

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

---

## PREFACE

Marriages today are under the assault of Satan. However, we can't blame everything on our arch enemy. Far too often adequate care is not given to nurture marriage. When flowers are planted in the freshly cultivated spring soil, there is high anticipation and expectation that the flowers will grow and bloom to the max. However, lovely blooms do not happen automatically. The plants must be nurtured, watered, weeded, and sprayed for insects. Finally, what a joy it is to see healthy plants mature and burst forth with beautiful flowers.

So it is with marriage. A beautiful marriage does not happen automatically. It requires nurture and careful attention to the unique needs of each individual and couple. With the watering of the Spirit, the weeding out of hindrances, and exercising spiritual authority over pesky annoyances of the enemy, a marriage can burst into full bloom and in its beauty bless others.

But marriage is not only about nurture and spiritual warfare. In the same way we must be trained and equipped for a profession, we must be trained and equipped for the multitude of everyday practical challenges we face in marriage. People will spend years and thousands of dollars to train for a profession but approach one of the most complex professions of life, marriage, as though they were planning for a Sunday afternoon picnic. Some people think it a great sacrifice to invest \$100 for premarital counseling but think nothing of spending \$10,000 for a wedding ceremony only to be disillusioned months later.

How tragic that almost fifty percent of marriages fail. Many more are living separated and unhappy lives in their own home just to keep their family under one roof. This reality is happening in Christian marriages almost to the same proportion as non-Christian marriages. This is not God's design for marriage!

It's time to get a revelation of what a Kingdom marriage looks like. In a Kingdom marriage, God rules and Jesus is Lord! It all comes down to a basic question: Who is sovereign ruler of our marriage? Is it God or self? The answer to that question makes all the difference. In the following outline, we will learn what a Kingdom marriage looks like. God intends for us to both experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage that will bring joy to our lives, bless others, and honor Him!

# INTRODUCTION

-The teaching, preaching, and demonstration of the Kingdom of God was very important to Jesus from the very beginning of his ministry right up to his ascension to heaven. (Matthew 3:23; 5:3, 19 & 20; 6:10, 33; 7:21; 11:12; 18:1-4; Acts 1:3)

-The apostles and others spoke about the Kingdom. (Acts 8:12; 14:22; 28:23)

-There is a present and future aspect of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is supernatural, glorious, transcends culture and earthly kingdoms. Christ's Kingdom will ultimately triumph. (Revelation 11:15-18; 12:7-12; 20:1-10)

-There are two kingdoms: The Kingdom of this world (Colossians 1:13), of which believers have been delivered from, and the Kingdom of God.

-In a summary statement, we can say that the Kingdom of God simply means God's rule and authority. Wherever God rules, his Kingdom is present!

-In a Kingdom marriage, God will have complete rule. The following teaching will seek to explain what this means spiritually and in the everyday course of life. The teaching will be grounded in the eternal truth of God's Word which brings freedom (John 8:32) but will also present many practical applications.

-We honor God's Word in this teaching for the following reasons: Since God is King over His Kingdom, we must learn the truth and principles of his word so that we are not destroyed by Satan (Hosea 4:6). To avoid self deception, we must not only be hearers but also apply his word (James 1:22-25). We hope to do that in this teaching.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Learn and apply Biblical Kingdom principles that will transform a marriage
2. Learn practical Kingdom applications that will strengthen our marriage
3. Provide opportunities for reflection and discussion as couples and as a group so that our Kingdom marriage will be nurtured
4. Provide additional resources for ongoing Kingdom marriage development
5. Experience the joy of the Lord in our midst as we are challenged to a higher Kingdom standard in our marriage

Note: The ground rule today is the following: When asking a question, be careful to honor your spouse with your words.

Teaching outline prepared by: Henry Buckwalter

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

## Principle No. 1 – DIE DAILY TO SELF

---

Angela had a rough day. She was exhausted! She had taken on a part-time job, working several hours a day to help pay the bills. She arrived home about the same time as her two school-age children arrived from school. She was stressed out with the demands and conditions of the household. Grabbing some laundry, she shoved it into the washer.

