

Marriage Tune-Up

- I. Sometimes marriage doesn't run properly. The default answer should not be, "Junk it" or "Trade it," but "Diagnose it and fix it."
- A. A lot of break-downs can be averted by proper maintenance. Why wait for the "idiot light" on the instrument panel to let you know you're about to be stranded?
 - B. A well-cared for marriage can last long enough to become a classic that isn't taxed like younger marriage.
 - C. Like an engine, your marriage needs cranking power (covenantal love), spark (romance), gas (self-sacrifice), oil (caring forbearance), coolant (temper, patience), filtration to keep out destructive elements, balanced air flow (reasonable expectations) and exhaust (don't worry about this one---it just happens, but don't let it get plugged): all working in coordination.
 - D. Husbands need a continual membership in AAA: Attention, Affection, Appreciation. This is the security package that gives her the assurance that you care for her.
 - E. Wives need to remember where the keys are: submissiveness, support, respect.
 - F. Your spouse has two data ports for diagnostics (both critical but sometimes disconnected): brain and heart.
 - 1. *Ask* the brain for data and *heed* the heart (since it doesn't always cough out data on command). If either of the OBD systems isn't providing data, it may need a re-boot.
 - 2. Wise diagnosticians know their vehicle well, and treat it accordingly. The same applies in marriage. **1PE 5:6-7.**
 - G. Keep your marriage running well with quality parts designed for your model.
 - 1. Other folks' marriages may have different parts that won't fit yours.
 - 2. Don't use cheap substitute parts like tantrums, yelling, threats, counter-accusations, passive-aggressive manipulations, procrastination, grudges, withholding conjugal favors as punishment, self-love, etc.
 - H. Not every marriage is a Toyota that runs virtually trouble-free but even Toyotas require care.
 - I. Break trust with your car by lack of care or imprudent use and it will stop working well. Break trust with your spouse and your marriage will do likewise.
 - J. If you can't figure out why your marriage isn't running well, get professional input before it fails. Don't wait until break-down. Counsel has its place, and the best counsel is what God's word says about man, woman, and the marriage relationship. **PSA 119:24.**
 - A. God is the Maker of man, woman and marriage. **GEN 2:21-24.**
 - B. Marriage is the relationship God has made with His redeemed. **EPH 5:24-25, 32.**
 - C. God knows best what drives and hinders us. He knows our hearts better than we do. **LUK 16:15; ACT 15:8; HEB 4:12.**
- II. One-shots.
- A. "Marriage is a contest to out-give and out-forgive your spouse." (Dave Ashworth)
 - B. In marriage, it is more important to be always good than to be always right.
 - C. The vow of marriage is its bond but let not the legality of the bond excuse you from managing the relationship wisely, godly.
 - D. Your heart will be where your treasure is (**MAT 6:21**), and your spouse will know it.
 - E. Next to God, the #1 person in your life should be your spouse, not children, parents, friends, employer, etc.
 - F. Realistic expectations can prevent many unfulfilled expectations.

- G. If you can't work out a perfect marriage, at least perfect a working marriage.
- III. In all associations or relationships, there are bound to be difficulties and friction. Marriage is no exception. **1CO 7:28.**
- A. If a Christian couple are intent on resolving problems God's way, divorce is not an option. **ROM 7:2; 1CO 7:10-11.**
 - B. Properly handled, friction in marriage can turn to a benefit, inasmuch as it can check excessive or selfish behavior. **PRO 27:17.**
- IV. If strife has become a trademark of a marriage, consider its source. **PRO 13:10; JAM 4:1.**
- A. Insistent and continual bickering is self-destructive. **GAL 5:15.**
 - B. Sometimes, self-righteousness masquerades as a holy, righteous defence of some principle. **ACT 26:11; ROM 7:7-8.**
 - C. Therefore, temper your righteousness. **ECC 7:16, 21-22; ROM 12:3.**
 - D. Righteousness and judgment must be governed by forbearance and mercy. **COL 3:12-13; JAM 2:13.**
- V. Sometimes a cause of marital difficulties is a departure from the respective roles of husband and wife as God has laid them out. **EPH 5:22-33.**
- A. The role of the husband.
 - 1. A man is to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. Leave and cleave. **v. 31 c/w GEN 2:24.**
 - a. The man must prioritize his new relationship over that of his upbringing. Parents' affections and demands take a backseat.
 - b. *Cleave* means "...to adhere or cling to; to remain attached, devoted or faithful to." See this in **GEN 34:3; RUTH 1:14.**
 - 2. A man is to be the head of his wife; he is to rule her. **v. 23 c/w GEN 3:16; 1CO 11:3.**
 - a. This is not a tyrant's license. Authority is to be used for the improvement of those under it. **2CO 10:8.**
 - b. A woman needs to be able to trust her husband to wisely rule over her and the house. Men need to avoid being Nabal. **1SAM 25:17-19, 25.**
 - c. If all the household decisions are thrust upon her, then she may well not respect her husband as a head.
 - d. This does not mean that the wife should be excluded from the decision-making process. God gave women brains and insight which deserve consideration. **GEN 21:9-12 c/w PRO 14:1.**
 - 3. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. **v. 25.**
 - a. True love gives of itself. **1CO 13:5.**
 - b. A woman needs to feel that her husband has a keen interest in her welfare and that he is willing to sacrifice for her good. Her submission will be much easier where she knows she is truly loved and cared for.
 - 4. A man ought to view his wife not just for what she is, fixating on her flaws, but for her potential under his loving headship. **vs. 26-27.**
 - 5. A man is to love his wife as he loves his own body. **v. 28 c/w JOB 2:4-5.**
 - a. He should give his wife the same regard that he would his own body. He should not demand of her that which he would be loath to do himself.
 - b. If a man loves his wife, he loves himself. It is in his best interests to love her sacrificially, considerately, kindly.

- c. She is poetically called a garden (**SONG 4:12**). Pleasure and benefit are only derived from a garden that is well-cared for.
- 6. A man must provide for his wife's well-being. **v. 29.**
 - a. He is to *nourish* her, which means “to bring up, rear, nurture... promote the growth of.”
 - b. He should provide for her financially, spiritually, emotionally, intimately, intellectually and recreationally.
 - c. Wilful failure to provide for the wife is denial of the faith. **1TI 5:8.**
- 7. He ought to *cherish* the wife (**v. 29**), which means “to hold dear, treat with tenderness and affection; to make much of.” **v. 29.**
- 8. This passage unquestionably sets forth a man's role as one of headship and tenderness: steel and velvet.
 - a. A balance of these qualities are necessary for a woman to feel secure in the marriage relationship.
 - b. This security is needed for her to derive maximum pleasure from marital relations.
- 9. **1PE 3:7.**
 - a. Dwell with your wife according to knowledge, not just feelings. One does not always feel like being married.
 - b. Scripture, observation and common sense all contribute to knowing a woman.
 - c. Give *honour* to the wife, i.e., “high respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation.” A woman needs to be praised, feel needed and valuable. **PRO 31:28-31.**
 - d. Remember that she is the weaker vessel, regardless of how thick the outer shell may appear to be.
 - e. A man is to provide a protective shield for his wife against pressure.
 - f. If she bears all the stress of the home by herself, then she will have problems relating properly to the husband.
- 10. **COL 3:19.** The husband is not to be bitter against his wife and take out his frustrations on her.
 - a. She may be a good sounding board, but not a dart board.
 - b. Reserve disgruntlement for her rebellion, not for her flaws and womanly nature.