

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

Step 7 —

To Have a Marriage That Really Lasts, You Must, Together, Experience Continual Growth and Development.

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-5

A. Growing Together Is A Very Crucial Step In Having A Marriage That Really Lasts.

1. This is the last point but not the least important.
2. Of all the points, this is probably one of the most important.
3. It may not be the longest to discuss, but most necessary for all the other points to work.
4. Whenever you find a healthy marriage with serious problems, it seems they are both in their separate worlds.

B. Growing Together Means We Are To Be Likeminded.

1. Paul says in verse 2 that we are to be “likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

2. What are the steps involved in being likeminded together so that a couple can grow? You must continually be:

- a. Communicating together.
- b. Reading together.
- c. Experiencing together.
- d. Growing together.

One wife said, “My husband and I like the same things, but it took me years to train him.”

3. I realize many people who walk down the aisle and take those wedding vows can't figure out what went wrong when in a few short years their marriage begins to face some serious difficulties.

4. The issue here is this, “A marriage is not a snapshot. It is a moving picture.”

5. At the marriage altar, most couples have a lot in common. They have many things with mutual interest. But after the wedding things begin to change.

That is why some couples have gotten married. In a church I pastored several years ago there were two couples whose mates died. They began to do things together in fixing up the parsonage. Their togetherness caused them to start liking each other and I had a wedding for a 73-year-old woman and a 66-year-old man in 1990.

6. But after the marriage if one of the partners begins to grow and develop and the other does not, that marriage will begin to have a major gap in it.

- a. When this happens, they are not on the same wave length.
- b. They do not discuss the same things.
- c. The bonding process is weak because they are not growing together.

7. The purpose of this last step is to help us grow together.

C. How Do We Grow And Develop In Order To Become Likeminded?

There are at least four ways that couples can grow together.

1. Each Partner Must Have A Personal Desire For Growth.

- a. This is an individual issue.
- b. You have to want to grow.
- c. Why would one party not want to grow?
- d. How do you get them to grow? Challenge them to see what it will do for the marriage.

2. You And Your Companion Must Become Best Friends.

- a. You can have friends of the same sex as you are but never to the exclusion of your companion.
- b. This involves working at developing a great friendship.
- c. This allows bonding to continue in the marriage process.
- d. How do you accomplish this? It takes time.

3. You And Your Companion Must Discover What You Enjoy Doing Together.

a. It is very important that you discover what your companion enjoys and do a lot of it together.

b. A companion does not want to hear all the good stories about exciting things you get to do and she is not allowed to be a part of the process.

c. A wife, especially, enjoys sharing experiences with her husband. Give some examples.

4. You And Your Companion Must Develop What You Enjoy Doing Together.

a. Work together on the projects you both enjoy.

b. This will not happen on its own.

c. Establish goals and review them frequently.

d. Record your progress.

CONCLUSION

You can have a strong marriage that will last if you will work together through God's strength and power and the willingness of your partner. Work at practicing the seven steps:

STEP 1 - STRONG COMMITMENT

STEP 2 - EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

STEP 3 - SPIRITUAL LIFE

STEP 4 - CONFLICT RESOLUTION

STEP 5 - PHYSICAL INTIMACY

STEP 6 - SERVANT'S HEART

STEP 7 - GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Don't wait for a miracle or someone else to do it. Start today. **DO NOT LEAVE GOD OUT OF YOUR MARRIAGE. HE CREATED IT!!!**

Start building a better marriage from this day forward!

Vows

No one is going to be embarrassed because you are going to stand right where you are and block out everything and everyone in the room.

I want you to turn toward your companion, holding both hands, and look into their eyes as you recommit yourself to each other and to God. This is for married couples only. This is not a wedding.

Repeat after me, but fill in the name of your companion.

We will start with the man:

I, _____, continue to take you, _____,
as the love of my life.
I will remain committed to you for the rest of my life,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
'til death do us part,
according to God's holy covenant for marriage,
and thereto I pledge to you my solemn vow.

Now for the wife:

I, _____, continue to take you, _____,
as the love of my life.
I will remain committed to you for the rest of my life,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
'til death do us part,
according to God's holy covenant for marriage,
and thereto I pledge to you my solemn vow.

Listen to what God says in Matthew 19:6: "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

May God add His richest blessings upon you.

You may now kiss the bride!