



marriage

matters

*laying the foundations
for a healthy, happy marriage*

David Lyon



Did you know?...

- ♥ Wearing a wedding ring on the 4th finger of the left hand dates back to ancient Egypt, where it was believed that the vein of love ran from this finger directly to the heart.
- ♥ *The longest engagement on record was Octavio Guillen and Adriana Martinez. After "dating" for 67 years, they finally got married. They were both 82.*
- ♥ The most married man in history, in the monogamous category, was Glynn Wolfe, a former Baptist minister from Blythe, California. He was married twenty-eight times.
- ♥ *The oldest bride was 102 year old Minnie Munro, who married an '83 year old gentleman named Dudley Reid in Point Clare, New South Wales, Australia.*
- ♥ The youngest couple ever to marry was an eleven month old boy and a three month old girl who were married in Bangladesh in 1986. The marriage was arranged in order to settle a twenty year feud over a disputed piece of farmland.
- ♥ *Two couples share the record for the longest marriage in history. Sir Temulji Bhicaji Nnman and Lady Nariman were married from 1853 until 1940, when he died. Lazarus Rowe and Molly Weber were married in Greenland, New Hampshire in 1743 and remained married until 1829, when she died after being married for 86 years.*
- ♥ Richard and Carol Roble are the most re-married couple. They wed each other 56 times, beginning in 1969.
- ♥ *The most expensive wedding on record was a seven-day celebration of the marriage of Mohammed, son of Sheik Rashid Ben Saeed Al Maktoum, to Princess Salama. The wedding took place in Dubai and the bill came to \$44 million.*
- ♥ The most fantastic gift of love is the Taj Mahal in India. It was built by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan as a memorial to his wife, who died in childbirth. Work on the Taj began in 1634 and continued for 22 years, involving 20,000 labourers.
- ♥ *32% of adults would consider their life a 'success' if they were able to have a strong family unit, a solid and lasting marriage or if they had done a good job of raising their children.*
- ♥ Half of all children [in the UK and US] will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these, almost 50% will also see the breakup of a parent's second marriage and 10% will live through three or more parental marriage breakups.
- ♥ *40% of children growing up in America today are being raised without their fathers*
- ♥ Children living with both parents are up to 35% more physically healthy than children from broken homes.
- ♥ *Girls from a broken family are twice as likely to become teen mothers than others*
- ♥ 70% of long-term prison inmates grew up in broken homes
- ♥ *50% of fathers lose all contact with their children within 3 years of a divorce*
- ♥ Rates of depression are more than 3 times higher in cohabiting couples than married ones

yet, despite all this...

310,000 people still get married in the UK every year!!



Marriage Matters!!

Marriage is the most essential, fundamental, wonderful, beautiful, incredible adventure ever invented!

But marriage is under pressure. The 'broken family' is becoming the normal family. The UK has highest divorce rate in Europe (almost 50% of all marriages) with devastating, long-term consequences. 400 children every day witness their parents divorcing. Many other 'marriages' are unfruitful, unhappy and unfulfilling: two people sharing a house and a parenting task, but little else. One sociologist has said: "The family is dead, except for the first one or two years of child-raising."

In contrast, the Bible places great emphasis on marriage, saying: "Marriage should be honoured by all." (Heb 13:4). So, what is marriage and how can we honour it?

A Biblical Definition of "Marriage" ...

Gen 2:24 (also quoted in Matt 19:5, Mark 10:7, 1 Cor 6:16 and Eph 5:31) defines marriage as comprising three vital ingredients:

- ◆ **LEAVING** – moving away from the emotional ties of a father/mother relationship;
- ◆ **CLEAVING** – entering into a new husband/wife love-relationship; and
- ◆ Becoming **ONE FLESH** – consummating the new union by the act of sexual intercourse.

All 3 elements are essential for a healthy marriage – and absence of any one of them puts strain on the marriage.

Honouring Marriage

We can "honour marriage" by preparing well for it; investing time in it and ensuring we are faithful in it for the rest of our lives! **This marriage preparation course is in honour of marriage! It is for all who recognize the importance of investing in the future.**

We must invest time in maintaining healthy, happy, God-honouring marriages. It's an investment worth making!

So, what can go wrong?!

Think about some of the common complaints about marriage...

