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Guidelines for Healthy Marital Relations



Our marriages are under siege, affecting families adversely. There were about 22,651 new marriages during 2020 in Singapore, and about 6,959 divorce proceedings in that year. Unfortunately, Christians are not spared (see Statistics on Marriages and Divorce Reference year ,2020, ISBN 2591 7900, Dept of Statistics, Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore). Is it possible for Christians to have a God-honouring and vibrant married life in the midst of a hostile, tempting and unhelpful secular environment? It is noteworthy that divorce is never God's will for us and can be avoided, but it is permitted by the Lord as he said, due to the hardness of our sinful hearts (Deut 24:1-3 Mt 19:2).

Do not be too quick to call off a marriage in anger or revenge. Seek divine counsel and wait upon the Lord. We believe it is possible by God's enablement, a strong spirit of accountability to God, with humble forgiveness and faithfulness to each other (Psa 127:1, Eph 4:32) to be reconciled in due time as the Lord leads. We need to let God work in our hearts and be ready to repent of our sins and not be hardened against the will of God. Below are some suggested helps that hopefully will be useful in nurturing a healthy God-centred marital life in the midst of mounting and exacting demands and challenges in our marriages. Nothing is impossible with God, but we must be willing to do our part too and make it happen.

Directions for a Happy Marriage

On 19 Feb 2022, we helped in the solemnization of a young couple's holy matrimony as we took them in premarital counselling and here are some practical advice we shared with the couple among others.

Consider the following practical pointers:

- God's blueprint for a successful marriage includes the headship of the husband, and the submission of both to the Lord (Col 3:18–19).

- The husband has the privilege and responsibility of loving the wife and to be faithful to her (Eph 5:22–25).
- A Christian family includes the sorting out and understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities in the home.
- The man is the loving leader and he has to be accountable for the major decisions in the family, in consultation with the Lord, and secondarily, the wife.
- While the husband is the head of the house, the wife is the heart of the home, and is generally responsible for supporting the husband in all his duties.
- Do not take each other for granted. Express appreciation to your spouse frequently and show chivalry, tenderness, respect and courtesy, and words of affections, encouragement and succour and strength.
- No two persons can effectively walk together or live together for long unless they agree in principle (Amos 3:3).
- One of the basic requirements of good effective communication is mutual openness, honesty and transparency. Honesty is still the best policy
- Each spouse must first have a foundationally sound and intimate relationship with the Lord, before they can be a support to the other. Marriage falls apart normally when one (or both) falls away from the Lord first.
- Good communication requires temperance and discipline, a charitable spirit, and the appropriate choice of words and non-verbal body actions.
- Good communication requires free and open conversation and careful, attentive and interested listening.
- Good listening involves letting a person speak without interruption and understanding what the other person is trying to convey.
- Refrain from having a rerun of old arguments and bygone conflicts. Deal in the present and the future in the will of God, not in the past (Eph 4:32).
- Never shout at each other unless the house is on fire. Remember that ANGER is one letter short of DANGER. Shouting is a lazy man's way of trying to be emphatic (Col 4:6).
- Resolve all conflicts by the end of the day. Remember, if you don't, you have the devil for a strange bedfellow (Eph 4:26).
- Practice the golden rule of Matthew 7:12. Do unto your spouse what you want your spouse to do to / for you.
- Learn to say, "*Thank you,*" "*I am sorry, I don't mean it,*" "*I appreciate it,*" "*Excuse me,*" and mean it. Believe me, it will save you from unnecessary troubles (Col 4:6).

- Remember the closer you get to Christ, the closer you are to each other (Mal 2:14).
- Have a forgiving and magnanimous spirit (Eph 4:32). Allow room for mistakes and be ready to forgive and be reconciled. Don't be a fastidious person, who is too difficult to placate (Jas 3:17), rather be willing to repent and say sorry if necessary.
- A couple that prays together stays together (2 Cor 1:11). Start the morning right with the Word and prayer (Ps 5:3). Get in tune with God before the concert of the day begins (Dan 6:10). Never forget or forsake prayer and daily devotion.
- Have a good circle of Christian friends (1 Cor 15:33) and serve the Lord together in the local church. Do not be isolated from the Christian community (Heb 10:24–25). Never miss Sabbath worship and edifying Christian fellowship even in a pandemic.

Conclusion

17 March 2022 will be our 32nd wedding anniversary and we thank God for the joy of marriage and the blessed institution of holy matrimony. We are to be faithful and committed to our spouses and to the covenant marriage in the Lord, not taking them for granted. Take a moment to pray and appreciate your spouse in the Lord, for our lives on earth may not be too long and we may not have them around one day in this temporal world (Psa 90:12, Eph 5:15,16).

Finally, below is a wedding poem we composed some years ago.

“ . . . Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, . . . yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.” (Malachi 2:14)

Jack Sin



A Wedding Poem

*As you remember the sacred day of your nuptial knot,
Glorify the Maker of this blessed lot,
The gift of a godly and caring spouse,
The blessings of living together in the same house.*

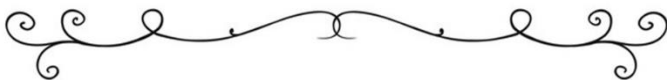
*Ever recall your vows that are covenantal,
When you promised before God our Redeemer,
For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health,
For in keeping them is great spiritual wealth.*

*In the joys and trials of marital life together,
Always trust God and be careful to ponder,
The example of Christ in his bodily afflictions,
The serenity of the heart in faith and consolation.*

*Live your temporal life as a witness in service,
To offer to the LORD in any humble office,
With your treasure, time and talents you render,
To testify and exalt Christ with full surrender.*

*Let this be said of every Christian couple,
With Christ, the strength to face trials is doubled,
To this lofty estate, we commend,
That you persevere together in Christ till the very end.*

*Jack and Angelina Sin
Ephesians 5:2
(our wedding verse 32 years ago)*



Memory Verse

Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks today on “**Sound Principles for Secular Life**” (Col 4:1-6), the quarterly theme of “Christ-Centred Principles for the Local Church”, a study on the Epistle to the Colossians.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “**Being a Faithful Co-Laborer in the Ministry**” (Col 4:7-18).
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Understanding Biblical Eschatology & related Topics – Joseph
 - Studies in Deuteronomy – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. In accordance with the Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures (VDS) that is effective from 1Feb, our Sunday worship services are for vaccinated worshippers. The measures do not apply to religious classes ie. Sun School and Bible Study classes and hence all are welcome to attend.
8. **The Church camp will be from 16 -18 June at Changi Cove** on the theme “**Biblical Precepts for a Vibrant Christian Walk**” by Dr Jack Sin. Registration Forms are available from Dn Yue Kay and all are encouraged to register as soon as possible as there is a limited capacity.
9. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 1 Apr 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
10. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
11. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
12. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
