SIX STONE FOUNDATIONS FOR A SOLID MARRIAGE

- Genesis 2:18 – Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

- Marriage is a covenant relationship initiated by God.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A contract ...</th>
<th>A covenant ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... is a secular, legal document regulated by the state.</td>
<td>... is a sacred, moral agreement regulated by God.</td>
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<td>... is based upon mistrust between two people.</td>
<td>... is based upon trust between two people and God.</td>
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<td>... is written to create limited liability.</td>
<td>... is accepted to embrace unlimited responsibility.</td>
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<td>... is embedded with “opt out” or escape clauses.</td>
<td>... is envisioned to be permanent.</td>
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<td>... demands joy through mutual benefit.</td>
<td>... seeks joy through mutual sacrifice.</td>
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- Matthew 7 – The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders
  - Marriages can be built upon the rock of a covenant, or the sand of a contract.
  - “He who hears these words of mine, and does them.”

1. Sacred union

Genesis 2:21–24 – So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: “This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken from man.” This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

- God ordained the first marriage when he brought the woman to the man.
- When a couple says, “I do,” the vows they make are a sacred commitment to God first, and to one another second.
- Your spouse is God’s sacred gift to you.

2. Sacrificial love

Ephesians 5:1–2 – Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

- Love is undoubtedly an emotion, but it is not only an emotion.
- Love is also a choice that spouses make daily.
- Sacrificial love is giving your spouse . . .
  - . . . what they need the most
  - . . . but deserve the least
  - . . . in the hardest of circumstances
  - . . . and it costs you something

3. Spiritual character

Galatians 5:22–23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- Every Christian is to pursue the “Fruit of the Spirit.” Fruit is what identifies every true believer in Jesus.
- Pursuing these character traits is your moral obligation to God and to your spouse.
- These character qualities are essential for a healthy marriage and should never have to be “demanded” by your spouse.

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4. **Scriptural friendship**

   John 13:34 – I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another

- There are 59 one anothers outlined in the Bible for Christian brotherhood.
- Spouses sometimes find it easier to fulfill these demands in lives of strangers than they do their own spouses.
- Marriage should display the pinnacle of fulfillment of these one anothers in the life of each spouse.
- Friendship in marriage must be cultivated just like with any other relationship in life.

5. **Shared responsibility**

   Ephesians 5:15-17 – Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So, don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

- There is much more to a Christian marriage than gender roles. Paul prefaced his remarks on genders roles by calling for every believer to examine his/her own life.
- Regardless of gender roles, husbands and wives are mutually called to take personal responsibility for the intimacy of their Christian walk.
- Marriage is not a 50/50 split. It takes 100% ownership and responsibility on the part of both spouses.

6. **Specific Roles**

   Ephesians 5:22–33 – Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- In a marriage, husbands and wives have equal value, but different roles.

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**The Unique Roles of Husbands and Wives**

**Wives**

I. Well-Suited helper (Genesis 2:18)
   - She is to lock arms with her husband in being a true partner

II. Respectful Supporter (1 Peter 3:1–6)
   - She is to respect and submit to him out of obedience to Christ

III. Skilled worker (Proverbs 31)
   - Her work outside the home is exemplary

IV. Enthusiastic Lover (Solomon 5:8)
   - She should pursue her husband and delight in him

V. Household overseer (Titus 2:3-5)
   - She should take pride in her responsibilities in the home

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**Husbands**

1. **Sacrificial lovers** (Ephesians 5:25 & Solomon 5–8)
   - Jesus loved the church so much He died for her
   - He should pursue his wife and seek to enamor her
2. **Servant Leader** (Matthew 20:25–28)
   - Taking charge vs. taking responsibility
3. **Family shepherd** (1 Timothy 3:1–7)
   - As a pastor shepherds the church, he pastors his family
4. **Tender Learner** (1 Peter 3:7)
   - He knows his wife and cherishes her
5. **Strong provider** (1 Timothy 5:8)
   - He needs to be a hard worker providing for the family