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Building A Strong Marriage



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A close-up photograph of a dark brown leather armchair, showing the texture of the leather and the stitching on the cushions and armrests. The chair is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the purple background.

HOMELIFE
GUIDE

Building a God-Honoring Marriage

With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families

No one plans to become a broken family or a miserable couple. We marry because we yearn for a life-long, thriving relationship. So, how can believers become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE – Discover God’s Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God’s relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a “profound mystery” because it is a picture of “Christ and the church.”

PRIORITY TWO: Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today’s civil marriages are much like business contracts—easy to get into and easy to get out of. God’s covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people weren’t faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime—in sickness and health, for better or worse. They don’t threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE: Pursue a Passionate Marriage

Couples aren’t supposed to just stick it out and find a way to make their marriages survive. God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God.

PRIORITY FOUR: Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ’s sacrifice directly to marriage: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25) and “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

PRIORITY FIVE: Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the “devil a foothold” in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

It Starts At Home (Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) explains why marriage is a key path of our spiritual formation and provides practical advice for intentional couples.

The Marriage Masterpiece (by Al Janssen) unveils the beauty of God’s design for every marriage.

Building Your Mate’s Self-Esteem (Dennis and Barbara Rainey) shows why one of the most vital ingredients in a marriage today is to build one another’s self-esteem.

Love and Respect (Dr. Emerson Eggerichs) discusses a powerful Biblical model for each spouse understanding and meeting the other’s most deeply felt need.

The Five Love Languages (Gary Chapman) describes how to discover and serve your spouse’s unique love language.

A Celebration of Sex (Dr. Douglas Rosenau) is a guide to enjoying God’s gift of sexual intimacy.

Sacred Marriage (Gary Thomas) shifts the focus from marital enrichment to spiritual enrichment in ways that can help you love your mate more. Whether it is delightful or difficult, your marriage can become a doorway to a closer walk with God.

The Good Fight (Les & Leslie Parrott) Whether you are dating, engaged, newly married or married for decades, this book is for you. Learn the practical research-proven, life-changing techniques that will show you how to turn every conflict to your advantage, leading to more intimacy and deeper respect.

You and Me Forever, Marriage in Light of Eternity (Franc Chan) dives into Scripture to understand what it means to have a relationship that satisfies the deepest parts of our souls.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Hillcrest has a variety of Sunday School classes and Small Group Bible Studies for the spiritual development of every person. No matter your age and stage of life, there’s a class for you. Visit the Welcome Center in the foyer or contact adults@hillcrestbc.com for more information.