

The Lord Of The Rings



Marriage As God Designed It

Lesson #1

Finding God In Your Marriage

If we so choose we can enter our marriage consciously as a path toward holiness. But we must choose to do so—*and that choice is not always easy.*

- ♥ It is the **Challenges** of our life that make the platform for growth. An athlete doesn't look for the easiest way—He looks for the one that challenges him the most.
- ♥ Marriage is full of **Challenges** that when met head on in our marriages can nurture our spiritual lives in enriching ways.

“Sometimes what is hard to take in the first years of marriage is not what we find out about our partner but what we find out about ourselves.”

Kathleen & Thomas Hart

The first thing we need to do is to confront the prevailing attitude of the society in which we live. It is the Great American Myth that life is supposed to make us happy – that happiness is the end goal we are striving for.

- * **Happiness is not the _____ – not even here on earth!**
- * **Happiness is the _____ - _____ or _____ of a life properly lived.**

Examine the “beatitudes” in Matthew chapter 5.
This is equally true in marriage!

There is a “deeper” question that needs to be asked – beyond...

- * How do I improve my marriage?
- * How do I make my marriage easier?

What if God did not design marriage to be “easier”? Or, what if the end goal was not just happiness?

What if God designed marriage to make us _____ more than to make us _____?

If this sounds like a radically different view of marriage...

...It is important to remember that _____ is a relatively modern pursuit in marriage.

No marriage can endure on _____ and _____ alone.

- Romantic love has no _____ to it! The kind of mature love that is needed to sustain a good marriage – must _____ – because marriage is the union of two flawed partners.

When we strive for happiness – we strive for the _____!

- The goal then instead of seeking to find happiness in our marriage might be better defined as seeking to find God in our marriage.

When we strive for happiness from our spouse – we strive for the _____ and from the _____!

- We need to remind ourselves of the foolishness of striving to gain something from humans that only God can provide!

Marriage is the merciless revealer, the great white searchlight turned on the darkest places of human nature.”
Katherine Anne Porter

Marital Analogies Teach Us _____ About God!

A giant thread runs throughout scripture—comparing God’s relationship to His people with the human institution of marriage.

It Is The Picture Of Divine Relationship

Hosea leads us into a startling reality...

- God views His people as a **husband** views his **wife**.
(Hosea 2:16, 19a)

Isaiah uses marital imagery to stress how...

- God **rejoices** in His people:
(Isaiah 62:5b)

Jesus also uses this imagery, referring to...

- Himself as the “**bridegroom**”
(Matthew 9:5) and
- The kingdom of heaven as a “**wedding banquet**”
(Matthew 22:1-14)

The converse is true as well.

- The prophet Jeremiah likened Israel’s idolatry to adultery. (Jeremiah 3:8)
- Jesus called the people of His day an “adulterous generation” (Mark 8:38)

Marriage: The Picture Of _____

Marriage is a window through which we should be able to see God. Ephesians 5:22-33.

In a man-centered view the focus and the strength of our marriages is based on our comforts, desires, and expectations.

In a God-centered view our marriages exist and endure for the purpose of bringing glory to God and pointing a sinful world to a reconciling Creator.

Not what will **make** me **happy** but what will **make** God **happy**!

The goal in marriage, as in all life, is to _____!
(2 Corinthians 5:9)

The Challenge Is Utterly Selfless!

If my marriage contradicts my message, I have sabotaged the goal of my life!

Lesson #2

What Does She Want From Me Anyway ?

Have you ever wondered that or maybe even expressed that thought to others? Because we think and are so different from our spouses we sometimes struggle mightily to figure out what we did, or what we failed to do to make our wife happy.

The wedding day is not the culmination but rather the very beginning of life together. Husbands learning to love her as Christ loved the church is difficult and a never-ending process.

HUSBANDS FIRST!

Know What _____

There are considerable differences between wants and needs

Three Things Your Wife Needs

☞ To Feel _____

☞ To Feel _____

☞ To Feel _____

MEN ARE GOING TO DISCOVER THAT THEIR WIVES ARE DRIVEN TO EXPERIENCE SECURITY!

