

NAIROBI CHRISTIAN CHURCH

PREMARITAL CLASSES

PREMARITAL CLASSES

FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

CONTENTS

1. COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE.....	2
2. CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTION.....	5
3. PET-PEEVES	7
4. FINANCES IN MARRIAGE.....	9
5. THE ROLE OF A HUSBAND	12
6. YOUR ROLE AS A FATHER.....	13
7. CHRISTIAN WIFE.....	14
8. INTIMACY	16
9. WEEKLY DISCIPLING	18
10. RHESUS FACTOR	19
11. BIBLIOGRAPHY	20

1. COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

Married couples involved in home dialysis must deal not only with the technical procedures for the treatment of kidney failure, but also with the “emotional aspects of living with a chronic disease in a marital relationship.” *How do partners in a successful marriage handle this?* They talk to each other. Sounds easy, doesn’t it? It’s not. Meaningful conversation is not a few monosyllables during dinner or comments during TV commercials or a discussion about a new technical problem with the equipment. Meaningful conversation is telling your spouse where you are—*intellectually, emotionally, and physically*. When couples come for counseling, and begin to voice their complaints, they are astonished by their revelations. This astonishment signifies how very little they communicated. Just because two people live together doesn’t guarantee that they’ll be omniscient about each other’s feelings—they must talk!

Spouses stop talking to each other about things that really bother them, and yet they can discuss “everything” with their counselor. What does the professional counselor do that encourages people to talk? *Firstly, they can offer an objective outside opinion, and secondly, they are able to feel and communicate genuine acceptance of the other person.* According to Dr. Thomas Gordon, “It is one of the simple but beautiful paradoxes of life: when a person feels that he is truly accepted by another, as he is, then he is freed to move from there and to begin to think about how he wants to change, how he wants to grow, how he can become different, how he can become more of what he is capable of being.” *Unfortunately, most people believe that, if you accept the other person as he is, nothing will change.* They believe that only through immediate confrontation and immediate change will the problem be resolved. The fact is without acceptance there can be no communication, and without communication there can be no resolution of problems.

Husband comes home from work and wants to sleep. Wife wants him to do some work around the house. Husband avoids the confrontation by asking, “What’s for dinner?” Wife’s face is beet red as she walks out of the room.

Conveying no acceptance turns people off, they stop talking. They learn it is more comfortable to keep their feelings and problems to themselves. *Later husband and wife again try to resolve their differences.* By this time, the wife is more relaxed. She has had the insight to see that she was not really angry about his not helping around the house at that particular moment. She was angry because sometimes she had to carry more than her share of the responsibilities. She tells her husband that she’s especially tired, working alone makes her feel that their life style really has changed. She recognizes that his illness has imposed some limitations on them despite their concerted effort not to let it. She feels more responsible for the management of the household, and occasionally she feels overwhelmed!

Husband says he too feels overwhelmed. He is frequently tired and can’t get to things as soon as he would like. He feels angry and frustrated. Perhaps instead of making a general statement about her husband’s character the wife could give him a specific task to do. If he needs to get some rest before he can get started, he should tell her.

Acceptance opens people up. It frees them to share their feelings. “But of all the effects of acceptance,” Dr. Gordon believes, “none is as important as the inner feeling of the person that he is loved. And in psychology we have only begun to realize the tremendous power of feeling loved. It can promote the growth of mind and body, and is probably the most effective therapeutic force we know for repairing both psychological and physical damage.” *But, just because you accept the other person, that doesn't*

mean that issues should go unresolved. Communication is the instrument used to solve the problems. To communicate effectively you need special skills.

(1) Be aware of your communication style.

How do you let your spouse know your feelings? *Avoiding confrontations, complaining, blaming, accusing or ridiculing the other person is not going to help you get what you want from the relationship.* Just before husband leaves for work one morning, he sees a note on the kitchen table telling him that he has a doctor's appointment at 10:30am. He is furious because today he must also attend several very important conferences at work. He awakens his wife to tell her that she was dumb to schedule an appointment without letting him know sooner. Wife answers that she's got better things to do than be his secretary, and from now on he can make his own appointments!

Another way the husband could have expressed his feelings might begin with: "This might seem like a low priority to you, but it's something that really bothers me. I know you're often busy, but when you make a doctor's appointment for me, please let me know at least two days in advance so I can plan my other activities to accommodate it."

In this response the wife's competence wasn't questioned. Consequently, she doesn't need to channel her energy to defend her ego against an onslaught of complaints and condemnations. Instead she can put her energy toward solving the problem with her husband.

(2) Determine an appropriate time for discussion.

Husband comes home from work, obviously frazzled and says, "Boy, have I had a terrible day!" Wife answers, "If you think you had a bad day, wait till you hear about mine!" An alternative response from wife might begin, "Gee, I'd really like to hear about your day, but let's wait until after dinner when things should be a little more relaxed around here."

(3) Be alert to the non-verbal clues.

