

Tips for a Struggling Marriage

(Genesis 2:18)

- Introduction:
1. In the beginning, marriage was given to humans as a gift (Genesis 2:18), but due to our imperfections, marriage has for some, become the source of great pain and frustration.
 2. You've probably heard it said that "Marriages are made in Heaven." Well that may be so, but they're maintained on Earth.
 3. If you want a happy, healthy home, you need to realize that there's some "assembly required."
 4. The amazing thing about God's word is that in so few words, God has given us the key to successful marriages, while thousands of pages have been written by men.
 5. I want to share with you some principles, that if followed, will result in a happy marriage.

I. Healthy Homes Are Committed Homes

- A. Some may be struggling with your marriage, especially if it's a new marriage.
- B. Who doesn't remember their first year of marriage?
- C. Commitment is the glue that holds marriage together.
- D. Commitment is necessary in order to allow time to heal wounds and change behavior.
- E. (1 Peter 4:8).

II. Healthy Homes Honor Each Other

- A. (1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:33).
- B. Besides you, nobody knows your faults better than your spouse.
 1. What are you going to do with that information?
 2. Are you going to humiliate each other with it?
- C. Situations when spouses failed to honor each other.
 1. Couple Fussing.
 2. Old Heifer.
- D. Kim and I made a decision to never dishonor each other, even if it is said in jest.
 1. In fact, it's become a "game" for us.
 - a. Reinforces our love and honors each other like God said to do.
 - b. Models the idea of "honoring" for others.

III. Healthy Homes Keep Courtship Alive

- A. What would happen if you bought a plant and set it in the corner, away from all sunlight and failed to water it?
- B. (Ephesians 5:29) Nourish and cherish.
- C. What would your spouse think if you showed him or her the same courtesies you did before you were married?

- F. One of the major reasons people come to the conclusion that they no longer love their spouse is because they have neglected courtship and allowed their romantic feelings for each other to die.

IV. Healthy Homes Practice Forgiveness

- A. (Ephesians 4:32) "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ also forgave you."
- B. Harboring resentment toward each other — or failing to let go of past mistakes is a major factor in the breakdown of homes.
 - 1. It occupies your mind and keeps you from accomplishing positive things.
- C. Illustration of fishing line that gets tangled.
- D. Slop Bucket.
- E. The art of forgiveness is seldom practiced because it is so costly.

V. Practice Creative Romance

- A. When one goes out of his/her way to please his/her spouse, it is romantic and bonding.
- B. Do what's not expected. Surprise each other.
- C. This doesn't just happen. It takes planning and brainstorming.
- D. Ills. Of my Father-in-law's fiddle.

VI. Learn Each Other's Love Language

- A. Gary Smalley – "The Five Love Languages."
- B. What is meaningful to me may not be meaningful to my wife.
- C. (1 Peter 3:7).

VI. Healthy Homes Put God First

- A. A home will never be what it could be; it will never experience the greatest amount of joy and fulfillment; it will never reach its potential until God is factored in.
- B. (Matthew 6:33).
- C. God created the home and knows best how we ought to function within it.
- D. The problem with today's family is not with its divine design and the unique roles God has assigned within it — these are not the problems but the solutions.
- E. When a couple is first and foremost committed to God, they will then naturally treat each other right.
- F. It must be remembered that the home is not an end in and of itself, it is proving ground to prepare us for Heaven.

- Conclusion: 1. "Happily ever after" is not just an ending for fairy tales, but can be the ending of your story if you will follow God's plan for the home.