

Angie's Marriage Column – March 19, 2015

Top Five Reasons for Successful Marriages

1. Makes God Most Important Part of Life

For the next few weeks we're going to talk about the top five reasons for a successful marriage. First we better define what a successful marriage is. A successful marriage is many things but the ROOT of a successful marriage is:

Successful Marriage Defined

1. Married to first spouse
2. Commitment to spouse and to God

We cannot define a second, third or fourth marriage successful for obvious reasons. Still, even long time married folks have some issues in their marriage as no marriage is perfect and never will be perfect. Even the best of marriages have their ups and their downs, so to speak. Some weeks the marriage may be going grand and the next week something else puts a damper on it. However, committed couples all have one thing in common when the going gets tough, and here it is:

When the storms come, the house still stands because (hopefully) they work out their problems and issues. Couples need to have a forgiving attitude. Without forgiving one another on a daily basis there would be so much unhappiness. Forgiveness and compromising works wonders in marriage.

If you are still married to your first spouse, even though you might be going through problems, your marriage is a success just because YOU'RE STILL MARRIED! Perhaps you have commitment in your heart. Marriage takes work, but it is not laborious work but more of a perception works, getting to know the Lord who created you.

But please understand, this marriage column will encourage you to take a deeper look into why you may be having marriage issues in the first place. It is a bit long, but please go through this study and take your time understanding it. There is a root cause to everything. For an example, if one is constantly getting headaches and all one does it takes pain medication for it, to feel better, how will you ever get to the bottom of “why” you are having headaches in the first place? Marriage is the same way, and that is what we’re going to talk about today.

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. Matthew 7:25

Btw, unresolved issues fester until they get really big and then they pop! Wham! So it’s best to talk out about any problems with each other as they happen, otherwise you might just pop too!

A successful marriage is not built on sand, in fact the foundation of a successful marriage lies with commitment to each other through the good times **and the bad**. So let’s talk some more about that.

5 Top Reasons for a Successful Marriage

- 1. Make God Most Important Part of Life**
2. Has Commitment within their moral fiber
3. Knows and applies proper position in the home
4. Forgiving (understands what “real” love is)
5. Compromise and Resiliency

Just so you know when couples actually do make God first in their lives then automatically all the rest of the reasons for a great marriage on the list become fulfilled too. When we put God, through His Son Jesus Christ FIRST in our lives, we are able to let go of pride and selfishness, which are the two things that keep us from having good relationships in the first place. However, sadly most folks do not know they are carrying around pride and selfishness with them UNTIL THEY MAKE GOD the most important part of their life.

EXAMPLE: The martial command (Gods way for marriage) below cannot be carried out properly without husbands FIRST making God the most important part of his life. It is Christ within us that shows us and guides us to the proper ways to love our wives! Humans do NOT have the spiritual knowledge to truly love the way the Lord loves us, without His help! We NEED Christ!

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...Ephesians 5:25

EXAMPLE: The martial command (Gods way for marriage) below cannot be carried out properly without wives FIRST making God the most important part of her life. It is Christ within us that shows us and guides us to the proper ways to love our husbands.

Therefore as the church is subject (IN SUBMISSION) unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Ephesians 5:24

Now here is something for you, dear reader to consider: If the churches are not subject to Jesus Christ than how on earth can they make the congregation who go to that church LIVE THEIR MARRIAGE IN THE WAYS OF CHRIST?

These are the things that most people do not understand and they perceive their Christian lifestyle through a building 'called church' that is subject to another rather than Christ!!! They may think that Jesus Christ is head of their church but if they have another master they submit their lives/church to, then how can that be?

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Matthew 6:24

And that is something we all must consider before we can go any further with this marriage study. Remember, it's not the DEED of "going to church" it is not the DEED of "tithing" and it is not the DEED of "baptizing" that Christ cares about it is what's in your heart.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16:15

A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart. Proverbs 21:12

Let's get started with talking about the number one reason for a successful marriage. And by the way, if you think someone could use this marriage guidance today, please send it to them.

1. Make God (Jesus Christ) Number One in Your Life

How do we do that? How do we make God the most important aspect of our lives? To put God first, over our own selfish desires and beliefs takes BELIEF and FAITH to know that He exists; it's that simple!

That means we have to take a leap of faith and allow God to go to work in our life by giving up those things we think we need to hang onto, such as thinking "going to church is going to save us", such as unforgiveness, pride, selfishness, addictions and the like.

So many relationships are destroyed because of wrong feelings harbored within us and being controlled by addictions. We cannot just "say" we love God we have to "love God" by trusting in Him. We have to let Him have free rein to go to work in our lives through our personal supplication and interaction with Him. **When we "see" God rectifying problems and issues in our lives is when we begin to have "real" faith in His power over us.**

That means just "going to church" on Sunday and then carrying on with the rest of the week doing whatever we think is best for our life, is not enough to have "real" faith. You see, we're all doubting Thomas to some extent until we actually "see" what God can do to make our life more fulfilled and blessed. This is where personal testimonies come into the picture. Some people have a personal testimony to share with others that gives others hope and inspiration.

