

Five Keys to a Strong Marriage

Message Notes

Intro:

Throughout the 'Rooftops' series, we've looked into the domestic lives of our society and stated that whatever happens under these rooftops will sooner or later happen in society - for better or worse.

So how can you be a salt and a light from that perspective? By investing in your marriage and prove to your world that a relationship btw husband and wife can be healthy, sound and loving throughout the years and the decades.

Your marriage isn't just a private relationship, it's a public testimony.

Please note: if you have encountered pain and grief in your past - maybe abuse, maybe divorce, maybe hurt, pain, trauma or a loveless marriage - please note that I am not speaking about, nor pointing finger to, your past today! I am only *speaking into your future*, which is a blank page!

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

You might have inherited a broken pattern, but you don't have to pass it on. If you can just let go of your past, God can create a brand new tomorrow from this day on! —

Today, I want to give you **five keys** for building a healthy and loving marriage. —

1. Invite Jesus daily

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

It's interesting that Ecclesiastes first celebrates 'two' being better than 'one', but then states that a cord of 'three' strands is not quickly broken. That third part is Jesus.

A strong marriage isn't two perfect people, it's two imperfect ones holding on to a perfect God.

Some people might think that Jesus is the center of their home just because they go to church on Sunday. But let's take a look at the position Jesus takes in our lives:

Revelation 3:20 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'

Pls note: this is not written to heathens who have not yet accepted Christ, but to a Spirit filled church! Even after you have accepted Him as your Saviour, Jesus will not break his way into your

life, marriage and family. He knocks. *He will only enter whatever door you open up!* So invite Him daily in prayer, together and individually.

2. Prioritize

One of life's most important questions is 'You *can't* have it all'.

So the big question isn't 'How much can I fit in my life?' but 'What deserves my life?' Among all the endless opportunities, out of all the things you could do - what will you prioritize? Whatever gets your time, gets your heart.

My list of priorities:

1. My relationship with God

2. My family

3. The Kingdom (my church and whatever God has asked me to do)

If your marriage and your family is not in your top two, then Houston, we have a problem. If you can't tell your friends and your hobbies 'no' because your spouse needs you, then Houston, we have even more problems.

1 Timothy 5:8

Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

'Provide' = pro-noéo (greek) = think first / prioritize

Your family needs more than exhausted time, distracted attention and emotional leftovers.

Don't be a married bachelor, who wants the sex, the cooking and the cleaning but not the daily commitment of time, effort and focus.

3. Stay curious

Philippians 3:10

I want to know Christ

This was written 30 years after Paul's conversion! Obviously, he knew Christ already (by this time he'd already written 25% of the New Testament) still he was *hungry for more*. 'I want to know Christ' meant that though he knew a lot, he was aware there was so much more to get to know.

Your spouse is made in the image of God!

Meaning there is more to know than you know. You just have to start making an effort. 1. Keep talking, keep sharing. 2. Learn new things together!

4. Stay intimate

Genesis 2:25

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Not just sexual and physical intimacy (though that's important): sharing, talking, listening *Intimacy is more than being naked in the same bed, it's being known without being afraid.*

Song of Solomon 4:12

You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain.

See each other this way. There are still gardens to unlock, springs to enclose, fountains to unseal. But you need to create that space of intimacy, that opportunity to open up and share your hearts without stress or the burdens of daily life.

5a. Wives: don't let motherhood replace marriage

Always stay more wife than mother. You will have your kids around for a number of years but your husband around for life. Don't forget to invest in your marriage as the kids grow up.

Most divorces happen:

1. Year after first baby is born

2. Year after last child moves out

I am assured that number 2. is caused by investing 100% in the kids and not enough in the marriage. Once kids are gone, it's like 'Who are you again?' Don't let that happen.

When it's time for the kids to leave the house, make sure you're still excited about the one who is staying behind.

'But my kids need me!!'

Yes, but showing your kids a loving marriage is one of the greatest gift you can give them! —

5b. Husbands: Stay romantic

You have forsaken the love you had at first.... Repent and do the things you did at first. Revelation 2:4-5

Men and women are different, so don't try to meet her needs the way you would want yours to be met. Don't stop doing flowers, surprises, dates just because it's been 10, 20 or 30 years!

Whatever you did to GET married, keep doing it to STAY married.

Invitation suggestion:

Even if you never saw this relationship in your parents, even if you grew up in a loveless home of one where abuse happened, the greatest way to get back on your past and on the devil is **breaking the circles.**

Some of the greatest marriages and families has been built by people who never saw one in the first place, but refused to be victims and rather chose to set a new standard and trust God to do a new thing.

Your history is not your destiny!

The patterns can stop with you. The dysfunction can stop with you. The bitterness can stop with you. The divorce cycle can stop with you.

You may not be able to change the home you came from, but by the grace of God you can change the home that comes from you!

If you only repent and believe, there is not one mountain high for God to bring down or a valley deep enough for God to exalt, to make a brand new way for your life and future!