- "I don't feel appreciated or valued the way I used to"
- "If we argue and fight- it's usually about money!"
- "I don't feel 'in love'?"
- "We don't talk like we used to"
- "Where's the romance gone? He's not taken me out for months!"
- "He never seems to notice things around the house"
- "She talks more to her mother than she does to me"

Discovering Some Keys

Sound familiar? This course will look at some of the underlying issues revealed by these statements, giving you some keys to building a healthy and happy marriage:



- ♥ the nature of **LIFE-LONG LOVE**
- ♥ Appreciating the differences between **MEN AND WOMEN**
- ♥ effective **COMMUNICATION** and dealing with **CONFLICTS** and common pressure-points
- ♥ Keeping the **ROMANCE** alive and enjoying **SEXUAL INTIMACY**

“Till Death do us Part”

Marriage vows are not merely statements of intent, hopes or optimistic sentiments; they are **VOWS** – promises. **YOU WILL BE MAKING A COVENANT TOGETHER**. before God.

You will promise: “to love, honour and obey in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, for better or worse – until one of us dies”.

The good news is that God enables willing and responsive couples to keep these sacred vows. Expect success! Be realistic about the challenges, but anticipate a wonderful marriage - God's kind of love never fails!



We hope you will enjoy this time of preparation for the ‘Big Day’ and (more importantly) for the wonderful lifetime together that is ahead of you!

1: The Power of Love

Strong enough to last!

Beliefs about Love

Consider each of these statements and say whether you think it is TRUE or FALSE:

- ♥ I believe "love at first sight" occurs between some people.
- ♥ I believe it is easy to distinguish real love from infatuation.
- ♥ I believe people who love each other will not fight or argue.
- ♥ I believe that if a man and woman genuinely love each other, then hardships or troubles will have little or no effect on their relationship.
- ♥ I believe it is better to marry the wrong person than to remain single and lonely throughout life
- ♥ I believe that if a couple are genuinely in love, then that condition is permanent and will last a lifetime
- ♥ I believe short courtships (less than 6 months) are best
- ♥ I believe teenagers are more capable of genuine love than older people



...It all depends what do we mean by "Love"?

There are three kinds of love described in the Bible:

1. **'Eros' love** – physical love; need love; sensual, sexual love; romantic love. Most couples begin marriage with a predominance of eros love. Certainly, it is essential for a successful marriage; it provides the motivation for couples to touch, explore and know each other. But eros love can be short-lived, and will not sustain a marriage.
2. **'Philia' love** – companionship; interest in someone for who they are not what they can give you. Philia is a dynamic word implying the overcoming of forces that work for separation in a marriage.
3. **'Agape' love** – self-giving, unconditional love. A commitment of the will in which one decides to love. It is the way God loves; the highest love one can experience! It is spontaneous and unmotivated. It is indifferent to a person's value or worth – rather, it *creates* value and worth!

Agape Love

Agape love is the dynamic in a wonderful marriage!

It has the power to revive or resurrect eros love and philia love when they have diminished or died.

Agape love is an *attitude* and a *decision* - not an emotion. Emotions are the result - not the cause - of our attitudes. In marriage, we must take responsibility for making a decision that we will love our partner and for developing the attitudes of agape love.

What does this involve? The well-known verses of 1 Corinthians 13 describe *agape* love wonderfully:

⁴Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. ⁶It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸Love will last forever...¹³There are three things that will endure--faith, hope, and love--and the greatest of these is love.

Agape Love...

- ♥ patient
- ♥ kind
- ♥ not jealous
- ♥ not proud
- ♥ not rude
- ♥ not demanding
- ♥ not irritable
- ♥ keeps no record of when it is wronged
- ♥ never glad about injustice
- ♥ never gives up
- ♥ never loses faith
- ♥ always hopeful
- ♥ endures through every circumstance

Above all, agape love means **laying down our lives for one another** (Jn 15:13) – dying to ourselves and living for our partner!



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Look at the list of agape qualities together.

Take 5 minutes to begin discussing any areas where there is room for some improvement!

2: Knowing Me, Knowing You


Celebrating our Differences!

We begin this section with a couple of exercises designed to make you think!...

Exercise 1: Needs and Expectations

What do you want and need most from your marriage and from your partner? What matters most to you? What are your needs and expectations? Choose the five most important things *for you* (rank them 1-5). Then try and predict *your partner's* choices and rankings!

Myself		Partner
	Understanding	
	Friendship	
	Trust	
	Support	
	Closeness	
	Sharing	
	Communication	
	Making love	
	Security	
	Being together forever	
	Freedom	
	Independence	
	Sharing our Christian faith	
	Children	
	Nice home	
	Sexual fulfilment	
	Respect	
	Shared interests	
	Good income	
	Openness and honesty	



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Compare your responses! Explain why you selected these items. Explain how you 'defined' the items and what the words mean to you.

