

A photograph of a couple embracing outdoors. The man is wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, and the woman is wearing a grey t-shirt and a colorful floral patterned skirt. They are standing in front of green foliage.

mount hope church

Stronger Marriage

GUIDE TO BUILD A HEALTHY, JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE



Stronger Marriage Guide

Guide to build a healthy,
joy-filled marriage.



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From Pastor Kevin



There is a ‘best’ that God has for your marriage. The Lord, who created marriage in the first place, did so with a picture in mind of what marriage at its full potential would look like. It’s a goal worth going after. We want to encourage you to refuse to settle for less than God’s best in your marriage.

“The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn which shines even brighter until the full light of day.” - Proverbs 4:18

You could say, “God’s best for our marriage is like the first gleam of dawn—it just keeps getting brighter and better!” Your marriage, your love for each other, was never meant to be like a light that dims with time. Instead, your love is meant to be like a light that keeps getting brighter with every day. That is our prayer for you!



36 Questions to Fall in Love Again

Communication is so key to your marriage. With your partner, turn off the distractions around you and go through these 36 questions. If you need to break them down, go through the individual steps.

SET 1

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
4. What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. Would you rather spend a night with me in a 5-star hotel or a simple bed and breakfast?
8. Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.
9. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

SET 2

13. If you could know a truth about yourself, your life, the future or anything else, what would you want to know?
14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
16. What do you value most in a friendship?
17. What is your most treasured memory?
18. What is your most terrible memory?
19. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
20. When was the first time you knew you loved me?
21. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
22. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.
23. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people's?
24. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

SET 3

25. Make three true "we" statements each. For instance, "We are both in this room feeling ..."
26. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share ..."
27. If someone else was going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for him or her to know.
28. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.
29. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.
30. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
31. How would you describe love in 3 words?
32. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
33. If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?
34. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
35. Would you rather be the one who initiates physical affection or have your partner initiate it?
36. Share a personal problem and ask your partner's advice on how he or she might handle it. Also, ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.



Keys for a Healthy And Growing Marriage

Activating these principles—with consistency—will help to grow a healthy marriage. Often, communication issues challenge couples, but as for all of us, pride and selfishness are so often the root issue. The Bible says, you that are Spiritual, restore.

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

Galatians 6:1 (NLT)

This is the job of a Biblical Guidance counselor [and applies to areas more than just marriage]: Restore a person's (or couple's) relationship back to the Lord. As each person grows closer to Him, they will in turn, draw closer to each other. The Spirit of God will be in them and working through them in a greater measure, producing right believing and thinking. This, in turn, will produce right living and godly actions.

1. Attend Church regularly and consistently

Some people have given up the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer.

Hebrews 10:25 (CEV)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12 (vs. 12 - 27)**

- a. Corporate Anointing
- b. Demonstrates love for God and is obedient to His commands
- c. Your Pastor has direction from God for you

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 (KJV)

2. Tithe to your local Church

We rob God of the opportunity to bless us the way He desires because of our disobedience. This is often the way He uses to help us in our spiritual development.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **Romans 12:1**

3. Pray, Love, and Serve (Together when possible)

- a. Pray together in your understanding and in the Holy Spirit
- b. Read your Bible and talk with God
- c. Find tangible ways to love each other and others
- d. Serve in your local Church or community

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. **Ephesians 4:16**

4. Play together

So be happy with your wife and find your joy with the woman you married. **Proverbs 5:18 (GNT)**

- a. Vacations
- b. 'Stay-cations' (Mini stay-at-home vacations to save money)
- c. Find things to celebrate (job promotion, new home, raise, finishing a project, etc.)
- d. Laugh at one another
- e. Participate in a shared hobby

5. Find, believe, and declare God's Word together for answered prayer

- a. House or bills to be paid for
- b. Health in your family
- c. For the Lord to give direction for your children
- d. For His help in decisions and solutions

"And I tell you more: whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." **Matthew 18:19**

6. Read a marriage-focused book together (or videos, podcast, etc.)

Recommended reading:

- Marriage on the Rock by Jimmy and Karen Evans
- The Purpose and Power of Love & Marriage by Myles Munroe
- The 5 Love Needs of Men & Women by Dr. Gary and Barbara Rosberg
- The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women by Dr. Gary and Barbara Rosberg
- For Better or For Best by Gary Smalley
- Marriage Covenant by Derek Prince
- Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott
- Men are Like Waffles: Women are Like Spaghetti by Bill and Pam Farrel

7. Forgive—and forgive often

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. **Colossians 3:13 (NLT)***

If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you.

Matthew 6:14 (GNT)

8. Speak life over your spouse

Never use the word 'divorce' or the phrase 'I hate you,' etc. Instead, talk about what you enjoy in life and in each other.

*Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. **James 1:26***

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Proverbs 18:21

*Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. **Proverbs 16:24***

*A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. **Proverbs 11:25***

9. Pursue one another intentionally

*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. **Revelation 2:4***

Practical Tips

- Think about your spouse
- Look each other in the eyes—often
- Remember why you fell in love
- Be quick to ask for forgiveness
- Be gracious towards one another
- Go on weekly or bi-monthly dates
- Practice being a 'customer service counter' for your spouse. Allow them to safely tell you what they don't like or what bothers them.

10. Set goals and dream together

God's design for us and our marriage is for increase in every area of marriage.

