

HANDOUTS - MARRIAGE

(1)

Togetherness

How can I paint the happiness of a marriage that the church cements? ... Two believers sharing one hope, one rule of life and one service! They are brother and sister, two fellow-servants, one in flesh and spirit. They pray together, fast together, teach, exhort and support each other. They go together to the church of God and to the Lord's table. They share each other's tribulations, persecutions and revival. Neither hides anything from the other, shuns or is burdensome to the other. They delight to visit the sick, help the needy, give alms freely. In psalms and hymns they vie with each other in praising God. Christ rejoices when He sees and hears such things. He is with them and sends them His own peace. (Tertullian (c.160-230)

(2)

Research has proven that one of the most important elements of success in marriage is shared control. When spouses respect each other and make decisions together, intimacy and happiness skyrocket. That is what marriage is all about. When you are sharing control of the marriage and making decisions together, you are sharing life. And that is why we get married. (Strengths Based Marriage by Jimmy Evans)

(3)

Discussion: Personal Evaluation

- Did you grow up in a home where one parent was clearly dominant over the other parent?
- What values in society interfere with marital togetherness?
- What practices of the church today interrupt marital togetherness?
- What personal beliefs and practices interfere with your marital togetherness?

COLOR TEST

The Zulu Love Letter: Colored glass beads strung together that convey between lovers in the language of beads. Colors were derived from nature. The letter was read from the outer edge towards the center.

Tick the colors that show your love letters?

- **White** (bone): purity, cleanliness, true love, hope
- **Black** (shadow): grief, loneliness, disappointment ("My heart has become as black as the rafters of the roof as I hear you have another maiden")
- **Red** (blood): intense love, longing ("My heart bleeds for you")
- **Ruby** (flames): burning love ("I burn for you as the flames of a grass fire")
- **Yellow** (corn): wealth or lack of it ("You provide enough" or "I am kept poor by you")
- **Green** (grass): love-sickness, jealousy ("I have become as thin as a blade of new grass from yearning for you")
- **Blue** (dove): faithfulness, calmness ("If I were a dove, I would fly the endless skies to you")
- **Light Turquoise** (pigeon): talkative ("You cannot keep a secret")
- **Dark Turquoise** (pigeon): impatient ("I am losing hope that you will ever marry me")
- **Pink** (poor one): abject poverty ("I doubt you will afford to pay the bride price"; "you are not providing sufficient for me" - Western paraphrase)
- **Purple**: friendship ("You have become my new friend")
- **Brown** (soil): life ("My love is like the earth which gives rise to new life")
- **Striped beads** (grasshopper): doubt, fickleness, two-timing ("You are like a grasshopper springing from bush to bush")

Fulfilling Marital Holiness

- Sort out the *Truth* of love: **Infatuation and Love** - see next page
- Sort out the *Fact* of love: **Security and Significance**
 Security = Secure in God's love
 Significant = Placed in the meaningful household of faith
- Sort out the *Sense* of love: **Manipulation versus Ministry**
 Manipulation = Look to my spouse for my source of importance
 Ministry = Give my spouse a sense (feeling) of love and meaning

INFATUATION vs. TRUE LOVE	
INFATUATION	TRUE LOVE
1. Born at first sight ("falling in love").	1. A developing relationship that deepens with realistically shared experiences.
2. Fades with time.	2. Keeps on growing like a living thing.
3. Demands and takes.	3. Delights in giving without return.
4. Takes away from the other person.	4. Makes couples more complete and adequate persons.
5. Demands exclusive attention and devotion. Ignores others.	5. Builds on self-acceptance. Respects others while growing together.
6. Jealous of outsiders.	6. Shares unselfishly with others.
7. Focuses on a single aspect of the other (usually the physical)	7. Focuses on the whole person (including the physical)
8. Immature emotional response based on a person's external behavior more than inner character qualities.	8. Foundation is based on what is true and pure, while building respect and character.
9. Built on physical attraction.	9. Appreciates the total beauty of another.
10. Sexually dominated relationship.	10. Embraces the whole person, which includes proper sexual expression.
11. Treats a person as an object to manipulate (use selfishly - ego centered).	11. Finds opportunity to minister to the whole person (gives up personal rights to serve).
12. Selfishness to the point of being inconsiderate, uncaring and unkind.	12. Seeks to meet the needs of another. Considerate of everyone, not just each other.
13. Uses a person to fulfill personal needs and cravings.	13. Determines true needs of a person that enables proper support.
14. Roots found in an insecure person because it craves attention.	14. Roots are in a person secure in Jesus Christ, through grace, which provides power to flee evil and pursue righteousness.
15. Attempts to gain security (to be loved) and significance (to be important) from a person, resulting in a judgmental attitude.	15. Knows true security and significance is found in Jesus Christ, which enables you to give a person the sense of security and significance, resulting in proper emotional responses.
16. Tries to change a person to become like me.	16. Creates opportunity for a person to express what God is making him or her.
17. Reality frightens and threatens a relationship.	17. Promotes reality in ways to conquer fears and doubts.
18. Uses words harshly in ways that hurt.	18. Guards against harsh words.

19. Excuses and rationalizes actions that can have distressing consequences.	19. Takes responsibility for personal conduct so that acceptance and respect grow in a relationship.
20. Brushes off offenses with a 'sorry' that does not accompany appropriate change.	20. Repents of wrong attitudes and behavior that leads to true sorrow.
21. Problems become obstacles to growth.	21. Problems are opportunities for growth together.
22. Upbringing and peers used to excuse improper behavior. Personal opinions override listening to others.	22. Past experiences are evaluated for future growth. Listens to others.
23. Compromises truth to gain temporary satisfaction. Believes lies.	23. Realizes there is no right way to do the wrong thing. Abides by truth.
24. Feel rejected when confronted about evil attitudes and practices.	24. Accepts confrontation as an opportunity to correct wrong beliefs and behavior.
25. Based on personal likes and dislikes that lead to fake behavior to show off.	25. Sees personal differences to promote genuineness in relationships.
26. Emotions determines behavior.	26. Responds with appropriate emotional expressions.
27. Someone else is used (abused) to reach personal goals.	27. Grows in using goals (what I can personally control) and desires (depends on help from someone) so others are not abused.
28. Personal happiness depends on how others treat me.	28. Happiness is a result of obedience.
29. Each one gives 50% with each one intending to control 100% in a relationship.	29. Each one gives 100% so that each one serves the other.
30. Hesitates to forgive the past of others.	30. Forgives the past, which helps face the consequences.
31. Romance is based on fleeting fantasy.	31. Romance enhances the other expressions of love in a relationship.
32. People and objects are used to gain personal satisfaction.	32. People and objects are appreciated to enhance a proper relationship.

PATH OF TOGETHERNESS

- **Apologize:** Forgiveness is a process
Give attention to grieving: Own up to the pain

Live through Confusion: Dying to the old is necessary to make way for the new

Allow the old to birth the new: God works inwardly to work out forgiveness in new ways
- **Confess your sin to God:** Agree with God to restore fellowship
- **Submit to God:** Draw on God's help
- **Help each other:** Build mutual respect
- **Pray together:** God transforms through prayer

Bibliography

THE MAGNOLIA STORY, Chip and Joanna Gaines with Mark Dagostino, W Publishing Group, an Impact of Thomas Nelson, 2016

STRENGTHS BASED MARRIAGE: Build a Stronger Relationship by Understanding Each Other's Gifts, Thomas Nelson, November 22, 2016 (most benefit from this book requires use of StrengthsFinder 2.0 by Tom Rath - new copy required to access the personal strengths assessment on line)