

PRINCIPLES OF MARRIED LIFE

Sylvester Onyemalechi

Marriage is something those who go into it look forward to with excitement with one motive in mind, finding happiness. Once married, the thoughts you think and the choices you make determine your marital experience. To be happy therefore, it is important that you work with the following marital principles from the word of God. These principles are the things that will make marriage a happy and steady one.

1. All marriages should be built upon Christ. Jesus must be made the head of the home. The couple must depend entirely on Him for wisdom, strength, grace and all their provisions. If Jesus is not Lord over the married couple's lives, the marriage will collapse – Ps. 127: 1; 1Cor. 3: 10- 11; Prov. 3: 5-8; Phil. 4: 13.
2. If the marriage must succeed, the couple should always pray together. And when children come into the family they should join the family prayer. The family that prays together stays together. The couple is each other's prayer partner; and the first among other prayer partners.
3. They should study the Bible together. Deut. 11:18-21; Josh. 1:8
4. The married couples are supposed to see themselves not as two different people but as one. And for this reason, should not hide things (especially their feelings) from each other, or the marriage will crack and crumble. Be open to one another. Be free to correct one another in the spirit of love. Gal. 6: 1-2). Accept corrections with meekness and love.
5. Do not assume that your partner knows or ought to know that what he or she is doing is wrong. Always bare your mind in love. Cry out if you have to. If you don't it will eat into you and destroy your love for each other.
6. Married couples should learn to understand one another's likes and dislikes, desires temperament, reasoning, ambition and attitude. When there is this understanding, nobody will step on each other's toes. There will be mutual agreement and cooperation. They can even represent and speak for one another because their minds work alike.
7. For any marriage to work. None of the partners (especially the husband should impose his or her will or desire on the other. You should not insist on your own way. Be open to reason. There should be mutual agreement in all you do. Where there is no agreement, both persons should pray and listen to God's will or verdict. By so doing, quarrels and disagreement will be far from you. But if you don't you will discover that your love life is turning to that of a master and servant relationship (a situation where the wife has no say but takes instructions from the husband) - 1Cor. 13: 5.
8. Tolerance, forgiveness and compromise should be your practice. Both couple should learn to tolerate one another's temperament and mistakes. You should learn to forgive each other when hurt. Jam.1: 19- 20; Eph. 4: 26 – 27, 30 – 32. Compromise with one another for the sake of peace. Rather suffer wrong and allow peace and love to flow than to allow your marriage crumble. Phil. 2: 1 – 5, 1Cor. 6: 7.
9. Be servants of one another in love. Gal. 5: 13 – 15
10. Always share your disappointments, sorrows, pain, joy and success together. Encouraging one another daily. Make good and encouraging remarks about one another. Learn to appreciate one another's efforts. You can encourage one another with gifts. Prov. 27: 17, Eccl. 4: 9 – 11, Thess. 5: 14

11. The married couple should always plan everything about their lives, their children's lives and everything about their home together. It should not be left for the husband. By so doing, eventually reap and enjoy together. If peradventure, the plan does not yield the desired fruit, both will share the blame, and there will be no quarrel because both of them planned it together.
12. Do not refuse one another sex except perhaps by agreement for a season that you may give yourselves to prayers. Your bodies belong to each other. 1Cor. 7: 1-6. Adultery is not allowed.
13. The husband's life is the wife's. The wife's life is the husband's. If you understand it, you will not see each other as being different but as one. It will motivate love and cooperation. Gen 2: 23 – 24.
14. Married couples should learn to play together and with their children. They can go on picnics together. It helps to strengthen their love for one another, and bind the marriage together.