Security is most wives' most pervasive need. She longs to know that life with you is going to be safe! She wants to be assured of:

🔒 **Physical Safety**

🔒 **Financial Safety**

🔒 **Social Safety**

🔒 **Emotional Safety**

She doesn't mean to be unreasonable about this, but it is a constant need to know that she is safe and secure with you.

For most women, security isn't primarily a material thing. It doesn't come from, knowing, in our heads, that all our needs are provided for. Security for women is primarily a heart thing. Our deepest feelings of security come from being loved and cared about.

Holly Faith Phillips

1. What Makes Her Feel Safe?

☞ When We _____ With Her

☞ When We _____ Into Our World

☞ When We _____ Her Of Our Love

Ephesians 5:25, 28 – Loving our wives

- ◆ As Christ loved the church
 - Sacrificially
- ◆ As our own bodies
 - Nourishing

This need and the series of questions that she has in her heart will all revolve around one great question.

Am I More _____ To You Than Anything Else In Your Life?

This question will present itself in the form of several tests!

She Feels Safest When She Knows That We Value Her Greatly!

1 Peter 3:7 – Granting the wife honor

- ◆ Honor – weighty, of great value, treasured

2. How To Make Her Feel Valued

Four Secrets To Making Her Feel Valued

☞ Show her That her _____ is a priority to you

☞ Show _____ in her life

☞ Show her you **Need** her and value her _____

☞ Show her that you don't **Take** her for **Granted**

Demonstrate With Actions And Express With Words

- ◆ How did Christ love the church?
 - Matthew 20:28
 - Descending to greatness

3. Helping Her Feel Connected

Connecting is about creating an experience of intimacy, bridging the gap between oneself and someone else.

- ◆ How did Christ love the church?
 - Ephesians 5:29
 - Cherishing – to warm or soften with body heat

Kindle The _____ Of _____

3 Things That Kindle Your Wife's Fire

☞ **Physical** _____

☞ **Receiving** _____

☞ _____ **Specifically For Her**

Lesson #3

What Does He Need Now ?

AND NOW – THE WIVES!

**AS MEN MUST DISCOVER THAT WOMEN ARE DRIVEN TO
NEED SECURITY WOMEN WILL DISCOVER THAT THEIR
HUSBANDS ARE DRIVEN TO ACHIEVE...**

_____!

God provides for this in His instructions to the wife. What are those instructions He gives to the wife?

★ Wives _____ To Your Husbands

★ Wives _____ Your Husbands

*Why are the instructions different for the wives than they are for the husbands?
Because the needs are different.*

God has created the husband to be the leader in the home—to provide—to be successful.

What are the questions that men ask in order to keep their lives simple enough to succeed?

1 **Is Life With You Going To Be An Expression Of**
_____?

The Truth: He Won't Feel He Is Leading If your Not Following

Appreciate His Desire To _____

Appreciate His Desire To _____

Appreciate His Desire To _____

Appreciate His Desire To _____ &

How Can He Know How Much You Respect Him?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2 Is Life With You Going To Be Filled With _____?

The Truth: Compliments & Flirting Are Cousins In Feeling Successful

Proverbs 16:24 _____ words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. But _____ words pierce like a sword. Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 18:21 The _____ has the power over life and death.

3 Is Life With You Going To Be _____?

The Truth: Testosterone Defies Logic

Men don't set out to be unreasonable about sex with their wives, but they often find themselves sexually restless whenever they are together. She walks by and he notices the way her hips move. She smiles at him and he instantly feels sexy. He walks into the bedroom while she is changing her clothes, and he immediately thinks, *this might be a great opportunity*. All of us men know that this kind of thinking is unreasonable, and we even -accept that we shouldn't be this way, but none of us are very good at it.

It is a strange area of life for men. Men pride themselves in being logical and focused on productivity. They like to make sense and they long for simple things. Alongside this desire is a man's sex drive which is in constant activation.

It Is His _____ — It Is Your _____
1 Corinthians 7:3

Do Not _____ Him
1 Corinthians 7:5

- A couple's sex life is a microcosm of the marriage.
 - Recharging his battery
 - Initiate sex

Lesson #4

AFFAIR PROOFING YOUR MARRIAGE

The Pathology of an Affair: A Four-Step Destructive Process

1. _____

Here are some things that cause us to be vulnerable

- under a lot of stress
- grieving major losses
- feeling insecure and looking for affirmation
- feeling rejected and looking for validation

List some other things that may cause us to be vulnerable in the area of sexual temptation

- _____

2. _____, Non-Physical Involvement

Emotional involvement and **violation of boundary** occur when a man and a woman who are not married to one another:

Experience Emotional Intimacy

- _____
- _____
- _____

Experience Sexual _____

What are some things that would let you know when this has happened?

