

Building A Marriage That Lasts

How something is built makes a huge difference as to how long it will last. This is true about furniture, cars, houses – and even marriages! God has certainly intended for marriages to last a lifetime (Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2-3). Sadly, many marriages (often around 50%) do not last – and others that do last are often only a shell of what they could/should be. Like with a house, the difference between a marriage that lasts and thrives and those that do not are how they are built. Therefore, let's look at how we can build marriages that last today.

1) Follow the right blueprint. Selecting the right blueprint/pattern is critical for any project. In marriage, many marriages will simply not last because they are following a blueprint that does not actually contain the right components. Some blueprints people follow today when building their marriages are: Family, friends, cultural expectations, media, celebrities, human “experts,” human opinions, false religious teaching, etc. However, building a marriage that lasts (and thrives) requires building according to God's perfect blueprint in His word (Proverbs 3:5-7; 2 Timothy 1:13)! After all, God is the all-knowing Architect who has masterfully created and designed both people and marriage (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, 18-25). As you consider how to build your marriage, then, you must recognize that God's inspired word in the Bible will fully equip you to do so successfully (2 Timothy 3:16-17)! This will both help the unmarried know who to marry and help the married know how to conduct themselves in the marriage.

2) Set the right foundation. The first major phase of construction on a house is to lay a strong foundation (as a house will only ever be as strong as its foundation). Sadly, based on faulty blueprints, many marriages are built on weak foundations. These include: Physical attraction, children, physically-focused goals, hobbies, convenience, etc. While

none of these are wrong to be included in a marriage, they will always fail to provide a strong foundation because they simply do not last (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)! Instead of physically-focused foundations, God's word urges people to dig deep to build the proper foundation in life (Luke 6:46-49). This requires removing everything that does not last in order to establish a strong foundation. A marriage that lasts (and thrives) will be focused on helping each other live to please God and impacting others to please God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 1 Peter 3:1-2; Ephesians 6:4). Having the foundation of Jesus Christ and obeying His words will require both husband and wife to make this the focus of their lives and their marriage.

3) Build carefully using the right materials. Since a house is the totality of all the materials used to build it, using the wrong materials will result in it not being as strong and well-built as it could be. In marriage, many follow the wrong blueprint so as to make faulty choices relative to their marriages. These decisions include things related to: Words spouses use to communicate with each other, roles in the marriage, individual character, how to raise children, finances, religion, work, family, conflict management, sex, etc. However, for a marriage that follows God's blueprint and is built firmly upon Jesus Christ, each spouse will be diligently seeking to know and obey whatever God's law and wisdom teaches in each of these areas. For example, this marriage will seek to implement the roles God has specified (Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7), put on the kind of individual character that both honors God and is a blessing to the marriage (Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 5:3-12), pursue sexual purity within the marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Matthew 5:27-30), establish the right perspective concerning physical and monetary things (Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Timothy 6:6-10), etc. When God's word is used to make every

decision, the marriage will be strong! Then, every decision must be carefully implemented with love, which is the perfect bond of unity (Colossians 3:14; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

4) Perform regular maintenance. Although the initial work of building a house will be completed, homeowners recognize that a house is never really finished (as there is regular upkeep, repairs, and various work that needs done to keep the house from falling into disrepair). In the same way, a marriage that follows God's blueprint, is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and obedience to His words, and is built carefully by following God's wisdom and instruction in each area can still quickly fall apart without careful maintenance. To maintain the marriage, therefore, both individuals will need to evaluate themselves and their marriage regularly (2 Corinthians 13:5). Take time to look into the pages of God's word so that you and your marriage continues to grow and mature in the Lord over time (James 1:21-25; 1 Peter 2:2-3; 2 Peter 1:3-11). Seek to learn more from God's word each day (Acts 17:10-12) and then let God's word teach you what you need to know, rebuke you when you are in error, show you the way to make corrections, and equip you to live in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If both spouses will prayerfully seek God in this way and communicate with each other in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7), the marriage will grow!

God's word tells you everything you need to know about how to build a marriage that lasts and thrives! While you and your spouse are free to build your marriage any way you would like, be warned that building in any other way will *always* result in a marriage that fails to meet its potential. Therefore, since God's blueprint for marriage simply cannot be improved upon, you must commit yourself to building your marriage God's way!

Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What are some key lessons learned from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correction: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this teaching to be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work?