Everyone who has not made God the most important aspect of their personal life has something that is controlling him or her from doing such. It can be just about anything and something as simple as harboring an unforgiving heart. So let's talk about this for a moment. I will use myself as an example.

Alcoholism is one that I am very familiar with. It is a condition that keeps us from making God number one in our life and in our marriage because we have made the alcohol number one instead. If ANYTHING is controlling our life it means we are a slave to it. That means we are not prepared to make God the most important part of our life, at least not yet. The alcoholic would FIRST need to let go of the addiction and then grow spiritually enough to "know" they NEED God to have a blessed and fulfilled life.

Pride is a big one because pride keeps us thinking we need something from the world to make us "be somebody". We don't know that we are already "special" just the way God made us. Pride is a top category while under it is many sub categories, like feminism, unfaithfulness, vengeance, greedy ambition, envy, jealousy, money, status, and others too.

So the first step is figuring out what it is that is controlling us. **What is keeping us from following Gods wonderful ways for our personal life/marriage?** You have to figure that one out; when you really stop and look at your life, comparing it to what you read in *Gods Holy Word* then you'll know. But you have to be honest with yourself, otherwise you will not know that perhaps you are allowing materialism, status, humanism, anger or an addiction control you to the point of NOT HAVING A REAL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

Most people think like this, "I'm faithful to my spouse, I am not addicted to any substance or attitude, I'm a family person who goes to church and I'm a believer, so I'm a good person and everything is good in my life". Is everything good in your life? Are you "really" a good person? All people are good but being good does not get us into heaven. What gets us into heaven is being GOOD in the "ways of the LORD"! Do you get it? **We're so good that we have become self-righteous rather than simply, righteous people.**

Luke 18:9 – 14 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

We have to all learn this lesson like I did in my life. Read on.

My Testimony in a Nutshell

So I quit drinking and after about three months I think, “I am a good person now, I’m saved!” However, how does a woman who bosses her husband around, who harbors resentment, withholds sex from her husband, and loves conditionally be a good person? A good person to whom? She is a good person in her own eyes; she perceives herself to be good because she is making herself believe it; after all she doesn’t drink anymore, she goes to church, and she reads the bible every day and loves God. (Loves God?)

I had a lot of spiritual growing to do because I was not good just because I was sober. Besides that, we can’t make ourselves good, that’s God’s job! Also we do not know what it means to TRULY love God until we put aside our selfish feelings (pride) and make God the most important part of our life. Unbeknownst to me, I had not done that yet. It took me many years of spiritual learning and growing to come outside of myself and to “see” that my wretched life was in a shambles, even after I quit drinking!!

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 1 Peter 5:6

Somehow I was one of the *lucky ones*, No...BLESSED *ones* that I was able to realize that I had been living a lie; that I was a selfish, spoiled person who pretended to

know and love God! Only when I let go of my selfishness and feelings of resentment that I'd been harboring for years, did I realize my need to get close to God. This was in 1998, after three years of sobriety that my life began its transformation. Four years later, when my marriage became strong through our wonderful God I started this marriage ministry and today I am writing to you.

That's my testimony in a nutshell. Circumstances change, people change through Jesus Christ...but it happens because we put God at the top THROUGH humbling our wretched lives!! I had to come down off the pedestal; at first it was hard to do. I liked being the God of my own life. I was the director of my own show; even though I wasn't happy I thought I was in control of my life...

...But the truth is NOTHING COULD HAVE BEEN FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. My feminist attitude was actually keeping me from having a personal, growing relationship with the LORD. Only when we start following in the ways of God for our life are we REALLY in control of our future and the destination or purpose our Christ-like life may take.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Understand that when we truly follow Jesus Christ then we know that our lives are being transformed. Why? Well, the FRUITs of the SPIRIT become apparent through blessings from God!! It's called "cause and effect" and is the only thing a person needs to BELIEVE and TRUST in God!! It is what gives believers the fervor to lay down their own life if need be for the Glory of God!!

As a person goes through the spiritual growth process and has become transformed (allowing the old selfish person to die) the person who is **born again** will gain KNOWLEDGE and wisdom that COMES FROM GOD! **This knowledge and wisdom are the BLESSINGS!**

We have to make God FIRST in everything we do!! **Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24**

This concludes the first part of five, about the top five reasons for a successful relationship. Here are some other articles and free ebooks to help you further in this spiritual subject.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

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Angie and Frank

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Do you have a marriage question that you want biblical answers to? Let us know and we'll pray about it, research it and answer it with the understanding and wisdom God has blessed us with. It's not what Frank or Angie can do for your marriage; it is between YOU and God. We're just the messengers.

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