

Making Time For Marriage

Topics to renew and energize your marriage.



Marriage is simple

we are complex

Marriage is simple, falling in love was simple, making a promise to one another was simple – **as time carried on, the unraveling of ourselves (at times) became complicated. Our goals shift, responsibilities grow, and the pressures of life steer our attitudes. We mature and we learn. Hopefully we learn how to fight well, how to let go quickly, and how to love as Christ loves us.**

Your spouse is more than a lifelong partner, your marriage is God's plan to help you grow in Christ.

Let these topics stir some thought and conversation, as well as equip, strengthen, and revive your marriage. As you read together, ponder their value and application in your relationship. Apply them to your marriage and you will reap the rewards they give as you honor and serve one another in Christ's love.

Keep in mind:

- It is not your responsibility to make your spouse happy – meaning, don't rely on each other as a source that only God can supply.
 - If your marriage or spouse is struggling, seek help. There is no shame in needing a professional to help guide your steps.
 - Seek out healthy community, one that encourages your marriage.
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Making Time for Marriage - *Topics to renew and energize your marriage*
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Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture used is the NKJV or ESV version.

Content there-in is written with the purpose to encourage and promote marriage relationship.

Meagan is not a professional therapist and the information given is based on her own personal experiences.

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Meagan has over ten years' experience blogging at MeaganView.com. She is a self-published author and a professional batik artist. Her writing is rooted deeply in her faith as she shares life experiences with inspiration and relatability. Married twenty-five years to a railroad engineer, mom of three daughters, homeschooler, and a 2/3rds empty nester – embracing every season of life while nested firmly in Christ. (*Matthew 6:33*)

TOPIC #1: YOUR WORDS

Your words reflect what you carry in your heart. They expose your bitterness or your admiration.

Have you ever been around someone who has spoken harshly about their spouse? Or worse, you witness a verbal attack? Their words were intent on causing a reaction; anger, hurt, shame. To speak down to, embarrass, or belittle your spouse is actually revealing your sin. For example, the sin of pride or dominance, etc. **If your words weaken your spouse, they weaken your marriage.**

For the Husband:

What you say to your wife will become her self-talk. She needs to hear security in your words. Words of surety and edification. It is not your passion or compliments she desires most – it's what you see in her that she needs to be reminded of. Her confidence, her strength, her tenderness ... use your words to remind her of her identity in Christ.

For the Wife:

Your husband needs to hear you believe in him; believe in his ability and his leadership. He needs to hear your supportive encouragement. Be willing to publicly praise him and privately encourage him.

One step further:

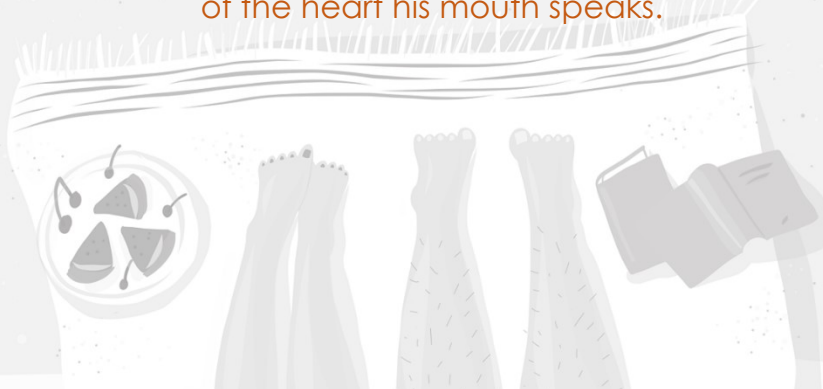
Tell your spouse three things you admire or appreciate about them. Be specific about the details of their strengths and gifts.

Proverbs 16:24

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Luke 6:45

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.



Topic #2: PREVIOUS BAGGAGE

Keep your marriage light from burden – unpack yesteryears weight.

The problem with burden is that we think neglect, ignorance, or tolerance will cause it to go away or become easier to deal with. In fact, those unpacked issues get heavier. Childhood trauma, previous relationships, addictions, sinful acts, unforgiveness – these burdens weigh on a marriage and cause it to break down.

Take a moment to pray, ask Holy Spirit to reveal what baggage needs to be confessed or addressed. Is there something weighing down your marriage? Some baggage takes years to unpack – this too is a time to grow together in the Lord.

When the burden within is heavy, the marriage weakens. If we have sin (*we hope will disappear*) it will ultimately shackle us to the sin. If we hold onto trauma, it will direct our reactions in an unhealthy way. If anger and bitterness hold our attention, we'll surrender our strength and sound mind to it.

Unpacking baggage is vulnerable, be to your spouse an encouragement to lean into Christ. Be willing to listen while asking Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance with your words and actions.

Pray, forgive, and leave the past behind.

Are you struggling with baggage? Perhaps your spouse see's something heavy from the past that you don't? Give time to discuss burdens you may be carrying that is affecting your relationship.

