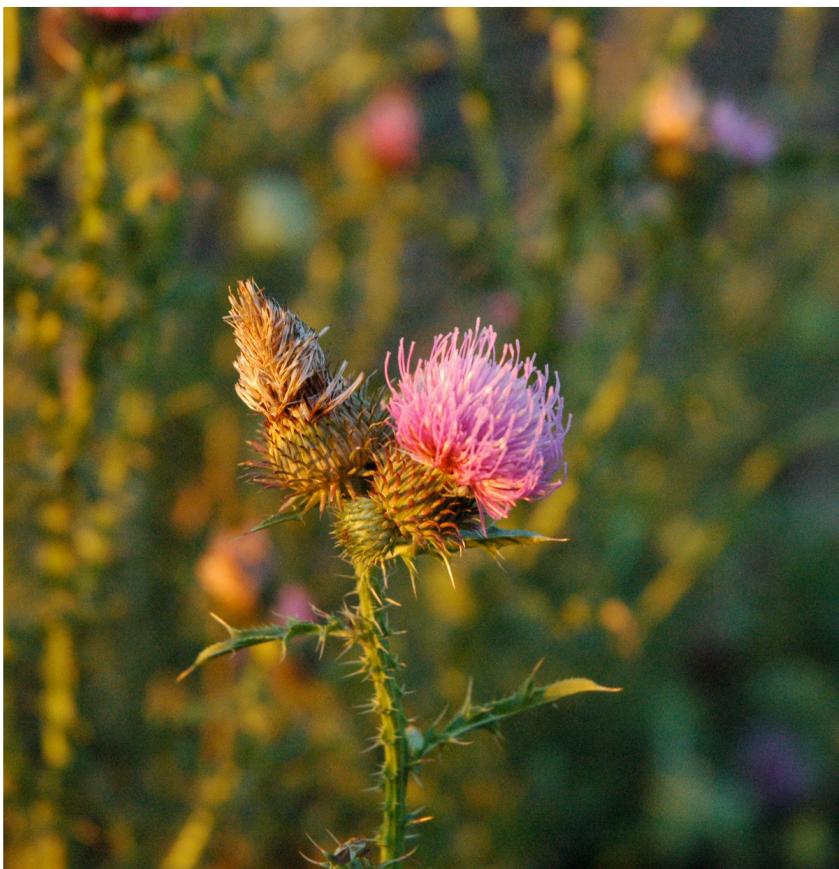


Apostolic Marriage Counseling



Simon Peter Chappell

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Marriage Counseling

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Proverbs 18:22

My most brilliant achievement was my ability to be able to persuade my wife to marry me.

Winston Churchill

Marriage is the largest commitment that you'll make in the physical. A relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, God of the universe, is the only decision that can top marriage for size and seriousness. A relationship with the Lord and a marriage are both entirely spiritual, although you follow through in the physical.

This being the case, marriage should be considered and subsequently entered into with a careful and deliberate attitude. There are few pains in this world that can exceed those felt in a bad marriage, so it is vitally important to have a good marriage.

The scriptures abound with a plethora of guidance and advice for those about to become or who already are married. This advice comes straight from the one who invented marriage, so ignore it at your own peril. The good news is that the Lord wants you to have a successful and dynamic marriage! Your pastor also wants

you to be successful. This means that you have some powerful help in your corner!

Marriage is a great institution. It would not have stood the test of time (about six thousand years) otherwise! Strong, successful, marriages are the bedrock foundation of good churches and great nations. While we enter into them for our own personal good, it is nice to know that we are selflessly aiding our church and our country at the same time.

I am not trying to score any points or make anyone like me with anything said here. I am 100% interested in helping you have a good marriage. The price you pay for a good marriage is careful selection of your spouse before the wedding and hard work afterwards. As the old marriage wisdom goes:

Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, and half-shut afterwards.

Benjamin Franklin

What Is Marriage?

The nation needs to return to the colonial way of life, when a wife was judged by the amount of wood she could split.

W.C. Fields

Invented By God

- Marriage was invented by God.
- The moment the Lord realized that Adam was lonely, he made Eve.

And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Genesis 2:21-22

- The woman was made from the rib of Adam.
- This means that she is from the same raw material.
- And she is from his side, so she is created to be by his side.

And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:23-24

- A man and his wife are to join together.
- This joining causes them to become one flesh.
- This is primarily a spiritual joining.
- Naturally, there is also a physical join.
 - Certain chemicals in the body are released during contact and these cause changes in the brain and behavior that bond a husband and his wife to each other.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:25

- There should be no shame about being together.

Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Hebrews 13:4

- Everything about marriage is good and honorable.
- And every aspect of physical joining is highly approved.

