

Putting Your Marriage To The Test

Introduction. We know that God's ideal for marriage is for it to be a permanent relationship (Genesis 2:24-25). However, God does not want marriages that are merely free from divorce; He wants marriages that are strong, thriving, and happy.

A recent study of 2,000 people conducted by Siemens in London found that as many as 73% of people surveyed say they are "making do" in their relationship because their true love got away. Furthermore, 17% of respondents said they met their soul mates when it was too late -- after they were already paired-off or married. And 46% say they would leave their spouse or partner to be with their true love. These statistics are grim, so we are going to study 10 questions that will reveal if your marriage is really strong.

I. ***Have You Left Your Parents To Cleave To Your Mate (Matthew 19:5)?***

- A. I am not necessarily referring to a physical presence or address. Couples sometimes must live with parents and in-laws for a time while they get on their feet financially.
- B. I am referring to leaving them in heart, mind, and loyalty. Cleaving means adhering. Your first concern is now caring for your spouse (Deuteronomy 24:5). Retaining loyalty to your parents over your spouse will cause incredible resentment in your marriage.

II. ***Is The Excitement And Romance Still In Your Marriage (Proverbs 5:18-19)?***

- A. Do you remember your first date? Do you remember the good feelings you had in your first years of marriage (Song of Solomon 4:9; 5:16)?
- B. Courtship needs to continue. One of the first problems spouses have with each other is boredom. I have heard of marriages that break up because of ESPN SportsCenter.

III. ***Do You Treat Your Mate The Way You Want To Be Treated (Matthew 7:12)?***

- A. You have to consider your spouses' likes, dislikes, and feelings, and extend the common, thoughtful courtesies (1 Peter 3:7). You want people to have a knowledge or understanding of your likes, dislikes, and needs. Your mate is no different.
- B. How do you like it when someone responds to you in a harsh, hateful manner (1 Kings 12:13-16)? Or ignores you? Or always pokes fun at what you do and how you do it? If you want your marriage to be happier, then treat them the way you want to be treated.

IV. *Do You Communicate With Your Spouse (James 1:19)?*

- A. The context of James 1:19 discusses listening to God, but would this not also work well with your spouse? The trouble with so much of our communication is that many of us want a monologue instead of a dialogue (cp. Psalm 141:3).
- B. If you have a habit of communicating with your spouse via fussing and yelling, then you seriously need to learn how to listen and calmly discuss a problem (Proverbs 25:28). Understand the problem and give constructive criticism instead of yelling.

V. *Would Your Marriage Last If God Allowed Divorce For Any Reason (Matthew 19:3, 9)?*

- A. This is a tough question for some couples who are Christians. If they were to answer honestly, the answer would be yes.
- B. If the answer would be yes, you had better get back to the scriptures and relearn how to act as a Christian and how to treat your spouse the way you should (Malachi 2:13-16).

VI. *Do You Make Your Mate Feel Inferior To You Or Others (Romans 12:3, 16)?*

- A. Constant comparison to parents or others can be extremely frustrating. Your spouse is their own person and you chose them! No person will ever be perfect nor will they attain the model of perfection as defined by your family.
- B. When a spouse minimizes strengths and magnifies faults, it will always make the other spouse feel inferior (1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4). Part of the task of a godly mate is to build up their spouse, not mentally destroy them.

VII. *Are You Affectionate And Intimate With Your Mate (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)?*

- A. Love can be shown in so many ways, but it is hard to love someone who never shows love. It is easy to stop obeying the commandment to love when no love and affection is shown to you. Do not make it more tempting for your spouse (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).
- B. The sexual relationship that a husband and wife share is not an ugly and cheap practice -- this is how the devil perverts intimacy. It is wholesome and necessary for a couple to have complete closeness; it should never be used as a bargaining chip to have one's way.

VIII. Do You Keep Score Of Your Mate's Faults And Wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)?

- A. Love does not keep a record of wrongs. Have you ever brought up a mate's faults or imperfections during a fight? If you have, you have violated the word of God.
- B. If a mate has a fault or wrong, tell it to them so they can correct it (Matthew 18:15). Do not bash them over the head with it every time you have a disagreement -- forgive!

IX. Do You Respect Your Mate (Ephesians 5:33)?

- A. Do you always have an attitude of appreciative, often deferential regard, or esteem for your mate? That is what respect or reverence means (Proverbs 31:28).
- B. We should have a veneration for our mate that we do not share with anyone else except God (cp. Genesis 2:23). A marriage that lacks mutual respect is doomed because the spouses will treat one another in an unbecoming and unfitting way, especially in public.

X. Do You Accept Your Biblical Roles (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8; Titus 2:4-5)?

- A. The husband is to be the spiritual leader and the physical provider (1 Corinthians 11:1-3). The wife is to be the helpmeet and keeper at home (Genesis 2:18).
- B. Do you swap roles willingly or by default? Do you try to justify failures in your respective roles? These roles were designed by God from the very beginning. His wisdom will always work -- follow it!

Conclusion. How did you do? If you did well, please keep it up. If you need work, do not put it off. An anonymous proverb says, "The easiest kind of relationship is with ten thousand people. The hardest is with one." Again, God's ideal is that marriage should be permanent and happy. Having a marriage that is divorce-free is not enough. If you will remember these questions, you will go a long way toward having a divorce-proof marriage.