

4 Habits of Happy Couples

Introduction. A couple once bought the plans for a beautiful house. They admired the picture on the front, imagined the rooms inside, and talked excitedly about living there. But when construction began, they discovered that a beautiful picture is not the same thing as a strong house.

The foundation had to be dug. The walls had to be secured. The plumbing had to be tested. The roof had to be maintained. And year after year, small repairs had to be made before they became large problems.

Marriage is much the same. A wedding may be beautiful, and the vows may be sincere, but a lasting marriage is built one decision at a time. Therefore, I want to show you how to build a healthier and stronger marriage by developing intentional habits of building spirituality, being kind and forgiving, serving one another in love, and expressing gratitude frequently. The deepest foundation isn't merely shared interests or romance, but a shared relationship with God

I. Build Spirituality Together

- A. Prayer is a powerful way to connect with God and each other. When you and your spouse pray together, you invite God into your relationship in deeper ways by aligning your hearts and minds with God's will.
 - 1. Regularly pray together and thank God for all the guidance and grace He constantly pours into your relationship. Talk with God together about the challenges you face and ask for the wisdom and strength to overcome them.
 - a) This can be as simple as a morning prayer for the day ahead or an evening prayer of gratitude (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10). Pray for each other's needs and spiritual growth.
 - b) Over time, this habit will create a sense of unity between you both and God. Praying together daily — no matter what challenges you're facing — can motivate you to rely on God for every situation (Proverbs 16:3).
 - 2. Choosing to give thanks regularly instead of thinking and being critical will let you enjoy a happy marriage in any circumstance.
- B. Build time into your schedule regularly to seek God by worship and learning the Word together.
 - 1. In every season of your marriage, keeping up with a habit of attending worship assemblies and diving into the Word together will help you grow in holiness and apply God's wisdom to your relationship consistently and build a marriage that fulfills you both daily (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 2:6).
 - 2. Several examples of Bible couples show how spirituality worked together in their lives and marriages:
 - a) Abraham and Sarah followed God's promises over many years, even when they didn't understand everything God was doing (Genesis 12-22).
 - b) Elkanah and Hannah participated in worship at Shiloh, and Hannah's prayer and song reveal a deep knowledge of God's character and earlier Scripture (1 Samuel 1-2).

- c) Joseph and Mary worshiped together, followed the Law, and regularly traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover (Luke 2:22-24).
- d) Zacharias and Elizabeth both knew and trusted God's promises, shaping their home by Scripture, prophecy, and faith (Luke 1:5-25, 39-45, 67-79).

II. Be Kind and Forgiving to Each Other

- A. Since conflict happens in every relationship, you and your spouse will disagree and argue. But godly couples treat each other with kindness and are quick to forgive each other for mistakes (Ephesians 4:32).
- B. Forgiveness doesn't mean ignoring the issues that have caused conflicts in your marriage. Instead, forgiveness frees you to address issues in loving ways.
 - 1. Forgiveness is a choice that can strengthen the love and trust in your relationship.
 - 2. It also sets a good example for your family and friends by showing them the power of God's love in action.
 - a) Holding onto grudges will only poison your relationship with resentment and bitterness.
 - b) Don't wait and let your anger linger. Ask God and your spouse to forgive you when you sin, and be willing to forgive when they hurt you.
 - c) Your forgiveness with God depends on your forgiveness in your marriage (Matthew 6:14-15). And your spouse deserves just as much grace as anyone else you would consider forgiving (Matthew 18:21-22).
 - 3. It's important to try to understand your spouse's feelings and reasons when you disagree (Proverbs 18:17). Foster an atmosphere of careful listening and responding, instilling confidence that you'll be kind and forgiving.

III. Serve Others Together

- A. Godly couples find joy in serving others as a team (Galatians 5:13; cp. 1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:3-4). Put your love into action together!
- B. Aquila and Priscilla were a great team in serving Christ:
 - 1. They worked and supported themselves as tentmakers (Acts 18:2-3).
 - 2. They traveled together and assisted Paul (Acts 18:18-19).
 - 3. They taught Apollos together, explaining God's will to him (Acts 18:24-26).
 - 4. They hosted a church in their home (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19).
 - 5. They were "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3-4).
- C. Serving lets you discover a deeper sense of fulfillment and connection. It also lets you see each other's strengths and compassion at work. That builds mutual respect and admiration in your marriage. You'll be focusing your energies outward, but God will bless you with more fulfillment within your relationship.

IV. Express Gratitude Regularly

- A. Expressing gratitude is a habit that can change your perspective to let you and your spouse see each other in a more joyful way (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
 - 1. Take time regularly to let your spouse know something you're thankful for about who they are as a person. This is where it's so important to "put on the new man" of Christ and then live it wholeheartedly (Ephesians 4:24).

2. Let your spouse regularly know how much you appreciate what they do as well (Ruth 2:10-13). Whenever your spouse does something especially kind or helpful, point it out and thank them.
 3. Beyond expressing gratitude for your spouse and what they do, remember to also thank God often for the gift of your marriage (Genesis 2:23-24).
 4. Finally, commit to a day without complaining. It'll reveal how much negativity we absorb and allow us to focus on the good (Proverbs 26:20; Philippians 2:14). And I mean commit to a fast of complaining in general, not just a fast of complaining about the shortcomings of your spouse.
- B. Over time, the habit of expressing gratitude will remind you of God's blessings in your relationship, and train your mind to choose a positive perspective.

Conclusion. The devil hates happy marriages and he's going to do everything he can to ruin good ones. But we can fight back by learning how to build our relationship with our spouse.

Like most couples, you and your spouse likely started your marriage with happiness. But over time, the stress of living in a sinful world can erode the happiness you first enjoyed together. It takes intentional effort to keep your marriage happy, and it isn't a lack of challenges that makes you happy but a connection with God.

The rewards of building a joyful and fulfilling marriage are worth it. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reminds you: "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." You and your spouse will be a happy couple if you place God at the center of your marriage!

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