At that precise moment, she heard her children argue about who gets the last of the chocolate milk in the refrigerator. Ten year old Joey exerted power over his eight year old sister, Amy. “It’s mine,” he shouted, and while backing away from Amy who was threatening to shove him, he tripped over a toy. The glass of chocolate milk in his hand splattered everywhere.

It was too much for Angela. She screamed at her children and sent them to their bedrooms. While cleaning up the mess, her husband Justin arrived home from work. “Hi baby,” he called out. “What’s for supper? I’m hungry.” Angela reached her limit of patience. “If you’re hungry” she screamed, “get your own food!” “I’ve had it!” With Justin not even stopping to ask what the problem was, he shouted back, “I come home tired and hungry and now you tell me to get my own food?” “I’m going to MacDonald’s,” he said, and slamming the door he drove away. Angela collapsed unto the floor, overwhelmed with stress, and broke into loud sobs. Oh yes, in less than two hours, several persons were expected for a small group Bible study in their home.

### Observation:

The actions and reactions by both spouses demonstrated an elevated self life. The kind of responses shown reveal that it wasn’t a first-time event. Unrestrained selfish living begins to grow like a cancer in one’s personal life and marriage. Without surrendering each trying situation to the Lord and humbling one’s attitudes and actions, cumulative events of selfishness often lead to marriage failure.

The self life, selfishness and self rule, rather than Kingdom rule in ones life, is a basic cause of most marital conflicts! Left unrepented of, it will lead to serious problems.

### For reflection:

1. Give examples of self, selfishness and self pity in this illustration.
2. Why would it appear that this is not the first time this kind of outburst happened?
3. If this kind of self life keeps manifesting in this marriage, what will be the outcome?
4. What are steps that Angela and Justin need to take in order to bring order to their marriage?

## What does the Bible say about dying to self?

Paul said, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

-In Christ, we are crucified, dead! You cannot offend a dead person. Because Jesus now lives in us, our responses will not be self centered but Jesus centered.

Jesus said, *“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’”* (Mark 8:34).

-Dying to self is a major component of the Christian faith. We must choose moment by moment whether we will feed self with its wishes and desires or deny self and take up the cross, the powerful symbol of Christ’s triumph over Satan and the self life. Let’s not deny the cross it’s power in our marriage. (Luke 22:41-44; I John 3:8-9)

Paul said, *“We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body”* (2 Cor. 4:10-11).

-Jesus died so that we can live for eternity. As followers of Christ, we must look for an opportunity to die to self every day so that the love and life of Christ will flow through us to our spouse and family.

### Practical Application:

**How will dying daily to self enable us to experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage? It will be experienced and demonstrated in the following ways:**

1. Positive attitudes- Instead of negativity, we will see the best in others and every situation. (Philippians 4:8-9)
2. Affirmative responses – Words will be given in ways that will build up and not destroy. (Ephesians 4:29)
3. Repentant spirit –There will be a willingness to quickly say, “I’m sorry.” (Eph. 4:31-32)
4. Spiritual fruit – The personality of Jesus will be seen instead of the flesh. (Gal. 5:22-26)
5. Correct choices – We will yield to what is holy in every situation. (Proverbs 3:5-8)

**Prayer:** Lord, today, I claim the promise of your Word that I have died to self and am alive in you. I choose this day to lay down my will, my right, and with your grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, allow Christ to be demonstrated in every attitude and action of my life. Amen

For reflection and application:

1. What are additional ways that dying to self will demonstrate a Kingdom marriage?
2. What specific area(s) do I deal with in dying to self in my marriage?

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

## Principle No. 2 – LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

---

For many years, Kevin and Jen were very active in their local church. Kevin played guitar and assisted with the worship team at church. His spiritual love for the Lord combined with his talent for music was a real asset in worship. Jen, with her vivacious personality was a great blessing to the hospitality team. Kevin and Jen had a healthy marriage, the kind of couple that others often admired. God blessed them with two beautiful sons, now six and eight.

