

HOW TO OBTAIN A GODLY MARRIAGE
A Marriage Seminar
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1. Goal of the class.

- *The goal of this class is to achieve a strong, happy, and fulfilling marriage through the understanding and application of God's principles for marriage as taught in the bible.*
- This class is designed for married couples, engaged couples, and couples who are seriously heading towards marriage but have not yet become engaged. The questions you answer outside of class are written from the stand point of a married couple. If you are not married, please answer in terms of how you think you should respond if you were married.

2. Format

- The class will take place once or twice a month over a period of six months.
- There will be approximately 1 hour of lecture followed by an hour of discussion and Q & A.
- The studies are designed to be done at home where you can meditate about the answers. The class is for expansion of the material and discussion.
- Five ways of learning.
 1. The lessons from the book, which are biblical and practical is a teacher. It's important that you read the lesson outside of class.
 2. The lessons are self-taught as you answer the questions in your study guide (meditation). If you fail to answer the questions outside of class, you will lose time in identifying the best answers.
 3. Class discussion becomes your third teacher as you learn insights from others.
 4. Experience is one of the best teachers.
 5. The instructor's experience.

3. Spiritual Guidelines.

- It is important to prepare your heart and mind for each class.
- Pray about the material you learn.
- Being humble and teachable is essential in learning and growing.

4. Class Discussion.

- We can learn from each other's experience, but be discreet in framing your questions so as not to reveal private information. Present your questions and experiences in general terms whenever possible.

Let's begin by examining five key texts from scripture to see what marriage is intended to be?

Genesis 2:18-25

"And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

- A problem identified: Man is alone and needs a helper suitable for him. God created a woman to meet this need.
- Companionship is vital. This points to the concept of "relationship" as an underlying axiom in life. We were created to enjoy a blissful relationship with God and within marriage. Sin ruined the relationship and separated the parties involved. Prolonged aloneness produces loneliness, depression, and even despair.
- Relationship is needed in order to fulfill the command "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen.1:28). Therefore, God gave man a helper to enable him to populate the earth, to subdue it, and to give him comfort, support, and encouragement.
- The way God chose to make woman from a part of the man's body illustrates the oneness, union, and closeness of marriage. Adam said "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen.1:23).
- Verse 24 makes it clear that God's plan for marriage involves three steps
 1. Separation. Once a man matures and finds a wife, he must release himself from the oversight of his parents.
 2. Spiritual and emotional oneness. He must unite in an even deeper level of inter-connectedness with the woman he marries than he ever experienced with his parents.

3. Union. Third, in the marriage union the man and the woman are united as “one flesh.”

Malachi 2:13-16

“And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. 14 Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 16 "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

- The background of this passage reveals a defective view of marriage on the part of the Jews:
 1. They were marrying the wrong women. They took pagan wives.
 2. They were divorcing their wives for trivial and unbiblical reasons.
- In his denunciation, Malachi provides some insights into God’s view of marriage. When a man marries a woman, God views this new relationship as a covenant that is broken by some act of unfaithfulness. In Malachi, the culprit of the unfaithfulness was the husband because he chose to divorce his wife. The reasons they gave for their divorces angered God.
- Because the relationship is not merely physical, but spiritual and emotional, the breaking of faithfulness is more than physical, it is spiritual unfaithfulness. God is seeking godly offspring, or literally, “the seed of God” from the union of the man and women.

Hebrews 13:4

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

- Many people today fail to honor marriage in the way God intended because they choose to live together rather than marry.
- Many couples fail to realize that as a covenant honored by God for a lifetime, marriage is intended to be a loving, fulfilling relationship.
- What is it about marriage that we are to value as precious? The text explains that we are to keep our marriage beds pure. It is not only the physical act that causes unfaithfulness. Jesus raised the bar on the meaning of sexual

faithfulness to an even higher standard when he said in Matthew 5:28, “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Matthew 19:6

“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

- The context is verses 1-12. The Pharisees sought to ensnare Jesus in a theological trap by asking a question about divorce that they often argued about. In his answer to their first question in verse 3, Jesus began by quoting a part of the Genesis passage. Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees’ question was, “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matt.19:6).
- There are many views on the legitimacy of divorce, however, we all agree that God wants marriage to be a permanent relationship.
- Jesus’ conclusion to the Genesis passage is that once married, a man and a woman are no longer two, but one flesh - they are to be one flesh physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- In marriage God joins the couple together. Jesus said, “Whatever God joins together, man should not separate.