We send messages by what we say and by what we don't say. Non-verbal messages are communicated through gestures, postures, facial expressions or by other behaviors. *To understand them you must learn to read the unspoken language of the eyes, the articulation of the body, and the message beneath the words.* Listen to learn when a hearty "I'm fine" is really expressing "I'm low now and need some encouragement." Learn to sense the pride of accomplishment or the pain of failure behind the seemingly casual description of some event.

Wife is sitting in the living room reading the evening paper. Husband has just come from an appointment with the doctor and proceeds to tell her that he has put his name on the cadaver list. He notices that his wife hasn't lifted her eyes from the newspaper. "Hey, are you listening to me or reading the paper?" he asks. Guiltily, the wife looks up from the paper, "Don't be silly, of course I heard every word." "Forget it," answers the husband, "the paper is more important to you than I am. Go back to it." The husband was right. His wife had not really heard what he said. He wanted to do more than just to let her know what he decided. He was looking for some reassurance that he had done the right thing, that someone cared about him and was really on his side.

(4) The importance of touch.

Touching the other person—nothing erotic—just plain touching can express acceptance. Sitting close enough to feel each other's body, taking his/her hand, or holding each other during times of stress are all ways of communicating that you are really with the other person.

(5) Listen (James 1; 19)

Be quick to listen and slow to speak. Make sure you really understand what your spouse is saying before the discussion gets too far along. To check your understanding of what is being said repeat what you think you're hearing in your own words. At this point, it is important for the person sending the message to clarify any misunderstanding before the conversation goes on too far. Remember: you're merely trying to reiterate your partner's message. Don't send back a message of your own. Often times, what goes wrong in the communication process is that the person receiving the message misunderstands it, but no one is aware that a misunderstanding exists.

I'd like to close by briefly summarizing the specific skills needed to foster meaningful conversation in a marital relationship.

1. Accept the other person as he/she is and convey that acceptance.
2. Be aware of your communication style and make appropriate changes when necessary.
3. Determine a suitable time to discuss the issue.
4. Don't forget the importance of touch.
5. Finally, be sure that both you and your spouse are hearing the same message before the conversation gets too far along.

Remember: Solving problems requires meaningful talk between open people, and the key to fostering openness is acceptance.

2. CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTION

God's desire is for us to experience a peaceful harmonious marriage. This doesn't come easy. We must seek, treasure and work for it.

Conflicts will be there and can even help us deepen in our relationship. But continual conflict-quarreling, arguing, and fighting will ruin the joy of any marriage and kill the happiness of our children.

It is therefore important that we understand and avoid the causes of conflict and also learn how to overcome the differences that will inevitably arise between us.

Causes and cures of conflict

Pride/humility

Proverbs 13:10 Pride is the attitude that feels, "*Am right all the time and you are not*". It is not possible for one to be right all the time. We need to learn to listen and take the advice of our spouses and that of others.

Do you argue and fight or feel bad when others think differently from you? Then most probably your prideful attitude is rearing its head.

1Peter 5:5 Instead seek to be humble and God will give grace to your marriage relationship. If we realize that we don't know everything and that our spouses might just be right, we will find ourselves living in far greater harmony.

Criticalness/gratitude

Proverbs 22:10

A critical attitude is one that we must be constantly aware of as it creeps into any relationship so slowly that you will only realize it after the damage is done. We cannot take each other for granted. Don't put your friend in a box- "he can never do this" or "she will never change" or "he's always like that", e.t.c. This is very negative and kills any joy in a relationship.

Philippians 4:8 *Instead of always seeing the negative make effort to seek out the good in your spouse and build them up! Even if there are issues between us we can still start with the positives and this makes it easier to delve into the ugly with much greater success.*

Defensiveness/openness

Proverbs 17:19

Building a wall shuts off any progress in a discussion. No matter what is said, we will find ourselves taking a different point of view. If this happens often then you are most likely defensive. This provokes anger and hatred thus breaking down communication.

We need to learn to be more receptive to others. Be open to the views of your spouse and other people.

Reckless words/building words

Proverbs 15:1, 12:18

Reckless words arise as a result of always living in the above three causes of conflict. This sets a bad tone for the ensuing discussions and opens way to the use of words that are demeaning, derogatory, foolish and the like which should not be welcome in our relationships.

No good can come out of it yet the harm will linger for a long time.

Ephesians 4:29

The only words we should allow from our lips are that are building to our hearers and that includes our spouses. Ask yourself, “Is this what my spouse needs? Will it be of any benefit?” this will ensure we don’t just say anything.

Unresolved issues / Urgency

Ephesians 4:25-27

We need to discuss issues openly when we are hurt in our feelings. Some things may be let go without any discussion. But if you still feel bothered then it is important to bring it up for discussion until resolved. Anything less will give the devil a foothold.

Resolve issues as quickly as possible. Don’t keep it in for days, weeks, months or even for years. This will eat away the love you have and will one day explode in your face!

