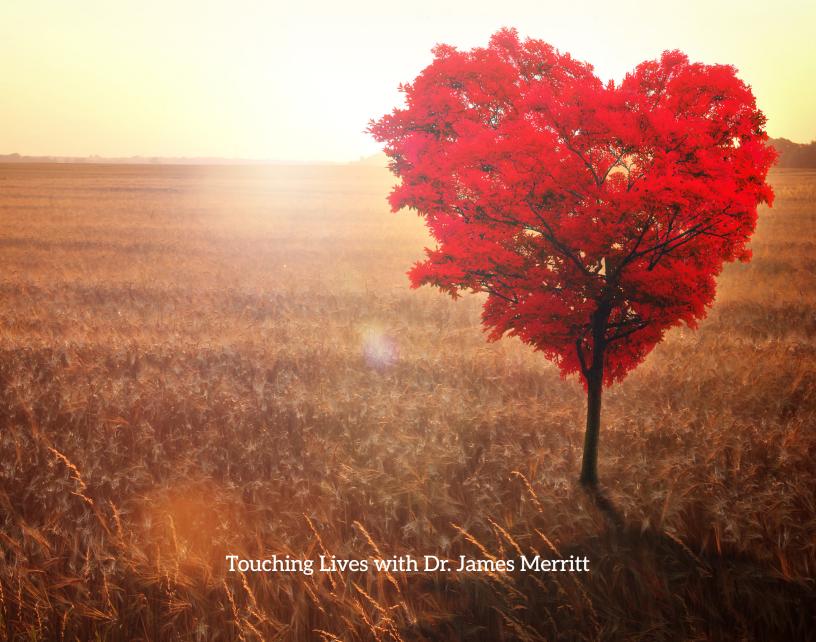
Made in Heaven



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 43 | Genesis 2:18–25

| Introduction | Notes |
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| I was about to say the two words that I knew would change everything. Looking into the eyes of the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen, having known her only six months, I said, "I do." At that moment, the word "marriage" took on a whole different meaning, from the hypothetical to the actual, from the imagined to the real, and from the abstract to the concrete. In this cultural moment, marriage is becoming like a dinosaur, with marriage rates at their lowest since 1867 and 40% of Americans viewing it as obsolete. But it is God's idea, and though it takes hard work, it is God's work. Through the first marriage in history, you will learn that when you align yourself with God's Word on marriage, you experience His freedom and blessing. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Remember That Marriage Is a Divine Idea | |
| For the first time in creation, we hear four words that had never been spoken: "It is not good." "The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18, NIV). This wasn't because God made a mistake or there was dirt on the carpet. God's creation wasn't imperfect, but it was incomplete. Notice we're not told Adam felt lonely (you can't miss what you never had). But God knows what we need better than we do, even when we think everything is fine. Adam didn't imagine marriage; God did. Creating a mate for Adam was God's idea, not Adam's. The English word "helper" can be misleading. The Hebrew word ezer is actually a military term referring to a "defender" or "protector," used 11 out of 15 times in Scripture to describe God Himself. There's nothing inferior about this helper; she makes up what might be lacking in strength. | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 43 | Genesis 2:18–25

| Remember that marriage was God's ideal from the beginning, so be careful not to turn an ideal into an ordeal, and then look for a new deal. | Notes |
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| 2. Realize That Marriage Is a Divine Initiative | |
| Every other aspect of creation had its counterpart: Day had the sun, night had the moon, water had fish, sky had birds, and the ground had animals. But man had no partner. Before there was a man or woman, there was God, and He always intended to be Adam's first love. "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 and then closed up the place with flesh" (Genesis 2:21, NIV). See how God took the first woman from the man's side, to be by his side. Not above him, not below him, but beside him. "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22, NIV). Notice that God brought Adam a woman, not a man. Consider also that according to God's design, there are only two genders, and they alone make up a true biblical marriage. From beginning to end, marriage has never primarily been about a woman and a man; it's been about God. Whose idea was this marriage? God's. Who planned it? God. Eve becomes the only bride given away by God Himself. God is still in the building business and the bringing business, and when you respect marriage as His initiative, you will receive the person and blessing He brings. The only person you should ever consider marrying is the person you truly believe God has brought to you. | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 43 | Genesis 2:18–25

