believe it is possible by God's enablement and a strong spirit of accountability to God and humble forgiveness and faithfulness to each other (Psalm 127:1, Ephesians 4:32) to be reconciled in due time as the Lord leads.

We need to let God work in our hearts and be ready to repent of our sins and not be hardened against the will of God. Below are some suggested helps that hopefully will be useful in nurturing a healthy God-centered marital life in the midst of mounting and exacting demands and challenges in our marriages. Nothing is impossible with God, but we must do our part too.

Consider the following:

1. *God's blueprint for a successful marriage includes the headship of the husband, and the submission of both to the Lord (Colossians 3:18-19).*
2. *The husband has the privilege and responsibility of loving the wife and to be faithful to her (Ephesians 5:22-25).*
3. *A Christian family includes the sorting out and understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities in the home.*
4. *The man is the loving leader and he has to be accountable for the major decisions in the family, in consultation with the Lord, and secondarily, the wife.*
5. *While the husband is the head of the house, the wife is the heart of the home, and is generally responsible for supporting the husband in all his duties.*
6. *Do not take each other for granted. Express appreciation to your spouse frequently and show chivalry, tenderness, respect and courtesy, and words of affections, encouragement and succour and strength.*
7. *No two persons can effectively walk together or live together for long unless they agree in principle (Amos 3:3).*
8. *One of the basic requirements of good effective communication is mutual openness, honesty and transparency. Honesty is still the best policy.*
9. *Each of the spouse must first have a foundationally sound and intimate relationship with the Lord before they can be to each other. Marriage falls apart normally when one (or both) falls away from the Lord first.*
10. *Good communication requires temperance and discipline and a charitable spirit and the appropriate choice of words, and non-verbal body actions.*
11. *Good communication requires free and open conversation and careful attentive and interested listening.*

12. *Good listening involves letting a person speak without interruptions and understanding what the other person is trying to convey across.*
13. *Refrain from having a rerun of old arguments, and bygone conflicts. Deal in the present and the future in the will of God, not in the past (Ephesians 4:32).*
14. *Never shout at each other unless the house is on fire. Remember that ANGER is one letter short of DANGER. Shouting is a lazy man's way of trying to be emphatic (Colossians 4:6).*
15. *Resolve all conflicts by the end of the day. Remember, if you don't, you have the devil for a strange bedfellow (Ephesians 4:26).*
16. *Practise the golden rule of Matthew 7:12. Do unto your spouse what you want your spouse to do to/for you.*
17. *Learn to say, "Thank you," "I am sorry, I don't mean it," "I appreciate it," "Excuse me," and mean it. Believe me, it will save you from unnecessary troubles (Colossians 4:6).*
18. *Remember the closer you get to Christ, the closer you are to each other (Malachi 2:14).*
19. *Have a forgiving and magnanimous spirit (Ephesians 4:32). Allow room for mistakes and be ready to forgive and be reconciled and not be a fastidious person, who is too difficult to placate (James 3:17). Be willing to repent and say sorry, if necessary.*
20. *A couple that prays together stays together (2 Corinthians 1:11). Start the morning right with the Word and prayer (Psalm 5:3). Get in tune with God before the concert of the day begins (Daniel 6:10). Never forget or forsake prayer and daily devotions.*
21. *Have a good circle of Christian friends (1 Corinthians 15:33) and serve the Lord together in the local church. Do not be isolated from the Christian community (Hebrews 10:24-25). Never miss Sabbath worship and edifying Christian fellowship.*

Thank God for the institution of holy matrimony and we are to be given to our spouses who are committed to covenant marriage in the Lord and we are not to take them for granted. Take a moment to pray and appreciate them in the Lord for our lives on earth may not be too long and we may not have them around one day in this temporal world. (Psalm 90:12, Ephesians 5:15,16)

*"... Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth,
... yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." (Malachi 2:14)*

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