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. _____ Involvement

Once an affair gets physical, it is hard to get out. It is like a full-blown addiction to the relationship.

4. _____ for Continuing the Affair

- “Just one more time”
- “If my wife only met my needs, I wouldn’t do this”
- ...

So if that is the pathology of an affair – how do we use that information to prevent it from becoming a part of our life?

As Christians we know that adultery is a grievous sin. It is a sin, which God calls us to avoid. Best of all, it is a sin which God shows us *how* to avoid.

By taking a look at some adulterous and illicit sexual relationships in the Bible we can see where some of God’s own fell and the things they might have done to prevent the fall.

2 Samuel 11

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The Old Testament book of Proverbs contains numerous divine insights into marriage and family matters. Chapters 5-7 contain three extended passages on the evils of adultery. One of these passages, 7:6-23, describes in sordid detail the *Pathology Of An Affair*.

Read Proverbs 7:6-23

- He is a “simple” young man
- Who “lacked judgment.”
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The Prevention of an Affair: A Four Step Protective Process

Proverbs 7:24-27, provides several warnings about how to resist sexual temptation.

1. Guard Your _____

Do not let your heart turn to her ways. (v. 25a)

Don't let it run away from you. Keep it on a short emotional leash.

Job 31:1,7,9-12 – Make a covenant with your eyes.

Matthew 5:27-28

Know your own vulnerabilities.

2. Watch Your _____

[Do not] stray into her paths. (v. 25b)

Where can we watch our step?

Experts are increasingly concerned about two temptation arenas:

The _____ & The _____

“One of the major causes of marital breakups in the Christian community is the lack of protective hedges that spouses should plant around their marriages, their heads, their hearts, their eyes, and their hands”.

Jerry B. Jenkins –

Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough To Protect It

The Biblical Basis For Hedges. (Proverbs 5:1-12; 15-21)

3. Consider The _____

Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.
Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. (vv.26-27)

Another similar warning: (Proverbs 6:27-29)

The message is loud and clear: adultery is playing with fire! You will always get burned! As the Apostle Paul declared in Galatians 6:7, “A man reaps what he sows.”

But few who give in to adultery think about its real cost. An extra-marital affair costs not just a car or a mink coat or new golf clubs—it costs your life! (Prov. 5:3-5)

When the hunter catches the prey, the end result is always death. Sometimes it is physical death. Sometimes it is marital death. But always it is spiritual death!

It not only costs us – **It costs God!**

4. Keep The Home _____

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. (5:15, 18)

Lesson #5

What Every Marriage Requires

Marriage is a covenant union between a man and a woman and God. Once we have accepted this fact—we must certainly see the seriousness of the union. Because it is a covenant relationship it is intended by God to last a lifetime. But, how can we make anything last a lifetime? If I am now in a marriage or if in the future I enter into a marriage how can I make sure it lasts the way that God intended?

Although we find ourselves at different stages of this covenant process the keys to successfully keeping the covenant are the same for all.

4 Keys To Keeping The Covenant

☞ *Decide On Your* _____

Goals Give _____

If you don't know what port you are headed for—no wind is a good wind.

Goals Keep Us _____ (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)

The power to lift your eyes from the present situation to a better future.

After our relationship with God—our marriage must be our **Top Priority** - **What does God want from our marriage?**

☞ *Develop A* _____

Setting a course for your marriage—even for the next year of your marriage is not easy. It will require real effort and hard work. It will require you to take responsibility for the condition of your marriage. It will demand that you make sacrifices to achieve the goals you may have only dreamed about before. Your marriage, with God's help, will be forged by your efforts.

The "Someday Syndrome" Is The Result Of Failing To Plan Or Not Charting A Course.