| 3. Respect Marriage As a Divine Institution | Notes |
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| When God brings Eve to Adam, we see the actual wedding ceremony. "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'" (Genesis 2:23, NIV). The Hebrew word for woman (Ishah) comes from anash meaning "fragile," while man (Ish) comes from usah which means "strength." God built masculinity into men and femininity into women, and male and female are the only two pieces of the marriage puzzle that fit together. The phrase "suitable helper" uses the Hebrew kenegdo—a combination of ke (like) and neged (opposite). Eve is like Adam as a human created in God's image, but different as a woman, not a man. "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24, NIV). The Hebrew word "one" (echad) describes unity with diversity, like God being one yet three persons. There's not uniformity, but there is unity. God's divine institution is woven into the very DNA of humanity. God's Word is not subject to change. What He has established in creation, He intends to transcend culture and time. | |
| Honor marriage as God's first institution, designed to be the foundation of family, which is the foundation of nations. | |
| Key Takeaway | |
| Every marriage should be made in Heaven, manufactured by Heaven, and mastered by Heaven. When you put Christ at the head of your marriage, you'll have a marriage that's made in Heaven. | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 43 | Genesis 2:18–25

| 1. | How does understanding that marriage was God's idea, not a human invention, change your view of its importance and design in today's culture? | | |
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| 2. | What does it mean practically to respect marriage as a divine institution in your daily life, whether you're single, married, or supporting others? | | |
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| 3. | What is one lesson from this study that will help you ensure that Christ remains at the center of your marriage or future marriage, making it truly "made in Heaven"? | | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 44 | Ephesians 5:21–24

| Introduction | Notes |
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| You may remember Frank Sinatra's classic hit about love and marriage going together. Now, that may have been true 70 years ago, but it's not the same today. In 1960, 59% of adults ages 18 to 29 were married compared to only 20% today. It seems our culture has become one of "hook up, shack up, and break up." As a result, many think doing a series on marriage is a fool's errand. But from the very beginning of time, God's Word says, marriage has mattered, and it always will. It's not coincidental that God's Word begins with a wedding between Adam and Eve and ends with a wedding between Christ and the church. We face something unprecedented in our country, with marriages failing and the very institution of marriage being questioned. But God calls you to remember what He says about marriage instead of being conformed to the world's view of marriage, because healthy homes, communities, and nations depend upon it. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Be Reverently Surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus | |
| Have you ever wondered why the word "submit" creates such controversy in marriage discussions today? The Apostle Paul writes, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22, NIV). Before anyone gets hot and bothered, let's take another look at that word. In almost every area of life, everybody submits to somebody: Privates submit to generals, citizens submit to police, and employees submit to bosses. Society can't function without submission. The key to not just doing this but being willing to do it is remembering who you are really submitting to: "as you do to the Lord." The road to a relationship with God is paved with the submission of God the Son to God the Father. In other words, if Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father, you can surrender to Jesus in complete trust. When a wife is surrendered to the Lord, she can have confidence that submitting to her husband | |

| Marriage Made in Heaven Week 44 Ephesians 5:21–24 | |
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| aligns with God's purposes. She can trust that whatever Jesus asks her to do is not just for her good; it's for her best and for His glory. | Notes |
| Husbands and wives must both submit themselves to Christ. When you truly place Jesus as Lord over every area of your life, He will give you the peace and confidence to submit to one another. | |
| 2. Wives, Be Respectfully Submissive to the Leadership of Your Husband | |
| Marriage works when the husband and wife understand their roles. Paul says, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (Ephesians 5:23, NIV). The way the wife relates to the husband is the way the church is to relate to Jesus. Just as Jesus is the head of the church, the husband is the head of the wife. Now, the head of the church also gave His life for her; this is the model for every "head of the household" thereafter. Every plane needs a pilot, every ship needs a captain, and every train needs a conductor. The church submits to Jesus willingly because the church knows that Jesus loves her and wants only what is best for her. No woman should ever submit to a husband if he asks her to do anything unscriptural or immoral, and you should never submit to being physically or verbally abused. Submission is not about inferiority; it's about maturity, responsibility, and authority. One of the greatest marks of maturity is when you're willing to accept the responsibility of submitting to legitimate authority. | |
| Submission doesn't limit you in any way; it actually frees you to be everything that God wants you to be. | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 44 | Ephesians 5:21–24

