

CARING NETWORK BULLETIN



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MARRIAGE

"It's all about me!!!"

"My needs aren't being met!"

"My husband doesn't understand me."

The kind of marriage God has in mind for us is all about me, but not in the way most of us may think. The marriage God has in mind is all about my doing what I can for my spouse. It's about me as a husband loving my wife, and it's about me as a wife, honouring/respecting my husband. It's about us esteeming our spouse better than ourselves.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil 2:2-4

Our master, our true example, the Lord Jesus, always looked to the interests or needs of others. If he did this for his bride the church, should we not do this for one another as we shadow that great marriage of Christ and his church?

On a day-to-day basis, how can we look out for the needs of each other? How can we as a couple, show love to one another? What behaviours might that evoke?

The apostle Paul answers this question in his letter to the ecclesia at Corinth. Paul addresses the relationship between brothers and sisters, but his principles are equally true for the marriage relationship.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. NIV 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Do we remember to show patience and simple kindness to our spouse? Do we keep a tally of how our spouse has irked us over the past week, or do we take heed to Scripture and keep no record of wrongs? Do we blow up when things aren't going the way we'd like them to, or are we slow to anger?



What are some other practical ways in which we can look to the needs of our spouse? Three Christian counsellors, Dr. Willard Harley, Dr. Kevin Leman and Dr. Emerson Eggerich, (their books are listed under the Resources section) have identified the top needs of men and women in marriage. Interesting, the top needs of men are usually at the bottom of the needs list for women which means we may have to do something that is not naturally easy for us but such is the nature of our calling. The needs that overlap amongst all three writers are as follows:

MEN

- ✓ Sexual Fulfillment
- ✓ Respect and Admiration
- ✓ To be Needed

WOMEN

- ✓ Love and Affection,
- ✓ Honesty, Openness, Communication
- ✓ Commitment to Family

Excerpts from Steps to True Marriage, by Bro. Harry Tennant Pgs 25-28

We are greater than our Parts

Our marriage is more than either of us and more than both of us. It does

not come to us complete with the wedding day. Marriage is a living relationship and has to be cultivated, protected and served. Marriage is greater than our mutual contributions. By prayer and a wondrous alchemy, there grows a precious, living structure which binds us together within itself. No two marriages are identical and no marriage is ever perfect. Marriage is what we determine it to be and what we make it. Each partner has something unique to contribute and nothing must be withheld.

It is not what we get out of marriage that counts; it is what we put into it. "It is more blessed to give than to receive, said our Lord, and it is as true in marriage as in everything else. This must be true for both of us. There must be no question of one partner always giving and the other always taking. If we give with all our hearts, we shall have no need to take because what we are seeking for our true good will always be forthcoming from our partner as giver. The secret is to learn how to serve with dignity, grace and readiness. Keep Jesus in mind and watch him at work. The Lord improved everything he touched. If we learn to follow him in marriage we shall find without doubt that our marriage too, will be touched by him ...

The Servant Lord of Life

Eph 5:23, 25...Truly, the man is the head of the marriage and he is also its chief servant. He is to love his wife and give himself for her. There is one, simple, golden rule for a husband: Seek your wife's salvation above all else. If husbands follow that dictum they will behave at all times and in all places, in their minds as well as in outward life as though they were the Saviour...

Eph 5:22,24....If a wife thinks of her husband as though he were Christ, submitting in the true sense, without fear or cringing or servility, the

mutual relationship will blossom. What we think we become, and our marriage will be a spiritual relationship with highlights of eternity in its adorning. There is no rivalry in such a marriage, no struggles for possession of the rein, no oppressive authority and no resentful service; since all is in Christ's hands and together we are his willing and loving followers and gladly obedient servants.



Excerpts from Marriage: A Very Special Relationship, by Bro Brian Lander. The Christadelphian Magazine: Vol 119, p.285, 1982

We are well aware that there is a special relationship between a believer and his Lord. The main point I want to make now is that marriage between two believers is a special relationship within a special relationship. So all the principles by which we are guided in our relationships with one another are repeated within marriage. There are no different rules, only a sharpening of those we already have. The mutual love between husband and wife is not a different virtue from the love which should flow between brethren and sisters generally, but it has a heightened application. Consequently, the things which militate against a successful marriage are the same things which militate against a happy ecclesia—in a phrase, “the works of the flesh” (see Gal. 5:19–21). And the things which make for a successful marriage are the same things which make for a happy ecclesia—in a phrase “the fruit of the spirit”, which Paul expounds as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (vv. 22–23).

The Love Bank, excerpt from Sex Begins in the Kitchen, by Dr Gary Leman, p.165

My friend Willard Harley came up with the term “the Love Bank” to describe the way husbands and wives balance their relationship. It's a helpful concept. Basically, Dr. Harley says that we all have “love bank accounts in which we are either making deposits or withdrawals all day long as we interact with people. For example, suppose the husband comes home from work to find his wife frazzled and emotional after a difficult day. Instead of asking her, “What's for dinner?” he takes her hand, leads into the den, and sits on the sofa with her, putting his arm around her and asking her to share with him the things that are on her mind. The he says, “Honey, I'm sorry you've had such a hard day.... Listen, I don't want you to worry about fixing dinner. Why don't we go out to a nice restaurant?” That husband made a substantial deposit in his love bank account. But then suppose if, in the same situation, the husband comes home and says to his wife, “For crying out loud, what's wrong with you?” “Well, it was a rough day.” “Rough day - what do you know about having a rough day? It's not like you have that much to do around here anyway.... And, speaking of things you have to do, haven't you even started dinner yet?” Obviously, that husband has made a hefty withdrawal from his love bank account. In fact, he may have just about emptied the account. Harley says that in everything we do, we are either making deposits or withdrawals in our love banks, and urges that we always be trying to build up those accounts, just as we would be interested in building our own personal savings accounts. Sometimes couples make so many withdrawals from each other's account that the love bank is empty. They have no feeling left for each other. When the husband needs support from the wife, it's not there because he hasn't made any deposits for a long time. When the

wife needs the husband to listen compassionately, he doesn't because she hasn't done much for him lately. Both of them are “bouncing checks” like crazy.

Caring Network Resources

➤ http://www.caringnetwork.ca/Wisdom/Spouse_Building/Spo useBuildingIndex.htm

Christadelphian Resources

- http://www.caregroup.org.au/vic/A4_Marriage.htm#MARRIAGE
- Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation seminars: <http://wcfoundation.org/index.htm> *The Dynamics of Marriage and Family* (5-9 sessions) *Spouse Building* (2 day workshop—starts Friday night)
- Steps to True Marriage, by Bro. Harry Tennant
- Building a Marriage: produced by the Christadelphian Care Group (UK)

Christian Books and Resources

- Sex Begins in the Kitchen, by Dr. Kevin Leman
- His Needs – Her Needs; Building an Affair-Proof Marriage, by Willard Harley, Jr.
- Intimate Issues, by Linda Dillow & Lorraine Pintus
- The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate, by Gary Chapman
- Marriage: From Surviving to Thriving, by Chuck Swindoll
- Love and Respect, by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs
- <http://www.insight.org/site/PageServer>. Click on “Archives”, then scroll through broadcasts topics

Please direct comments, suggestions, or useful resources to Sis Jennifer Daniel, 250 656.2396; 8583 Sansum Park Dr. N. Saanich, BC V8L 4V7 jenniferdaniel@telus.net