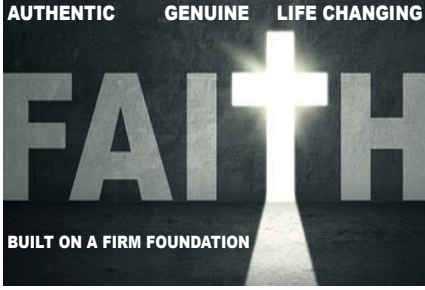
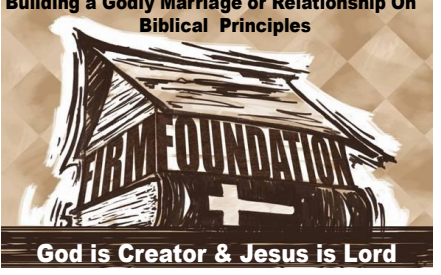


May 6, 2018am – Firm Foundation

Building Biblical Marriages & Relationships

Some portions adapted from <https://www.tomorrowworld.org/magazines/2007/july-august/five-keys-to-a-successful-marriage/>

		Firm Foundation Statements "I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. The third day He rose again from the dead"
		Foundational Truths & Principles from the Bible on Marriage & Relationships Foundation Block No. 1: God created marriage as a loyal & loving partnership between one man & one woman.

Genesis 1:26-28...²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."²⁷ So God created man in His own image; He created him in the Image of God; He created them male and female.²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

Genesis 2:15-18;22-25...¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." ...

²² Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from man.²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.²⁵ Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Mark 10:6-9...⁶ "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'⁷ 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,⁸ and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh.⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Hebrews 13:4...Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral

Foundation Block No. 2:

Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship with His people

Isaiah 54:5... *"For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called."*

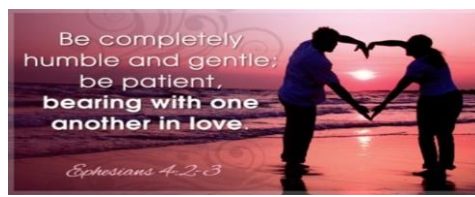
Defintion of husband = "house-band," connecting and keeping together the whole family.
(Eastons Bible Handbook)

2 Corinthians 6:14...*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

Ephesians 5:21-33...²¹ *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ...Just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her*²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*²⁷ *and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*²⁸ *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*²⁹ *After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—*³⁰ *for we are members of His body.*³¹ *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."*³² *This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.*³³ *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

John 17:20-26...²⁰ *"I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word.*²¹ *May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be*²² *in us, so that the world may believe you sent me.*²³ *I have given them the glory you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one.*²⁴ *I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.*²⁵ *"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world's foundation.*²⁶ *Righteous Father, the world has not known you. However, I have known you, and they have known that you sent me.*²⁷ *I made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them."*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7...*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*



Foundation Block No. 3:

Marriage is the firmest foundation for building a family and a society

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11... ⁹ *Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.* ¹⁰ *For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.* ¹¹ *Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm?* ¹² *And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.*

Mark 10:9... *"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."*

"Researchers are finding that marriage has a much greater impact in our lives than many have assumed. This is especially true in the area of adult health and well-being. Sociologist Linda Waite and researcher Maggie Gallagher explain, "The evidence from four decades of research is surprisingly clear: a good marriage is both men's and women's best bet for living a long and healthy life." Men and women who are in their first marriages, on average, enjoy significantly higher levels of physical and mental health than those who are either single, divorced or living together. The research on this is very strong.

Leading social scientist, James Q. Wilson, explains:

"Married people are happier than unmarried ones of the same age, not only in the United States, but in at least seventeen other countries where similar inquiries have been made. And there seems to be good reasons for that happiness. People who are married not only have higher incomes and enjoy greater emotional support, they tend to be healthier. Married people live longer than unmarried ones, not only in the United States but abroad."

Research conducted at the University of Massachusetts concludes,

"One of the most consistent observations in health research is that the married enjoy better health than those of other [relational] statuses."

Dr. Robert Coombs of UCLA reviewed more than 130 empirical studies published in this century on how marriage impacts well-being. He found that these studies indicate "an intimate link between marital status and personal well-being." (From Focus on the Family. Glenn Stanton.

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/gods-design-for-marriage/marriage-gods-idea/why-marriage-matters-for-adults>

- **KEY 1: GIVE 100 PERCENT**
- **KEY 2: HONOR AND RESPECT YOUR SPOUSE**
- **KEY 3: SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE**
- **KEY 4: COMMUNICATE IN LOVE**
- **KEY 5: PRAY, WORSHIP AND READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER**

Ask God to help you apply these principles in your own life. Remember, you cannot force your spouse to change—you can only change yourself. But your example of love and service can be a tremendous influence on your mate. And remember, you cannot do it on your own. You need the help of your Savior in your own life.