Practicals for resolving conflict

1. Both parties must agree to talk if there need be. It takes both to have a conflict so does it take both to resolve a conflict and therefore the co-operation of both is required.
2. Choose the proper time and place. Not before people, when just leaving for work, or just before meeting others for a function. This takes maturity.
3. Be more concerned for what is right than who is right. Search for the truth even in the midst of sharp disagreement.
4. Apologize for anything however small what you have said or done that is wrong. You are only responsible for what you have done. Change yourself instead of trying to change your spouse.
5. Don’t wait for your spouse to beg you for their sin. Deal with yourself before God then go your spouse and admit your sin. Don’t excuse yourself or minimize it. Be honest.
6. Ask for forgiveness. Say, “Will you please forgive me?” Don’t focus on whose wrongs are greater.
7. Don’t allow your emotions to cloud the issues at hand or to bring up other old issues to the now. Tackle one issue at a time and do so clearly.
8. Forgive completely without first making others feel bad or feel pain for what they’ve done. Forgiveness is the right thing to do even if not requested. Say, “I forgive you.”
9. Work through the healing process by constantly assuring the other person of your love and commitment to not let it happen again. Some wounds are deep and take a little longer to be mended even though you might already have worked through them. Help each other to heal by; reassurance, forgiving completely and not opening up the old wounds that had been resolved.
10. Get help from others when after your best efforts you still stay unresolved. This helps to solve the conflict and is also an opportunity to learn how to resolve any future disagreements.

3. PET-PEEVES

Songs 2; 15 “catch for us the foxes .the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

Petty things look small or trivial. You may even consider them unimportant. But these are some of the things that cause a lot of problems in relationships. Experts say that it’s the small things that often break marriages. We need to watch out for them and strive to understand our partner’s point of view. The goal is to always bring joy to your partner. Strive to do the things that your partner likes. On the other hand, we can be very peevish ourselves. We can be easily annoyed by less important things. Whenever any mistake is done, we hit the roof.

Some of the petty things are:

- Putting clothing anywhere in the house e.g. socks under the seat
- Leaving the lights and water on when not being used.
- T.V programs (which program to watch)
- Pouring tea (over-pouring or pouring less)
- How to squeeze and use toothpaste (from the end or middle or anywhere in the tube?)
- Responding to others when they talk to you.

The ***person you love the most is likely to be the one that hurts you the most.*** Because we care a lot for them and sometimes we can’t just understand why they do things differently from what we expect and they also can’t understand why we do what we do.

They also say that old habits die-hard. We enter into a relationship with a mindset based on the way we were raised up, the environment we grew up in and culture.

In the world, people are selfish and do things only to gratify their desires. But as Christians, we are commanded to be selfless, giving, forgiving and godly towards our spouses. The Lord calls us to a higher standard than that of the world.

Matthew 7: 12 – God calls us to do to others just as we would like them do to us.

We have to try as much as possible to live in harmony with one another, which means that we have to consider the feelings of our partners and what they would prefer.

Discuss it and come up with an agreement.

2 Timothy 1:7 – God has given us a spirit of self-control. God expects us to rely on him and so overcome our bad habits. We can not hide behind “I was raised like that”, “That’s how I do things” etc.

There is always room for growth and change. We can acquire better behavior and do things in a better way if we are willing to learn and grow.

The growth will bring joy to you and your spouse.

Philippians 2: 3, 4 – Have you been considering your partner? Or do you look only at your interests?

Do you appreciate the fact that your partner is more organized?

Philippians 1: 27 – On the other hand we have a responsibility of remaining godly even when your spouse does things against your expectations.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 – Love is patient, kind, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs among other things.
You must be patient with your spouse.
You must be forgiving
You must be selfless
You must be self-controlled

Further readings:

Romans 14: 19-21

James 3: 2

1 Corinthians 10: 23-24

Proverbs 16: 32

Proverbs 25: 28

4. FINANCES IN MARRIAGE

Luke 16:10-11----‘*whoever can be trusted with very little can be trusted with much and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy handling worldly wealth who will trust you with true riches.*’

Almost every thing around us today is pegged on money. We cannot separate our lives from money. Therefore we have to be very careful on how we go about money issues in our lives and more especially in our marriage. Management of money is a spiritual issue, it is very important to God and so it must be equally important to us. God expects us to be trustworthy with the little we have for him to entrust us with the true riches.

Most problems in marriages today have their bearing on money. The proper use or misuse of money will determine the spiritual condition of your marriage. Below are some principles which when embraced will help you build a strong marriage that will withstand the storms of finances.

1. Given to give

Your financial stability will begin with a great attitude to give. You can never go wrong by giving. God has given us so that we may give back to him and to others.

a.) God first

Lev. 27:30 The things of God have to take priority in our finances. You have to decide once for all that God and his kingdom will always be first and the rest later. You have to honor God with the first fruit of your every income. As a couple you have to be totally committed to give your *tithe* to God. Make a decision to honor God and not to rob him. (**Malachi 3:8-12, Numbers 18:21**)

b) Give to others;

Luke 6:38 Give and it will be given to you. With the same measure you use. It will be measured to you. If you make it your priority to refresh others, God will in turn refresh you too. It's good to practice hospitality. Invite people to your house for dinner, break fast, lunch, and give to meet the needs of the less fortunate. e.t.c. **Proverbs 11:24-25**

2. Contentment is great gain

1 Tim. 6:6 “*but godliness with contentment is great gain*”

The virtue of contentment will save you so much trouble. Our hearts are naturally inclined to wanting more and more, we must show restraint (**Pro. 15:16, Heb 13:5**) God will always give us our needs not wants.