Ephesians 5:31-33

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

- In explaining the richness of marriage, Jesus compared it to the relationship between Christ and his church.
- Fundamentally a Christ-centered marriage depicts the relationship that Christ has with His bride, the church.
 1. A man without a wife is not a good thing in most situations. There are exceptions (see 1 Cor.7:8).
 2. A husband and wife are to be one physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

3. A husband and wife should enjoy unashamed intimacy in their relationship.
4. Marriage is valuable and precious in God's eyes and should be in ours as well.
5. A man or woman should avoid any intimate relationship (including emotional intimacy) with anyone beyond his or her spouse to avoid damaging something precious and to avoid incurring the wrath of God.
6. God intends a husband and wife to be an inseparable team.
7. A husband and wife should take seriously God's judgment on people who ignore His plan for marriage.
8. In a Christ-centered marriage, a husband and wife are the closest comparison to the relationship that Christ has with his bride, the church.

1. Establish Goals in your Marriage! Set your goals firm. Do not back off or let anyone interfere with your relationship! Don't allow anyone to compromise your goals, beliefs, or values regarding the bible's teaching on marriage. Don't associate with people who put negative pressure on your relationship with your spouse.

2. Speak Only Positive and Good Things About Each Other! Words are very powerful and have meaning. Couples who continued to speak positive and uplifting words to one another had meaningful marriages. If you want the other person to love and take care of you for a lifetime, invest in speaking good things about one another.

3. Understand That No Relationship Is Perfect! Successful marriages limit disagreements and escalation.

4. Don't Hold Grudges! There will be disagreements. Forgive easily and work on the issues. A difference of opinion does not mean a couple is not compatible. It just means that we all have different opinions.

5. Pray For One Another Every Day! There are some things that should be prayed about daily, and marriage is one of them. The enemy always seeks to drive a wedge between you and your spouse. Pray for one another positively and sympathetically. Pray TOGETHER every day. Sometimes you have to fight for your relationship! Once you leave your home, there are outside forces that are vying to gain your attention and affection. Your attention should always be focused on your spouse and his/her well-being.

6. Pay Off Your Bills! Money causes arguments and puts undue pressure on a

marriage. It not easy to have one souse's financial obligations paid off while the other one is indebted and creating more debt. A marriage is about fairness, one that distributes equally and as a team, not buying toys while the other one is paying off bills.

7. Buy Things For One Another! One of the biggest complaints of marriage is when a person stops doing nice things as they did when they were dating. Just because we are now married does not mean for us to stop sending cards, small gifts, flowers, going out on a date, and taking time to say you love each other. Things don't have to be expensive, but it is the thought that counts. Remember to invest in your relationship!

8. When You Are Married, Act Married! Spend quality time with each other. If you are gone all the time from your spouse, someone else may be giving your spouse attention. Do not allow the "little foxes" spoil the vine.

9. Attend Church Together! Marriage is difficult enough without maintaining a commitment to serve God. There are too many distractions and influences that will hinder you serving God together.

10. Talk To Each Other About Major Purchases! You may have one person in your relationship that is very impulsive. Impulsiveness should never be a part of any major purchase or decision! This can place a financial and emotional burden on your relationship. Creating such a burden is not an act of love.

11. Don't Let Arguments or Disagreements Get Out Of Hand! Disagreements in every relationship will happen, even in the best of marriages. Either of you can call a "time out" to set a time to discuss disagreements or you may agree to disagree for that moment.

There are some things over which you may disagree, such as disliking certain foods, having different tastes on clothing or furniture, or being used to certain ways to do things around the house. Remember that both of you were raised by two different families. How you are raised may have an influence on your preferences and the things you are used to as a family.

But you are now a new family. In these situations, it is probably best to agree on mutual things. Something that both of you can agree. Never call each other names or put each other down. Do not use humor to make the other person look bad. Successful marriages have learned the importance of loving one another

without using negative influences or trying to get one's way. Be humble and take the low place.