When Kevin and Jen were married, they determined that Jesus would always be at the center of their marriage. Both grew up in Christian homes so they had a strong spiritual foundation. Their close walk with the Lord gave them the strength and anointing they needed to carry out their work in the church. They enjoyed their local congregation, supporting it with their regular attendance and tithes and offerings.

For several years, Kevin worked in a finance company, first as a clerk and later as a loan officer. His boss liked him because of his integrity, skill, and great personality. One day he invited him to his office. “Kevin,” he said, “Our management is very happy with your work. We would like to offer you a position as a senior vice president. One benefit, of course, will be a significant increase in salary, about \$10,000 more than your current salary plus other benefits which we’ll discuss.”

Kevin and Jen were overwhelmed with the offer which Kevin readily accepted. That was fine. But to make a long story short, the benefits of an increased salary slowly overcame their love for the Lord. They bought the dream boat they always wanted and ended up at the bay about two hours from their home quite frequently on weekends. Because of their busy summer schedule at the bay, they both asked to be relieved of their responsibilities at church. Kevin was spending more hours at work and their close relationship with the Lord and each other began to dwindle.

### **Observation:**

An increased financial blessing does not have to draw one away from the Lord. However, when the love of things begins to have more appeal than the things of God, it doesn’t take long for one’s spiritual life to dwindle. The story of Kevin and Jen is repeated over and over again in the church today. Wholehearted love and devotion for the Lord and being involved in His Kingdom work bring great blessing in a marriage.

When love for the Lord fades, it often begins to affect the quality of marriage. However, the closer we are to the Lord as individuals, the closer we will be to each other in our marriage.

### **For reflection:**

1. How could Kevin and Jen fall into this trap so easily?
2. What safeguards should couples take so this kind of thing won't happen?
3. What choices do Kevin and Jen have at this point in their life?
4. What will be the long-range consequences of wrong or right choices?

## What does the Bible say about loving God with all our heart?

Jesus said, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength”* (Mark 12:30).

-Each person in a Kingdom marriage will make every effort to love God with their entire being. Notice all the “all’s.” There is nothing passive about this love. The effort to love God with one’s entire being will overflow into one’s marriage relationship.

Jesus said to the church at Ephesus, *“I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out. But you walked away from your first love—why? What’s going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you’ve fallen? A Lucifer fall! Turn back! Recover your dear early love. No time to waste, for I’m well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle”* (Rev. 2:3-5 Msg).

-When love for God begins to fail, it is vitally important to repent and turn back to God with wholehearted devotion. Without this love for God, the “light” can, and often does, go out of a marriage. The Kingdom marriage will purpose to have devoted and passionate love for the Lord at all cost!

### Practical Application:

**How will loving God with all our heart enable us to experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage? It will be experienced and demonstrated in the following ways:**

1. Victorious living – A daily commitment to spiritual disciplines, both personally and together will result in a lifestyle that will honor God and bring peace in one’s relationship as a couple. (Romans 5:17; Proverbs 2:7-8))
2. Spiritual wisdom – There will be the ability to make wise choices in every area of life. (Proverbs 2:1-6)
3. Lasting peace – In the light of God’s love, strife and conflict will take a back seat. (Psalms 119:165; Romans 14:19)
4. Loving relationships – Growing deeper in love with God helps us to grow deeper in love with each other. (I John 3:16)
5. Correct responses – We will respond in ways that flow out of God’s heart of love rather than our own carnal nature. (Romans 13:11-14)

**Prayer:** Lord, I want to love you with all my being. Please give a passion and hunger for you. Forgive me when I become spiritually indifferent. Please convict me when my love is growing cold. Let your perfect love flow through me to my spouse. Amen

For reflection and application:

1. What are specific ways you have discovered that enhance your love for the Lord?
2. How does lacking love for the Lord affect marriages? Be specific.
3. How is my personal walk with the Lord? Poor? Fair? Good? Strong?

