

MARRIAGE KILLERS

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Marriage, though interesting and exciting can become a bitter pill and a source of great pain for a couple if care is not taken in watching over the words being used in expressing feelings, habits and character being manifested, and associations being kept by both couples. Many things we do in marriage help to strengthen or weaken love, trust and confidence in each other and the marriage. It is paramount that we understand that there are marriage killers that we need to identify and eliminate before it destroys completely our marriage. There are many things we take for granted, but, yet very destructive. The destruction is subtle and gradual. You may not know the damage being done to your love and marriage, until a future time when you discover things have become opposite of what you intended your marriage to be. Give adequate time to these issues right now and you will not regret it.

WHAT DESTROYS MARRIAGE

- 1.** Selfishness – Self consciousness and self centeredness.
- 2.** Bad habits, manners, behaviours and character.
- 3.** Refusal to live by the word of God.
- 4.** Lack of respect and submission to husband.
- 5.** Weak love for wife.
- 6.** Adulterous relationship by one of the couple.
- 7.** Nagging and fault finding habit.
- 8.** Laziness and dirtiness by wife and littering of the house by the husband.
- 9.** Lack of provision for the family by the husband.
- 10.** Mismanagement of funds by either the wife or the husband.
- 11.** Unwholesome counsel from friends, neighbours and family (some have good counsel based on the word of God, and some don't. The later is dangerous).
- 12.** Wrong use of words and language and lack of communication skills.
- 13.** Extending anger to in-laws by way of insults and curses, neglects, maltreatment, disrespect and enmity.
- 14.** Wife not preparing food on time for husband, children, and in-laws.
- 15.** Husband insulting and abusing the wife in the presence of his family, visitors and in public.
- 16.** Lack of care by the husband for wife.
- 17.** Allowing job, business and money-making to eat up time that would have been spent with each other.
- 18.** Inability to control temper and restrain oneself in the face of provocation.
- 19.** Betting and bargaining with sex.
- 20.** Absence of romance in the relationship as a result of one party's lack of interest.
- 21.** Refusal to admit wrong and apologize for the wrong done.
- 22.** Refusal to forebear and forgive when offended.
- 23.** Not forgetting old offensive matters – keeping record of wrongs.
- 24.** Giving ears to gossips about your spouse and family members.
- 25.** Letting family members think for you and dictate what happens in your home.

26. 'I too know' attitude and actions.

STEPS TO KEEPING PEACE

1. You must decide you want peace and harmony in your home.

Your mind must be made up about it.

2. Determine to keep the peace.

So much will happen to discourage you and make you think it will not be possible. Your spouse may appear incorrigible (unchangeable), don't let that disturb you. Keep believing and working towards it.

3. Give yourself to God to help you.

It is important that you surrender and rely on Jesus Christ to change you and your spouse and help you work on and perfect your character in order to keep the peace in your home. Only Jesus Christ can change people from inside. Without Him, your efforts will end in futility.

4. Give room for offence.

An understanding of human behaviour reveals that offences will always come. One of the problems we have in relationship is that we expect too much and we tend to forget that only perfect people don't make mistakes or sin. Since we are still learning to yield to the nature of Christ in us to manifest perfection, it is very important that we give room for offence. It is therefore necessary that everyone prepare to absorb all offences, so it does not come as a surprise.

Forbearance is a virtue of love. For peace to reign in your home, you must be willing to forbear.

Col 3:12-14

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

NIV

Prov 19:11

11 A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

NIV

Prov 20:3

3 It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

NIV

Forbearance is very important in every relationship, especially in a marriage. If you are weak in manifesting this grace, pray about it. You need it to keep the peace.

Forbearance enables you to keep the peace. It energizes you to forgive and not to keep malice or grudge.

5. Determine to forgive when offended.

True love does not keep record of wrongs. Where record of wrong exists, forgiveness is absent. And where forgiveness is absent, peace cannot exist. A home where there is no peace, the marriage will collapse. When the marriage collapses, the children suffer.

