



# **BUILDING ON A ROCK SOLID MARRIAGE**

## **5 Day Bible Plan**

**BASED ON THE BOOK "WHAT LOVE IS NOT"**



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## Day 1: Plan Ahead

A marriage that works takes work. It takes planning. Harvey McKay once said "When you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

It is so important to have a mission statement and a vision statement for your marriage. A mission statement is short term, while the latter is broader and long term. Think of mission statements as little stepping stones to get you to your destination. A marriage shares some of its aspects to that of running a business. In order to keep that business from failing within the first 5 years, you need a solid plan which consists of mission statements, leading up to your grander vision. Which is your final goal. Practice this fine art even before entering your marriage. Habbakuk 2:2 says "...Write the vision and make it plain upon tablets so that a herald may run with it".

Many get into marriage blindly, and with the fear of failure. Not knowing if they will even make it past the first 5 years. This is why it is so important you both discuss your dreams, desires and goals together. Draw up a plan of your expectations. Do you plan to have children? If so, do you want them right away? Do you plan to buy a house? Do you want to start a business? If so, what timeline are you looking at? Have a plan for where you are going by discussing these issues, so that when life happens, you have something to fall back on.

### Scripture References:

Habakkuk 2:2 "And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."

### Exercise:

Put some time aside to sit down together and have a heart-to-heart talk. Be totally open with each other about your goals. Then, write them down. You may even choose to get a large vision board to help you visualize and track each step. Create a timeline and revisit it together on a regular basis.

## **Day 2: When The Plan Falls Apart:**

Add a little bit of On day one, we talked about having a plan--a mission and a vision statement for your marriage. But there's also another side to this.

What happens when the plan falls apart? Proverbs 19:21 assures us that we may have a plan, but God's is the one that ultimately prevails. We are to use wisdom and proper judgement to guide us straight from the principles in God's word. But even so, there may be times when we've done the best we could, and something completely unexpected happens. Like the rug has been pulled from beneath you. A death in the family. A job loss. It's how you respond that makes all the difference. Perhaps it's a test. Are you willing to trust God in the process? Or perhaps, God is closing a door to open a bigger door. He may be protecting you from something worse. Whatever the case, choose to trust and lean on God. Rather than seeing these things as an obstacle, and allowing them to put a wedge between you and your spouse, use these circumstances as opportunities to get closer to God and each other. You will find that you will have to tweak or sometimes even scrap your mission statement altogether. While the vision remains, the strategies may change along the way. Remain pliable to God's plan and learn to listen to God's voice during those times.

### **Scripture References:**

Proverbs 19:21 "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

### **Exercise:**

Think about a short term goal and talk about a 'plan b' together in preparation that your plans may change. Make sure you write down all the details as a point of reference and clarity. Brainstorming together is a good way to enhance your team building skills.

## **Day 3: Marriage is Ministry**

On day 2, we talked about planning and what to do when it all falls apart. With that in mind, it's important to recognize that your marriage is your first ministry.

After God, comes your marriage. Even if you are doing "the Lord's work", this rule still applies. When two become one, it means just that. You are considered one unit. Once you shift your mind-set to this reality, you begin to see life as one big team project. Talk about your passions and your gifts and if it isn't obvious, ask God to show you how you can merge them together.

How do your gifts as well as your differences compliment those of your spouse? Remember, God put you together for a greater purpose. Not just to fulfill one another by having nice a house, 2.5 children and a white picket fence. There is a greater picture--to glorify God. You are kingdom builders--together. Where one is weak, the other may be strong. Where one is blind, the other can see. Your differences are meant to compliment each other. You were not designed to pursue your own agenda. Nor are you to pursue ministry alone. Not only can this drive a wedge in your marriage, but it can ultimately lead to burn-out. Your spouse is not your competition, they are your partner! This ought to reflect in the practical everyday mundane things, right down to the large complex decisions. Your ministry is their ministry.