Learn to live within your means.

Don't live an expensive life style that you cannot afford.

Don't compare yourself with other people (some of them have been married for so long and you forget that it has taken them that long to have whatever they have today; the car, fridge, house etc.)

You are just starting life and at Gods own time he will also bless you, so don't put yourselves under pressure. Some may have had an inheritance that you don't have, so don't stress yourselves.

Let's imitate Paul who mastered the art of contentment in plenty or in want (**Phil: 4: 11-13**)

3 Budget and stick to it

Having no plan is actually planning to fail.

It is important that you have a plan of how you're going to use your money for the specified period of time, monthly, quarterly or annually. Financial experts say that the starting point for money management is having a budget, without one you will find yourselves buying things that you don't necessarily need and this will lead real financial crisis.

For example a couple whose total income is 20,000/= may have simple budget taking this format;

Tithe	=	2000/=
House rent	=	4000/=
Food	=	4000/=
Transport	=	4000/=
Medical	=	1000/=
School fees	=	2000/=
Savings	=	1000/=
Others	=	<u>2000/=</u>
		20,000/=

NB – The budget must be made by both of you and each one must understand and be in total agreement. Its one thing to make a budget and it's another thing to stick to it. Be disciplined enough to stick to your budget.

4 Avoid debts

Pro 22:26—27 – *'Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledges or puts up security for debts, if you lack the means to pay your very bed will be snatched from under you.'*

Being in debt is very addictive, you are safe staying off that line of slavery.

The borrower is a servant to the lender (**Pro. 22: 7, Romans 13:8**)

- pay your bills on time (rent, water, electricity, e.t.c)
- Take a loan only when it's necessary, when both of you are in total agreement and when you have a very good plan of repaying it. If your spouse thinks otherwise seek for help.

NB: Cut down your expenses to help you stay out of debt.

5. Hard work pays

Prov. 28: 19 *"He who works his land will have abundant food but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."*

Pro. 31; 27 The bible encourages us to work hard. We should not eat the bread of idleness.

NB: Emphasis to any of the spouse who is not working and just dependants on the other who is working. (**Ecc. 4:9**)

When you work hard you will;

- have food to spare
- stay out of debt

- give to God more
- give to the less fortunate (*Ephesians 4:28*)
- save more for the future (*Proverb 20:4, Pro. 14:23, Ecc. 9:10 Pr 10:4*)

NB: Remember not to chase for money at the expense of your relationship with God in the name of working hard. (*Proverb 11:4, 23;6, Ecc. 6:2*)

6. Saving

Proverb 6:6 – 11

It is wisdom rather than faithlessness to save. The bible encourages us to save and to be wise on how we spend. “Go to the ant and learn” saving will help you deal with special and unexpected needs e.g. Sickness, education, accident, retirements, etc.

7. Seek advice

We cannot out grow the need of other people in our lives. Just as we need other people in other areas of life, our finances will be much better if we seek for pieces of advice. Getting a second or third opinion just before a financial commitment will make a very big difference.

(*Proverb 11; 14, 12:15, 13:10, 15:20, 20:18, 24:6*)

PRACTICALS

1. Don't go out with money in large denominations, most likely you will over spend. Put your money in small denomination and just carry what you need for the day.
2. Avoid impulse buying, plan for your purchases and agree with your spouse before you buy.
3. Avoid debt as much as possible. *Romans 13:8*
4. Be open with your finance. “Two have become one”. So let your spouse know and be involved in your finances.
5. Never spend outside your budget unless both of you are in complete agreement.
6. Seek for pieces of advice at the right time about your finances.
7. Read lots of materials about finances.
8. Pray about your finances (*Proverb 19:21*) “Many may be your plans, but the Lords will prevails”

5. THE ROLE OF A HUSBAND.

Ephesians 5:23.

- Husbands have been given the role of being the head of the home. (family)
- Your duty is to provide a spiritual and a good moral leadership at home.
- You are also expected to provide and maintain an environment of love, peace and security at home.
- Husbands are expected to take upon them the responsibilities of taking care of their homes; e.g. Maintenance, repairs, paying bills. etc.
- Husbands should also take upon themselves the role of being the primary trainer and organizer for family developments.
- Making sure that family devotionals, picnics, dinners out, vacations and other fun activities are well organized.

Ephesians 5:25-29.

- Your leadership must be done through love and harmony.
- You are expected to imitate Jesus in your love for your spouses and children, by laying down your life for them on security, meeting their emotional and physical needs.
- You must see to it that both of you are doing well spiritually.
- Be always gentle and considerate to your wife, be self-controlled and sensitive.

Colossians 3:19

- God commands all husbands to love their wives and never be harsh to them.
- You must always stay self-controlled and you cannot dare beat whatever happens.
- You must always learn to talk and resolve issues before they get worse. (*Ephesians 4:26-27, 29-32*)
- Kindness and forgiveness are keys in all marriages.
- You must always remain selfless, sacrificing time and money for our family.