1 Cor 13:5

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

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Eph 4:32

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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Learn to forgive each other as offences occur. Whether your spouse asks for forgiveness or not, forgive.

6. Work on your character, and areas of weakness.

Failure to correct and improve your life to eliminate conflicts will result in more trouble. Whatever your spouse is complaining about or is making him or her to be sad and quarrelsome should be addressed. Have feelings for your partner. Prove your love by saying and doing those things that lead to peace, happiness and fun. If you are not creating happiness, but sorrow, you can never know peace in that home. True love seeks to please the one you love. *If pleasing yourself is your main focus, then you are not prepared for marriage.*

Take a look at yourself, especially in your partner's areas of complain. Prayerfully with determination, eliminate the weaknesses and the evil character in your life. Deal with anger, unforgiveness, wrong use of words and other evils in your life. Listen to the cry of your partner. Instead of complaining that your spouse is talking and complaining too much, look at the things he or she is complaining about.

7. Be careful who speaks into your marriage.

Not everybody is qualified to advice you on marriage matters. Anyone speaking into your life is molding your character, taste and desires, and is also directing the focus of your life. Counsel can increase your love, tolerance and patience for your spouse. Counsel can reduce your love and patience for your spouse to the barest minimum. Counsel can make you fight your spouse and destroy property worth millions of naira. A counsel can plant hatred in your heart for your spouse, and set you up against him or her.

It is not every counsel you follow, but a wise counsel that is rooted in the word of God. Choose carefully those who speak into your family life and personal life. Do not give your ears to gossips about your spouse or in-laws. Gossip is deadly and wicked. Gossip can turn your marriage into a battlefield, break your trust for your spouse and make you wild. Gossips are liars and have evil motive. They may appear to be helping you but they have evil motive. They are setting you up against your spouse.

Prov 26:22-26

22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. 23 Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. 24 A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit. 25 Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. 26 His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

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The seven abominations in his or her heart are:

Prov 6:16-19

16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

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Shun gossips, and don't work with what they tell you.

8. Let there be no partiality in welcoming, entertaining and assisting family members.

Partialities in the way family members are treated create a lot of problems and subsequently bring a lot of strain on the marriage.

THE CALL FOR EXTRA MILE

Matt 5:38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

AREAS WHERE YOU NEED TO GO EXTRA MILE

PATIENCE

1. In the time of adversity and trials.
2. With each other's mistakes or even deliberate acts of provocation.
3. In the time of child bearing and rearing.
4. With children's irritations.
5. In the time of sexual adjustments as in sickness, conception and childbirth.

TOLERANCE

1. Tolerate all the unavoidable nonsense of marriage.
2. Tolerate the nagging habits of either husband or wife.
3. Tolerate the strange actions that may come from your spouse, contrary to your expectations.
4. Tolerate the unusual behaviours of pregnant or nursing wife.
5. Tolerate the unusual actions of a husband who is under financial pressure.
6. Tolerate the time wasting nature of your partner and do something to help in the given circumstance.

UNDERSTANDING

1. Make deliberate efforts to understand matters before taking decisions.
2. Show maturity by seeing situations from the other person's point of view.
3. Study and understand your partner's lifestyle and ways of life.
4. When there is an unavoidable misunderstanding, avoid explosion and humbling yourselves and resolving the issues through effective communication.

FORGIVENESS

1. Make room in your heart for offences and other mistakes.
2. Forgive and forget all confessed and unconfessed offences.
3. Admit and humbly ask for forgiveness, whenever you know that you are wrong.
4. Forgive even when apologies do not come.
5. Do not keep records of your partner's offences.
6. Do unto your partner, as you will want him or her to do to you in the family.

FORBEARANCE

1. Develop marriage "shock absorbers". Be prepared for the undesirables and the unwanted.
2. Forbear some bad habits of your partner, which go away with time.
3. Forbear whatever you can, to have a good marriage.

APPRECIATION

1. You need to appreciate the unique nature of your partner.
 - There are some things you saw in your partner that attracted you, leading to your marriage. Now that you are married, don't forget to appreciate him/her for it.
2. Appreciate the physique of your partner.