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

## Principle No. 3 – ENCOURAGE YOUR SPOUSE CONSTANTLY

---

Gloria grew up in a very dysfunctional home. Her dad was scarcely at home but when he was he would constantly criticize Gloria and seldom affirm her. He worked long hours and weekends were generally spent at the local bar. Gloria's mom worked very hard to maintain the family of four children on a meager income. There was constant tension between her mom and dad concerning finances. The tension would often overflow into unreasonable and harsh verbal demands to the children. Gloria being the oldest and having extra responsibilities would often take the brunt of those angry words. Encouragement and affirmation were non-existent.

When Gloria was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, she met Eric. While Gloria grew up with very low self-esteem, she had a unique smile and that, along with the twinkle in her eyes, won her the attention of several guys, and now Eric. But something was different about Eric. One day, sitting together in the school cafeteria, Eric explained how he received Jesus in his life and how much peace he had. Over the weeks, they met quite frequently and one day, with simple faith, Gloria received Jesus. A genuine transformation took place in her life over the coming weeks and months.

A few years went by and Eric and Gloria were eventually married. Even on her wedding day, her father criticized her hair style and the waste of money for her gown as he escorted her down the aisle. Tears brimmed to her eyes but seeing Eric at the altar, the godly young man that he was, gave her the motivation to quicken her steps toward him. She desired this man who lavished love upon her with his words of encouragement, gifts and affirmation. Often she would not feel worthy of such love and say so. But after years of Eric's persistence, patience, and loving rebukes, Gloria finally began to receive the compliments and encouragement that he poured upon her. Gloria became a whole person who in turn could love her husband with all her being!

### **Observation:**

When the wounds of one's past are not healed it will affect the outcome of one's marriage. The love of Christ working through Eric, with a lot of perseverance, brought the revelation of Christ's love and acceptance to Gloria. This story turned out well. Eric was a Kingdom man who viewed Gloria as a Kingdom woman that needed a revelation that she was adopted and accepted by Abba Father. SHE HAD WORTH! Eric drew out that inherent worth in Gloria.

Tragically, too many people enter marriages without being healed from past wounds and generational curses are perpetuated which often end in broken marriages. Kingdom marriages will seek healing and brim over with genuine words of encouragement and affirmation to each other. Constant and genuine encouragement of one's spouse gives motivation and life to a marriage.

### **For reflection:**

1. What is at the root of a critical spirit?
2. What often happens to a person who is not healed of low self-esteem?
3. Describe Eric's character. How does one attain this kind of character?
4. What could have been the outcome of Gloria's life had she not met Eric?

## What does the Bible say about encouraging your spouse constantly?

The writer to the Hebrews says, “Let's see how *inventive* we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25 Msg).

-While the writer is not specifically mentioning married couples, the verse does apply. How “inventive” are we in seeking ways to encourage our spouse. In a Kingdom marriage, encouragement to our spouse will be a high priority!

Solomon records beautiful words of affirmation between lovers and says: “*How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince's daughter! Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of a craftsman's hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies*” (Song of Songs 7:1-2). The beloved responds: “*My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels*” (Song of Songs 5:10-12). The book of Song of Solomon is full of encouragement and affirmation between lovers.

-Kingdom marriages will be full of genuine encouragement and godly romance. The reason so many marriages fail is because spouses are not affirmed by the one who should affirm them the most. Therefore, tragically, they look elsewhere for love.

### Practical Application:

**How will encouraging our spouse constantly enable us to experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage? It will be experienced and demonstrated in the following ways:**

1. Emotional fulfillment – Everyone, some more than others, has a built in need for love and acceptance. Encouragement and affirmation supplies this. (Proverbs 15:4)
2. Genuine motivation – Encouragement of one's spouse results in positive motivation. Putting your spouse down brings discouragement and defeat. (Romans 15:1-2)
3. Healthy emotions – Genuine encouragement and affirmation does a lot to maintain healthy emotions. (Ephesians 5:1-2)
4. Joyful living – Where there is encouragement there is joy. (Ephesians 5:19-21)
5. Romantic love – Trying to experience romance without regular encouragement is like trying to push a car with a rope. It ain't going to happen!

