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# An Inner Life for a Healthy Marriage

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# An Inner Life for a Healthy Marriage

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There is no one person as intimately involved in your life as your marriage partner. So, your partner will make you more conscious of your inner life than anyone else. How are you contributing to happiness in your marriage?

## Attitude

With your partner in mind, consider these verses:

- *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (Colossians 3:8-10).*
- *On the other hand, with your partner in mind, consider these verses: Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another; and forgiving each other; whoever has a complaint against any one; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you (Colossians 3:12-13).*
- *...be subjected one another in the fear of Christ (Ephesians 5:21).*

The will to cooperate is an important key to building self-respect. Cooperation implies that both husband and wife make the decision to dedicate time and effort in developing a mutually agreeable way of life.

## Submission

No matter how committed you are to cooperate, it is inevitable that sooner or later you will become deadlocked over some decision. There is a way to settle a deadlock if you are committed to resolve the divisions between you.

*Someone must have the last word.* The Bible says:

*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22).*

In the decision-making process, the wife should participate vigorously and forthrightly in the search for a mutually agreeable solution. The husband should think twice, or more, before going against his wife's judgment. If the wife still disagrees with her husband's tie-breaking decision, she should say so. The husband

has two options when there is a deadlock: 1) Make the decision himself, or 2) Ask his wife to make it. Once done, both husband and wife submit to the decision and do all in their power to make it work.

## **Commitment**

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

As I travel around the country, I am appalled at the number of individuals who are walking away from their marriages and calling it quits.

If a man approaches his responsibility to marriage as Christ did toward the church, then the man will be committed until death. He will submit to the responsibility for maintaining a wholesome relationship with his wife. There may be a period of time—perhaps years—when he has no choice but to stand by a totally rebellious, obnoxious, rejecting, or immoral woman, whose behavior is not worthy of his loyalty. His self-respect will remain intact if he retains the will to make it work, even though all his efforts are rejected.

Conversely, the behavior of many husbands can be totally obnoxious, mean, self-centered, even immoral. They may make no effort to be responsible husbands. They may totally reject any responsibility for the marriage. Yet, the will to stay committed will sustain a woman's self-respect.

*...you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior (1 Peter 3:1-2).*

## **Sexual Responsibility**

Sexual response dies when there are deadlocks and ill will between the partners. Accordingly, when you do not respond to each other, look elsewhere for the reason.

There is a specific directive in the Bible to guide you in managing your physical relations:

*The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourself to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control (1 Corinthians 7:4-5).*

Clearly, your partner's wish is your commandment. Obviously, the spirit here is one of mutual concern for each other.

Marriage, like no other human relationship, will keep you up to date on the condition of your inner life. It is a personal decision, unrelated to marriage, whether or not you repent of a negative inner life, and allow God to flood your soul with His Spirit.

You build your own self-respect or self-love as you remain loyal, cooperative, submissive, and committed unto death to do all in your power to make the marriage work.