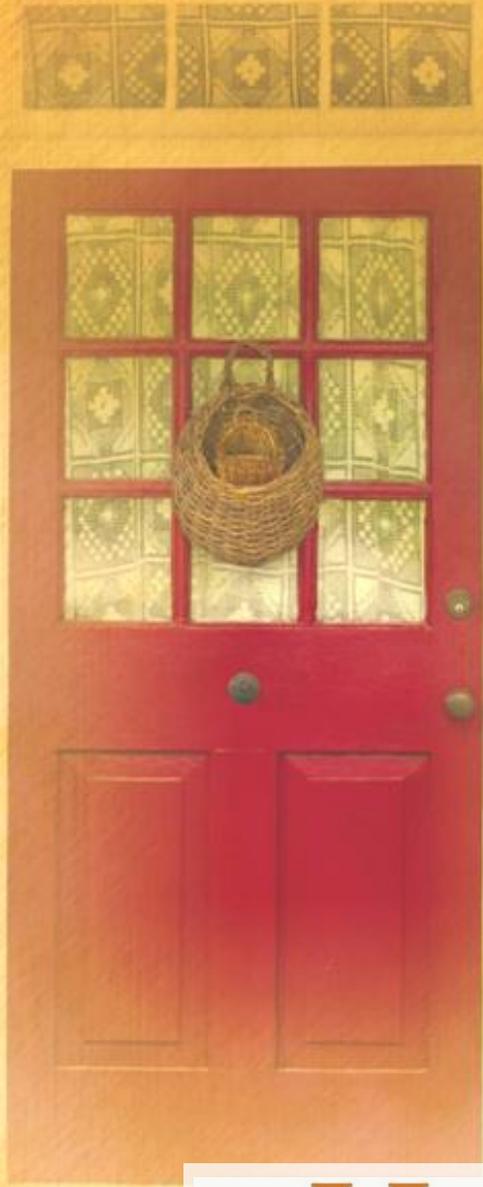


# Building A Strong Marriage



@Home 

*Painters*

# **Building a God-Honoring Marriage**

*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. 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:

- ***The Marriage Masterpiece*** (by Al Janssen) unveils the beauty of God's design for every marriage.
- ***Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem*** (by Dennis and Barbara Rainey) shows why one of the most vital ingredients in a marriage today is to build one another's self-esteem.
- ***Fall In Love, Stay In Love*** (by Willard Harley Jr.) explains why and how to stay in love by protecting each other and the love they've created.
- ***Fit To Be Tied*** (by Bill and Lynee Hybels) offers creative ways to "court" your spouse and a guide to resolving conflicts instead of driving them underground.
- ***A Celebration of Sex*** (by Dr. Douglas Rosenau) is a guide to enjoying God's gift of sexual intimacy.
- ***Simply Romantic Nights Kit*** (from Family Life Ministries) Discover intimacy in a new light using a series of his/her date night ideas.

### Also, Available in the FBC Library for Check Out:

***The Five Love Languages*** by Gary Chapman  
***The Many Loves of Marriage*** by Thomas and Mary Kinkade  
***Boundaries in Marriage*** by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend  
***Making Love Last Forever*** by Gary Smalley  
***Marriage from Surviving to Thriving*** by Charles R. Swindoll

### Recommended Websites:

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

## GOING FURTHER - Church Support

**Adult Sunday School Bible study groups** offer a great place for couples to meet and connect with other adults and develop healthy relationships. These are ongoing groups that meet each Sunday morning, and often share in times of fellowship and ministry outside the class setting.

**Marriage-related events** at FBC, such as marriage-enrichment seminars or classes, offer help and support to married and engaged couples, as well as single adults who desire to get married. Even great marriages can be better. Subjects covered in these type events help build and/or strengthen marriage relationships based on solid biblical principles that reveal God's design and plan for marriage. He wants every marriage to be *great!*

Through our **on-line equipping resource, RightNow Training**, couples can access a number of video-driven "short courses" on a variety of marriage, parenting, and family-related topics. These can be powerful teaching segments, as well as great discussion starters between partners. Perhaps best of all, you can access them at your convenience, any time of day from anywhere you have Internet access, including a smart phone. There's no cost to you, and you'll have access to thousands of resources and study courses on all types of topics. E-mail [keith@fbcterrell.org](mailto:keith@fbcterrell.org) if you'd like to sign-up for access to RightNow Training.