1 Timothy 5:8

- Husbands must make sure that they provide for the needs of the family- wife and children.
- As head of the family you must make sure that you organizes and plans ahead. e.g. clothes, school fees, shelter, land, etc.
- A responsible husband must work hard and never eat the bread of idleness.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

- You must set a good example by doing something even if it does not pay much.

Ecclesiastes 9:9-10

- God designed marriage as an institution that can be enjoyed by all who may get married. Therefore we must make every effort to enjoy marriage as the bible encourages us to.
- Make sure you spend some quality time every week with your wife.
- Even if you are a very busy man, you cannot be busy to the point of forgetting your wife.
- Enjoy life with your wife whom you love all the days that God has given you.

6. YOUR ROLE AS A FATHER.

God will bless your marriage, according to his will, with children. We are reminded that children are a reward from God. Therefore, there is an expectation for us from God as regards to raising our children. So, what role do you play?

Many in the world think that the training and upbringing of our children is the responsibility of the mother, and without knowing we may tend to borrow that, but what does the bible say?

Ephesians 6:4

- Paul was addressing the responsibilities of the husband and wife in marriage. Then now he singles out the father and charges him with the responsibility of training and instructing the children. There is so much to teach, to train and instruct our children on. Paul says, in the ways of the Lord, so we need to know the scriptures well so we can teach God's ways. We need to teach also about life and making good decisions, that's why we need to be a good example to all. This does not mean that the wife should not be involved, she should also play a great role in raising the children, but you as the father and leader of the family play the major role. You lead
- Teaching them in God's ways is what we are reminded in Deut. 6:4-9, teaching the word of God. You prepare the devotionals and see to it that they are done consistently, you read the bible daily with the children, pray daily together, sing together hymns and spiritual songs, don't excuse yourself with, my child is so young, training begins early.

Many children as they grow and see the good qualities of their fathers, say they want to be like daddy. Would yours want to be like you?

What would you like your child to be like?

1 Timothy 4:16

- What person are you, do you watch what Paul is addressing here? Your life, your children will be seeing you, they listen to you, remember your first words, a mimic of what you heard from your parents. That's the same with also our children. Imagine their first words a mimic of what you say. Will it be careless or building/encouraging?
- We need to be great role models, great examples to our children so they can see the good in us and desire to be like their dads.
- They should see us treat our wives with love, being considerate, forgiving, serving, when you go wrong, especially in their presence, they should see you apologize.
- Its important they see you have your quiet time, so they can see your love for God and that they may learn from this to prioritize their walk with God in the future.
- Remember any negative response or attitude will affect the children in their future regarding how they will respond to others and to God. So be a great role model for your children.

What great memories do you have of your childhood? Especially those build with your family?

How do we build such great memories?

- Great memories are built by spending quality time together. Children like playing, they like going out for different activities, and it's also good once in a while to go out for lunch or dinner. We need to be flexible to accommodate them. We may come home from work tired, but as reminded in

scripture, **Romans 12**, we need to make those sacrifices. Jesus had a busy schedule, but still made time for the children, we can't be that busy not to spare 30 minutes or so!

- Spend time with the children, have fun, it builds great memories, it builds their self-esteem, courage, confidence, they feel secure.
- This is very important, spend quality time with them and especially the girl child, with this you protect her from seeking attention from other men who will only take advantage of her, imagine your girl. When she gets proper attention from you, she will not go looking for it out there.

If you play your role well, you will raise awesome kids.

7. CHRISTIAN WIFE

(For the engaged woman; to be done a few days before the wedding)

1) Marriage was created by God;

[Genesis 1:27-, 2:20b-25]

How do you feel about getting married? I am very excited for you....

What's your view of marriage?

Decide now to go into your marriage with the mindset of seeking to know and understand God's plan for your marriage so you can live it out.

Matthew 15:3-9 – *Not all traditions are bad, but some of them go against the word of God. What are some traditions that you might have had or seen practiced that you think will not help you live out God's plan for your marriage? What will you do about them?*

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 – *As you make your marriage vows to be a Christian wife to your husband, do it in awe and fear of God.. It's better not to vow, than to break those vows later.*

(Go through some of the vows she will be making to her husband e.g. to love him forever in plenty, in want, in need, in sickness, to be faithful etc.)

Please take time to think through these vows and pray through them before your wedding day!

2) Your Role as a wife -

a) As a Helper

Genesis 2:18, 20b-22 - God specifically created you to be the helper of your husband. How do you feel about this role? This doesn't mean that he is incapable of doing certain things, or that you are lesser than he is. All it means is that you will make his life much more bearable. To help means **'to make something easier, quicker or better for someone'**.

Some of the ways you can help is by making sure the affairs of house are running smoothly, e.g. meals being ready on time, keeping the house clean, keeping his clothes ironed, well organized in a way that he can find what he needs easily, getting ready to leave on time, (when the children come, he must still be the number one human priority, but also make sure the kids are ready on time) etc.

Help spiritually by praying for him, sharing what you are learning and by being a great example as Christian.

