

Introduction: The American Family

1. Our heart's desire – 97% want a close-knit family.
2. Our current situation: Families are disintegrating.
3. The **Christian** family is in demise.
4. The primary cause: Our failure to hold marriage and marriage commitments in high esteem.

God's instructions for a great marriage

²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; ²⁶that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body. ³¹For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV)

1. It requires mutual _____ to God and each other.

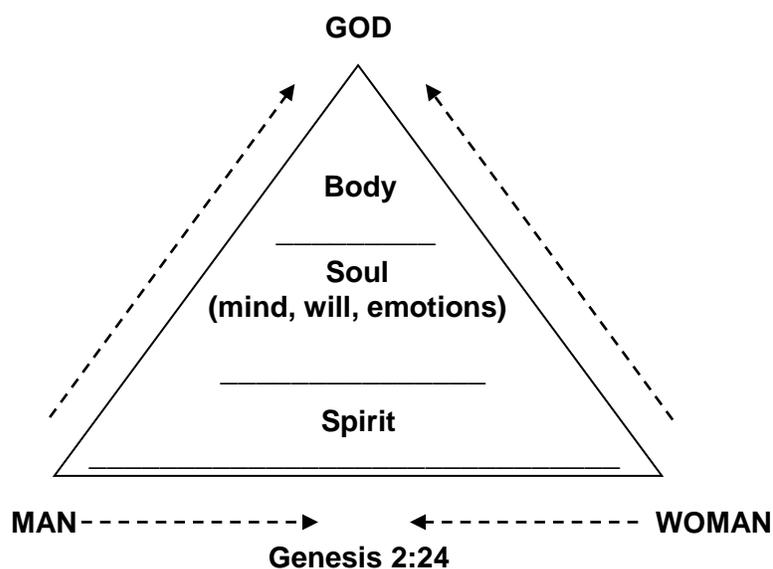
...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

2. You need to know how to _____ your mate.

3. Your marriage has an even bigger _____ than your happiness.

God’s design for marriage: “The Blueprint”



Marriage is a holy covenant

Malachi 2:14

A covenant: An agreement and guarantee one person makes with another.

- The Hebrew word for covenant used in the Old Testament comes from the verb “to cut”.
- We see in the Bible that God made very serious agreements where He established a “covenant” which represents a serious occasion which the parties involved seal their promises in the midst of “cutting” which generally involved blood.
- **Examples:**

Noah	Genesis 9:1-17
Abraham	Genesis 17:3-8
Moses	Exodus 34
Jesus	Mark 14:24 & Hebrews 7:22
- The Bible itself is divided into two sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “testament” is interchangeable with the word “covenant”. So when Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, a new *covenant* was established which was different than the Old Testament. This is why we see in the Bible where marriage is a “covenant” - it is a very serious thing in the sight of God (Malachi 2:14).

Definition: Marriage is an _____ commitment of unconditional love toward an _____ person.

A covenant marriage involves three distinct aspects:

1. Leaving
2. Cleaving
3. Becoming “one flesh”

Since marriage is a covenant and not merely a contract...

1. _____ is not an option. Malachi 2:14
2. _____ is a serious covenant breaking offense. Proverbs 2:16-19
3. _____ before _____ is a violation of this holy covenant. Hebrews 13:4
4. _____ relationships are forbidden as a violation of God's design.
1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:26-27

Marriage that Works
Personal Commitment – Week 1

From this day forward...

- I will refuse to consider divorce as an option.
- I will take seriously my covenant relationship with my mate before God.

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 (NIV)

Beginning with me...

- I realize I need God's forgiveness for violating His covenant plan for marriage.
- I receive God's complete forgiveness for my sin based on Christ's death for me.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

I commit to pray for...

- My marriage/future marriage
- My children's marriage
- A marriage that is in crisis

Signed

Date