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to daily affirm and encourage my spouse. Amen

For reflection and application:

1. List at least five creative ways you have or could encourage your spouse.
2. How has encouragement helped you in your relationship with your spouse?
3. Do you find it easier to criticize or encourage? Why?
4. What hinders spouses from giving and receiving encouragement?



# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

## Principle No. 4 – LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

---

Brandon was a fun loving guy. At age nineteen, he met Karen at a regional church youth retreat. Karen was athletic, pretty, and laughed freely. Immediately Brandon and Karen seemed to connect. While they never met before, they discovered they lived in towns only twenty miles apart.

Both were involved in their congregations youth activities but participated more for the social life and “fun” activities than for spiritual growth. Life was meant to live to the fullest...lots of parties, movies, fun and games.

Brandon and Karen’s parents affirmed and blessed the relationship. They were concerned about the lack of commitment to the Lord but prayed that they would make right choices. It was no surprise to them, and most of their friends, when they announced their plans to get married.

Two years after they were married, Karen became pregnant. They both anticipated a child. However, her pregnancy came with a lot of sickness and her lifestyle faced a major change, dare I say crisis. It became a crisis because Brandon kept up the fast track without considering Karen’s needs. Karen became more moody, less responsive to Brandon physically, and what was left of her spiritual life slid in oblivion. Days and nights became almost as one. Brandon grew more distant.

It was during this season of time that Brandon became physically attracted to a young secretary at the office where he worked. Brandon, feeling the unresponsiveness of Karen, succumbed to the pressures of this newborn romance, and violated his covenant with Karen. Somewhere the prayers to heaven on his behalf reached him, howbeit late. With deep conviction and true repentance to God and Karen, he found, over a period of time, spiritual restoration. Karen, by God’s grace overcame the pain, offered true forgiveness, and years later they are a happy family fully committed to the Lord and the work of His Kingdom.

### **Observation:**

Satan will do everything in his part to destroy marriages. Brandon lacked integrity in failing to understand the unique needs of his wife which led to a greater breach of integrity. Both of them were on slippery ground because of their lack of commitment to the Lord. While both made right choices in choosing to repent and forgive, the lack of integrity will leave it scars which only God’s grace can cover and heal.

Kingdom married couples will recognize the importance of wholehearted commitment to God in order to live lives of integrity.

### **For reflection:**

1. What should Brandon's response have been during Karen's pregnancy?
2. What could Karen have done that may have changed her situation?
3. What is the relationship between spiritual indifference and lack of integrity?

## What does the Bible say about living with integrity?

David said, *“I will be careful to lead a blameless life-- when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing”* (Psalm 101:2-3a).

-Integrity has to do with every aspect of our lives. Are we living “blameless lives” regarding our finances, sexual conduct, our speech, our conduct when no one else is around? The Internet has tremendous potential for good but also phenomenal potential for evil. God help us as never before to walk in integrity and accountability.

Solomon said, *“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity”* (Proverbs 11:3).

-When a couple in marriage pledges to walk in integrity they will be led by God into fruitfulness. However, lack of integrity brings destruction.

Job said to his accusers in the midst of his deep trial, *“I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live”* (Job 27:5-6).

-Job maintained his integrity before God in the midst of trials. Help us to do the same!

### Practical Application:

#### How will living with integrity enable us to experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage?

1. Genuine openness – There will be nothing hidden between husband and wife. (Genesis 2:25)
2. Holy character – Our life and marriage will reflect God’s glory. (Ephesians 4:20-25)
3. Clear conscience – There will be no need to carry the weight of hidden sin. (I Timothy 1:18-19)
4. Spiritual protection – Integrity provides the Lord’s protection in marriage. (Psalms 41:12)
5. Solid anchor – A lack of integrity brings instability. (James 1:8)

**Prayer:** Lord, in this day of many pressures, help me as an individual and us as a couple to be so in love so that we will have the grace and strength to walk in absolute integrity. Amen

#### For reflection and action:

1. How can integrity best be maintained in a marriage?
2. What are we willing to do as a couple that will strengthen integrity in our personal life and marriage?
3. How does accountability help to maintain integrity? How do I/we experience accountability? What steps am I willing to take in accountability?

