

**Student Workbook**  
**Making The Most of Your Marriage**  
**by Dr. John Maxwell**

**Video Session 2: "What Does a Strong Marriage Look Like?"**

**1. Introduction**

Ephesians 5:21-33, from The Promise Study Edition (Contemporary English Version)

*<sup>21</sup> Honor Christ and put others first. <sup>22</sup> A wife should put her husband first, as she does the Lord. <sup>23</sup> A husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head and the Savior of the church, which is his own body. <sup>24</sup> Wives should always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first.*

*<sup>25</sup> A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup> He made the church holy by the power of his word, and he made it pure by washing it with water. <sup>27</sup> Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws.*

*<sup>28</sup> In the same way, a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows that he loves himself.*

*<sup>29</sup> None of us hate our own bodies. We provide for them and take good care of them, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are each part of his body. <sup>31</sup> As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife." <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I understand it to mean Christ and his church. <sup>33</sup> So each husband should love his wife as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband.*

**2. Video Session Begins**

**The Six "C's" of a Strong Marriage**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - Do you come first in my life?

The motto of Successful Marriages... "Family First"

- Key Word in "Making the Most of Your Marriage" ... WORK

2. \_\_\_\_\_ - "Can I tell you everything?"

"Even if marriages are made in heaven, we have to be responsible for the maintenance."

2 bathrooms - forgot how to cooperate,  
2 car family - forgot how to associate,  
2 TV house - forgot how to communicate.

The "Communication Slide"

- 1st Year \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day
  - 2nd Year \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day
  - 3rd Year \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day
  - 4th Year \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day
  - 10th Year \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day
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- Intimacy - "The degree to which we share vulnerabilities in words."
  - You are intimate if each of you can say anything, no matter how silly or frightened or immature or helpless it makes you look, and the other person will treat it with respect, not use it against you.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ - "Are we a good fit?"

- Criteria for Compatibility

A. \_\_\_\_\_

- Values are anything important to you.
- Values give us freedom. Values make it possible to live beyond the moment.

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

- Marriage is a social relationship, and to the extent that you expand your love for each other and manifest it to other people, so will your marriage be strengthened. Do you share friends together or do you each have a separate set of friends?

D. \_\_\_\_\_

- The journey to learn and grow together assures both partners of a future in their marriage. When one partner grows and the other does not, the marriage will either fail or only be average.

E. \_\_\_\_\_

- Here is how you can find out if you and your spouse share interests: make a list of everything in the past, present, and future that interests you or that you would like to get interested in. Have your spouse make a list also, and exchange lists. Mark on each other's list the things that would be worthwhile for you to participate in. If you don't have any common interests, start developing some.

E. \_\_\_\_\_

Refers to the total male-female relationship, not just fifteen minutes of intercourse. Sex is a special look, a touch, the way you relate as male and female. There should be unique behavior between husband and wife that is not shared with anyone else

*"Marriage is the only union that can't be organized. Both sides think they are in management."*

4. \_\_\_\_\_ - "Who is in charge here?"

- Research from Timberlawn: "We have found a tendency for marriages of more equal power to be healthier in all other aspects. This isn't a perfect correlation; there are successful, happy marriages with unequal power but with strong commitment, closeness, good communication and problem-solving skills just as there are couples with equal power who divorce. But on the whole, the more lopsided the power, the more you'll see problems in other areas, no matter who's dominant."

#### Four Relationship Styles

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ - Moving AGAINST each other.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ - Moving ONE OVER another.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ - Moving AWAY from each other.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ - Moving WITH each other.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ - "Do we enhance each other?"

A Brief Quiz: If you want to have psychologically healthy children who will grow up to be strong, capable loving adults, the single best thing you can do is:

- a) Build your kid's self-esteem.
- b) Give them lots of hugging and cuddling.
- c) Provide firm, fair discipline.
- d) Make your spouse you equal partner and best friend.

The surprising answer is "d," according to the Young Family Project, a ground breaking study of family health being conducted by the Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation in Dallas, Texas.

*"The supreme happiness in life is the conviction that we are loved."*

#### How to Spoil Your Spouse

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ - "Can we solve our problems together?"

## How To Fight Fair

1. Understand the difference between a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.

A problem is something I can do \_\_\_\_\_ about.

A fact of life is something I can do \_\_\_\_\_ about.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

When the issue is not specific there is a tendency to ...

A. Misunderstand

B. Attack the person and not the problem.

3. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ block communication.

### Communication Stoppers

A. \_\_\_\_\_ - Someone who yells during an argument.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ - Someone who cries during an argument.

C. \_\_\_\_\_ - Someone who pouts during an argument.

D. \_\_\_\_\_ - Someone who manipulates during an argument.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Negative labeling of a mate is common and always destructive.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Don't tell your husband, "You never take out the garbage." Don't tell your wife, "You always nag me." Don't use words like "never" and "always" - they're absolutes. Then we forget the whole reason we're arguing.

6. Agree on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the argument.

When to Delay an argument:

A.

B.

C.

7. Clear the air \_\_\_\_\_.

Don't "gunny-sack." Gunny-sacking is saving up all your complaints and problems until the bag is full and then dumping it on the person.

8. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ to conflict.

Don't drop a bomb when a sling-shot will work.

9. Position things \_\_\_\_\_.

Give the person and the situation the benefit of the doubt.

To handle yourself use your \_\_\_\_\_.

To handle others use your \_\_\_\_\_.

10. Don't try to analyze your mate's \_\_\_\_\_.

Motives are subjective. Criticize the action and not the person.

The intimate knowledge you have of your spouse's psychological soft spots can enable your words to be especially hurtful and damaging.

11. Love your spouse more than your \_\_\_\_\_.

Any husband who loves his opinions more than his spouse, will defend his opinions and lose his relationship with his wife.

12. Follow the \_\_\_\_\_ principle.

Find the 1% that you agree on and give it 100% of your effort.

13. Show that you \_\_\_\_\_ the other person's position.

Repeat or rephrase the other person's position.

14. \_\_\_\_\_.

The people affected are going to feel shock, bitterness, resentment. And they may not spare your feelings by hiding behind a stiff upper lip. Whatever they say - or keep secret - they won't be ready to listen to the reason this is happening to them until they've expressed their emotion or had time to swallow the hurt.

15) Be committed to \_\_\_\_\_ and mutual \_\_\_\_\_.

Honesty allows the relationship to \_\_\_\_\_.

Respect allows the relationship to \_\_\_\_\_.

16) Check your own \_\_\_\_\_.

It's not what happens to me, it's what happens in me that counts.

17) Provide an \_\_\_\_\_ for your spouse.

Follow the Golden Rule....“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

18) When you're wrong - \_\_\_\_\_.

What a fresh idea! This is one of the best ways to stop a fight.

19) When it's over...\_\_\_\_\_.

This requires listening, tenderness, kindness, and forgiveness. Never withhold love from your spouse. Put the issue in the past.

20) Welcome each conflict. Make it a \_\_\_\_\_ process.

## MARRIAGE GOAL CARDS

By God's grace, I determine to accomplish at least one specific goal this week based on video session # \_\_\_\_\_. My goal for this week is...

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## Test Your Compatibility

Rank these statements:

5 - strongly agree; 4 - mostly agree; 3 - unsure; 2 - mostly disagree; 1 - strongly disagree.

\_\_\_ 1. I believe my partner tells me the truth.

\_\_\_ 2. My partner has a fine sense of humor.

\_\_\_ 3. My partner understands my sexual needs and satisfies them.

\_\_\_ 4. We feel the same way about how others should be treated.

\_\_\_ 5. One-on-one talks occur frequently in our relationship.

\_\_\_ 6. We are never abusive with one another physically or emotionally.

\_\_\_ 7. I trust my partner to do what (s)he says (s)he will do.

\_\_\_ 8. My partner is easily able to laugh at himself/herself.

\_\_\_ 9. I like the way my partner looks, smells, tastes and feels.

\_\_\_ 10. We would both choose to live in the same locale.

