

In Need of a Tune-up?

Becky and David have been married for five years and are about to start a family. After 15 years of marriage, Gail and Pat are losing touch because they are absorbed in the school and church activities of their three adolescents. Norman and Betty recently sent their last child off to college, and they feel they hardly know each other any more. All these couples have something in common—they need a marriage tune-up!

Marriage is the most intricate and, sometimes, complicated relationship in life. Your marriage is a special gift from God that needs constant maintenance. Whether you've been married for five years or 50, you can have your marriage running like new again with a little tune-up.

*“Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth.”
(Proverbs 5:18)*

Q: “What are God’s purposes for marriage?”

God has a unique purpose for the marriage covenant. The marital relationship affords you the awesome opportunity to showcase Christ’s relationship to His bride (the church). In the same way that Christ sacrificially gave Himself to the church, you and your mate should be willing to sacrifice your individual desires for the sake of your marriage covenant.

Partnership (Amos 3:3)

God has given you and your mate to one another as partners for life. True companionship grows within the marriage relationship when there is emotional, spiritual, and physical unity.

Pleasure (Proverbs 5:18)

The marriage relationship and your mate are God’s special gifts to you. True enjoyment of your mate will grow out of self-control and a servant’s heart.

Parenting (Genesis 1:28)

God’s first command in Scripture was for Adam and Eve to be “fruitful and multiply.” God desires that the earth be filled with godly offspring.

Perfecting (Romans 8:29)

In the intimate relationship of marriage, you become well aware of your partner’s shortcomings. Your partner is also well aware of your shortcomings! God uses both your weaknesses and strengths to sharpen and conform you and your partner to the image of Christ.

*“He who finds a wife finds a good thing
and obtains favor from the LORD.”
(Proverbs 18:22)*

For Husbands . . . Your Wife's Needs¹

A wife needs affection.

- Speak affirming and complimentary words.
- Give cards, flowers, and gifts.

A wife needs intimate conversation.

- Talk on the feeling level.
- Listen with concern and interest.

A wife needs honesty.

- Commit to always being truthful.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with eye contact.

A wife needs financial security.

- Shoulder the responsibility for finances.
- Plan adequately for the future.

A wife needs commitment.²

- Place your wife and family as your highest earthly priority.
- Verbalize reassurances of your commitment.

*"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
(Ephesians 5:25)*

For Wives . . . Your Husband's Needs³

A husband needs admiration.

- Communicate understanding of his values and achievements.
- Give reassurance of his capabilities.

A husband needs domestic support.

- Create a peaceful home atmosphere.
- Manage the home efficiently.

A husband needs sexual fulfillment.

- Be a responsive partner.
- Communicate assurance that he is sexually adequate.

A husband needs a mate with a pleasing appearance.

- Keep physically fit with diet and exercise.
- Dress appropriately with a feminine look.

A husband needs recreational companionship.

- Develop mutual interests.
- Become proficient in activities that he likes.

*"The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life."
(Proverbs 31:11–12)*

Failed Expectations

Far too many people enter into a marriage relationship expecting a personal payoff. Eventually, these unfulfilled expectations become lost hopes and dreams that can grow into a root of bitterness.

Marriage will . . .

- provide me with love and acceptance
- bring me affection and sexual intimacy
- surround me with a loving family
- furnish me with financial security
- give me the assurance that someone will take care of me

Common Conclusions

- "Life is too short to live like this. We'll both be happier if I just leave."
- "This was not a marriage made in heaven. We should have never married."
- "We've tried everything, and nothing works. Our situation is hopeless."
- "It will be better for the children to be away from this tense environment."
- "I'll never be happy in this marriage. Maybe I can just 'stick it out' until the children are grown."

Key Verse to Memorize

*"[Submit] to one another
out of reverence for Christ."
(Ephesians 5:21)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread Ephesians 5:22–33

A Covenant Connection

Commit to working through problems, not walking away. (1 Corinthians 7:27)

Offer love to your mate even when you don't feel like it. (1 Corinthians 13:4–8)

View your marriage as God's setting for spiritual growth. (Proverbs 15:31)

Eliminate the emphasis on your rights. (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)

Nurture your identity in Christ. (Galatians 2:20)

Ask God to change you. (Psalm 51:10)

Nourish your extended family relationships. (Exodus 20:12)

Turn your expectations over to God. (Psalm 62:1–2, 5)

Related Topics . . .

- Adultery:
The Snare of an Affair
- The Blended Family:
God's Recipe for Success
- Communication:
The Heart of the Matter
- Intimacy:
Learning the Language of Love
- Premarital Counseling:
Are You Fit to Be Tied?
- Unbelieving Mate:
Becoming a Winsome Witness

1. For this section see Willard F. Harley, Jr., *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*, 15th Anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2001), 93, 121.
2. Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages* (Chicago: Northfield, 1992), 56.
3. For this section see Henry Cloud, *When Your World Makes No Sense* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1990), 236; Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs*, 80, 105, 108, 156.

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