

God Centered Marriages

Remind us of God's image: Genesis 1:26-28; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:5-11

Remind us of God's gift: Genesis 2:18-22; Ecclesiastes 9:7-10

Remind us of God's love: Genesis 2:23-24; Ephesians 5:28-33; Matthew 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:15-18

Marriage is defined, comes with expectations and specific roles, but is not divorced from general principles. Our spouses are also our neighbors. Sometimes, we get along better with a neighbor than with our other half. Our spouses, generally speaking, are members of the body of Christ, so there are many other passages that apply. When we're discussing marriage, don't focus only on marriage passages/examples. Obviously, don't neglect them, but what's the principle? Consider the following:

- Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **as God in Christ forgave you.**
- Colossians 3:12-14 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; **as the Lord has forgiven you**, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
 - Often, marriages get stuck in a cycle of anger and bitterness. We're caught in a dryer, filled with hot anger, going round and round, and no one is willing to stop the cycle.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- Philippians 2:1-8 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - And when you ask, "Why is there so much anger and bitterness in your marriage?", the answer is typically this: "My partner is self-centered and/or selfish."

How can we restore our marriages if need be?

- Remove your own speck: Matt. 7:3-5
- Exchange selfishness for sacrifice: Phil. 2:3-4
- Soften your response: Jam. 1:19-20
- Tell the truth in love (if it's necessary): Eph. 4:15
- Offer forgiveness: Col. 3:13
- Recruit wise counsel: Prov. 11:14
- Engage your commitment: Rom. 12:18