| 3. Remember That Marriage Reflects Christ and the Church | Notes |
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| How does understanding Christ's relationship with the church transform your marriage? In Ephesians, Paul uses the word "church" six times because marriage is meant to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:24, NIV). This is the sweetest relationship in the world, the kind of relationship that husband and wife ought to have. When they do, the wife will willingly and respectfully submit to the husband's leadership because it will be so easy to do when that husband loves her the way Christ loves the church. Both husband and wife are created in the image of God, and both have God-given roles to fulfill. When you submit to Jesus, He gives you the freedom to be who you are called to be and to do what you are called to do. | |
| When marriage functions as God designed, husbands love sacrificially and wives relate respectfully, honoring Christ and displaying His glory and goodness in the community. | |
| Key Takeaway | |
| Your primary relationship is with God. Then, husbands, you can love your wives sacrificially, and, wives, you can submit to Jesus first, freeing you to respect your husband. When you do, you discover that the key to a happy marriage is not in finding the right person; it is in being the right person. | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 44 | Ephesians 5:21–24

| 1. | In what areas of life do you currently submit to authority without question? How does this help you understand that submission isn't meant to be demeaning, but is necessary for society to function? |
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| 2. | How does your relationship with Jesus as Lord affect your willingness to follow His design for marriage? What might need to change in your surrender to Him first? |
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| 3. | When you think about Christ's relationship with the church, what encourages you most about the kind of loving leadership a husband should provide? How does this picture help you understand God's design for marriage? |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25–33

| Introduction | Notes |
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| What if finding the right person to marry isn't actually the secret to a happy marriage? Everyone wants a fairy-tale marriage, but it's a tragedy when fairy tales turn into horror stories because we misplace our expectations. The real problem is this: Every person wanting to get married is looking for the right person, but it will do you no good to find the right person if you are not the right person to be married to. That's why every marriage should begin with not just a husband and wife, but a <i>godly</i> husband and a <i>godly</i> wife. A marriage made in Heaven begins with a spouse given by Heaven. Learn the three specific things every heavenly-given husband must do for his wife to create a marriage that truly is happily ever after. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Provide Humble Leadership | |
| What kind of leadership do you think a husband should provide in marriage? In Ephesians five, Paul says this: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (Ephesians 5:23, NIV). The word "head" means "authority," but being an authority does not mean being an authoritarian. The husband is to exercise authority over his wife in the same way that Christ exercises authority over the church. Jesus never forced anybody to do anything. He doesn't bully the church, throw His weight around, yell, scream, or demand anything. Jesus led His disciples by serving them. He was a servant leader who said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, NIV). Husbands need to have a foot-washing mentality when it comes to their wives. Lyrics from an old country song say it this way: "A woman wants a man she can look up to that won't look down on her." | |



Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25-33

| If a husband looks up to his wife by serving her, she will look up to him by following his leadership. But his leadership cannot be haughty; it must be humble. | Notes |
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| 2. Practice Heavenly Love | |
| How should a husband love his wife according to God's design? Paul commands this, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25, NIV). When the husbands in Ephesus first heard these words, they probably fell out of their chairs because this was absolutely revolutionary. Paul uses the word agape—the same word used in John 3:16. It's the love you give when someone's unlovable, and seems undeserving. This kind of love is not a feeling; it's a command. It's an act of the will that always puts the other person first. Paul asks the bigger question: Do you love your wife enough not just to die for her, but to die to yourself and live for her? You've got to die to what you want out of the marriage and start living for what you can give to the marriage. Paul says to love your wives "as [your] own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28, NIV). We love our bodies every day: When it's hungry, we feed it; when it's thirsty, we water it; when it's tired, we rest it. | |
| A husband is to love his wife the way he loves his body—by providing for her, protecting her, and putting her needs above his own. | |
| 3. Promise Divine Loyalty | |
| Paul concludes by going back to the first marriage: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31, NIV). Marriage is a covenant relationship where the husband is to be united to his wife through a covenant, an oath, a binding promise. Malachi 2:14 calls the wife "your partner, the wife of | |

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25–33

| your marriage covenant" (NIV). The number one thing a man and woman must remember is that marriage is not a contract or even just a commitment; it is a covenant. Paul explains, "This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32, NIV). Marriage is like a photocopy of | Notes |
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| the relationship between Christ and the church. Every mar- riage is to mirror that divine relationship, and that relationship is based on keeping the covenant. Each husband is responsible before God, others, and himself to keep that promise. | |
| When you continuously ask Jesus to help you love your spouse, the One who keeps His promise to you will give you the power to keep your promise to your spouse. | |
| Key Takeaway | |
| It's extremely difficult for a marriage made in Heaven not to end up happily ever after when the husband provides humble leadership like Christ, practices heavenly love like Christ, and promises divine loyalty like Christ has for the church. | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25–33

| 1. | How does Jesus' example of servant leadership challenge the way husbands think about being "head" of their home? If you are a husband, what would humble leadership look like in your daily interactions with your wife? |
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| 2. | What does it mean to you that marriage is a covenant, not just a contract? How does understanding that your marriage mirrors Christ's relationship with the church change your perspective on your commitment? |
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| 3. | For husbands: Paul emphasizes that if your wife is not being drawn closer to Jesus by the way you're leading and loving her, you're not the husband you ought to be. How are you providing spiritual leadership in your home? |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 46 | Matthew 19:4–6

| Introduction | Notes |
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| I heard a story about a daughter who wrote her dad about marrying someone she met online: "We met on eHarmony, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on WhatsApp. He proposed on Zoom." Her dad replied, "I suggest you two get married on X, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon, and, when you get fed up with this new husband, just sell him on eBay." There are lots of views today on what marriage is, but the one opinion that should really matter is that of the One who invented marriage—Jesus. Even though Jesus was single and never married, He knew more about marriage than any marriage counselor because marriage was His idea. When the Pharisees asked Him about divorce, Jesus didn't answer their question about how to get out of marriage. Instead, He explained why you should stay in marriage. In one simple but unbelievably strong sentence, Jesus taught that in marriage math, $1 + 1 = 1$. In this passage, Jesus outlined the three principles you need to guard what God has established and, in doing so, fulfill His purpose in your life. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Commend God's Plan for Marriage | |
| Why do you think Jesus started His teaching about marriage with God's original design? In Matthew 19, Jesus declares, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'" (v. 4, NIV). Jesus is not just giving His opinion on marriage. He goes back to the very beginning to establish the foundation of God's original plan for marriage. This one statement tells us what the inventor of marriage intended for marriage to look like from creation: a male and a female joined together. Jesus builds three characteristics into marriage. First is duality: It takes two human beings to get married. You can't marry your dog or your car. Second is heterosexuality: He did not create them male and male or female and female, but male and female. Third is monogamy: He | |