Note your partner's needs and expectations. How can you help fulfil them?

Exercise 2: Intimacy Needs

There are a number of *intimacy needs* that we all need in some measure and especially at particular times. However there will be certain of these relational needs that you will enjoy receiving over and above the others. Decide which are your top three needs and then guess which three needs your partner most enjoys receiving.

Myself		Partner
	Acceptance - deliberate and ready reception with a favourable positive response (Rom.15:7)	
	Affection - to communicate care and closeness through physical touch (Rom.16:16)	
	Appreciation - to communicate with words and feelings a personal gratefulness for another (1Cor.11:2)	
	Approval - expressed commendation; to think and speak well of (Rom.14:18)	
	Attention - to take thought of another and convey appropriate interest and support; to enter into another's "worlds" (1Cor.12:25)	
	Comfort - (empathy) - to come alongside with word, feeling and touch; to give consolidation with tenderness (Rom.12:15)	
	Encouragement - to urge forward and positively persuade towards a goal (1Thess.5:11; Heb.10:24)	
	Respect - to value and regard highly; to convey great worth (Rom.12:10)	
	Security - confidence of harmony in relationships; free from threat of harm (Rom.12:16a)	
	Support - to come alongside and gently help carry a load (Gal.6:2)	



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Again, compare your responses. Explain why you selected these items



Note your partner's needs and expectations. How can you help fulfil them?

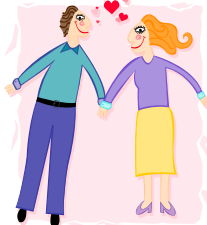
We're Different!

As these exercises show, God has created men and women in His image – but has made us wonderfully **DIFFERENT!** Understanding these differences is a vital key to better communication and fulfilment in marriage.

Many conflicts arise through insufficient awareness of these differences and the (consequent) wrong response to our partner.

Consider some of these key differences between men and women:

	 Men	 Women
Value:	<input type="radio"/> Success	<input type="radio"/> Acceptance
Fear:	<input type="radio"/> Failure	<input type="radio"/> Rejection
Worst-case:	<input type="radio"/> Failure in wife's eyes	<input type="radio"/> Rejection by husband
Cope with stress by:	<input type="radio"/> Withdrawing and thinking silently	<input type="radio"/> Talking about it
Talk about feelings:	<input type="radio"/> A little <input type="radio"/> Reluctantly	<input type="radio"/> A lot <input type="radio"/> Easily
Focus on:	<input type="radio"/> Solutions	<input type="radio"/> Feelings
Motivated by:	<input type="radio"/> Being needed	<input type="radio"/> Being cherished
Need love expressed primarily by:	<input type="radio"/> Trust <input type="radio"/> Acceptance <input type="radio"/> Appreciation <input type="radio"/> Admiration <input type="radio"/> Approval <input type="radio"/> Encouragement	<input type="radio"/> Care <input type="radio"/> Understanding <input type="radio"/> Respect <input type="radio"/> Devotion <input type="radio"/> Validation <input type="radio"/> Reassurance
Communicate their needs:	<input type="radio"/> Directly	<input type="radio"/> Indirectly
Resist:	<input type="radio"/> Demands <input type="radio"/> Unsolicited advice	<input type="radio"/> Solutions



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Do you recognise these characteristics in each other?!

Which things cause difficulties in your relationship? What 1-2 things could your partner do that would most help you at this time?

Completing not Competing!

Marital roles are often blurred, leading to confusion, pressure and tensions.

A Marriage based on proper Biblical **'HEADSHIP' AND 'SUBMISSION'** (see Ephesians 5:21-33) will result in a husband and wife *completing* each other not *competing* with each other!



The Husband – a Loving Leader

The husband's role is one of 'headship' (see Gen 3:16; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14; Eph 5:23).

Headship is loving leadership - not domination or tyranny! In

fact, the way a husband functions will usually determine the extent to which his wife is fulfilled.

Headship must be actual not theoretical. Headship is actual authority that springs from love as its foundation and finds its expression through taking responsibility in order to protect and benefit.

