



April 2, 2006

Making Love Last a Lifetime

Every day, every moment, we are called to serve the Lord, including, or perhaps especially, in marriage. Marriage is a calling, a mission, in which two people enter into a covenant with God to minister to each other. Marriage is an act of discipleship, faithfulness, service, and obedience to God. When we see marriage in this way, it offers us the possibilities of remarkable joy and satisfaction.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2

For Personal Study

The average wedding in the Columbia area costs close to \$40,000. What a huge investment for a the success of one important day! What investment is needed for a successful and lasting marriage?

In "The Power of a Praying Wife" Stormie Omatian writes a suggested prayer "Lord, give my husband the wife of his dreams, and let it be me." A profound thought! It is so easy to think about the things we long to change in our spouse. Certainly much easier than dealing with how God wants to change our own hearts. Consider Stormie's prayer. What would it take for your spouse to have the mate of his or her dreams?

This is why we pray. In our hearts we know the amount of molding and shaping we require. We need God's help! As we invest in our own spiritual maturity, we bring to our mate a more delightful partner. What is the Lord pointing to in your character that He wants to help you transform?

Adam Hamilton lists the following "Habits of Highly Effective Marriages"

- A. Perseverance
- B. Doing Love Until You Feel It
- C. Grace and Forgiveness
- D. Gratitude
- E. Time and Sharing
- F. Physical Touch

Learning to be a good spouse requires growing up into an emotionally and spiritually mature adult. Where do you need to begin? Ask God to supply your needs and equip you to follow through.

Whether we are married or not, as you grow in emotional and spiritual maturity, there is an enormous blessing to all of your important relationships. Let God's power speak to others by showing them a transformed new you. As we wrap up this series, commit to the ongoing investment of growing up into the ways of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Lord, and Friend.

For Group Discussion

1. According to Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, why are two better than one? To what does the "threefold cord" refer? How does Christ strengthen a relationship?
2. Read 1 John 13:1-17. What does Jesus teach us? How is God calling you to serve those closest to you?
3. Review the six habits of highly effective marriages to the left. Share examples of how you have seen them make a difference in the lives of married people.
4. Discuss each habit by identifying the characteristics and maturity it requires.
5. How has this series on marriage helped you and your relationship with your spouse?

Making Love Last a Lifetime

April 2, 2006

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church • 6004 Waterloo Road, Columbia, MD 21045 • 410-799-8888 • www.StJohnMD.org

Daily Reflections

Monday, April 3

For your devotion time today Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. Try inserting your name in the place of the words "love" and "it" to see how you measure up to God's desire for your life. How will you work to improve these characteristics?

Pray for your spouse and ask God to make you a blessing to him or her this week.

Husbands: On your own initiative, plan a *date with your wife* for sometime soon. If you have children, surprise your wife by arranging for childcare. Plan to make this a time that is designed to help her feel your love and a bit of romance or adventure. Spending a lot is not the point, focus on something thoughtful that the two of you can enjoy together.

Wives: One way that a man experiences love and feels closest to his wife is during sexual intimacy, especially when his wife takes the initiative. Plan for this to be a part of your blessing and ministry to your husband some time this week. Express a desire for your husband.

Tuesday, April 4

Today we will focus on gratitude

and expressing appreciation with regard to our spouse. Read Proverbs 31:10-31 where we find a husband expressing gratitude for his wife and publicly praising her. How do you think this woman felt to hear these words spoken about her? How can you build the habit of gratitude? How might you express appreciation to your spouse today?

Set aside 15 minutes to be a time for prayer of thanksgiving to God for your spouse. Praise God for every part of him or her - mind, body, spirit, character - consider every good thing your spouse has done for you and praise God for these. Your spouse is part of God's provision in your life - a gift not to be taken for granted, but to be cherished and appreciated.

Wednesday, April 5

Read James 1:19 and try to memorize it - write it on a card to carry with you. Practice this with your spouse - be quick to listen and slow to speak. What other relationships could benefit by building this habit?

Read Romans 12:9-21. What does it speak to you about your marriage? In what ways do you need God's help to build your character and habits towards healthier relationships?

Thursday, January 17

Read Colossians 3:12-17. What does this teach you about God's plan for your life?

How would your marriage be different if you were able to more fully live out this scripture? How would other relationships be improved? On what action in these verses do you sense the Spirit is asking you to focus? How will you begin?

Read 1 Peter 3:1-2. What does this chapter mean for us today? Pray for your spouse's faith and for the Lord's will to be done in their life.

Friday, January 18

Read 1 Peter 3:8-9. To what area of your marriage could your loving behavior bring greater harmony?

Read Philippians 2:1-5. How can you grow in humility in your marriage relationship? Seek to embody this as you cherish and love your spouse each day.



Resources for further study:

[Making Love Last a Lifetime](#)

By Adam Hamilton

[The Power of a Praying Wife](#)

By Stormie Omartian

[The Power of a Praying Husband](#)

By Stormie Omartian