created one male and one female, not many males and many

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 46 | Matthew 19:4-6

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| females. His intention from the beginning was one man and one wife, to be one for life. If God had intended polygamy, He could have easily created one man and two women. If God had intended homosexuality, He could have created two men or two women. | Notes |
| When you try to deviate from God's plan, you're going to wind up with a bad marriage, a sad ending, or both. | |
| 2. Consider God's Purpose for Marriage | |
| What is the primary purpose that God designed marriage to fulfill? Jesus explains, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5, NIV). It may surprise you, but the primary purpose of marriage is not to procreate children; couples who cannot bear children are just as married as couples who can. The sexual difference between a man and a woman is why we have marriage in the first place. Marriage is based on gender and would never exist without the sexual differences between a man and a woman. With marriage comes disunion—when you get married, you have to leave your mom and dad—and then union as you become one flesh. The preeminent relationship in a family is not child to parent or parent to child, but husband to wife. A parent and child are two, a brother and sister are two, but a husband and wife are one. That's the math of marriage, and when you view marriage His way, you experience the peace of unity and alignment. Jesus does in marriage what is impossible in math. We all know 1 + 1 = 2, but in marriage, 1 + 1 = 1. | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 46 | Matthew 19:4–6

| 3. Commit to God's Permanence for Marriage | Notes |
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| Jesus concludes, "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6, NIV). Why does He say that? In one fell swoop, Jesus makes it plain that the only kind of sexuality that is proper is sex between a man and a woman who are in a marital relationship. "Joined together" literally means "to be glued to," which means not to be separated. Marriage is not what culture joins together, not what nature joins, not what sex joins, not what law joins, not even what love joins; marriage is what God joins together. When I'm asked to perform a wedding, I let the couple know I can't do a wedding. I can perform the ceremony, but God is the one that brings two people together. It is God who brings a couple together, bonds them together, binds them together, and builds them together. After 49 years of marriage, I can tell you that the hard work never ends, but it is worth it because marriage is made in Heaven. If you cannot keep a promise to God about marriage, you | |
| will not be able to keep promises with anyone else. But with God's help, you can understand the math, Master, and miracle of marriage. Key Takeaway | |
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| Marriage is hard work, but it's extremely doable when you practice marriage math by commending God's plan, considering God's purpose, and committing to God's permanence for the sacred union He designed. | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 46 | Matthew 19:4–6

| 1. | What does it mean practically for a married couple to "become one flesh"? How should this divine mathematical approach (1 + 1 = 1) change the way spouses relate to each other daily? |
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| 2. | Jesus teaches that God is the one who joins couples together in marriage. How does this truth impact your view of the permanence and sacredness of the marriage covenant? |
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| 3. | Whether single or married, how can you better support God's design for marriage in a culture that is increasingly moving away from His original plan? |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 47 | Song of Solomon

| Introduction | Notes |
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| Ever wondered the secret to marriages that last 60 years? I heard about an elderly couple celebrating their diamond anniversary who shared their story: On their honeymoon at the Grand Canyon, the wife's mule stumbled, and she said calmly to the animal, "That's once." When it stumbled again, she said, "That's twice." The third time, she got off and shot the mule right between the eyes. When her husband asked why, she looked him in the eyes and said, "That's once"—and they never had another major disagreement! While there's humor in that story, the truth is that God desires for everyone who gets married to truly live happily ever after. When two people get married, it's God's will for that marriage to be a happy union instead of a civil war. He wants every marriage to end in celebration, not separation, enjoying marriage, not enduring it. That's why God's Word gives us a marriage example through an old love song: It's King Solomon's Song of Songs. In this book, you find the four essential keys to building a marriage that lasts. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Communicate Love Through Treasured Talk | |
| Happily married couples talk to each other in the right way and use the right words. Solomon knew the way to a woman's heart is through her ears, telling his wife, "How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!" and "You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you" (Song of Songs 1:15; 4:7, NIV). He's telling his wife she's perfectly beautiful and to him beautifully perfect, affirming her and building her up. World-renowned relationship expert John Gottman discovered the 5:1 ratio. That is, for every one negative interaction in a relationship, you need five positive interactions. Always be looking for the good and the positive. You are to seek to say the right thing, the right way, at the right time, but what's even more important is that you keep saying things and keep talking. | |