- Remember how you used to praise her/him before marriage. It is always good to know that your partner appreciates your looks and efforts in making yourself good looking, attractive and acceptable as ever.
- Women love to be appreciated in this area often. There is something in everyone that craves praise.
- 3. The efforts of your partner in any way.
 - Appreciation seems to give energy and motivation in work and creativity. Motivate and encourage your partner through appreciation.
- 4. The success of your partner needs appreciation.
 - It is always wonderful to know that your partner is happy that you are succeeding.
 - Everyone needs some one to celebrate victories, and mourn failures and disappointments.
 - That is why God gave you a partner.
- 5. Appreciate the spiritual gifts of your partner as they manifest to bless your lives and that of others.
 - It encourages, and helps to motivate unto maturity in the manifestation of the gifts.
- 6. Appreciate occasional gifts from your partner.
 - No matter how small, insignificant and cheap the gift may be; appreciation will provoke more.
 - If you despise the “little” gift, you kill the zeal for more and greater gifts.
 - Appreciate the fact that it entered his/her heart to give a gift.

COMMENDATION

Commendation is to praise, to hail. It is to speak favourably of. You need to always commend your partner for:

1. Good food.
2. Good public actions and speeches.
3. Good physical outlook and arrangements.
4. Commend housekeeping.
5. Achievements in business and avoid blames when things go slow.
6. The visions and plans of your partner. It shows identification and support.
 - There is nothing like knowing that the one you love is behind you in your visions and plans.
7. Academic pursuits and success.

COMMUNICATION

Communication must be done in the fear of the LORD. When the fear of God is in a man’s heart, he walks worthy of the calling of God on his life. To desire to honour and please God and not to offend Him in all things is the fear of the Lord. This is what is required in communication.

1. Let there be free flow of information. No secrets. No half-truths. No hypocrisy. Transparency should be the prevailing policy.
2. Avoid reactions that will subdue or inhibit each other’s feelings and opinions about any given matter.

3. Avoid intimidation over issues. Husbands, give your wives opportunity to contribute on issues that concern you and your family. Make them feel that they are a partner in the marriage.
4. Accept frank and straight talks with maturity and do not regard them as insults.
5. Give way to your partner's ideas sometimes. Don't always insist on your own opinion.

AGREEMENT

Amos 3:3

3 Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

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Agreement is having the same opinion. An arrangement or understanding either written or verbal made by two or more persons.

Two cannot work together when there is no agreement. It takes constant agreement on issues that come up daily for a relationship to prosper. Therefore, couples must pursue agreement at all times.

1. Agreement no matter the differences of opinions and conventions makes marriage work.
2. Disagreements are by-products of insufficient flow of information and inadequate clarification. Therefore, effort should be made to make sure that adequate information flows from one to the other.
 - Where lack of understanding is noticed, pains should be taken to make clear explanation.
 - Never get pissed off when your partner shows signs of lack of understanding.
 - Explaining it all over again will save you from the likely problems lack of understanding will create.
3. Take time to explain issues for easier convictions and agreements.
4. Agreement calls for the ideal of give and take.
5. Maturity does not insist on what you may call "RIGHT" in the interest of agreement and peace.
6. Avoid, "I too know".
7. Pick all the senses that could be found in all the nonsense from your partner. Out of every so-called nonsense, is a sense. Find it.

FAITH

1. Believe God at all times for all your marital and other needs. God will always help out when people trust him in faith.
2. Trust him always with your situations and circumstances for solutions.
3. Turn over to Jesus all your family predicaments and problems.
4. Put on him all your worries and anxieties.
5. If you are not yet born again, read John 3 and receive Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, so that you can have someone to fall back on in times of trouble.
6. Build your family on Christ, the solid rock that cannot be moved.

CONCLUSION

May the Lord give you grace to stretch yourself a little for the sake of love. May your elasticity know no limit. May you not break, but be strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God. May the Lord strengthen you to avoid the things that kill marriage. Peace, love and happiness be multiplied in your marriage and home in Jesus name Amen