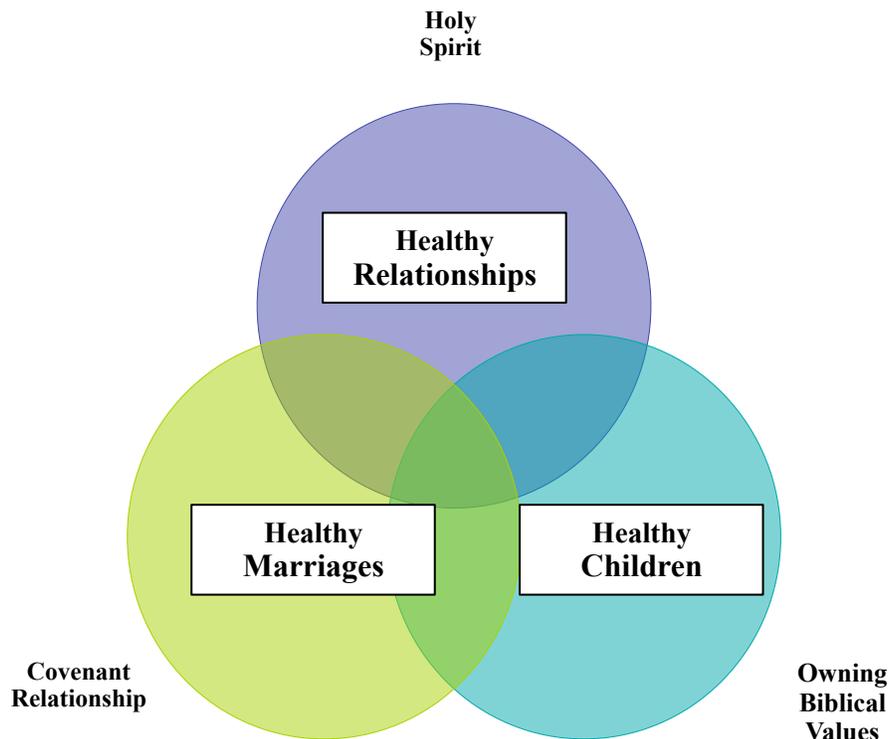


Becoming a Disciple in Your Marriage



Ingredients of Healthy Relationships

- 1) **Trust** – Firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, justice, etc. of another person
- 2) **Communication** – The ability to speak in a way that others can hear what you really mean; the ability to listen to what others are really saying
- 3) **Honor** – Respecting one’s value; holding another person as precious
Consider the “one-anothers” of Scripture:
- 4) **Commitment** – a pledge that, no matter the circumstances, I will do whatever it takes to make the relationship successful -- Scripturally, this is called “covenant”
- 5) **Relational Grace** – Bearing with one’s weakness; overlooking faults. Granting mercy because I know my own weaknesses. Understanding our differences helps us to value one another and to grant grace to one another. “Not wrong, just different”

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We Believe:

- 1) God desires every couple to experience an excellent and ever-growing marriage
- 2) His pattern for an excellent marriage is found in the Bible
- 3) Your marriage flows from your heart – good things flow from a good heart... bad things flow from a bad heart. Good principles cannot make up for a bad heart.
- 4) Once your heart is where it needs to be there are specific, learnable skills that can solidify your relationship
- 5) The state of your marriage is up to you. As a couple, you make decisions every day which effect the quality of your marriage.

Here is the point: The beauty, excellence and fulfillment of your marriage is directly proportional to the degree of submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and obedience to His Word walked out by both marriage partners. **True disciple = good spouse**

Two Key Words:

Covenant - A binding and solemn agreement before God between marriage partners consisting of the strongest bond of unconditional commitment and faithfulness promised to each other until death separates them (not 50/50 but 100/100)

Oneness - The quality or state of being joined together; spiritual, emotional and physical intimacy, designed to mirror God's image and mutually complete each other.

Two things you must know:

- 1) The pre-eminence of marriage - Marriage was God's first thought when it comes to human relationships. It is the priority relationship in the family and in society.
- 2) You have an enemy - and it is not your spouse! Every married couple is either pro-actively working toward oneness or drifting toward isolation

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So.... What is a Disciple?

1) A disciple denies himself/herself (Luke 9:23-24)

To forget about oneself; to lose sight of one's own interest in preference of another; to say no to your own way.

2) A disciple takes up his/her cross daily (Luke 9:23-24)

Settle it here and now: you must die to be a disciple. Not just die, but die *daily*. MEn, are you willing to take a bullet for your bride? How about a bullet every day for her? How about a bullet *from* her... and still love her as Christ love you?

3) A disciple follows Jesus (Luke 9:23-24)

Read Philippians 2:1-11. The greatest need in my marriage is for me to become truly like Jesus. I must get to know him and pray for God to change me into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

4) A disciple submits to the Word of God and obeys it. (John 8:31-32)

We may know (or think we know) the scriptures, but we must live them out in our daily lives. We must settle that in our marriage, we submit to the Word of God and it has the final say in what we do and how we respond to each other

5) A disciple loves (John 13:35)

Your personal love gauge: Try substituting your name for the word "love" or "charity" in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.

Love is not: an emotion but a choice
a feeling but a policy
conditional, but enduring and faithful
mysterious or irrational, but a deliberate action

Love is: always doing the best for the beloved
a powerful force which produces fruit when given away
always shown by actions (a verb)
costly
shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit
a command

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6) A disciple is filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-36)

The commands to husbands and wives (Eph. 5:22-33) are prefaces by being filled by the Spirit, because only the Holy Spirit can enable us to do what God commands each of us to do for our spouse.

7) A disciple forgives (Ephesians 4:32)

“Marriage is a long-term, intimate, all-inclusive, no-holds-barred, day-to-day, year-after-year commitment between two sinners. How will they get along without forgiveness?... Forgiveness is not excusing - excusing is making nothing of sin. To forgive is to face the truth: this thing was done to me; this person is responsible; it was wrong. Then to treat the person as if the thing were never done and be willing to be reconciled.”

Elizabeth Elliot

Husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). Hurts go deeper when they come from someone we love dearly. We must give each other grace and wipe the slate clean between us, or our marriages will not survive.

8) A disciple keeps his/her relationship with God as priority (Matthew 6:33)

It is easy to put our spouses above God. It is easy to look for our spouses to meet needs that only God can meet. That places way too much pressure on your relationship.

There is a love reserved only for our spouse. Giving that reserved love to another is called adultery. Likewise, there is a love that is reserved only for God. Giving that reserved love to another is called spiritual adultery.

My identity must be rooted in the fact that God accepts and loves me. That love must be kept first and marital fulfillment will “be added” to me.

9) A disciple pray Matthew 7:7-8

Prayer brings oneness just as surely as physical intimacy brings oneness. Prayer is setting our hearts and desires together toward seeking God. Become intentional about praying with your spouse. Make a plan and stick with it.

10) A disciple does not settle for mediocrity (Ecclesiastes 9:9-10)

Settle it in your mind that you will not just exist together or “stay together for the kid’s sake”. Press in toward excellence in your marriage relationship. Become intentional about making your marriage the best marriage you know of!