Acts 20:35, Philippians 2:5-11 – Decide to serve your husband all the time!

b) As a Lover

Genesis 2:24-25 – Sex in marriage was created by God. It is a beautiful thing. It's the special thing that

connects you to your husband like no other relationship that you will ever have! It is a spiritual act! Therefore, treat it with respect, care, reverence and appreciation! If viewed biblically, it is fun and enjoyable!

1 Corinthians 7:1-7 – The only reason the Bible gives for depriving your husband is spiritual reasons, and even then, there needs to be a mutual consent.

Vs. 5- A Christian wife never says “no”. Always be ready and prepared to give physically to your husband.

Keep yourself physically fit and attractive so you can always meet his need.

If you don't meet the sexual needs of your husband, then you are setting him up for 'being tempted by Satan!' Decide that as long as it depends on you, this will not happen. **Eph**

5:22 – This is also an issue of submission to your husband.

Titus 2:4-5 – Love your husband. Let him know that you love him in the way you look at him, treat him, talk to him that you adore, admire, and appreciate him more than any other human being!

2) **Submit to your Husband out of Reverence for Christ!**

Ephesians 5:21-24,33b –

Def. of Submission – to place or arrange oneself under another. It is voluntary subordination to a recognized authority, in this case the divinely appointed authority of a husband. Submission must be out of our respect for God. We usually say that 'Respect is earned' but in the case of marriage, you need to submit and respect your husband because *he sustains by God's order a position of dignity as head of family!*

This passage also compares marriage to salvation/heaven/relationship with Jesus.

Start with yourself... First and foremost, you are married to Christ, let him guide your heart and ways.

How do you feel about fully submitting yourself to your husband, being obedient to him...?

Discuss several areas of submission – Finances, Children, time management, family issues etc...

1 Peter 3:1-6 – **Sarah Abraham** is a perfect example of true biblical submission. She obeyed her husband and called him her master.. You'll be her daughter if you do what's right and not give way to fear. **Do you have any fears that could hinder you from submitting to your husband?**

4) **Commit Yourself to Growth!**

Pr 14:1 – 'A wise woman builds her house...**Psalm 127:1-2**

Be committed to growing in your own marriage. Learn and seek advice from other women **Titus 2:4-5, Pr 15:22**. This way, as you grow wise, you will build your house! Grow in wisdom - through your solid times spent with God through prayer and Bible **1 Peter 2:1-3**. Study – **Proverbs 1:1-7**, Read books on marriage. There is so much to grow in and discover about marriage. Don't limit yourself!

Be open about your struggles and weaknesses as well as your strengths so you can get encouragement (**Heb 3:12-15**).

For further study: -

1. *Proverbs 31*
2. *Songs of songs*
3. *1 Peter 3:1-6*

Suggested books to read: -

1. *A Gentle and Quiet Spirit* by Virginia Leafler
2. *The Act of Marriage*
3. *A woman after God's own heart.*
4. *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*

At this point find out about how she feels about the first night. Encourage her and help her be relaxed

Can also encourage her to get a gift and a card for the husband-to-be for that night!

Talk about what to pack for first night and for honeymoon e.g. nighties,

Also talk about family-planning method (should have been discussed earlier).

Does she have any questions?

Pray together to close out.

8. INTIMACY **(PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP)**

Introduction:

Gen 1:31 After God created all things; He saw that everything He created was very good. God created sex for married partners (husband & wife). God gave men responsibility to protect what He created because good things should be protected. Sex in the same way must be protected. We protect sex by learning more about it and using it for what God created it for.

Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge”. God will reject us if we reject His knowledge on sex. Our marriages will not be as God planned.

What is the purpose of sex?

Gen 4:1 For procreation

Prov 5:18 For pleasure and enjoyment. To enjoy we must pray for God to help us think of sex as He first thought of it and also as a gift from God. The call is that as we grow older, we shall also grow in our intimacy.

Intimacy killers

i) Misinformation:

This comes from television (movies, talk shows, soap operas), books and magazines which are to be avoided at all costs. Sexual instincts and urges are born but knowledge must be learned (spiritual knowledge).

Prov 12:15 A wise man listens to advice – seek for advice.

Read Christian books to educate yourself on the sexual relationship.

Note: Women & men respond to sex very differently, hence protect your wife by learning about her.

ii) Cultural hindrances:

Traditions especially in Africa dictate that women shouldn't talk about sex.

1 Corinthians 7:5 Mutual consent – there needs to be communication.

The bible says that both must talk and agree. No-one should have the upper hand over the other.