RAISING OF CHILDREN

1. One of the purposes of marriage is for pro-creation. Children are gifts from God to the married couple. And it is the will of God that all marriages produce children that is why he does not want people to be barren but gives them children. Ps. 127: 3; Ps. 128: 3,6; Ps. 113: 9; Exodus. 23: 25 – 27. If your marriage has not produced any issue, hold unto God and he will bless you with children.
2. The raising up of children is the responsibility of both parents. The husband should not leave it for the wife only. And the wife should not leave it for the husband. The children belong to both of you so you must train them together.
3. Teach your children the way of the Lord so that they will not depart from it when they grow up [Prov. 22: 6, Eph. 6:4]. Teach them good morals. Teach them about life. Do not be too busy to instruct and train your child. Most parents beat their children and scold them when they do what they don't want them to do. But they will never take time to teach them how to live life and how to behave. Help also to teach them academically. Teach them housekeeping.
4. Punish the child when the child misbehaves or disobeys instruction. Prov.13: 24; Prov.23: 13-14; Prove. 29:15,17.
5. Play with your children, and always reward their obedience and hard work with gifts. It will encourage the child to do more.
6. Always pray with your children, it will help to bind the family together. It will also help to teach them to depend on God for all their needs.
7. Teach your children by example e.g. Never instruct your children to tell your visitors that you are not at home when you are at home. You will be teaching them to tell lies by so doing.
8. Do not provoke your children to anger. Do not get on their nerves. If you are not careful here, you will make them rebellious before you know it. Always understand that they are children and not adults. Eph. 6: 4. Understand their temperament.
9. Love your children as your own selves, as God's gift to you as members of your family and as you love the Lord. Jn.13: 34 – 35.

FAMILY PLANNING

Use natural method (billing's method). Use any method that you are sure will not have adverse effect on the woman's body. Consult your doctor. Don't have more children than you can care for. It will be a sin for you to bring children into the world that you know you don't have the means to take care of. It must be by mutual agreement.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

This is an area that has wrecked marriages and brought problems into some. Therefore we are going to look at this issue critically.

1. One of the ways of solving this problem is by planning your financial expenditure together. In this way, both partners will know what amount they receive and how they are spent. The husband should not keep the wife ignorant of how their money is been spent (which is the practice of many). If he does, the wife will never understand when he keep telling her there is no money. But if they plan together, such things will not happen.
2. Opening of joint-bank account will help solidify your relationship. Either the wife or the husband, or both could be the signatories to the account. Whoever the signatory is, none should withdraw any money from the account without the mutual agreement of both partners. If you know your partner is not born again, and you know he will cheat you, or may be he has cheated you when you practiced it before, do not go into joint account. Joint account is for those who trust themselves.

If you cannot afford to open an account in the bank, you can open one in your house. The emphasis is on JOINT.

3. In financial planning you have two major areas: -
 - a. Fixed expenditure
 - b. Capital expenditure

Under fixed expenditure, you have: - House rent bills, water bills, electricity bills, school fees, food and provisions, maintenance and transportation. All these are fixed expenditure. Month after month, you will be spending in these areas.

Out of whatever is left, you can use for your capital projects, which includes furnishing of your house, electrical and electronic equipments, clothes and other things. Execute your capital projects bit by bit. Sew your coat according to your cloth. Avoid borrowing money, and try to live within your means.

Remember to give your tithes – Mal.3: 6 – 12.

THE HUSBAND

1. The husband is the head of the home. He is the one placed by God in position of leadership and authority in his home. He is the king, the prophet and the priest. He must be found performing these roles.
 - a. As King, leadership of the home is in his hands. He provides for his family and takes care of his family. It is therefore necessary that the husband work and earn a living. – Eph. 5: 22-24; 1Tim. 5: 8; 2Thess. 3: 10 – 12; 1 Cor. 11: 3-5; 1Tim. 3: 4- 5.