Matthew 11:29-30

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Luke 7:47

Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."



Topic #3: FIGHT WELL

It's not about winning; it's about resolving the problem.

Fighting requires a victor – it's one sided. Resolving creates companionship – it's relational.

Fighting is simply an expression of frustration. Arguments typically arise when we have an un-met expectation. Which then turns into a power struggle with intent to overcome the other. Blaming, shaming, using infinitive words such as always and never, retelling the event with details – all demonstrate our desire to win and have our spouse concede.

In a marriage, both spouses are the victor when they are heard, valued, and able to communicate in a way that moves them toward solving the issue instead of pointing blame. When a problem is resolved, the marriage is strengthened.

Fighting off frustration with communication:

When tempers flare, try communicating your feelings first. *"I'm very frustrated right now."* *"I'm feeling hurt."* *"It feels like you're not listening."* For the other, instead of justifying or defending your words or actions, resolve to connect by asking a question. *"How can I help?"* *"Did I hurt you, how so?"* *"How can we move forward?"*

Fighting well, will strengthen your marriage.

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



TOPIC #4: GOALS

Know your goals and walk in the direction together.

Your marriage is about teamwork – working together toward a common goal. These goals don't necessarily have to have details, rather a direction in mind. Goals also depend on the season of marriage you're in.

- **Financial goals** – If one is a spender and another is a savor, you're walking in different directions. Are we working as a financial team?
- **Raising children** – They must be tended to by the masculine and feminine characteristics of God. Are we in unity with God as we lead our children?
- **Maintaining a home** –When one person feels they are carrying all the responsibility arguments and bitterness is at hand. Is there teamwork within the home?
- **Empty nest** – When the kids are gone and the house is quiet, have we invested in our relationship to take us into the next season with joy and hope?

Discuss this:

- What are your goals that require teamwork?
- What does teamwork look like to you?
- How can you work better together?

James 3:17

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.



TOPIC #5: PRAY FOR YOURSELF -

Before you pray for your spouse.

How often have you prayed for another to see something, believe something, or become something before asking God what He desires, or what He wants us to see?

When we pray for ourselves, we're asking Jesus to show us what needs to be changed - our mindset, our perception, our heart.

Before you pray for God to “fix” your spouse or change their mind – you must be willing to have your wickedness revealed to you. Be brave enough to pray, *“Search me, Oh God, and reveal any wicked thing in me.”* Even if you feel completely justified, completely in the right, or completely wronged.

God uses honest humility to correct, change, and heal our situations.

For the Husband: Ask God how to pray for your wife, how to love her the way He does, and how to lead her the way He does.

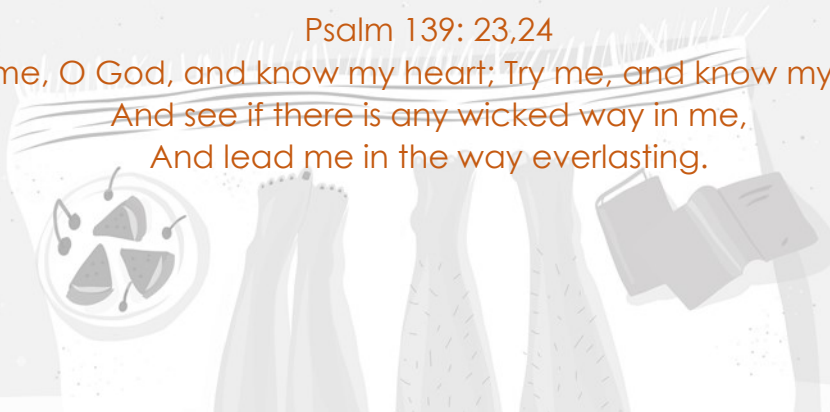
For the Wife: Ask God how to pray for your husband. Ask God to lead you with your words and actions.

Psalm 139: 1-4

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

Psalm 139: 23,24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.



TOPIC #6: YOUR AFFECTIONS

When I say “affections” I’m referring to the places that hold your attention. Remember when you were first married? You wanted to spend all your time together? Little things didn’t bother you; such as overflowing laundry and meals not cooked. Irritations were easily distracted by an affectionate look, hug, or a connect-full conversation.

Then, the years go by and those irritations are no longer silenced by a tickle, a wink, or a complimentary word ... no, our affections have turned elsewhere. We desire a clean home, a meal made, time to watch football, or time to sit in silence.

When our affections turn away from each other and toward our unmet needs, we’ll desire our needs more than our spouse. It’s perfectly understandable to want our tasks accomplished, or time for ourselves – however, if those things are desired more (or happen more often) than time with your spouse, then your relationship will suffer.

Take a moment to discuss the distractions or un-met needs. This is not a time to point fingers or blame, this is a time to share your burden as your spouse listens.

Then, make steps toward helping your spouse. It could be as simple as connecting over morning coffee, giving space on the calendar for a date, or helping with the responsibilities at hand.