A Joining Together

- Marriage is often described in the scriptures as a joining together of the man and woman into one flesh.

- A married couple should share many things.
- All finances should be shared and all accounts be joint.
 - The only caveat here is if one of the partners brings financial challenges or has a history of bad financial behavior.
 - Even if separate accounts are chosen, there should still be a joint bill-paying account that both pay into when able.
- All owned property should be in both names.
 - If you are ready to put a ring on her finger, be ready to put her name on your stuff.
 - This will mostly apply to real estate property and vehicles.
- Shared goals are vital.
 - If you are both aiming at different things, neither of you will hit your targets.
- Shared values will help you address your goals in compatible fashion.
 - A shared goal could be to accumulate money.
 - A shared value of honesty will eliminate robbing banks as an option for achieving that goal.
- There are some things that both partners will not share.
- It is your personal responsibility to work on your marriage.
 - If one slacks on their marriage, the other does not receive any blame.
- As the leader of the home, the husband is responsible for everything.
 - Even if a matter is delegated, he is responsible to ensure that it is done.

Spiritual And Physical

- Marriage has both a spiritual and a physical component.

- We will look at both these sides of marriage.
- A good marriage will have a careful balance of these components held in equilibrium by commitment from both the husband and the wife.

Marriage 1.0

- This is the marriage that most people think of when they're getting married.
- Historically, marriage has always been the purview of the church.
- A minister would perform the marriage ceremony and would declare the couple married.
- No certificates required.
- The marriage was according to the scriptural directions.
- One man, marrying one woman.
- Love, honor, cherish and obey.
- Until death do us part.
- United by God in the presence of witnesses.
- The definition unchanging because it was wholly based on the scriptures.
- And, as any researcher of genealogy could tell you, the record of the marriage would be stored at the church.
- Zero government involvement.

Marriage 2.0

- Marriage is no longer what it was.
- This happened when the government involved itself in marriage, issuing licenses and taxing people differently when they were married.
- Nobody has a version 1.0 marriage any more.

- Even if you think you do, you don't.
- Unlike a scriptural marriage who's definition doesn't change, the version 2.0 marriage is whatever the government says it is.
- These changes can happen after the ceremony.
- For example, biblical marriage has no concept of "no fault divorce".
- Yet, the government passed a law declaring that divorce could be for no fault on either side.
- And now, everyone has that option in their marriage, from that point forward.
 - Even if they did not want that option in their marriage.
- It is important to remember this going into marriage.
- Both spouses need to intend the same version of marriage or it can go wrong quickly.
- A marriage version 1.0 spouse who believes that marriage is forever, will likely be upset if the other spouse takes a version 2.0 view and decides that it's easier to leave than work through issues.

Reading List

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

We guys may never arrive at a point where we understand our wives, but it is possible to learn about them. The scripture encourages us to be knowledgeable about our wives and books are an excellent source of good knowledge.

Ladies, we guys are less complicated than you, but still sufficiently different that you would be well advised to read up on how we think and operate.

The following books are ones that I have read and felt to be useful. Please start with the strongly recommended ones and then work through the others as you have time or opportunity. A few are more targeted towards men or women, but they can be safely read by both sexes.

Strongly Recommended To Purchase

- “Love and Respect” by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. (Thomas Nelson. ISBN: 978-1-59145-187-7)
- “His Needs, Her Needs” by Willard F. Harley, Jr. (Revell. ISBN: 0-8007-1788-0)
- “The Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman. (Northfield. ISBN: 1-881273-15-6)

Mostly For The Guys

- “No More Mr. Nice Guy” by Dr. Robert A. Glover. (Running Press. ISBN: 978-0-7624-1533-5)

Mostly For The Ladies

- “The Proper Care And Feeding Of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. (Harper. ISBN: 978-0060520625)
- “Romancing Your Husband” by Debra White Smith. (Harvest House. ISBN: 0-7369-0606-1)

Others Worth Reading

- “The Total Money Makeover” by Dave Ramsey. (Thomas Nelson. ISBN: 978-1595550781)
- “The Marriage-Go-Round” by Judy Segraves. (Word Aflame Press. ISBN: 0-932581-64-1)
- “One Flesh” by Bob Yandian. (Creation House. ISBN: 0-88419-380-2)
- “Before The Ring” by William L. Coleman. (Discovery House. ISBN: 1-57293-133-7)

Spouse Selection

One should choose a wife with the ears, rather than with the eyes.

French Proverb

If you get everything else wrong in your marriage, you need to get this one aspect right. You can circle back around and fix almost everything else, but you can't re-pick your spouse!

There are few aspects of spouse selection that are guaranteed to bring success or failure, but each aspect can contribute positively or negatively. Therefore, consider each of the following aspects carefully and ensure that your prospective spouse to be has as many positive qualities as possible before making the final commitment.