- b. As prophet, he stays much in the presence of God and receives from God on behalf of his family. He gives spiritual guidance and leadership. He stands as the spokesman of God. That is why the husband must be a godly man and very sensitive to the Spirit of God. Rom. 12: 1-2.
 - c. As priest, he prays and uplifts his family unto God. He leads them in prayers, worship and in serving God. –Job 1: 1-5.
2. In as much as the husband is the head of the home, the husband should try not to create in his home a ‘master-servant’ relationship with his wife by lording it over her (imposing his will on her). But instead should apply dialogue and compromise to reach a mutual agreement in all that he does. –Mt.20: 25-28; Col. 3: 19; Gen. 2: 18,21,22. Respect your wife’s opinion. – 1Cor. 13: 5.
 3. Husbands must love their wives, bestowing honor on them as the weaker sex, since you are joint-heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered. –1Pet. 3: 7. Love your wife so much as to die for her. –Eph. 5: 25- 33. Give your whole love to your wife, and do not look to the left or to the right.

THE WIFE

1. The wife is an equal partner in her marriage with her husband. They are two people joined into one. As the man is not complete without his wife, so also the woman is not complete without the husband. But the wife must also recognize the leadership position of the husband as the head of that home, submit in humility and love to the husband’s authority and leadership. The wife should respect the will and opinion of the husband. Where there is a disagreement in opinion, the wife should lovingly make her opinion known while also ready to compromise when the husband insists on his own opinion. – Eph. 5: 21- 24.
2. The wife is the keeper of the home. The wife should manifest in her daily life such qualities that will exult Christ and win her husband’s love and admiration; and if he is an unbeliever, win him to Christ. – 1Pet. 3: 1-5, Ps. 113: 9; 1Tim. 5: 14.

MARRIED TO AN UNBELIEVER

1. Unmarried Christians should endeavor not to marry an unbeliever- 2Cor. 6: 14-17. But for those of you that are married to unbelievers, you have to remain with your partner except when he or she does not want to continue the marriage because of your faith. When your partner does not want the marriage to continue, do not just leave immediately, but try everything within your power to change his or her mind.
2. The man or woman that is married to an unbeliever should exhibit such life and character that will convert the partner. If you apply all you have learnt in this marriage seminar you will see a change in your home. – 1Cor. 7: 16, 1Pet. 3:1–5.
3. If your partner is persecuting you because you are a Christian, you should be patient with your partner. Pray always for him or her. Love him despite the treatment you receive from him or her. Make sure his food is always ready at the time it is supposed to be ready. Never call him/her a devil in secret or to his hearing. Never make negative confessions about your partner, but positive. Be hopeful of his change, and you will see a miracle. If you keep nagging and quarreling with him or her, it will not help your relationship but destroy it and make you unhappy and peaceless. –Rom. 12: 12,14.

DIVORCE

- 1.** God hates divorce, and never encourages divorce no matter the reason. Mal. 2: 13 – 16, Mt. 19: 3 – 9, 1Cor. 7: 27, 39.
- 2.** But if you do separate from your husband, or wife, remain single, or go back to him or her. – 1Cor. 7: 10, 11. If you have already separated or divorced your partner, be reconciled back to him/ her or remain single. But if your former husband or wife refuses reconciliation, you can marry another only in the Lord instead of burning with passion 1Cor. 7: 27-28.

WORDS OF WISDOM

- 1.** The atmosphere you create determines your experience.
- 2.** Don't give your ears to gossip. What you hear repeatedly, you will eventually believe. Please read proverbs 26:20-28.
- 3.** Never allow what people say about your spouse to form your opinion about him or her.
- 4.** Never allow what people say about you to change your scriptural opinion of yourself. You are who God says you are. You have what God says you have. You can do what God says you can do.
- 5.** Never allow what people say to change your godly principles upon which your marriage and relationship is built.
- 6.** What you think of your partner is more important than what people think about him or her.
- 7.** Like the soil to seeds, so also the mind to words.
- 8.** Give your mind to what will enhance love, unity, happiness and celebration in your home.
- 9.** Guard your mind with all diligence.
"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well spring of life".
(Prov.4: 23)