Prioritize Your Marriage

"The No. 1 cause for the breakdown in marriages today is the same issue that causes infidelity. Couples aren't prioritizing their marriage," says Michele Weiner-Davis, a marriage and family therapist and author. "People spend time on their careers, their kids, community affairs, hobbies, sports. But they take their spouses for granted. It just doesn't work that way." In other words, to have a strong marriage, your spouse must come first.

Ask for _____ (Psalm 127:1)

Decide what _____ (Mark 8:37)

Consider What You Would Like To _____

Set Some Specific _____ Goals

⇨ ***Determine To _____***

This is what your **Wedding Vows** are all about!

Enemies Of Commitment:

- 1.
- 2.

Commitment is a _____ (Joshua 24:15)

It requires _____ & _____

⇨ ***Dedication To _____***

These are the actions that show the commitment.

It requires _____ & _____

Lesson #6

THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

What is a covenant? Is there a difference between a covenant and a contract? Why is it so important for us to understand the nature of a covenant and to view our marriage as a covenant?

Read Genesis 15:9-19—This covenant between God and Abraham is a great picture of God's intent in any covenant arrangement.

- ◆ Over half of all marriages end in divorce. Add the number of marriages on the rocks, troubled, you've got 3/4 of all marriages sunk or sinking.
- ◆ Your kids need to know that marriage can work!!!
 - How?
 - Watch yours.

Four Characteristics Of A Covenant Marriage

❶ It Is Conducted Before _____

"Dearly beloved we are gathered together here in the sight of God...**to join together here in the sight of God**...to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony...."

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

Of the guests at your wedding who was the most important guest there?

❷ It Is Conducted Before _____

Why are the wedding guests there?

What is the purpose of the "registry" book?

- As the couple walked through the blood soaked soil...people watched.
- If two leaders of opposing sides enter into a covenant....people watched.
- The reason is that the covenant makers could **NEVER deny it happened.**

③ It Declares The _____ Of The Commitment

Covenants were made on major decisions

Our responsibilities to each other are not based on a reciprocation.

Ephesians 5:22-33

- We assumed we'd be love in return,....but that wasn't part of the deal.
- By our vows, each of assumed 100% responsibility for the marriage.

④ There Is No _____ Mechanism

Five words..... " ...till death do us part"

Matt. 19:6

When you get married....there are no "outs."

**The states says "Yes." DIVORCE...*

**Your God says "NO."*

**Not about being happy, content, pleased, satisfied....Your either a promise keeper....or you're aliar.*

Lesson #7

What Every Marriage Needs

Have you ever experienced the frustrating reality of being disgusted with someone while at the same time knowing that you love them dearly?

Welcome to marriage! In marriage we are asked to live with a person who is different in many ways than we are. Even though we are deeply in love and have much in common—there will be conflicts. Even in the moments of anger, betrayal, exasperation, and hurt, we are called to pursue this person, to embrace them, and to grow toward them.

So, how do we make it work? What do we need to know in order to have a marriage as God designed it? What is one great lesson we can learn in marriage?

Marriage Teaches Us To _____

- ◆ Marriage is the union of two _____
- ◆ Sinful people _____ each other

Our marriages as well as our relationship with God cannot survive if the one with whom we are in partnership is most interested in using the law to impale us or beat us over the head. The law, all boundaries, and rules are there for our benefit and protection but marriage helps us to understand what it is like for God to have us for a partner. As we live with our spouses on a daily (and sometimes difficult) basis – we are forced to make a choice. We can either give in to our hurt or we can grow as a Christian and learn yet another important lesson on how to forgive. The longer we are married the more fully we will understand God’s forgiveness toward us – and we can better appreciate grace.

Sin in marriage – on the part of both partners – is a daily reality, an ongoing struggle. The person you have married will hurt you – sometimes even intentionally so, making the practice of forgiveness a necessity for an enduring marriage that will glorify God.

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The Challenge Is Utterly Selfless!

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One of marriage’s primary purposes may very well be to teach us

to _____ but _____ is _____!

FORGIVING LIKE GOD FORGIVES...

❶ Don’t Confuse Your _____ With Your _____
Proverbs 14:12; 28:26

❷ Don’t _____ In The _____
Philippians 3:13

❸ Forgiveness Is A _____ Of _____
Luke 23:34

❹ Forgiveness Will _____ You
Matthew 20:28