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE

## Principle No. 5 – LOVE EACH OTHER DEEPLY

---

Bob and Trish would soon celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It seemed but only a few months ago that they met at Central Bible College. Both had a hunger for the Lord and a desire to serve wherever God would use them in His Kingdom. Their love over the 25 years grew more deeply each year, even through challenging times. God blessed them with three lovely daughters; all serving the Lord, and one was married. They would soon welcome their first grandchild.

For the past number of years, they faithfully served in a dynamic and growing congregation. Bob served as an elder and Trish served on an intercessory prayer team. They were the kind of couple that every pastor dreams of...devoted, faithful, strong marriage, and overall a godly example.

Bob earned his living as a sales representative for a large carpet warehouse. He climbed his way up in responsibilities over the years until finally he became a manager in his division. Financially, the family was secure, business was good, and the future looked bright.

Trish, full of life and enthusiasm, in addition to her role as an intercessor, volunteered a lot of time for the church. She helped with office work, taught a discipleship class for young mothers, and spent quality time with her daughters.

One day, while working at the church, Trish became lightheaded. She rested a moment and then continued to work. Soon she collapsed. She woke up in the emergency room with bright lights shining in her eyes. "What is happening" she thought, and then all became quiet again.

Trish was diagnosed with a tumor on the brain. The prognosis was uncertain. Her world suddenly changed. This active, dynamic, faithful servant of the Lord felt so helpless and weak.

In the ensuing days, her loving husband devoted every available moment he could to bring comfort to Trish and in caring for the family. His boss gave him some time off but as manager he still had to keep in touch with some details, but never complained. Together they cried out to God, along with their family and church family, for healing. It was a dark hour, but the love of God so permeated the home that no trial, no matter how big, would ever diminish their love for each other. It grew deeper!

### Observation:

The strong foundation of love and devotion in their marriage and to the Lord helped them to face the crisis with confidence when it came. Marriages don't just happen. They are built with love. Love is the cement that holds a Kingdom marriage together, even in the most severe trials of life.

### For reflection:

1. Let's suppose Bob and Trish were nominal Christians simply getting along with each other. Now they face this trial. What could their response have been, especially Bob?
2. What do you sense in this illustration about Bob's character?
3. How is it possible for love to grow deeper in trials?

## What does the Bible say about loving each other deeply?

Paul said, “*Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting*” (Ephes. 5:25 Msg).

-This seems like an almost unattainable goal. However, it is a command of God. Kingdom men will not make demands upon their wife. They will give of themselves first of all to meet her emotional needs and give of their resources to provide for physical needs. When a Kingdom man genuinely gives, he will get what he needs.

Paul said, “*Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing*” (Ephes. 5:22-23 Msg).

-Wives who have a husband who is walking under the authority of Christ and lavishing love upon her as wife will find it fairly easy to support her husband. However, when the husband’s love for her and the Lord are not as it should be, giving honor and respect to your husband (v. 33) may be more of a challenge, but trust God’s grace to do so.

Paul said, “*Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. **His love was not cautious but extravagant.** He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.*” (Ephes. 5:1-2 Msg)

### Practical Application:

**How will loving our spouse deeply enable us to experience and demonstrate a Kingdom marriage? It will be experienced and demonstrated in the following ways:**

1. Fulfilled intimacy – Fulfilled sexual intimacy happens when it flows out of lavished love and respect on a daily basis to our partner and not from a momentary passion.
2. Genuine romance – Romance will be pure and will never die but live on, even into old age!
3. Emotional satisfaction – While love will have definite emotions, true love is not entirely dependant on emotions. We will love even when we don’t feel love. Love is a choice!
4. Great companionship – While we will have our times apart, we also will find great joy and satisfaction in being and doing things together.
5. United focus – We will not work against each other but for each other.

