

- ***The Marriage Masterpiece*** (by Al Janssen)* unveils the beauty of God's design for every marriage.
- ***The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*** (by Timothy Keller with Kathy Keller)* Essential reading for anyone who wants to know God and love more deeply in this life.
- ***What Does She Want from Me, Anyway? Honest Answers to the Questions Men Ask About Women*** (Holly Faith Phillips)* The author responds to questions she's heard men asking about the women in their lives.

Websites: Both family.org and familylife.com provide online collections of marriage articles, resources, assessments and referrals representing the best of Christian marriage support.

All the resources listed are intended to give you a thought provoking perspective on Christian marriage. None are intended to replace the Bible and the counsel of Holy Spirit as our ultimate guides.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

At Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church, we regularly offer opportunities for marriage enrichment. Our Christian Education team tries to have a course that focuses on marital relationships at least once a year. Keep an eye on the church bulletin for information about upcoming events.

Recent offerings have included:

The Marriage Course, which combines a date night in a romantic setting with video teaching. Couples discuss issues presented on their own, at the privacy of their own table.

Financial Peace University, a 9-week course to give coaching on personal finances, a stumbling block in many marriages.

Building A Strong Marriage



HomePointe
Pointers

Building a God-Honoring Marriage

From the Staff at Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church
With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families

No one plans to become a broken family or a miserable couple. We marry because we yearn for a life-long, thriving relationship. As Tim Keller points out, "even the best marriage cannot by itself fill the void left in our souls by God". So, how can believers become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE – Discover God’s Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God’s relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a "profound mystery" because it is a picture of "Christ and the church."

PRIORITY TWO: Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today’s civil marriages are much like business contracts—easy to get into and easy to get out of. God’s covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people weren’t faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime—in sickness and health, for better or worse. They don’t threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE: Pursue a Passionate Marriage

Couples aren’t supposed to just stick it out and find a way to make their marriages survive. God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God.

PRIORITY FOUR: Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ’s sacrifice directly to marriage: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25) and "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands" (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

PRIORITY FIVE: Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the "devil a foothold" in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

(*Available for check out at the Faith@Home Center)

- ***Boundaries in Marriage*** (by Henry Cloud and John Townsend)* Learn when to say yes, and when to say no- to your spouse and to others, in order to make the most of your marriage.
- ***Love and Respect*** (by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs)* discusses a powerful biblical model for each spouse understanding and meeting the other’s most deeply felt need.
- ***Preventing Divorce*** (McPherson and Biehl)* Fun questions for facilitating discussion on a variety of issues.
- ***Simply Romantic Nights Kit*** (from Family Life Ministries)* Discover intimacy in a new light using a series of his/her date night ideas.
- ***Sacred Marriage*** (by Gary Thomas) Your marriage is more than a sacred covenant with another person. It is a spiritual discipline designed to help you know God better, trust him more fully and love him more deeply.
- ***Tender Love: God’s Gift of Sexual Intimacy*** (by Bill Hybels)* is a guide to enjoying God’s gift of sexual intimacy.
- ***The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*** (Gary Chapman)* Do you feel like you and your spouse speak two different languages? Dr. Chapman helps you identify, learn and speak your spouse’s primary "love language".
- ***The Marriage Book*** (by Nicky and Sila Lee)* Full of practical advice, this book is easy to read, and is designed to help prepared, build and even mend marriages.