\_\_\_ 11. Our political views are nearly identical.

\_\_\_ 12. When we discuss our difficulties we always come to a reasonable resolution.

\_\_\_ 13. Deep inside I know that (s)he is the right person for me.

\_\_\_ 14. I feel cared for by my partner.

\_\_\_ 15. Our sense of humor gets us out of difficult moments.

\_\_\_ 16. I feel relaxed and sexually uninhibited with my partner.

\_\_\_ 17. We never have conflicts over money management.

\_\_\_ 18. My partner is very sensitive to my feelings.

\_\_\_ 19. My partner is my best friend.

\_\_\_ 20. I believe that my partner is honest with others.

\_\_\_ 21. I find my partner very interesting as a person.

\_\_\_ 22. We talk openly and forthrightly about our lovemaking.

\_\_\_ 23. Our spiritual convictions are very closely aligned.

\_\_\_ 24. Our arguments get resolved with a short time.

\_\_\_ 25. I'd rather spend time with my partner than anyone else.

\_\_\_ 26. When I'm in need, I go first to my partner for help.

\_\_\_ 27. We share many interests and activities.

\_\_\_ 28. We frequently express our affection in non-sexual ways (cuddling, small gifts, kissing, "sweet talk," etc.)

\_\_\_ 29. We are both comfortable with the same standard of living.

\_\_\_ 30. I would trust my partner with my life.

\_\_\_ 31. When something is bothering me about our relationship I always bring it up directly with my partner.

\_\_\_ 32. We play well and have fun together often.

\_\_\_ 33. My partner admits it when (s)he makes a mistake.

\_\_\_ 34. I would choose to spend as much free time as possible with my partner.

\_\_\_ 35. Our sexual life is varied and interesting.

\_\_\_ 36. I feel totally accepted by my partner as I am, shortcomings notwithstanding.

\_\_\_ 37. I respect my partner's opinions and viewpoints.

\_\_\_ 38. I never feel suspicious of my partner.

\_\_\_ 39. We have an excellent time when we go on vacation together.

\_\_\_ 40. I look forward to making love.

\_\_\_ 41. When our viewpoints differ, we can agree to disagree.

\_\_\_ 42. We feel the same way about having children.

\_\_\_ 43. I don't think my partner would make an important decision that affected both of us without consulting me first.

\_\_\_ 44. I believe my partner genuinely respects my intelligence and competence.

\_\_\_ 45. I believe that my partner is a thoroughly ethical person.

\_\_\_ 46. We are well-matched in the amount of time we each need alone.

\_\_\_ 47. We see eye-to-eye on most social issues.

\_\_\_ 48. I admire my partner for who (s)he is.

\_\_\_ 49. When we have a misunderstanding my partner forgives and forgets rapidly and easily.

\_\_\_ 50. I like my partner's friends.

# Making the Most of Your Marriage

## Session #2 – Answer Key

1. Commitment
2. Communication  
70, 30, 15, 10, 5
3. Compatibility
  - a. Similar values
  - b. Family background
  - c. Social style
  - d. Intellectual development
  - e. Leisure interests
  - f. Sexual wholeness
4. Control
  1. Retaliation
  2. Domination
  3. Isolation
  4. Cooperation
5. Consideration
  - a. think from her perspective, not yours
  - b. list the little things she likes
  - c. do the little things
  - d. do the little things that she loves cheerfully
  - e. affirm her verbally – privately and publicly
6. Coping skills
  1. problem, fact of life  
something, nothing
  2. be specific
  3. emotionally
    - a. screamers
    - b. streamers
    - c. steamers
    - d. schemers
  4. Avoid labels
  5. Avoid absolutes
  6. timing
    - a. when other people are around
    - b. before an important meeting
    - c. if there is too much anger
  7. as soon as possible
  8. overact
  9. positively  
head, heart
  10. motives
  11. opinions
  12. 101%
  13. understand
  14. Encourage a response
  15. honesty, respect  
grow, last
  16. attitude
  17. escape hatch
  18. admit it
  19. clean up the mess
  20. growing