



# Heart-to-Heart God's Blueprint for the Ordinary Days of Marriage

Week 5 | Nov. 10 (PM) | Nov. 12 (AM) | 2014

"In any relationship, there will be frightening spells in which your feelings of love dry up. And when that happens you must remember that the essence of marriage is that it is a covenant, a commitment, a promise of future love. So what do you do? You do the acts of love, despite your lack of feeling. You may not feel tender, sympathetic, and eager to please, but in your actions you must BE tender, understanding, forgiving and helpful. And, if you do that, as time goes on you will not only get through the dry spells, but they will become less frequent and deep, and you will become more constant in your feelings. This is what can happen if you decide to love." — Timothy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*

God's Blueprint for the ordinary days of marriage is found Genesis 2:8-25:

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam<sup>f</sup> no suitable helper was found. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs<sup>g</sup> and then closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib<sup>h</sup> he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,'  
for she was taken out of man."

<sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

<sup>25</sup> Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

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Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

"Remember that God will allow His children to choose their path. Then, just as He provided the children of Israel after they rebelled against Him by refusing to believe in and fight for their promised land, He will also provide for his children who bail on their marriages. Still, there will always be that unknown blessing that could have been obtained if only married couples would be strong and courageous in every battle set before them. Like the Israelite's who never lived in the promised land, those who give up on their marriage will never have the chance to experience the blessings that only come through entering battle. Marriage takes courage. It requires bravery. But, oh the prize that awaits those who – like Joshua and Caleb – magnify the promises of the Lord above the obstacles in life."

- Deborah Ross, *Healing a Broken Marriage*

"Forgiveness is not excusing one's behavior but recognizing the grace of Jesus goes deeper than my hurt." - Pastor Dan

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## Seven Ways to Fight for Your Marriage and Trust God's Blueprint in The Ordinary Days:

1. Slow down long enough to look at your marriage – the good, bad and the ugly!
  - Proverbs 20:25
  - Jeremiah 6:16
  - Romans 12:17-18
  - Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-17 (AMP)

*What is ONE thing you need to face the truth about in your marriage? Ask God to show you how to navigate through that in a healthy way*

2. Choose a humble heart toward your husband.
  - Proverbs 11:2; 22:4
  - Romans 12:1-3, 9-10
  - Ephesians 4:29
  - 1 Peter 3:1-6 (AMP)

*Ask God to let you see your husband through His eyes; to see what HE sees in the depths of your husband's heart, in his woundedness, fears and more.*

3. Don't deal with sin in your marriage lightly, especially your own.
  - Proverbs 12:4, 13:21, 17:19
  - Genesis 4:7
  - 1 Corinthians 6:16-20 (The Message)
  - Jameson 5:16
  - 1 John 5:17

*Is there sin that you need to confess and ask God to help you repent of? Remember, repent means to choose to turn and go the other direction. Is there sin that you need to lovingly confront your husband about?*

4. Forgive quickly.
  - Proverbs 17:9
  - Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21=25
  - Mark 11:25
  - Colossians 3:12-14

*What do you need to forgive your husband for? Consider writing it down today and then tearing the paper up, or burning it as an act of your will to let it go.*

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## 5. Refuse to be a control freak.

- Proverbs 11:17, 12:25
- Romans 13:9-10
- Philippians 2:3-8
- Galatians 5:25-26
- 1 Peter 4:7-8

*What do you constantly try to change in or about your husband? Let it go today and consider telling him or a trusted friend that you did.*

## 6. Speak the truth about your needs.

- Proverbs 12:19
- 1 Corinthians 13:6
- Ephesians 4:25-27
- Colossians 3:3-10

*Go home and ask for help in some area where you need it. BUT, choose to not be mad if you don't get it. However, don't stop asking. Doesn't crawl back into a shell or resort back to nagging in an effort to just keep wading through the junk. Say what you want and what you need or don't be mad when you don't get what you want or what you need!*

## 7. Enjoy sex! Bring your faith into the bedroom.

- Proverbs 31:11
- Song of Solomon 7
- Ephesians 5:22, 31
- Hebrews 13:4

*To bring your faith into your bedroom means that you pray about and trust God for the difficulties of sex and intimacy for you personally. Invite God into your marriage bed to bring unity and personal enjoyment for you, and your husband.*

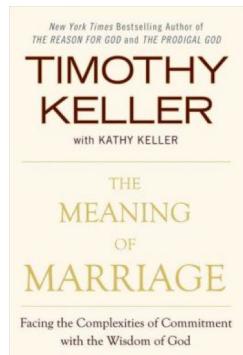
*"Love isn't about IF we act, it's about HOW we act."*

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## For Further Study

- Read Genesis 2:1-3:8 and journal about God's original intent for bringing a woman into a man's life. Apply that to your marriage.
- Joshua 1:6-7
- Meditate on Malachi 2:16-17 in the Amplified Bible
- Read the following verses in context and then APPLY them to your marriage:
  - Matthew 5:43-48
  - John 13:34-35
  - 1 Corinthians 13
  - Ephesians 3:20-21



Renowned pastor of New York's Redeemer Presbyterian Church and author of the forthcoming *Every Good Endeavor*, Timothy Keller with his wife of 36 years, delivers *The Meaning of Marriage*, an extraordinarily insightful look at the keys to happiness in marriage that will inspire Christians, skeptics, singles, long-time married couples, and those about to be engaged.

Modern culture would make you believe that everyone has a soul-mate; that romance is the most important part of a successful marriage; that your spouse is there to help you realize your potential; that marriage does not mean forever, but merely for now; that starting over after a divorce is the best solution to seemingly intractable marriage issues. All those modern-day assumptions are, in a word, wrong. Using the Bible as his guide, coupled with insightful commentary from his wife of thirty-six years, Kathy, Timothy Keller shows that God created marriage to bring us closer to him and to bring us more joy in our lives. It is a glorious relationship that is also the most misunderstood and mysterious. With a clear-eyed understanding of the Bible, and meaningful instruction on how to have a successful marriage, *The Meaning of Marriage* is essential reading for anyone who wants to know God and love more deeply in this life.