"Eve was not made out of Adam's head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled on by him; but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be loved". (Matthew Henry)

Headship is expressed through:

- ♥ **Strong Love and Appreciation** (Eph 5:25, Col 3:19). Loving her with strong agape love: self-sacrificial and unlimited.
- ♥ **Strong Protection** (Eph 5:26). Protection involves saving her from pressures and burdens and also refreshing and strengthening her spiritually through the Word.
- ♥ **Strong Leadership** (1Pet 3:7). A husband with faith and clarity of direction will give a strong lead which his wife will find easy to follow.



The Wife – a Loving Supporter

A wife is to be in loving 'submission' to her husband (Eph 5:22-24, Col 3:18, Titus 2:4-5). This will be easy if he is giving her the loving leadership God intends!

Submission is not submersion or subservience! It does not imply inferiority in any way. Submission is expressed through:

- ♥ **Proper Honour and Respect** (Eph 5:33) - speaking highly of him so that he feels trusted, believed in and valued.
- ♥ **Speaking Wisdom** (Pr 31:26) - using her right to question him and bring wisdom into their decisions.
- ♥ **Appreciating her role in the family and home** (Pr 14:1) - recognising the privilege, responsibility and dignity of her role.

Towards a Bigger Dream!

*"Marriage is a means by which persons who are sinful and contentious are so caught up in a dream bigger than themselves, that they work throughout the years, in spite of repeated disappointments, to make that dream come true."
(Elton Trueblood)*

Husband and wife are "**JOINT HEIRS OF THE GRACE OF LIFE**" (1 Peter 3:7). For Christian marriage to really work there will be a meeting of the sense of ETERNITY and the sense of DESTINY in each partner! Marriage is not "I will if you will" but "*we will - regardless!*"

3: We Don't Talk Anymore?!

The Art of Communication

Communication, Communication, Communication...


Good communication is the life-blood of any relationship. In fact, **poor communication is the number one cause of difficulty in marriage.** Marriages struggle when we start taking each other for granted and stop talking about things that matter. When that happens a 'creeping separation' starts to set in.

But communication is complex. It comprises words (7%), body language (55%) and tone of voice (38%) – no wonder we call it an 'art'!

So, how are you doing??!! Thinking of your relationship, in which of the following areas would you say you are

- 1 = communicating well ("we get through clearly to each other and we understand each other")
- 2 = communicating, but not very well ("there's room for improvement")
- 3 = not communicating (through neglect, embarrassment, or fear)

Areas	1	2	3
Dreams and aspirations			
Money			
Relaxation and rest			
Job and career			
Church involvement			
Expressions of affection			
DIY			
Time with family			
Time with friends			



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Take a few minutes to complete the above exercise

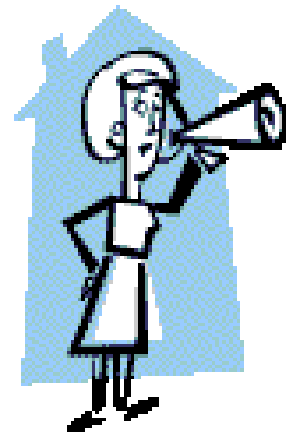
Then set aside some time (at home) to talk through the results together.


Understanding Each Other

Good communication starts with a good understanding of each other. How well do you understand each other?! Please consider each statement below and say how true it is for you.

(always = 5; usually = 4; sometimes = 3; seldom = 2; never = 1).

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I understand my partner ...					
2	I can understand how my partner sees things ...					
3	Even when my partner can't quite say how he/she feels, I understand what he/she is feeling ...					
4	I can judge my partner's feelings accurately ...					
5	I can lead my partner into talking about his/her deepest feelings ...					
6	I can help my partner by pointing out feelings he/she may be unaware of ...					
7	I know how my partner feels by how he/she looks					
8	My partner finds it easy to talk to me...					
9	I try very hard to pay attention to my partner, and want to get involved with his/her problems ...					
10	Understanding my partner is very important to me ...					





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Look at the results of this exercise!
Do you agree with your partner's assessment of how well they understand you?!!

We often speak different languages!

Men and women tend to communicate in very different ways. For example, have you ever noticed:

- ♥ men communicate *information*, women communicate *feelings*
- ♥ Men often offer *solutions* when their wives want *support*. Consequently, wives often feel that they are not 'heard'.
- ♥ Men tend to be motivated by feeling *needed*, women by feeling *cherished*.
- ♥ Men often take personal offence when their wives are expressing their feelings; whereas often the wife is simply calling out to be heard and cherished, rather than expressing any personal criticism of her husband.