- iii) Stress:** Too much work creates anxiety which brings about stress. At times stress comes as a result of job insecurity.
Phil 4:5-6 open up to your partner, cast your burdens to Jesus through prayer and advice.
- iv) Fatigue:** Sex takes physical and mental energy. Keep fit and stay in shape. Set dates for the physical relationship, work less to avoid fatigue, eat well and be relaxed.
- v) Opportunity:** The more the children, the more responsibilities. Create time for each other and plan well.
- vi) Boredom:** Getting accustomed to each other. Treat your partner with continual respect and love, dress well. Surprise each other with presents, gifts and special gestures.
- vii) Critical remarks:** These kill the sexual desire. Encourage each other according to their needs.
- viii) Fear of pregnancy/pain:** To avoid pain, relax and practice adequate foreplay, seek medical advice if it's a prolonged problem. Use protection as well to avoid unwanted pregnancy.
NB; (You can talk about family planning at this point or arrange to talk about it in detail next time.)
- ix) Guilt:** About past sexual behaviours e.g. one may have been raped or contracted sexual diseases. Open up and seek spiritual and professional help. There needs to be a lot of patience and understanding from the other partner.
- x) False beliefs:** Believing that sexual fulfillment undermines one's spirituality e.g. cannot have sex on days of worship like Sunday, etc. This is wrong and unbiblical.
- xi) Personal preference:** Differences in sexual preferences e.g. frequency and styles of sex. There needs to be mutual consent, agree with one another what is comfortable for each person.
- xii) Conflicts:** Sex is a means of expressing love – love and conflicts never go together – choose to resolve your conflicts.

Effects of sexual problems

- i) inability to perform
- ii) lowered self esteem
- iii) Deteriorating relationship – arguments, boredom.
- iv) Selections of substitutes – masturbation, infatuation, pornography, etc

Resolutions

- i) listen with acceptance and understanding
- ii) physical examination by the doctor
- iii) Give accurate information
- iv) Gather information – advice and reading Christian based books
- v) Deal with related problems – K-Y Jelly, foreplay, etc.
- vi) Cleanliness and making every effort
- vii) Marriage enrichment- retreats, presents, anniversaries, family days, etc.

NOTE: Great marriages need God.

9. COUPLE’S WEEKLY DISCIPLINE OR FAMILY TIMES

Eccl. 4:9-12 – “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up.. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Unity is a very important part of having a great marriage that will last the test of time! Unity doesn’t just happen, it has to be cultivated! *Praying together daily is one of the ways that will definitely keep you close as a couple!*

The other way to stay close emotionally and spiritually the way God intends is by having spiritual times together weekly. Pick on a day that will be good for both of you; a lot of couples have Monday nights as their day, coz the week is just beginning, so this time can have the attention it requires! Here are a few suggestions of what this weekly time should include:

- 1) Commend and compliment each other – Share what you really have appreciated in each other- and make it a great time of encouragement! ***Heb 3:12-13***
- 2) Share things that have bothered you about your mate. Limit to only one or two things at a time. Be sure to listen carefully without becoming defensive. *No one knows you than your spouse. Therefore be excited to get their perspective and learn from them! God always rewards humility! **1Peter 5:5-7, Eph 4:15, 29.***
- 3) Plan a calendar and schedule for the week (or next week). Talk about areas of shared responsibilities or things you need to do together. This will make sure you stay coordinated and united as you spend your life together.
- 4) Talk about your feelings... your goals, dreams, desires, frustration fears and anything else that really brings out your heart and inner convictions. One of the things that would help openness is sharing about things that happened to you in the past. Sharing these memories together will

bond you and increase your understanding and appreciation of each other. Learn to share your hearts together. Real intimacy is much more a matter of heart to heart than body to body. Also spend some time confessing to each other so you can pray for each other more specifically.

(James 5:16)

- 5) Household management: Talk about needs around the house (the “Honey-to-do” list)!
- 6) Children: Talk about how you feel the children are doing. Make sure you are unified about discipline and other parenting concerns. Your unity as a couple in this area is very important. Stay spiritually focused and unified in dealing with your children. Make sure you are also getting help from other couples on how to raise your children!
- 7) Finances: Make sure that adequate communication on all financial issues takes place, and that each of you feels unified about financial decisions that are reached. Be careful not to give Satan a foothold in this area. **1Tim 6:6-10.**
- 8) Close out with a prayer together!

[NB: ADDED INFORMATION]

RHESUS FACTOR

Rhesus Monkey

The rhesus monkey is native to the forest and semi urban areas of India, Afghanistan, China, and Vietnam. These social monkeys can be found in both terrestrial and arboreal habitats throughout their range. Due to their widespread use in medical research, their numbers have steadily declined. Because they are physiologically similar to humans, rhesus monkeys have been used as research animals to an extent that has greatly reduced their population; The monkeys have been used extensively in research on human blood chemistry, and the Rh factor in blood derives its name from them. Psychological studies carried out on the animals have aided in the understanding of infant-mother relationships in humans, and rhesus monkeys were launched in high-altitude tests of rockets following World War II (1939-1945).Scientific classification: The rhesus monkey belongs to the family Cercopithecidae. It is classified as *Macaca mulatta*.

Rhesus factor (Rh)

Rh Factor, term applied to any of the 30 or more substances, called agglutinogens, found on the surfaces of red blood cells. They are distinct from the main blood types, but their composition is unknown. The Rh factors were named by the American pathologists Karl Landsteiner and Alexander Solomon Wiener, who discovered the first of them in the blood of the rhesus monkey in 1937. This first Rh agglutinin, corresponding to the one now designated Rh0, is present in the blood of about

85% of all humans. Blood reactions involving Rh factors are now chiefly of interest in obstetrics. The hereditary blood constituent called Rh factor is of great importance in obstetrics and blood transfusions because it creates reactions that can threaten the life of newborn infants. The presence of Rh factors in the blood is controlled by the laws of heredity. An individual who possesses one gene for the Rh factor will express the factor on the red blood cells.

