



Building a Strong Marriage

A strong marriage doesn't just happen; it takes work. Here are some practical tips for making your good marriage great!

Step 1 - Pray Together

Set aside time each day to pray with your spouse. For many couples, the first thing in the morning is the best time to pray. It is important that you ask God to fill your lives with His Holy Spirit and give you strength for the day ahead. It brings you closer together as you care for each other every day. Praying together forces you to think about what the day ahead holds for each of you. Your loving affection goes beyond the physical realm to the emotional and spiritual realm. This develops true intimacy with each other and with God.

Perhaps a better time for you as a couple might be just before you go to bed each night. It's impossible to fall asleep angry when you've just held hands together in God's presence.

Step 2 - Read Together

Set aside time each day, or at least once a week, to read the Bible together.

This might also be described as a time of devotions. Many couples find it beneficial to set aside time each weekday morning to read the Bible and pray together using a couple's devotional book or a Bible reading plan. Following the reading, spend a few minutes in prayer together. This might require getting up 30 minutes earlier in order to do this, but can be a wonderful, intimate time of strengthening your marriage.

Step 3 - Make Decisions Together

Commit to making important decision together. This isn't limited to deciding what to eat for dinner. Major decisions, like financial ones, are best decided as a couple. One of the greatest areas of strain in a marriage is the sphere of finances. As a couple you should discuss your finances on a

regular basis, even if one of you is better at handling the practical aspects, like paying the bills and balancing the check book. Keeping secrets about spending will drive a wedge between a couple faster than anything.

If you agree to come to mutual decisions on how the finances are handled, this will strengthen trust between you and your partner. Also, you won't be able to keep secrets from each other if you commit to making all important family decisions together. This is one of the best ways to develop trust as a couple.

Step 4 - Attend Church Together

Get involved in a church together. Find a place of worship where you and your spouse will not only attend together, but enjoy areas of mutual interest, such as serving in a ministry and making Christian friends together. The Bible tells us that one of the best ways we can stir up love and encourage good deeds is by remaining faithful to the Body of Christ by meeting together regularly as believers.

Step 5 - Continue Dating

Set aside special, regular times to continue developing your romance. Once married, couples often neglect the area of romance, especially after the kids come along. Continuing a dating life may take some strategic planning on your part as a couple, but it is vital to maintaining a secure and intimate marriage. Keeping the romantic love alive will also be a bold testimony to the strength of your Christian marriage.

These 5 steps require real, committed effort on your part. Falling in love may have seemed effortless, but keeping your Christian marriage strong will take ongoing work. The good news is—building a healthy marriage is not all that complicated or difficult if you're determined to follow a few basic principles.

Adapted from christianitytoday.com



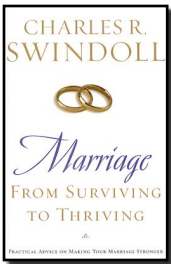
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And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Genesis 2:18-24).



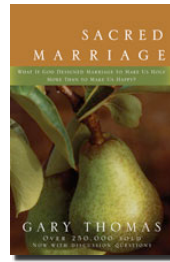
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Charles Swindoll
ISBN 978-1400280094

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Gary Thomas
ISBN 978-0310242826

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Small Groups for Couples at Long Hollow

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