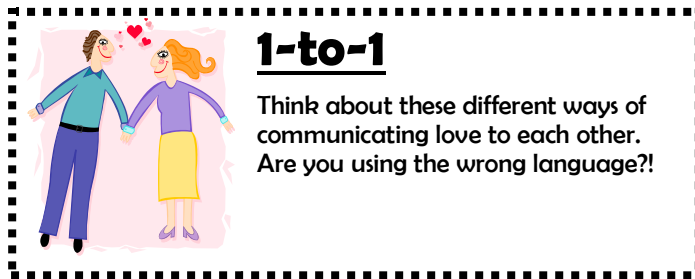
The Languages of Love

There are four 'languages of love' or 'languages of communication' - ways we express ourselves to our partners:

- ♥ **Touching** – physical expressions of affection
- ♥ **Speaking** - telling the other that you love them
- ♥ **Giving** - gifts and other expressions of love
- ♥ **Doing** - serving the other by doing something for them

Think: Which is most important to you? How do you communicate most to your partner? Do you know which language your partner speaks in most often?

We tend to communicate in the language that is most important *to us*. However, one of the keys to better communication is to 'learn another language' ie to understand our spouse and communicate in *their* language.



Keys to Better Communication

- ♥ **Make time** to communicate. There is never a substitute for 'quality time' together.
- ♥ **Never compare** your partner with anyone else.
- ♥ **Never be deliberately unkind.** Never criticize in public.
- ♥ Try and **understand *your own feelings***. The way you deal with them is key. It's vital that we admit our feelings and share them with each other.
- ♥ Try and **understand *your partner's feelings***. Try and feel what they're feeling; try and communicate that you understand their feelings.
- ♥ **Listen between the lines.** Try and listen not just to the words your partner uses but to the feelings behind them
- ♥ Try and 'listen with your eyes'
- ♥ Spend more time talking to each other than you do to other friends
- ♥ **Switch off the TV** and the phone and spend an evening just being together

4: Under Pressure!

Handling Pressure Points and Conflicts

Conflict - a Good Thing!?

Conflict in marriage can be a good thing – as long as we learn to handle it properly! Facing up to differences of opinion, issues that arise and pressures that we come under and dealing with these things positively will help build a healthy marriage.

However, if we don't handle these things well, a small spark can often start a huge fire! If conflicts are not dealt with properly and put to rest they can result in unresolved anger, bitterness inside and a growing resentment towards the other.

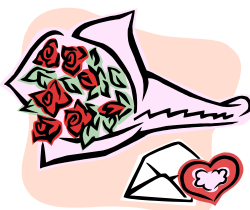


Pressure-Points

There are common pressure-points in most marriages. Being aware of them is a great start! Discuss these issues openly and agree together what's important to each of you and how you'll handle the issues. Eg:

- **Money:** Spending/saving priorities; monthly budget; use of credit cards; joint accounts; 'separate' money; who keeps the books? etc
- **Priorities:** What comes first? Time given to work, church, sports etc
- **Change:** wanting the other person to be different! Weight/fitness, etc
- **In-Laws:** Time with each set of parents; establishing your own house-rules; accepting help/support etc

“A woman marries a man with the ridiculous notion that she can change him, and he with the foolish idea that she will be the same forever! (Rob Parsons)



'Forgiveness': The Key to Conflict Resolution!

The absolute key to dealing with conflicts is FORGIVENESS - a willingness to ask forgiveness and to extend forgiveness.

- ♥ Forgiveness is not a magic formula or a magic wand – but true forgiveness releases something that allows the wound to be mended
- ♥ Forgiveness is not being a 'doormat' – it's a quality decision to move on and embrace the future
- ♥ Forgiveness does not mean trust will be instantly regained – but it's the only thing that does make it possible
- ♥ Forgiveness doesn't eliminate pain and hurt, but it does release you to start afresh. There is no hope without it.
- ♥ WE MUST FORGIVE – AS GOD HAS FORGIVEN US!

“Never and Always”: Dealing with Conflict

- ♥ ALWAYS think: is this worth fighting over?
- ♥ NEVER let the sun go down on your anger
- ♥ ALWAYS try and sort it out the same day
- ♥ NEVER insist on winning or having to have the last word
- ♥ ALWAYS be the first to say ‘sorry’
- ♥ NEVER go to sleep not talking
- ♥ ALWAYS be willing to forgive – and to forget
- ♥ NEVER use it as an opportunity to bring up other (older or unrelated) issues
- ♥ ALWAYS deal with the *issue* rather than attack the *person*
- ♥ NEVER try and resolve conflicts when you’re tired - you’ll say things you don’t really mean
- ♥ ALWAYS be willing to lose an argument
- ♥ And NEVER use the “D” word - it’s not even an option



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Think back to the last time you fell out.