Lastly, make a plan to re-connect and give space for your affections toward each other to realign.

Matthew 6:20-22

but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Proverbs 28:20

A faithful man will abound with blessings,
but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.



TOPIC #7: EROS

The Greek word for sensual or romantic love – sex.

There is a reason this topic is last – because every chapter previous to this one, will contribute to good sex.

Sex engages more than our physical bodies; sex engages our emotions, our acceptance and belonging to one another. All the previous topics discussed help fuel and promote satisfying sexual activity. Why? Because a man is attractive when he is living the masculine attributes God created – when he's *protective, humble, selfless, devoted, courageous, internally strengthened by God* – this is what makes a wife desire her husband physically.

Likewise, when a wife embraces her feminine beauty, *when she is forgiving, tender hearted, nurturing, respectful, encouraged and empowered by her relationship with Jesus* – this is what makes a husband desire his wife.

Also . . .

Touch often. Studies have found physical touch increases immune systems, decreases stress, and reduces anxiety. Neuroscientist Edmund Ross [found] that physical touch activates the brain's orbitofrontal cortex, which is linked to feelings of reward and compassion. Studies show that touch signals safety and trust, it soothes. It activates the body's vagus nerve, which is intimately involved with our compassion response and a simple touch can trigger release of oxytocin, aka 'the love hormone.'"

Begin in a healthy habit together. What is something that you both can do together that promotes health, physical, mental or spiritual? This encourages companionship, teamwork, and togetherness.

Give effort to the experience. What would make your wife feel beautiful? Candles, music, a lovely atmosphere? What would arouse your husband? A gentle touch, a non-routine encounter? Where there is effort given, there will be enjoyment received.

Talk about it, laugh about it, recall it with fondness. Sex is a gift from God to enhance and demonstrate your love to each other. When you recall memories, you're demonstrating to your spouse the value of those moments together. This is not to be used as a manipulation or shaming tool "remember when you used to?" Rather, speak about the memory with 'two' in mind – how she looked, how he spoke. Let this not be a space of selfishness, but togetherness.

Prayers for my Husband

Pray for his work.

"Lord, I pray that You would bless my husband's work. That he would be diligent and prosperous. That You would give him wisdom and discernment. God, I pray You would give him strength to walk the opportunities you provide. Thank you, Lord." (Proverbs 22:29)

Pray for healing from the past.

"God, I ask for the wounds of my husband's heart be healed and soothed by your love. You've promised healing to those who submit to You. Father, please smooth the scars of past hurts and brokenness. May Your healing permeate his being, inside and out." (Jeremiah 17:14)

Pray for his leadership.

"Father, I pray Your Holy Spirit would guide my husband as the leader of our home. May his leadership skills be empowered by your wisdom, courage, humility, and love. I trust that You will lead in his hand and heart in our relationship, our home, his work, and our community." (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Pray for his heart to be guarded.

"Father, I pray you guard and protect my husband's heart, eye's, tongue, ears, and hands. Keep him far from temptation and perversion that would try to pull him away from You. (1 Samuel 2:9, Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 107:9)

A prayer for my husband:

Prayers for my Wife

Pray for her faith.

“God, be her God, her all-satisfying treasure. Help my wife be satisfied in all she does, seeing you daily in her tasks. (Psalm 73:24–25).

Pray for her joy.

“Father, intensify my wife's joy. Help her find contentment, satisfaction, and laughter by Your great love.” (1 Peter 8,9)

Pray for her heart.

“Father, I lift my wife's heart to you — rescue her from cynicism and allow tenderness with awareness to your presence. In the most difficult and complicated details of her days, among the multitude of needs being given for her to meet, help her heart to not grow bitter, instead grow closer to You.” (2 Chronicles 34:27)

Pray for her wisdom.

“Father, give my wife wisdom — help her see and vocalize perspectives I would not see. Let her words bring life to situations that feel hopeless, that we may walk in unity and strength by Your wisdom.” (James 1:5)

Pray for her influence to multiply.

“Father, I ask you to multiply my wife's influence — encourage and deepen the impact she has on our children, family, and friends. Extend her influence to our neighbors and beyond, and give her sweet glimpse of the impact she gives. (Matthew 4:19)

A prayer for my wife:

Prayers for our Marriage

That we would walk in unity.

“Father, help us to inhabit our home in unity, submitted fully to Your Word, with joy and contentment.”

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)

That we would repent and forgive quickly.

“Father, be near in all we do. As David said, “reveal any wicked thing in me,” we ask that you gently lead us to where sincere apologies bring lasting change. Help us to forgive quickly, leaving behind anger, bitterness, and pain.”

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Pray for health in our bodies and marriage.

“Father, thank you for our body. May we continue to glorify you in our actions. Please keep us from disease and sickness. Bring us to complete health – in our body and marriage. Amen”

For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:22)

Scriptures for our marriage:
