

Reading: I Corinthians 13:1-13

Topic: Strengthening Your Marriage

INTRODUCTION: People spend a lot of time, money, planning and _____ for their wedding day, and when the big _____ is over, one has the memories and the pictures to remember the special day. However, many people give so much for the wedding but do not make plans to prepare for the actual _____ that follows after. An old proverb states, "A wedding lasts for a _____ but a marriage lasts for a lifetime." That is the will of God, but some do not last because they do not do the things required to make marriage work.

I. BE KIND TO EACH OTHER:

A. Fruit Of The Spirit:

1. One elder pastor with many years of experience stated that there is no reason that two _____, the husband and wife who are supposed to be Christians, should not be able to get along with each other and just be _____ to one another. Eph. 4:31,32
2. When two people, husband and wife, are both Christians, their lives should produce the _____ of the Spirit which includes _____ and kindness. Gal. 5:22,23
3. The fruit of the Spirit is produced in a life when one is filled with the _____ of God and that happens daily when one gives themselves to _____ and worship. Eph. 5:18

B. Speak & Act Kindly:

1. Unfortunately, it can happen that husbands and wives can become unkind to each _____ and treat one another in a manner that they would never treat another _____ or acquaintance.
2. Sometimes the pressures of _____ can cause us to become irritable and frustrated but we need to learn not to take out our frustrations on the one who is _____ to us.

II. SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER:

A. No Longer Single:

1. Before marriage, we were single and somewhat used to doing everything _____, but now we have been given a partner to _____ our lives with. Mk. 10:7,8
2. This God designed plan of marriage reveals the benefits and _____ of having someone to help us with our work, our challenges, our problems and _____ that we used to face alone. Gen. 24:67

B. In Word & Deed:

1. Marriage should be a partnership in which the man and woman work together as a _____, with each one helping the other to accomplish their goals and _____. Ecc. 4:9-12
2. Words of encouragement are much more helpful than _____ and fault-finding words, thus if one feels the support of the other partner, they will be motivated to do even _____ than before.
3. Helping in encouraging _____ is great, but also practical help in doing physical _____ to assist one's spouse will forge a bond of _____ and encouragement that speaks louder than words.
4. When both husband and wife are working, agreement should be made to _____ the workload of chores and duties at the _____, not leaving it all for one person to do it alone. Gal. 6:2

III. TAKE TIME TO BE TOGETHER:

A. Life Is Busy:

1. In today's modern world there are so many things that take up our _____ and do not leave us much time to spend together _____, which is needful.
2. Work, school, kids, church, activities, etc. all are things that we get _____ in and some of them are absolute necessities, but it can leave us with no _____ for each other.

B. Plan For Together Time:

1. If you do not plan and _____ time for each other, you will probably not do it very often, and this can lead to drifting apart emotionally and physically in your _____ bond.
2. If possible, plan times together alone – perhaps a date night twice a month, or a day _____ outside the city to get _____ and refresh yourselves.

C. Physical Touch:

1. When people are courting and in the process of _____ in love, one of the things that begins to happen is the desire to be _____ to one another – sitting together, holding hands, etc.
2. When the marriage takes place, the process of physical _____ moves from the casual to God designed lovemaking with kissing and sexual activity which forms a _____ between husband and wife.
3. It is important to keep the physical contact of the marriage _____, even after the years go by – to show affection and _____, not just for sex, but a hug, a pat on the hand or shoulder for encouragement, and to show concern when one or the other is hurting. Mt. 19:5,6
4. When the physical contact between husband and wife is neglected, it can open a _____ to a desire for one or the other to start looking elsewhere for _____ and affection. Gen. 26:8

IV. SPIRITUAL LIFE:

A. Personal:

1. When one is disciplined in their _____ with God and the time is given daily to personal prayer and reading of the _____ of God, the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested instead of carnality. Mt. 6:6
2. When personal prayer and the Word of God are neglected, the _____ side of our nature will begin to be manifested, leading to unkind _____ and conflicts. James 4:1

B. Together:

1. It is wise and spiritually beneficial for a husband and wife to also take time to _____ together, even if it is just for a short time each _____.
2. We need to remember that we are also a son and daughter of _____, and a brother and sister in Christ so we need to strengthen and encourage one another in our spiritual _____. Col. 3:19

CONCLUSION: It has been stated that marriage is like a garden – if you take time to _____ for it in a proper manner, it will produce many _____ things. However, if you neglect it, like a garden, you will end up with weeds and thorns that will choke out the good things. So let us be wise and work at strengthening our marriages.