

I. Introduction.

II. What must be done to protect and preserve your marriage? 5 L's

A. The Lord must come first.

1. Make your personal walk with the Lord your highest priority. Gal. 5:16 1 Pe. 2:2-3
Ps. 1:1ff Phil. 4:6-7 1 Th. 5:17 Eph. 5:15-21
2. Remain involved in a strong church. Heb. 10:24-25 13:17 Eph. 4:11-16

B. Laziness will cause your marriage to deteriorate. Pr. 24:30-31

1. Do not take each other for granted.
2. Quickly and completely resolve conflicts – biblical peacemaking. Rom. 12:18
 - a. Conflict is dangerous. Eph. 4:26-27
 - b. Don't be quarrelsome – fire your inner lawyer (excusing and accusing).
Prov. 29:22 20:3 25:24 Js. 4:1-2,11-12 1:19 Eph. 4:29
 - c. First, get the log out of your own eye. Mt. 7:1-5
 - d. Gently restore your spouse. Gal. 6:1-2
 - e. Forgive as you have been forgiven. Eph. 4:31-32
 - f. Get help (godly counsel) if you need it. Phil. 4:2-3
3. Commit to communicate.
 - a. Learn to listen in love. Js. 1:19 Phil. 2:3-5 Pr. 20:5
 - b. Build up with your speech. Eph. 4:29 Pr. 16:24
 - c. Learn to communicate on a deeper level.
 - d. Make specific plans to spend quality time together.

C. Lies are like a deadly cancer to your relationship. Eph. 4:25

1. Nothing is more important in marriage than mutual trust.
2. Lying includes exaggeration, spin (“always, never”).
3. Why do people lie? People lie for selfish reasons. Js. 4:1ff
4. Some people are so accustomed to lying that learning to be truthful is like learning to speak a new language (and to trust God). Pr. 3:5-6
5. Make it safe for your spouse to honestly confess their sins and failings.

D. Lust can destroy your marriage.

1. Be circumspect in your dealings with the opposite sex. 2 Tim. 2:22 Prov. 5:8
Js. 1:14-15
2. Don't be emotionally vulnerable with someone of the opposite sex. Gen. 2:24
3. Don't think that it can't happen to you. 2 Sam. 11:1ff 1 Co. 10:12
4. When one becomes married (or engaged) he/she commits to cut off all other romantic options until death parts them.
5. Establish guidelines for propriety in dealing with the opposite sex. 1 Tim. 3:2 5:2
6. Consider the consequences of moral failure. Prov. 6:27-35 7:22-27
7. If boundaries are crossed, quickly confess and seek accountability.

E. Lift one another up in order to strengthen your marriage.

1. Look for that which is affirmable. Phil. 4:8-9
2. Affirmation is biblical. Prov. 31:28-29 Rev. 2:2-6 1 Co. 1:4-8
3. Affirmation glorifies God for His work in your spouse. Col. 1:3-8 1 Thess. 1:2-10
4. Affirmation is very powerful. Prov. 16:21b

III. The gospel is the one key to keeping your marriage strong.

- A. Both the Old and New Testaments portray the Lord's relationship with us as a marriage. Eph. 5:32 Isa. 54:5
1. You must first know the love of Christ. 1 John 4:19 Eph. 5:1-2,25,32
 2. Study God's Word and meditate upon the greatness of Christ's love for you.
 3. Pray the prayer which Paul prays for the Ephesians. Eph. 3:14-19
- B. Christlike love is founded upon grace, not law. 1 Jo. 4:10-11
1. Most human relationships are implicitly governed by law.
 2. This is not how God has dealt with you. Titus 3:5-6 Eph. 5:1-2
 3. You are the chief of sinners who has been shown great mercy. 1 Tim. 1:15
 4. Self-righteousness is delusional and destructive. Js. 4:11-12
 5. You married a fellow sinner and should not be shocked when they sin. Pr. 19:11
 6. As you remember God's grace to you, restore and forgive your spouse. Gal. 6:1
1 Jo. 1:8-9 Col. 3:12-14 Mark 6:36
 7. The kindness of God leads us to repentance. Romans 2:4
 8. Marriages fail because of a gospel-disconnect.
- C. Keep fighting for love.
1. You are in a spiritual battle. Gal. 5:17
 2. Walk by the Spirit. Gal. 5:16-24
 3. Your spouse cannot make you fleshly. Gal. 5:16 1 Co. 10:13
 4. Covenant love endures. 1 Co. 13
 5. God loves us with an eternal and unchanging love. Heb. 13:5
- D. Christ's love described. 1 Cor. 13:4-7 Phil. 2:3ff

IV. Concluding summary. Ps. 103:10 2 Co. 5:15

Discussion questions

1. Why is it important that married couples be committed to a strong church?
2. How does your personal walk with the Lord affect your marriage?
3. How can laziness cause a marriage to deteriorate?
4. Are you quarrelsome? If so, how can you change?
5. How do lies impact a marriage?
6. How can you make it easier for your spouse to be truthful?
7. What should be done to protect a marriage from sexual or emotional infidelity?
8. What biblical basis is there for affirming your spouse?
9. How can a person who tends to find fault and criticize others learn to be an affirmer?
10. How does your experience of gospel grace affect how you treat your spouse?
11. Why is it important for your marriage that you walk by the Spirit?
Can your spouse make you fleshly?