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to love each other according to the will of your Word! Amen

For reflection and application:

1. On the above points, what is the strongest and what is the weakest point?
2. What are very practical and creative ways I can love my spouse deeply?
3. What are adjustments that I'm willing to make this week with my spouse?

# EXPERIENCING AND DEMONSTRATING A KINGDOM MARRIAGE ESTABLISHING GOOD COMMUNICATON

---

## Introduction:

For a healthy and satisfying marriage, there must be good communication. When communication breaks down, it leads to dysfunction in a marriage.

Faith begins to die when a believer has less and less communication with their heavenly Father. In the same way, marriages begin to die when communication begins to diminish. A lack of communication in marriage is one of the leading causes of marriage failure.

Paul, in Ephesians 4:29-30 gives us a basic foundation on how we should communicate to one another: *“Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. **Say only what helps, each word a gift.** Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.”*

In his book, Training Christians to Counsel, Norm Wright, a well-known marriage counselor, says that communication can be broken down into three categories: 7% words (content); 38% attitude (tone of voice) and 55% body language. Wow, words are only 7%! What are we communicating to our spouse even if we offer few words?

In their book, Called Together, Steve and Mary Prokopchak offer helpful communication guidelines. They are as follows:

1. Be a ready listener, and do not answer until the other person has finished talking (Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19).
2. Be slow to speak. Think first. Don't be hasty in your words. Speak in such a way that the other person can understand and accept what you say (Proverbs 15:23; 18:2; 29:20).
3. Don't go to bed angry! Each day, clear the offenses of that day. Speak the truth, but do it in love. Do not exaggerate (Ephesians 4:15, 25-26).
4. Do not use silence to frustrate the other person. Explain why you are hesitant to talk at this time (Proverbs 15:28; 16:23).
5. Do not become involved in heated disputes. It is possible to disagree without attacking (Proverbs 17:14; 20:23; Ephesians 4:31).
6. Do not respond in uncontrolled anger. Use a kind response and a soft tone voice (Proverbs 14:29; 15:1; 25:15; 29:11).
7. When you are wrong, admit it, ask for forgiveness and then ask how you can change (Proverbs 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; Matthew 5:23-25).

8. When someone confesses a wrong to you, tell that person you forgive him/her. Be sure it is forgiven and not brought up again to that person, to others or to yourself (Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
9. Avoid nagging (Proverbs 10:19; 21:19; 27:15).
10. Do not blame or criticize the other person. Instead, restore, encourage and edify (Romans 14:13; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 5:11).
11. If someone verbally attacks, criticizes or blames you, do not respond in the same manner (Romans 12:17, 21; I Peter 2:23; 3:9).
12. Try to understand the other person's opinions. Make allowances for differences (Ephesians 4:2; I Peter 2:23; 3:9).
13. Be concerned about the other person's interests (Philippians 2:4).
14. Do not gossip (Proverbs 17:9; 18:8; 20:19; 26:22).

For reflection and action:

1. What are ways that you show non-verbal communication?
2. When your spouse confronts you about something, what is your normal reaction? Defending your position? Silence? Backing away and not making eye contact? What would your spouse say about your response?
3. When is the best time to communicate with each other? When is the worst time?
4. Do you always feel that your spouse understands your opinion?
5. What would you admit is your biggest problem in communication? (Failure to communicate? Harsh words? Not listening? Backing away? Strongly opinionated about your point of view? What else?)
6. How would you define your communication with your spouse on a range from 1 to 10? 1 = poor, 5 = fair, 8 = good, 10 = excellent
7. Name at least one way in which you would like to see communication improve in your marriage.
8. Would your spouse feel that you are able to express concerns, ideas, emotions, appreciation, affirmation, etc?

Teaching by: Henry Buckwalter