

A Principled Marriage!



OUR CONTEXT

I have enjoyed the privilege (and sometimes wild ride) of engaging in pre-marital and marriage counseling with numerous couples over my years as a teacher, counselor, and elder. It has always been amazing to me how much time and money goes into a wedding day - and how proportionately little time goes toward preparing to build a fruitful marriage.

We were as dumb as rocks (inexperienced) when we married (well, at least I was), yet our Father has been amazingly gracious to Burney and me. He has been with us "through good times and bad, sickness and health, in wealth and poverty" as well as immaturity and times of rigorous growth. Side by side with our good friends we have picked up a few things in the process - so here you go!

My Strong Home.com
A Principled Marriage

A healthy marriage is based upon principle. From the beginning marriage was intended to provide companionship and partnership for the needs and rigors of life.

When it comes right down to it, I wonder how many men and women would be willing to give anything to find one life partner that could fulfill the needs of friend, lover, partner and companion? I am frightened and saddened to think of a generation of enlightened and independent once-married men and women living out lives of loneliness and isolation, when an effective (and principled) marriage is within everyone's grasp.

We have had to work hard to be such partners. By discovering principles and continuing to rededicate ourselves to those principles, we have built the foundation and rooms of our marriage home. This has often occurred despite our shortcomings!

The first subject we consider is the Stages of Marriage. It is hard as newlyweds to even comprehend the big picture on an enduring marriage. As we understand and apply His principles we can step around the tapestry to see the reverse side of a progressing but not yet finished product. In our microwave world it is difficult to conceive that an enduring marriage is built slowly, step by step, layer by layer.

These foundations are carefully established as we grow together in the first five to ten years of a marriage. What it means to be partners, how our original families impact us, and our developed communication abilities all have a significant bearing on the condition (or existence) of our long term relationship. How we come to terms with our mutually defined standards for romance and how we plan together in pursuit of our hopes and dreams impact the quality and longevity of our relationship and oneness.

**The next page describes and outlines the stages of marriage.
Review the stages and answer these questions:**

1. In which stage do we currently find ourselves? _____
2. In which stages have we experienced success? _____
3. In what stages have we blown it? _____
4. Do we have a view toward an enduring marriage? _____
5. How effective have we been at achieving oneness in our relationship?

Listen to the video "A Principled Marriage."

The Stages of Marriage

1 GROWING UP

Through our childhood, young adulthood, and single life we formulate a view of marriage. This is influenced by our parents and relatives, peers, reading and other forms of media, as well as our various encounters with the opposite sex. It is during these years that we formulate our answer to the question:

What do I think that marriage involves?

2 DATING & COURTSHIP

As we enter into puberty we experience such things as infatuation and understanding the basics of the beginnings of commitment. Here we are concerned with acceptance, establishing and living up to values, developing interests, and experiencing the fulfillment of our needs through romance. Here we ask the question:

What do I hope that marriage will bring to me?

3 COMMITMENT & BUILDING

Here we face the realities of married life. The honeymoon is over, the newness is worn off. We either learn and grow or fall to independence and conflict of the will. It is time to work and surrender to a new marriage system. It is time to accept and modify the two family systems we brought into the relationship. It is time to solidify our mutual commitment to the purpose for our marriage, and to establish a marriage that follows higher principles. Here we ask the question:

What am I willing to give to my marriage?

4 GROWING & PERSEVERING

Deep and enduring affections characterize this stage of marriage. We have established our values and interests and shared our lives with one another. We continue to grow individually and together. We are becoming older and have the choice to turn and help those who are younger. We ask ourselves the question (and hope we are happy with the answer):

Am I able to appreciate/accept what my marriage is becoming?