

How can we be godly in marriage?

What are all the things which are good and attractive about a good marriage?

"...a man shall leave his father and mother, hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2 v 24)

"This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5 v 32)
(NB : "mystery" means a secret which has now been revealed)

"the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready..." (Revelation 19 v 7)
"Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he... showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21 v 9-10)

*** God designed human marriage on the first day of human history to speak of the marriage he was planning for the last day of human history - the marriage between his Son and her beautiful bride, the church.**

*** We are heading for a wedding - THE wedding.**

- * This truth gives us the right perspective on our marriages now.
- * This truth shows we need to model our marriages now on THE marriage of Christ and his church.

1. The right perspective on marriages now

Being married now is not IT. We are heading for THE wedding.

- a) That changes the significance and expectations of human marriage now.
- b) That helps us cope with difficulties and tensions in marriage.

Make a list of all the things which can create tensions in a marriage or make a marriage hard work....

Marriage is an intensive "godliness gym". An opportunity to exercise and develop all your godliness "muscles" as you prepare for THE wedding day.

Look at your list of things which make marriage difficult. How might each give you an opportunity to develop in godliness?

Can you think of any parts of the Bible relevant to handling each area of tension?

Eg, Having a disagreement gives you the opportunity to exercise and strengthen these godliness "muscles":

Love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13 v 5)

Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1 v 19)

Do not let the sun go down on your anger (Ephesians 4 v 26)

Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3 v 13)

c) That show us how to respond to whatever is good in our marriages.

Thank God for it and let it point you to the wonder of the God's plan for you to unite you to Christ forever.

d) How to pray for your marriage.

Pray first that you both make it to THE wedding.

Pray you would order everything in your marriage to that end.

2. Christ's "marriage" is the model we should copy in our human marriages now.

a) We stay united in love by choosing to play different roles in the "drama" of marriage - copying Christ and his church.

b) We stay united in love by keeping promises.

Marriage is called a covenant in the Bible (Malachi 2 v 14)

Our faithfulness in promise keeping should mirror God's.

What advice would you give someone about to get married about how to keep working at keeping their marriage promises?

Leave (a new first loyalty in human relationships),

Cleave (love and commitment)

Become one flesh (physical intimacy and union)

What would your top tips be?

- Concentrate your attention on what you can do differently in your marriage. Remember the mobile.