If a woman is Rh-negative, that is, if she has two recessive genes for the Rh0 factor, and a man has two genes that express the Rh-positive factor, then all of their children will be Rh-positive. But if the Rh-positive man has one recessive gene, then each child has a 50 percent chance of being Rh-positive. When carrying an Rh-positive child, the mother will build up antibodies (see Antibody) to the Rh0 factor in about 5 percent of all cases. These antibodies will usually be too weak to harm the first child. But during labor and delivery some of the baby's Rh-positive blood may get into the mother's bloodstream and trigger or sensitize her immune system. Her antibodies will then attack the red blood cells of any subsequent Rh-positive children. This reaction produces erythroblastosis fetalis, or Rh disease, which results in jaundice, anemia, brain damage, and often death, either before or shortly after birth.

What can be done about it?

Fortunately, Rhesus factor problems are almost entirely preventable. Women who are Rh- are routinely given an injection of a substance called Anti-D shortly after the baby is born (or after a miscarriage or termination). This destroys any Rh+ cells that may have got into the bloodstream so that they won't produce any more antibodies. In some areas, Anti-D is given to Rh- women during pregnancy

Previously, Rh disease was treated by transfusing the blood of infants who survived. Now most women and men are tested for Rh0 factor before having children. When an Rh-negative woman has a child by an Rh-positive man, she is given an injection of a substance called Rhogam immediately after the birth. Rhogam is gamma globulin containing antibodies against the Rh0 factor. By killing any of the Rh-positive red cells that have migrated into the mother's circulation from the fetus, Rhogam prevents the mother from building up immunity to the Rh0 factor. Thus, subsequent Rh-positive children are not exposed to anti-Rh0 antibodies. This procedure has largely eliminated Rh disease.

Why is the Rhesus factor important in pregnancy?

If the blood of anyone who's Rh- comes into contact with Rh+ blood, it will react to it as 'foreign' and will develop antibodies to the Rh+ cells that will kill them off. This works in much the same way as when your blood develops antibodies to the cells of viruses, like colds and flu, in order to destroy them. And as with antibodies to colds and flu, once the antibodies to Rh+ cells have developed in the blood of someone who is Rh-, they stay there.

If a Rh- woman has a Rh+ partner, it's very likely that their baby will be Rh+. This means that if her blood comes into contact with her baby's, she'll develop antibodies to it. This is unlikely to happen during a first pregnancy, but can happen when the baby is being born, when some of its blood may get into her circulation. It can also happen if she has a miscarriage or a termination or, occasionally, after an **amniocentesis** or **CVS** test. If it does happen, the woman will produce antibodies to the Rh+ blood. They won't affect her first baby at all, but they'll stay in her blood and if she becomes pregnant again, problems can arise.

If a Rh- woman who has antibodies in her blood is pregnant with a Rh+ baby, it's possible for her antibodies to pass through to the baby and damage or even destroy the baby's red blood cells. This can lead to the baby becoming anaemic or developing jaundice, or occasionally to more serious complications.

What can be done about it?

Fortunately, Rhesus factor problems are almost entirely preventable. Women who are Rh- are routinely given an injection of a substance called Anti-D shortly after the baby is born (or after a miscarriage or termination). This destroys any Rh+ cells that may have got into the bloodstream so that they won't produce any more antibodies. In some areas, Anti-D is given to Rh- women during pregnancy, but this is not routinely done everywhere.

At the first antenatal appointment a blood test is carried out and Rh- women are checked to see whether they have any antibodies. They may also be offered more frequent blood tests during pregnancy to make sure that they haven't started to produce any.

If antibodies do show up, they may be at a low enough level not to cause any problems to the baby. If there's reason to think that they could be affecting the baby, it may be necessary to run tests to see how severe the effects are. In the most serious cases, it may be possible to give the baby a blood transfusion before it's born. In other cases, the baby may need to have its blood exchanged after the birth.

NB: It's important that the couple get to know their blood groups before marriage and more importantly before pregnancy. Incase the man is Rh +ve and the woman is Rh -ve the is much danger for the unborn so seek medical advice in good time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1]. Campbell, Jim & Campbell, Ann, when It is All Got You Down, Some Problems You Were Afraid to Ask About, I Renal News, v. 7, Fall, 1975.
- [2]. Gordon, Thomas, P.E.T., New American Library, N.Y., 1975, p. 31.
- [3]. Jim George, A husband after Gods own heart; 12 things that really matter in marriage, 2004.
- [4]. Sam, Geri Laing, Friends and Lovers; Marriage as God designed it, 1996.
- [5]. Sherod, Miller, et al., Alive and Aware: Improving Communication in Relationships, Interpersonal Communications, 1975.
- [6]. Op. Cit., Gordon.
- [7]. Ibid., p. 33
- [8]. Op. Cit., Sherod

END