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 47 | Song of Solomon

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| The danger is "sour silence"—silence motivated by anger, bit- terness, and unforgiveness that builds a wall so high and thick that the couple cannot or will not get back together. | Notes |
| No marriage can survive without the oxygen of communication; tender talk can give oxygen to the fire in a marriage, making it burn hotter and brighter. | |
| 2. Rejuvenate Love Through Together Time | |
| Do you know how to spell "love" in a relationship? You spell it T-I-M-E. Marriage needs time like a plant needs water; it's essential for survival. In the Song of Songs, the bride asks, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me" (2:10, NIV). She's asking for some together time. Nothing will communicate to your spouse that they're the number one priority over all other relationships like giving them the most valuable thing you possibly can—your time. Go back to your dating days. What were you giving someone when you were dating them? Your time! Single women and married women both have one thing in common: They like to be courted and dated, and that desire never ends. When the bride says, "Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside" (Song of Songs 7:11, NIV), she wants the two of them to get away just so they can have time together. Don't let yourself make excuses. Make time instead. Where there's a will, there's a way. | |
| Both of you need to communicate to the other that the most important thing is to make time to spend with one another. | |
| 3. Demonstrate Love Through Tender Touch | |
| What's the difference between touching and taking in marriage? Twice in this song we read, "His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me" (Song of Songs 2:6; 8:3, NIV)—an expression referring to true loving sexual affection. | |



Generally speaking, for most men, the number one need is

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 47 | Song of Solomon

sexual fulfillment. That's his "touch." For most women, however, the number one need is affection; that's her "touch." Men, if the only time you ever touch your wife is when you want sex, that's not touching; that's taking. Show your wife you love her with occasional, extemporaneous, unplanned touches: a pat on the back, a kiss on the cheek, holding hands, putting your arm around her. Don't give the excuse, "Well, I'm just not affectionate." Learn to be! Women crave affection and conversation the same way men crave sex and recreational companionship. The majority of a woman's needs are nonsexual; she wants to be hugged, held, and heard.

Husbands, show your wife frequent non-sexual affection. Wives, remember and prioritize your husband's desire for sexual fulfillment. We demonstrate our love through tender touch.

4. Illustrate Love Through Timely Thoughtfulness

Do the little things really matter in marriage? In the Song, the bride says, "Let us go early to the vineyards ... there I will give you my love. The mandrakes send out their fragrance, and at our door is every delicacy, both new and old, that I have stored up for you, my beloved" (7:12-13, NIV). She wants to go out, pick flowers, gather fruit, and give it to her husband. How thoughtful! Marriage is built on the little things. You don't have to spend a lot of money to be romantic or do big things to demonstrate your love. The little actions of love can be like a bucket of kerosene on a match: a text telling them you love them, an occasional love note, a card for no reason, or flowers when there's no special occasion. Nothing is dynamic unless it's specific, so here are practical tips: Spend time talking daily without interruption, do something together every day, show physical affection throughout the day, and occasionally do thoughtful, unexpected things.

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| Marriage Made in Heaven Week 47 Song of Solomon | | |
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| The strongest fires aren't the ones that roar, but the ones that quietly never burn out. By God's grace, it can be an old-fashioned love song that never ends. | Notes | _ |
| Key Takeaway | | _ |
| We are to love our spouse the same way Jesus loved the church: with selfless, sacrificial, sweet, unconditional, and unending love. Let your love be communicated through treasured talk, time together, and tender touch and illustrated through daily acts of thoughtfulness. | | _ |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 47 | Song of Solomon

| 1. | John Gottman's research shows you need five positive interactions for every negative one in marriage. How would you rate your current ratio, and what specific positive words could you speak to your spouse this week? | | | |
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| 2. | How are you currently spelling love (T-I-M-E) in your marriage? What creative ways could you carve out more together time, even with busy schedules or limited resources? | | | |
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| 3. | For husbands: How can you show more non-sexual affection to meet your wife's need to be "hugged, held, and heard"? For wives: How can you be more sensitive to your husband's need for sexual fulfillment? | | | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 48 | 1 Corinthians 13:4–8