Not trying to put anyone off of anything, but these are all perfectly reasonable points to consider.

Saved Or Unsaved

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:14

- Marriage was invented as a religious institution.
- As a religious institution it works best with both partners being believers.
- Any other combination than two believers is sub-optimal.

- For this reason, the Lord warns believers not to be married to unbelievers.
- If your prospective spouse is unsaved, the scriptures are clear that it is unwise to marry them.

History

- In biblical times, the vast majority of marriages were first marriages for both partners.
- This meant that the prospective spouse's history was very simple to understand.
- Both partners were virgins and never previously married.
- In this day and age, such simple situations are becoming increasingly rare.
- Nevertheless, it is important to take into account the prospective spouse's previous history of relationships or marriages.
- Understand that your prospective spouse will be the sum of all of their previous relationships.
- They may have emotional baggage or physical consequences that they bring with them.
 - Children or STDs are classic examples of this.

Age Difference

- Typical age differences in marriages these days seem to be the husband being between two and four years older than the wife.
- There is no rule about this, but given that most people marry young, this shows the relative difference in age of people for the same level of maturity.
- People tend to marry people of a similar maturity rather than similar ages.

- That said, too much age difference can be unhealthy in a relationship.

Parent's Relationship

- While your relationship will be with your spouse, your spouse has been trained by their parent's example.
- The relationship that they saw lived before them during their formative years will be the model that they bring into the marriage.
- If the parents argue a lot, guess what, so will you.
- If they avoided confrontation, then your marriage will be quiet, but nothing will ever be solved.
- If there was ever abusive behavior between the parents, then abuse has a potential to rear its head in your marriage.
- Think of your marriage turning into the average of both sets of parent's marriages.
- It's a helpful sign if both sets of parents are still married and enjoying being married.
- Also take into account the power dynamic in both parental relationships.
- If there are strong mothers and weak fathers, or weak mothers and strong fathers, this dynamic has a strong chance of leaking into your marriage.

Her Mother

- As well as the general state of the parents marriage, it is useful to observe the wife to be's mother.
- It is generally observed that most women turn into their mother.
- Your mother-in-law is your wife in twenty years or so.
 - Somewhat in looks, but more in attitude and behavior.

His Father

- Not just picking on the ladies here.
- Guys have a tendency to turn into their fathers.
- Your father-in-law is your husband in twenty years or so.
 - Somewhat in looks, but more in attitude and behavior.

Known Health Issues

- Does your prospective spouse have any known medical or health issues?
- In the same way that medical insurance companies want to know about pre-existing conditions, so should you.
- If your prospective spouse has a medical condition, understand that you are bringing that condition into your house and your children may literally inherit it.

Respectful And Loving Behavior

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

Ephesians 5:33

- This is important to be found in both partners in a marriage.
- Husbands are more attuned to whether behavior is respectful or disrespectful than wives.
- Wives are better at detecting loving versus unloving behavior.
- So husbands generally need to work on adding loving behavior into the mix of their natural tendencies.
- And wives generally need to work on adding respectful behavior into their mix of natural tendencies.

Previous Partner Count

- Ideally, this should be zero for both partners.
 - Some circumstances like a spouse dying after a faithful and monogamous marriage, should not be counted negatively.
- Where the partner count is not zero, remember that you will be forever competing with all the previous partners in the relationship and especially the bedroom.
- In this day and age of rampant STDs, both partners should consider getting tested for STDs.

Personality Types

- The phrase about opposites attracting is true.
- But not everyone you are attracted to is going to be a good candidate to be your spouse.
- For reasons covered elsewhere, passive guys and strong women don't do well together.

About The Author

Pastor Simon Peter Chappell is the pastor of New Life United Pentecostal Church in Dodgeville, Wisconsin in the United States of America. Pastor Chappell moved to the United States from England in 1994 and has lived in Dodgeville since 1998, pastoring the congregation there since 2007. He describes himself as a “recycled atheist” and gives the Lord all the glory for bringing him out of the hopelessness of unbelief.

Pastor Chappell is happily married and keeps busy raising three minions. He loves God, writing, guns, cats, bacon, good tea, photography, esoteric programming languages, martial arts and lots of other guy stuff.

Pastor Chappell’s personal blog may be found at <http://simonpeter.org/>, a mix of interesting projects may be found at <http://simonpeter.com/> and he tweets at <https://twitter.com/SimonPChappell>.

The church website is at <http://newlife-upc.org/> and the church tweets at https://twitter.com/NewLife_UPC.

Colophon

The cover image is a photograph by the author, taken around Iowa County one lovely fall evening.