Could you have handled things better?!

5 Making Love!

Sexual Intimacy and the Art of Romance

Sexual intimacy is at the heart of a healthy, happy marriage! It is a profound experience involving the whole personality – body, soul and spirit.

However, it is also something that can be a source of great anxiety (especially as you prepare for marriage), and a cause of frustration and resentment if it is not ‘working properly’.

Love-making is a skill to be learned. It takes time to perfect the art of pleasing and satisfying your spouse: it simply isn’t a matter of ‘doing what comes naturally’!

The great mystery and beauty of sexual intimacy is that it works best when we try and please the other before gratifying ourselves.

Sex is God’s idea!

Sex isn’t dirty! It was created by God for enjoyment within a marriage. The Bible teaches that Marriage - a lifelong covenant of commitment - is the only Biblically acceptable context for sexual intimacy.

Prior to marriage you should honour God and each other by abstaining from all foreplay and intercourse.

In anticipating the beginnings of a lifelong sexual relationship with your spouse, remember...

- Sex is not a measure of love
- Mutually satisfying sex takes time - and you’ve got a whole marriage ahead of you!
- It’s not always fabulous! The whole world does not enjoy great sex!
- Never compare yourselves with the movies!
- Find a frequency and an expression that suits you both
- Your levels of desire will probably differ - times, seasons, drive, emotions, etc
- Avoid anxiety - don’t take it too seriously!
- Talk openly about it
- “Honour the marriage bed” by making sexual intimacy a priority and planning your nights together.

Now let’s get specific about foreplay and sexual intercourse! The following points will help develop a discussion. Ask as many questions as you can think of!...

Foreplay

- Foreplay involves the arousal of each others bodies in preparation for full sexual intercourse
- Take time - don’t rush

- Discover and explore your own and each other's bodies
- The key in foreplay is tenderness. Don't be clumsy!
- Talk openly together; reassure each other
- Don't do things you're not both comfortable about
- Remember: MEN are aroused - relatively quickly - by sight, touch, the physical, imagination, etc
- Remember: WOMEN are aroused - relatively slowly - by mood, atmosphere, romance, affection, appreciation, compliments, etc
- Remember that (for a wife) love-making begins at 8am. She needs to be wooed!
- Fresh breath and short nails will help!
- Music and Atmosphere may be important!

Sexual Intercourse

- It is more blessed to give than to receive! - Focus on gratifying your spouse
- Take time - don't rush!
- Expect that you will both enjoy an orgasm
- Learn techniques that prolong the moment and add satisfaction

Marital Faithfulness

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE BIBLICAL STANDARD is complete PURITY before marriage and complete FAITHFULNESS within marriage. Therefore:

- Be aware of the vulnerability of everyone; don't assume you're not open to attack. Know your own weaknesses.
- Avoid time alone with other members of the opposite sex.
- NEVER "scoop fire into your lap" (Proverbs 6:27) – you cannot 'play with fire' without being burned.
- Protect each other in these areas.

Keeping the Romance Alive!



One of the great misgivings amongst married couples is that the romance seems to have disappeared from the relationship. Familiarity has taken over and the couple have begun taking each other for granted. When this happens we usually stop investing in some of the things that once mattered so much.

Romance is vital in any marriage. It is the spark that fans emotions and often draws us together intimately.

For a woman especially, romance and 'love-making' go hand-in-hand.

Keeping the romance alive is an essential priority if we are to enjoy healthy, happy marriages.

Keeping the Romance alive: Some Ideas!!

- ♥ Have a regular 'date-night' – and guard it with your life!
- ♥ Do something unpredictable together
- ♥ Sit in the car and watch a sunset
- ♥ Eat a meal by candlelight
- ♥ Go for walks together
- ♥ Hold hands more often
- ♥ Don't stop sending love letters to each other
- ♥ Give her (or him!) flowers – for no special reason
- ♥ Leave each other secret notes
- ♥ Do something extravagant together occasionally
- ♥ Smooch together in the kitchen when the kids are in bed



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Could anyone accuse you of being 'romantic'!?

If not, resolve that you'll start making romance with each other a higher priority.

The Final Word

Ephesians 5

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- ³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1 Corinthians 13

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