| Introduction | Notes |
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| What do you think is the one ingredient that can transform an ordinary marriage into an extraordinary one? McDonald's has its Big Mac sauce, Shake Shack has its Shack sauce, and even What-A-Burger guards its spicy ketchup recipe. These "secret sauces" give each restaurant its competitive edge. But there's also a secret sauce to marriage that isn't secret at all. It's found in the word love. Now, this isn't Hollywood's love that evaporates when your spouse gains weight or loses their job. This is the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13, often called "The Love Chapter," describing the hard work of what real love is and what real love does. As we study it, you can discover the answer to this question: Can two people who fall in love before marriage really stay in love after marriage? The answer depends entirely on what kind of love you're talking about. The 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love doesn't quit when your husband forgets your birthday. It doesn't walk out when your wife criticizes you in front of friends. This is the kind of love that makes it to the finish line, not because it's easy, but because it comes from the God who never fails. | |
| Key Points | |
| 1. Show Love Through Your Actions | |
| Have you ever wondered why love looks so different from what we see in movies and hear in songs? The Apostle Paul explains that love isn't primarily a feeling; it's a series of deliberate actions. He writes, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:4–6, NIV). Notice Paul uses more negative statements than positive ones to show what love refuses to do. Real love is patient; it has a long fuse, not a short temper. It's kind in words and actions. As Mark Twain said, "Kindness is a language the deaf can hear and the blind can | |

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| see." Love doesn't keep a ledger of bad deeds like an accountant tracking debts. Most importantly, love tells the truth when it's needed and receives truth when it's hard to hear. Practice one specific action of love daily—patience when your spouse is late, kindness in your tone, or forgiveness instead of keeping score. | Notes |
| 2. Cultivate Love Through Your Attitude | |
| After describing what love does, Paul reveals the attitude that sustains it: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7, ESV). The phrase "all things" appears four times in this one verse. Paul wants you to understand that real love doesn't give up when circumstances get difficult. Love bears all things like a roof protects a house from storms. It believes all things, meaning you choose to see the best in your spouse rather than assuming the worst. Love hopes all things because if there's a God in Heaven for whom nothing is impossible, then no marriage is beyond hope. Finally, love endures all things, taking the long view and refusing to quit. C.S. Lewis reminds us that we already practice this kind of love with ourselves, accepting our own flaws while still loving who we are. Choose to believe the best about your spouse today, trusting that God is working even when you can't see it. | |
| 3. Trust Love Because It Never Fails | |
| Paul continues with three simple words that change everything: "Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8, NIV). This isn't wishful thinking; it's a promise rooted in God's character. God doesn't just have love or do love; He is love, and God never fails. The reality is, you'll never love your spouse the way you should until you love God the way you should. When you love | |



God most, you'll love your spouse best. Commitment may keep

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| you living in the same house, but love keeps you beating with | Notes |
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| the same heart. I read a story about a hospital chaplain who spent hours in intensive care waiting rooms, seeing people's final moments with one another. Distinctions of race or class | |
| melted away, vanity disappeared, and everyone understood that loving someone was what life was really all about. What if you could learn to love like that every day, not just in crisis | |
| moments? It begins by trusting God's unfailing love for you. | |
| Ask God to fill you with His love first, then watch how it transforms the way you love your spouse. | |
| Key Takeaway | |
| The love described in 1 Corinthians 13 isn't just an ideal; it's the supernatural love God offers to every married couple who asks for it. When you love with patience, kindness, hope, and endur- | |
| for it. When you love with patience, kindness, hope, and endurance, you create a marriage that lasts not only until problems come, but until death parts you. | |
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Marriage Made in Heaven \mid Week 48 \mid 1 Corinthians 13:4–8

| 1. | Which characteristic of love from 1 Corinthians 13:4–6 (patience, kindness, not envying, not boasting, etc.) is currently your biggest challenge in your marriage? What specific step could you take this week to improve in that area? |
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| 2. | Paul says love "keeps no record of wrongs." Are you keeping a mental note of your spouse's mistakes? How might forgiving and forgetting those past hurts transform your relationship? |
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| 3. | How does your love for God directly impact your ability to love your spouse? In what practical ways could deepening your relationship with God strengthen your marriage? |
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