### **Scripture References:**

Mark 10:8 "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh."

1 Timothy 3:5 "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

### **Exercise:**

Write down a list of all your gifts and strengths, and compare notes. Find ways to make these things work for you. Perhaps one person is a highly organized and a great administrator while the other is very creative and has a passion for dance. You may consider running the church youth program together, or eventually opening a studio one day. The possibilities are endless. Most importantly, pray that God will put a passion within you, and that He will make you ready vessels to do the work you were created to do.

## Day 4: Rock Solid Foundation

Over the last few days, we discussed planning ahead, when the plan fails, and that marriage is ministry.

In order to determine whether all those things will really work, you need to assess what foundation your marriage is built on. Is it on Christ? Matthew 7:24-27 is a true eye opener. It talks about the man who built his house on solid rock, verses the man who built on the sand. If you can recall how the story goes, the man whose house was built on the sand crumbled when the first storm came along. When your foundation is on Christ, it can be likened to the man who built on solid rock. Your marriage must be built on biblical principles that are timeless, effective and fool proof. The marriage is then secure because you are following directions straight from the Architect. When the storms of life come your way, and you're not sure what to do, you go to the manual. When you build and maintain your foundation with prayer, faith, focus, commitment, humility and wisdom, your marriage becomes reinforced and insured. There will always be storms--it is expected! When you both agree in prayer on a matter, you can rest assured that God will answer! When you have faith, he makes your path straight. When you keep focused, you avoid distractions. When you stay committed, it builds momentum and drive, while humility brings out the best in each other and allows for pliability.

Lastly, wisdom brings clarity and guidance in times of confusion.

### Scripture References:

Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

### Exercise:

Write down this checklist and post it where you can see it daily. Revisit it together regularly to keep yourselves and each other in check:

- Pray together and individually
- Faith in God
- Focus on the vision God's given you
- Commitment to stay the course
- Humility towards your spouse
- Wisdom from God's Word and Holy Spirit

## **Day 5: Money and Debt Management**

On the previous days, we discussed the importance of planning ahead, when the plan fails, marriage is ministry and building on a solid foundation. Lastly, we will introduce a touchy subject. Money. When you talk about money, people get funny! It's a tough subject, but it needs to be dealt with.

Money reveals hearts like nothing else can. When couples master the basic principles of money, the other areas of marriage begin to fall into place. Do you know that finances are listed as one of the top reasons why couples divorce? It's no surprise why, when we dig a little deeper. Often times, couples enter the marriage with a wrong preconceived notion; that they are two separate entities, splitting their lives in half. Counterintuitive to our culture, the bible tells us that two become ONE, in every sense. You share a home, food, ideas, time, a bed, a purpose and your bodies--the most intimate part of ourselves. So then why should money be any different? When your finances are merged, it automatically challenges you to be accountable, and you begin to think like a team. It fosters discipline, maturity, selflessness, and ultimately, unity. When couples begin with the mindset that everything they have is not only each others' but God's first, according to Psalm 24:1, we become more cognizant of how to better steward our money. Once your perspectives are aligned, you can be honest with each other when it comes to how and when to spend your money. You are a team, working together toward one common goal and one purpose. Two minds are better than one!

### **Scripture References:**

Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

### **Exercise:**

Work on creating a budget together and commit to living within it. It's also not a bad idea to consider seeking a financial consultant to better assist you to meet your goals, if necessary. Some other great tips: -Don't spend based on future events or bank on your income tax or a promised gift. -Don't create unnecessary debts. -Pay off your credit card each month -Limit the number of credit cards -Prioritize needs verses wants -Set realistic financial goals and review them periodically -Stay clear of "buy now, pay later" schemes Ultimately, spend your money God's way. Be led by the Holy Spirit when making financial decisions, not your emotions!

We hope you enjoyed this 5 Day marriage plan. Be blessed, as you make your marriage great again--God's way!