

together can find themselves in a most unique position. Like *comrades in arms* who have shared common battle experiences, couples who holds together through all that life throws at them share a bond no one else can understand. Troubles need not pull us apart—they can actually cement a bond stronger than any other human relationship.

There is no question that the greatest spiritual influence anyone can ever have on another is when two Christians have entered into the marriage covenant. They can either help each other go to heaven, or become the greatest obstacle toward achieving that goal. Peter notes this speaking of a husband and wives as **"heirs together of the grace of life"** but warning them to live in such a way that will not cause their prayers to **"be hindered"** (1 Pet.3:7). Job's wife could have *hindered* his faith (Job 2:9). Ahab's wife led him to compound his sin with further sin (1 Kings 21:1-16). To mature in marriage we must also seek to mature in faith. Make responsibilities to God a priority. Make prayer a constant and regular family practice. In times of trouble help each other seek the eternal. The marriage covenant is not eternal but the faith a husband and wife share ought to be. That commitment with grant to a husband and wife the hope of an eternal home with all children of God in the age to come. That surely promises the faithful husband and wife a closeness that may continue in even richer ways in the age to come.

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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

Let us know if you have any questions.

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BULLETIN OF THE OLSEN PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings



Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

Maturing in Marriage

by Kyle Pope

Marriage is not governed by instinct. God hasn't programmed us to be the kind of husband or wife we ought to be automatically. In marriage the Lord guides us through His word. The Psalmist said, **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"** (Psa. 119:105, NKJV). A married couple must look to what God's word teaches and consciously choose to follow where it leads.

When young people begin married life one of the greatest challenges they face is replacing the pictures they have in their minds about what marriage is, with images that are not only realistic but biblical. Newlyweds have no idea what it's really like to be married. If we haven't spent time in God's word, our pictures may be shaped by movies, TV shows, or books. We look to what we've seen in our family or friends, but if what we see in these sources is not sound, we go into marriage with an unhealthy expectation of what marriage is.

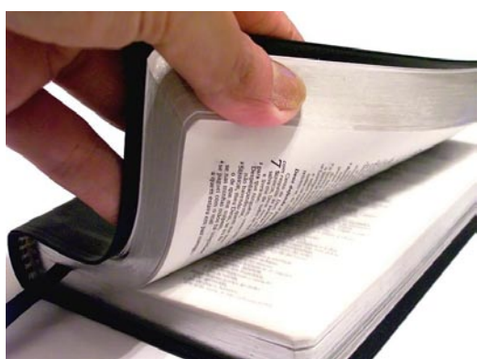
Marriage is a covenant and a promise made to one another. The Lord revealed through Malachi that when two people have the right to marry, God acts as **"witness"** between a man and the wife of his youth who becomes his **"wife by covenant"**

(Mal. 2:14). Marriage is a choice. It is not magic. It is not chemistry. It is an agreement.

As God intends it this agreement is for life. **"A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives"** (1 Cor. 7:39a). That presupposes some things. What will you be like twenty years form now? Only God knows. The marriage covenant commits to a level of care, affection, responsibility, and love not only to the spouse that stands before us when we first wed, but also to the unknown mate that will develop as the years turn. Those who do not devote themselves to maintain a commitment to that unknown future spouse (whatever may come) will never gain the maturity needed to sustain the covenant they have made.

Like marriage our relationship with God in Christ is a covenant (Heb. 8:6-10). Like our relationship with God in Christ we begin this covenant as **"babes"** (1 Pet. 2:2)—**"unskilled"** in those things we need to do in order to honor this agreement (Heb. 5:13). All couples begin marriage with a naïve and immature view of it. Newlyweds can be very selfish. Their treatment of one another is often self-seeking. They do nice things for a mate because of some benefit that brings them in return. As Christians we are taught to **"look out not only for"** our **"own interests, but also for the interests of others"** (Phil. 2:4). This must begin with our mates. Yes, marriage brings us the benefits of love, friendship, and intimacy, but if we only give these to our mates bartering for something in return we will never know the love God intends in marriage.

When Paul talked to the Corinthians about the responsibilities one has if he or she chooses to marry he described a duty we all understand but often neglect when the newness of marriage begins to fade. Both husbands and wives should seek to **"please"** one another (1 Cor. 7:33-34). God created marriage so that man might not be **"alone"** but would have a **"helper comparable"** to him (Gen. 2:18). Far too often a young man or young woman who start off doing everything imaginable to make the other happy, somewhere along the way lose any interest in making the other happy at all. That is not how it ought to be. Hurt feelings or wounds caused by one another can make us build walls of defense. We don't say it out loud, but we imagine that if we do something nice to **"please"** the other it leaves us vulnerable—so we choose a course we think protects us.



Love **"keeps no record of wrongs"** (1 Cor. 13:5, NIV) and Christians must forgive others **"even as Christ forgave you"** (Col. 3:13, NKJV). Married couples in their twenties or in their nineties should never stop trying to **"please"** one another. This doesn't always have to be something big. It might be a note or a single rose. Perhaps it is a special meal cooked or a fun night out. As God intends it our spouse should be our best friend in the world. Friends listen to, care for, and support each other. In all things Christians should be **"swift to listen, slow to speak, slow to wrath"** (Jas. 1:19). One of the simplest ways to show our love and friendship for our mate, yet something we often fail to do is just listen—listen, care, and encourage the soul to whom we have pledged our life.

When the Holy Spirit warned against adultery He offered some interesting admonitions—**"rejoice with the wife of your youth"** (Prov. 5:18)—her body must **"satisfy you at all times"** and the husband must **"always be enraptured with her love"** (Prov. 5:19). What the world calls "the seven year itch" should never evn be known among Christians. A husband and wife promise one another in the covenant of marriage to *keep themselves only for* one another. In times of frustration with one another do not look to someone else for comfort. In times of disappointment don't begin to consider how someone else has what your mate lacks. That is not what you promised. Instead avoid all situations that could lead to temptation—**"do not go near the door of her house"** (Prov. 5:6). Speak well of your mate to others, and in so doing you will grow in gratitude for his or her positive qualities.

One false image that must be replaced in the mind as we grow in marriage is the expectation that we will never face any difficulties. Jesus said bluntly, **"In this world you will have tribulation"** (John 16:33). What the Lord promised of life in general is true of marriage also. There will be sickness, heartbreak, loss, disaster, setbacks, disappointments, discouragements, financial troubles, and family issues. These are to be expected. The Christian husband and wife who weather these storms