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* (by 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* (by 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* (by 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* (by Gary Chapman) describes how to discover and serve your spouse's unique love language.

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

- *Simply Romantic Nights Kit* (from Family Life Ministries) Discover intimacy in a new light using a series of his/her date night ideas.

- *From This Day Forward* (by Craig and Amy Groeschel)

- *Love, Sex, and Happily Ever After* (by Craig Groeschel)

- *The Meaning of Marriage* (by Timothy Keller)

- *The Mingling of Souls* (by Matt Chandler)

- *You and Me Forever* (by Francis Chan)

GOING FURTHER – Resources Cont'd.

Websites: Listen to a free marriage podcast and discover tools for becoming an intentional couple at HomePointe.org

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