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How Can I Make My Marriage Work?

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A happy marriage is one of the greatest joys life can offer. Yet so many suffer failed marriages. Your marriage can be different if you will obey the Author of marriage.

Marriage is not just a tradition; it is an institution ordained by God. To the first man and woman, He commanded, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Making your marriage work begins with this understanding. God’s earliest definition of marriage is *leaving, cleaving* and *becoming one*. Marriage is the point where a man and wife *leave* the authority of their parents and form a new family, a new life with new responsibilities and new roles.

Why did God create marriage? The answer is incredibly inspiring. When God gave Adam a helper (verse 18), that symbolized the Church marrying Jesus Christ at His Second Coming (Revelation 19:7). God gave man and wife the ability to reproduce, which pictured the future expansion of the God Family (Genesis 1:28). And He made marriage permanent (Mark 10:9, 11-12), illustrating that the Church’s marriage to the Son of God will never end. Marriage is an institution, a blessing *and a vision*.

God gives us a lot of instruction in the Bible for making our marriages work, particularly about the individual roles and responsibilities of husband and wife.

Ephesians 5 is the most important biblical chapter explaining marriage. It is a gold mine of instruction. This passage teaches the roles of husbands and wives, then shows that these roles *primarily* address the marriage between Christ and the Church. The instruction works within a physical marriage because this is an exact type of Christ’s marriage. Both are governed by the same laws.

It starts with verse 21: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Godly family life is a way of *mutual submission* in the fear of God. In this passage, the Apostle Paul gets more specific about *how* the husband submits and how the wife submits. He spells out the individual responsibilities of women and men, which reveals God’s thinking, His love, His government and His purpose for marriage.

The two marriage roles interlock in an extraordinary way. Each is about service. Each demands 100 percent commitment to the way of *give*—the way of *LOVE*! It requires sacrificing your own notions and ideas. The vast majority of husbands and wives are simply *too selfish* to do this. We walk by sight, and want to hold on to our own theories of the way a relationship should function. But if we are willing to simply *OBEY*—to walk by faith and do as God commands—wonders and miracles result. To do this fully requires real faith in and submission to God.

When a husband and wife each devote themselves to following God’s marriage laws, they set a God-level dynamic in motion that creates a profound level of trust, intimacy and interdependence.

God designed these roles and responsibilities to strengthen, benefit and bless human beings. They draw us into the world of

the God Family! They teach us exquisite, God-level governance and love.

None of us are perfect, but God requires that we strive *to become* perfect (Matthew 5:48). No marriage is perfect either, but both husband and wife must work toward God's perfect standard.

Wedding ceremonies generally end with the husband and wife making their marriage vows. The vows used in the Philadelphia Church of God, publisher of the *Trumpet*, come straight from the instruction in the Bible.

The man vows to *cleave* to his wife unto death, to *love* her, *cherish* her, *honor* her, and *provide* for her—five specific promises that come straight from Scripture. When husbands understand and keep these vows, their marriages flow with love, blessings and purpose.

The bride vows to take her husband for the remainder of her natural life, to submit herself to him as unto the Eternal, to be subject to him in everything, and to deeply respect him. Different promises for a different role, and also straight from Scripture.

Keeping these beautiful, biblical wedding vows leads to harmony, happiness, stability and longevity in your marriage. If you remember them and keep them, you will enjoy the rich rewards of a marriage governed and blessed by the Creator of marriage! He wants your marriage to be *great!* He created this magnificent, God-plane relationship, and He wants it to be a *rich, joy-filled, deeply satisfying, intimate* and altogether *LOVING* experience for *everyone* who enters into it. And as you make your marriage work, you learn more about the awesome spiritual dimension and ultimate purpose of marriage, which extends through the remainder of your natural lives and far, far beyond.

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