11. Listen to faith-filled teaching

*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit, who can bear? **Proverbs 18:14***

So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

Romans 10:17 (GNT)

12. Read “The Love Chapter” together: I Corinthians 13



13. Find mentors and seek them out (Don't expect them to find you)

14. Ask questions of each other and invite the Lord to give you wisdom

Examples:

- What is love?
- Is love a feeling or a decision? Why?
- In what areas could our marriage relationship grow deeper?
- What is the blessing of the Lord, and is our marriage/family operating by this? If so, what is the tangible fruit?

15. Develop Friends and attend a Life Group

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24



Joy-Filled Activities

“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

One of the major keys to having the best marriage ever is filling it with joy! In Hebrews the word joy means to be filled with gladness. As with love, **having joy in your marriage is a choice.** In order for us to see and experience joy in marriage, we must first make the decision that we are going to always choose joy, even when we don’t feel it.

This is the same choice to have joy that Jesus made to endure the cross, “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

When we choose joy in marriage, we are partnering with Jesus and aligning ourselves with His ways and thoughts about your spouse. We do this practically by engaging in activities that are fun, strengthening, and bring you both closer together, binding it together with joy in love.

However, this doesn’t happen by accident! We encourage couples to be intentional about scheduling time with each other, because, let’s face it, life is busy, and all too often we prioritize everything and everyone else other than our spouse. We honor the Lord and fortify our covenant when we choose to fill our marriages with joy each and every day!

Here are some joy-filled activities that you and your spouse can engage in throughout your marriage:

1. **Plan a picnic or simply sit on the deck, enjoying each others company**
2. **Learn a new hobby or activity together**
3. **Visit coffee shops or boutiques**
4. **Mini vacations or travel**
5. **Go for walks or bike rides**
6. **Dance parties** (doesn’t have to be good to be fun)
7. **Play games, puzzles, trivia, or read the same book**
8. **Try a new restaurant or recipe together**
9. **Go down memory lane** (yearbooks, photos, videos, etc.)
10. **Participate in each other’s favorite activity together** (golfing, hiking, shopping, etc.)



Love Languages

By learning the five love languages, you and your spouse will discover your unique love languages and learn practical steps in truly loving each other.

Words of Affirmation

Hearing those important words of love and appreciation.

Physical Touch

Physical affection, touch, sex, hugging, cuddling - feeling love through a skin-to-skin connection.

Receiving Gifts

It's all about the thought behind the gift, not the price tag.

Quality Time

That special time spent together when you just focus on each other.

Acts of Service

Building that bookshelf, picking you up from the doctors, making you coffee in the morning, showing love through actions.

Add Total Number of Answers from Page 11

- A. Words of Affirmation
- B. Quality Time
- C. Receiving Gifts
- D. Acts of Service
- E. Physical Touch

Read each pair of statements and circle the one that best describes you.

1. A. I like to receive notes of affirmation from you.
E. I like it when you hug me.
2. B. I like to spend one-on-one time with you.
D. I feel loved when you give me practical help.
3. C. I like it when you give me gifts.
B. I like taking long walks with you.
4. D. I feel loved when you do things to help me.
E. I feel loved when you hug or touch me.
5. E. I feel loved when you hold me in your arms.
C. I feel loved when I receive a gift from you.
6. B. I like to go places with you.
E. I like to hold hands with you.
7. A. I feel loved when you acknowledge me.
C. Visible symbols of love are very important to me.
8. E. I like to sit close to you.
A. I like it when you tell me that I am attractive.
9. B. I like to spend time with you.
C. I like to receive little gifts from you.
10. D. I know you love me when you help me.
A. Your words of acceptance are important to me.
11. B. I like to be together when we do things.
A. I like the kind words you say to me.
12. E. I feel whole when we hug.
D. What you do affects me more than what you say.
13. A. I value your praise and try to avoid your criticism.
C. Several inexpensive gifts mean more to me than one large expensive gift.
14. E. I feel closer to you when you touch me.
B. I feel close when we are talking or doing something together.
15. A. I like when you compliment my achievements.
D. I know you love me when you do things for me that you don't enjoy doing.
16. E. I like when you touch me when you walk by.
B. I like when you listen to me sympathetically.
17. C. I really enjoy receiving gifts from you.
D. I feel loved when you help me with my projects.
18. A. I like when you compliment my appearance.
B. I feel loved when you take the time to understand my feelings.
19. E. I feel secure when you are touching me.
D. Your acts of service make me feel loved.
20. D. I appreciate the many things you do for me.
C. I like receiving gifts that you make.
21. B. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you give me your undivided attention.
D. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you do some act of service for me.
22. C. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with a gift.
A. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with meaningful words (written or spoken.)
23. D. I feel loved when you help me out with chores.
C. I know you are thinking of me when you give me a gift.
24. C. I appreciate it when you remember special days with a gift.
B. I appreciate it when you listen patiently and don't interrupt me.
25. B. I enjoy extended trips with you.
D. I like to know that you are concerned enough to help me with my daily task.
26. E. Kissing me unexpectedly makes me feel loved.
C. Giving me a gift for no occasion makes me feel loved.
27. A. I like to be told that you appreciate me.
B. I like when you look at me when we are talking.
28. C. Your gifts are always special to me.
E. I feel loved when you kiss me.
29. A. I feel loved when you tell me how much you appreciate me.
D. I feel loved when you enthusiastically do a task I have requested.
30. E. I need to be hugged by you every day.
A. I need your words of affirmation daily.



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