As the Apostle Paul wrote,

Philippians 4:13... *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*

INVITATION

KEY 1: GIVE 100 PERCENT

The old saying, "Marriage is a 50–50 proposition," is totally wrong! So-called modern, enlightened professionals may say, "Independence is our priority. We'll intellectually agree to work together, but I'll still reserve my personal escape route in case things don't work out right." One needs to ask, what is the framework for our marital relationship? Is it mutual convenience? Or is it a biblically based relationship that will grow in depth and character for the rest of our lives? What does the Bible say? Notice this verse, which is foundational to happy relationships and the character that we need for all eternity: "***And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'***" (Acts 20:35). Or, as the Moffatt translation puts it, "It is happier to give than to get."

True love is giving without expecting anything in return. When two people both give 100 percent, you have a strong bond, a strong overlap that is going to guarantee flexibility and the ability to cope with crises and problems. But accepting the 50–50 proposition guarantees a built-in weak link in your relationship! God's way of life is a giving way—the mature approach to life and marriage. The Bible also instructs husbands and wives to give to one another sexually. In the first century, the Apostle Paul gave this instruction to Gentile converts to Christianity, who were living in the sexually immoral city of Corinth:

1 Corinthians 7:2–5... "let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have sole authority over her own body, but the husband shares that with her. And likewise the husband does not have sole authority over his own body, but the wife does as well. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control"

Are you willing to follow this instruction? Do you express affection to your husband or wife? Simple hugs and kisses when you leave for work, and when you return, are important. A German insurance company issued a report a few years ago, concluding that people who kiss their spouses every day are less prone to accidents, and are generally more successful financially than those who do not kiss their wives every day. So make it a practice to kiss your spouse every morning before leaving for work.

Commenting on the problem of selfishness, Dr. John A. Schindler wrote, "The only person capable of true affection is the person who can forget himself and his own immediate interest while he places the welfare and interest of someone else foremost. When both husband and wife can do that, they will have no domestic nor sexual trouble" (How to Live 365 Days a Year, p. 142).

How many husbands and wives actually practice that principle? And how many Christian husbands and wives actually practice that principle?

KEY 2: HONOR AND RESPECT YOUR SPOUSE

Do you really value your spouse? Do you respect him or her as a human being made in the image of God? Notice God's instruction regarding our relationship with others:

Philippians 2:3...*"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself".*

Yes, you need to esteem—to value—your spouse better than yourself. To vain, self-indulgent individuals, that sounds awfully archaic, but it is a living law. So repent of selfish ambition and conceit. Turn your attitude around. Treasure your mate as a potential child of God. And, as the saying goes, "Don't sweat the small stuff." Look for and appreciate the positive values you find in each other! And if you have been abusing your spouse, physically or verbally, you need to repent! You need to humble yourself before God and ask His forgiveness, and you need to apologize to your mate! I know it is sometimes difficult to say, "I'm sorry." But an apology can go a long way in healing and restoring a relationship!

How do you demonstrate honor and respect to your husband or wife? There are many ways, such as giving special gifts, listening carefully, expressing thanks and using common courtesy in your words and the tone of your voice.

How patient are you with your family? Patience is a way of expressing love, as we learn from

1 Corinthians 13:4–8...*"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends".*

Read that chapter. Pray that God will give you the ability to live by those qualities and grow in those qualities.

You can improve your marriage by listening, by understanding, and by giving space to one another. You can improve your marriage by honoring and respecting your spouse!

Notice this vital instruction God gives to husbands:

1 Peter 3:7...*"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered".*

God instructs the husband to honor his wife. Keep in mind that you are "heirs together of the grace of life." Perhaps the most important key is to understand how God values every human being, and particularly your mate, regardless of your opinion of him or her. Every human being on earth has the potential of being born into the divine family of God as a glorified, immortal child of God. The Apostle Paul reminded us of God's plan for us:

2 Corinthians 6:18...*"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty".*

KEY 3: SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

You cannot change another person against his or her will, but you can change yourself! We all have God-given responsibilities in our marriage and family. God tells husbands:

Ephesians 5:25...*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her".*

The Apostle Peter gave instructions for Christians to set a good example even to their non-Christian mates:

1 Peter 3:1–2... "*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear*".

"A Hindu woman was converted, chiefly by hearing the Word of God read. She suffered very much persecution from her husband. One day a missionary asked her, "When your husband is angry and persecutes you, what do you do?" She replied: "Well, sir, I cook his food better; when he complains, I sweep the floor cleaner; and when he speaks unkindly, I answer him mildly. I try, sir, to show him that when I became a Christian, I became a better wife and a better mother." The consequence of this was that, while the husband could withstand all the preaching of the missionary, he could not stand the practical preaching of his wife, and gave his heart to God with her".

