

# Working through Marriage problems

Wrap up of Ephesians 5:2-33  
A Sermon by Chris Mueller

God designed marriage to be a testimony to the world of His own character. In God's design, marriage would be a source of companionship, a way to reproduce godly children, a deterrent to immorality, a cause of great personal joy and a catalyst for greater ministry.

If you know your Creator through Jesus Christ and are seeking to live out your purpose in Him and trying to follow God's instructions for your marriage, then why do you and your spouse sometimes experience marital struggles? Ever since the fall of mankind, people have been sinful and rebellions at heart. But Christian couples have the resources to insulate marriage against the effects of sin. You can depend on the Holy Spirit to walk according to the Word of God. So how do Christians experience deep intimacy in marriage?

## #1 Get better at \_\_\_\_\_

Biblical love shows interest in how others feel, what they think, and what they say. Good lines of communication are essential for marital oneness; genuine love shows verbal attention.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Tell everything to God \_\_\_\_\_, in prayer *Philippians 4:6*

If you pray before you speak, your words can demonstrate the character of Christ. Ask God to give you understanding ears and a compassionate heart.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Commit to speaking \_\_\_\_\_ *Ephesians 4:25*

Never disclosing your true feelings only leads to counterfeit peace, and hint dropping and guilt tripping are tools for manipulation. Learn to discuss misunderstandings and disclose hurt feelings.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Commit to speak with \_\_\_\_\_ *Psalms 141:3*

True oneness in marriage is found by couples who learn to control their speech by yielding to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Biblically there's no excuse for bitter words or a short fuse.

1-A self-controlled tongue contains words that build up *Ephesians 4:29a*

2-A self-controlled tongue will be well-timed *Ephesians 4:29b*

3-A self-controlled tongue will listen more than talk *James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13*

Deep intimacy happens when communication is bathed in prayer, honest and self-controlled.

## #2 Enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ intimacy

God designed sexual intimacy for the marriage relationship, and He affirms that in marriage sex is honorable. *Hebrews 13:4* Yet sexual intimacy can be a source of great dissatisfaction and even marital discord. Why?

### 1 - Unresolved guilt

Guilt over memories of illegitimate sexual experiences from the past can be an obstacle in your marriage relationship. *Psalms 33:3-5*

Verse 5 shows the Christian how to resolve such guilty feelings:

*I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.*

Agree with God (confess) that the sexual experiences from the past were sinful, and ask Him to forgive you and wash you clean, restoring harmony in your marriage. *Proverbs 28:13*

### 2 - A warning indicator of other problems

Sexual problems in marriage are often a warning indicator of underlying problems in your marriage. Look for undisclosed hurt resulting from harsh words, discourtesies or perceived neglect. Look for hidden conflict about money, family decisions or spiritual matters.

### 3 - Misinformation

If you have believed worldly lies about sex, your expectations about human anatomy and what is sexually satisfying may be false. Fill your mind with the Word of God to find God's blueprint for sexual intimacy.

The most common sexual conflict in marriage occurs because men and women are built differently. When a man marries, he thinks his wife will feel as strongly as he does about sex, but in many women the need for physical affection is stronger than the need for sex. God's answer to this dilemma is in 1 Corinthians 7:

*3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again, lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

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- Treat physical intimacy as your most precious **GIFT** from God in marriage. It is the gift of your body—no other gift is as special or unique. Grant each other this gift willingly.
- Treat sexual intimacy as a **COMMAND**.

Verse 3 commands ...*husband, fulfill your duty to your wife*

Verse 4 commands ...*stop depriving one another*

When you don't fulfill each other's desires, you are setting yourself up for satanic attack (5 ...*lest Satan tempt you*). Husbands, learn to be affectionate without using every gesture of affection to lead to intimacy. And wives, learn to meet your husband's needs for intimacy.

## #3 Learn to control your \_\_\_\_\_

Marital oneness requires unity in the issue of money. Be committed to sharing the material blessings God has given you. Learn God's blueprint for money and commit to living by it:

**1 God alone gives you the ability to make money** *Deuteronomy 8:17*

**2 Everything you have belongs to God** *Psalms 24:1*

**3 There are many things more valuable than money**

*Mt. 16:6 For what will a man be profited if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?*

*Prov. 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold*

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*Ephesians 4:28*

**6 Giving to the church is a privilege and a responsibility**

*2 Corinthians 9: &; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2*

Take God's financial principles and put them into a budget. Why have a budget? A budget allows you to be a good steward of your finances—God doesn't want finances to tear your family apart.

*Proverbs 23:4 Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it.*

## #4 \_\_\_\_\_ your spouse

Stubbornness about forgiving is perhaps the greatest problem in marriage. But the Bible commands us never to go to bed angry because bitterness and grudges give Satan an opportunity to tempt you.

*Ephesians. 4:26 do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

We have an obligation in all our relationships, and especially in marriage, to keep short accounts and readily forgive. Jesus forgave you when you deserved eternal death, so don't you think you should forgive your spouse?

## #5 Agree to \_\_\_\_\_ your kids biblically

*Ephesians 6:4 And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

### Discussion Questions

1. What things does your spouse like to talk about? Be honest—do you ever find yourself groaning when those topics come up? How much time do you think you spend each day really listening to what your spouse wants to share with you? (1 hour? ½ hour? 15 minutes?)
2. Do you sometimes have a “short fuse?” How frequently do you unleash frustrations on your spouse? How does your spouse respond? Describe the connection between controlling your temper and trusting God?
3. Is “counterfeit peace” a part of your marriage relationship? What would be the cost of making a commitment to work through issues instead of ignoring them? What would be the benefits?

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