

A Healthy Relationship in Marriage

by Wayne Goff

It never ceases to amaze me how frequently young people enter into the most sacred earthly relationship without **spiritual counseling**. While I am not a “counselor,” I can give capable “counseling” from the best Counselor of all on the subject of marriage. And the first piece of advice which I give to all couples getting married is — **put God first in your marriage, and in each of your lives**. No marriage can be truly successful without this foundation! Many homes of Christians find God absent. It is as if these good people think that “God” is something you “do” on Sunday, and then forget it for the rest of the week!

So **why** is putting God first in marriage so important? *Because we cannot love others properly until we learn to love God first.* The Second Commandment is to love **others** as yourself. But who are you? You are a person made in the image of God! But if you do not believe in God, then how can you love someone made in His image? You will fall short every time.

In a spiritual relationship, we will always expect God to fulfill our needs as He guides, instructs, and perfects our lives. Partners in a healthy relationship are those who expect God to meet their needs. An unhealthy relationship involve partners who look only to each other to meet their needs. This expectation falls short, one or both partners become disillusioned, and the marriage suffers.

Furthermore, in an unhealthy relationship, one or both partners will become frustrated, angry, demanding, and often manipulative. How often do marriages suffer greatly because of these carnal attitudes? *“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there”* (James 3:14–16).

(Sadly, I watch numerous television shows about crime, and more than once have I seen a show about a couple whose marriage crumbled under the pressure of failed expectations, and one would go so far as to murder their mate! This may be the extreme case, but failed marriages are too numerous to count. Why? Failed expectations.)

Bible Examples

You can look to the Bible for numerous examples of marriages that have suffered or failed because they did not put God first in their lives. Perhaps the number one example is King Solomon. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3), but he never had one committed marriage!

On a lesser note, we even see faithful Abraham with his wife, Sarah, forgetting to trust God for an heir and substituting their own “think so” in its place. The poor handmaiden Hagar gave birth to a son for Abraham and named him “Ishmael,” but he was never God’s choice, never God’s promised son, and never an heir of Abraham (Genesis 16)!

Biblical Blueprint

The blueprint for a successful, spiritual marriage is found in Ephesians 5:22-33. It is **an exact duplicate** of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church (v. 32)! Husbands, like Christ, are to be the spiritual leaders in the family (v. 23, 25-28). Wives, like Christ’s bride, are to “*submit*” to their own husbands, as to the Lord (v. 22). When each trust in God for their individual responsibilities, then God blesses that union with blessings untold! The world reads this marriage blueprint and mocks! But trust God, believe Him, and put it to practice.

350803