Are you, as a husband, fulfilling your responsibility? Some husbands and wives place great emphasis on judging their mate's conduct, to excuse their own lack of faithful service. Remember, we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, as it tells us Romans 14:10. Be sure you are fulfilling your own God-given responsibility as a husband or wife! Years ago, Tomorrow's World magazine Editor in Chief Roderick C. Meredith wrote two very helpful articles outlining the Christian responsibilities of husbands and wives. His article "What All Husbands Need To Know!"

Summarized briefly, a husband's five areas of responsibility to his wife are: **love and respect, support and encouragement, leadership and guidance, help and protection, and inspiration to grow** (Plain Truth, June 1966).

A few months earlier, he had written a similar article, "True Womanhood—Is It a Lost Cause?," outlining qualities that will help a woman help her husband and the whole family. Those areas are:

responsiveness and service, tenderness and beauty, intelligence and understanding, Christian virtue, and faith, hope and courage (Plain Truth, November 1965).

When we apply these biblical characteristics in our lives, we enrich the lives of others, and we strengthen our marriage and family.

The book of Titus outlines biblical responsibilities for Christian women, explaining that the older women should teach and "***admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children***" (**Titus 2:4**).

Are you wives and mothers who are reading this article fulfilling your God-given responsibilities? If you are, you will be a positive example to your husband. God will bless your efforts, if you acknowledge Him in your marriage, and if you ask Jesus Christ to live His life in you. With God's help, strive to be the best husband or the best wife you can be.

KEY 4: COMMUNICATE IN LOVE

Communication begins with listening How often do couples "tune one another out" in their conversations? Effective communication means effective listening as well as speaking. We

should listen for understanding—try to understand the other person's point of view. Try to understand the other person's feelings and needs! Demonstrate respect by giving your full attention.

The Apostle Paul gives us a fundamental principle in communicating effectively.

Ephesians 4:15...*"But speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ"*.

Some people speak the truth in hate. But Christians who are maturing in Christ will care about how their words affect those who listen to them.

When you talk with your husband or your wife, do you demonstrate concern and care? Do you communicate respect? Certainly we need to be patient with one another

1 Corinthians 13:4...*"Love is patient, love is kind."*

Be conscious always to speak the truth in love!

In our fast-paced lives, husbands and wives may be going in different directions and hardly have time to speak to one another. Some studies have shown that many couples average less than 20 minutes a week in conversation! Authors Leonard and Natalie Zunin have suggested the "four-minute rule" as a way to capitalize on the brief time you may have together. They point out that the success or failure of a marriage "can depend on what happens between a husband and wife during just eight minutes of the day: four in the morning upon awakening, and four when you are reunited after the working day" (Contact: The First Four Minutes, p. 133).

The Zunins correctly point out that your language, attitude, or expression at the beginning of the day can affect your whole relationship. Learn to express a positive, loving attitude for the first four minutes you are together at the beginning of the day. If you make this effort, you can avoid an accidental argument or an unnecessary grudge that will last all day. And pay particular attention when you get together at the end of the day. Even if you are tired, a positive word of encouragement or appreciation—a hug or a kiss can make a big difference in your relationship for the whole evening.

KEY 5: PRAY TOGETHER

Many of you reading this article may be married to an unbeliever. If so, you may not be able to pray with your spouse—but you can pray for your spouse, and for your successful marriage! As mentioned earlier, you can be a Christian example to your mate. Scripture gives this instruction to wives who have non-Christian husbands.

1 Peter 3:1...*"Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives"*.

Your loving, giving, Christian example can go a long way toward positively influencing your mate. Notice the emphasis is on your conduct, not on trying to argue your mate into your religion! Of course, if both you and your spouse pray, you can pray together. When my wife and I pray together, I normally begin the prayer, then after a short while nudge my wife. She

will then pray, and when she is done I will conclude our prayer together. It is just amazing how intimate and personal thoughts come out in our shared prayers. In that way, we are sharing with one another, and with our God.

We all need to acknowledge God and our Savior in every aspect of our lives. Scripture exhorts us:

Proverbs 3:5–6...*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths".*

A marriage requires work, effort and continual nourishment to be successful. It means giving all you can in following your God-given responsibilities as a husband or as a wife. There will be obstacles, differences, and even conflicts. But with God's help, you can improve your marriage—and even save your marriage if it is in danger!

May God bless you, your marriage and your family as you strive to live by His word”!

This message adapted from <https://www.tomorrowworld.org/magazines/2007/july-august/five-keys-to-a-successful-marriage>