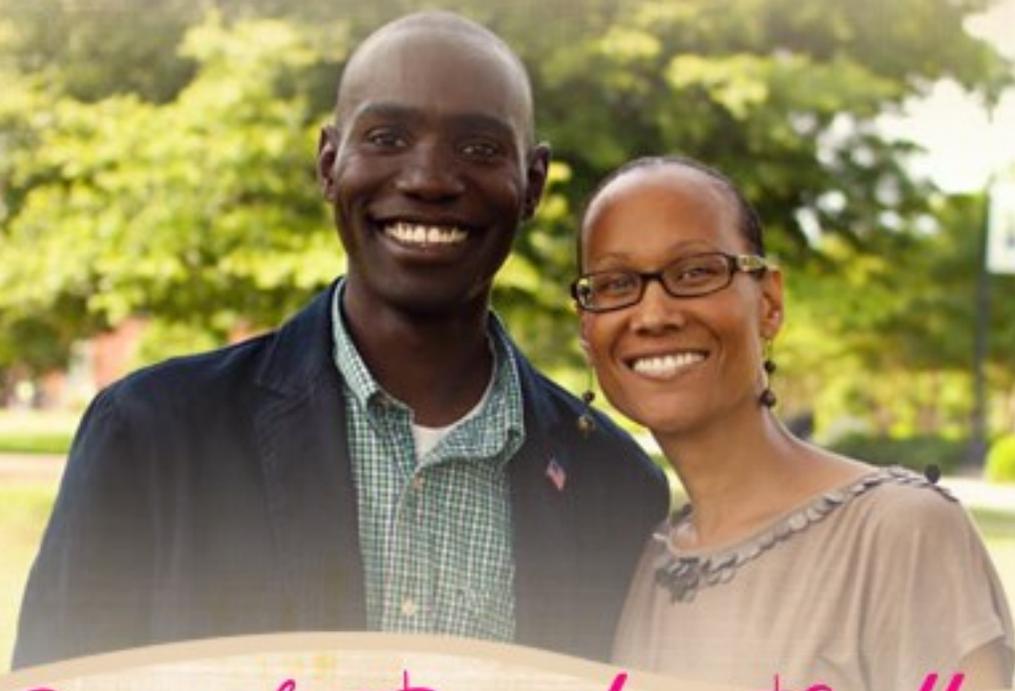


GOD WORKS

magazine

the Love issue



Kevin & Cetelia Bullard
tell us how they make their **MARRIAGE WORK!**

along with
several more
couples

A Celebration of
Christian Love & Marriage!



June 2013 | Special Edition
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Cetelia & Kevin Bullard

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER



“Trust God more, pray often, and work harder at making marriage a success.”

Everyone wants to love and be loved. I certainly do. When we open ourselves up to giving and receiving love, we make ourselves vulnerable. There is no way of being certain that once we have put aside all fear the love will last.

For years we all have heard about how high the divorce rate is. Even those who are Christians have failed in their marriages. It leaves little hope for those who are longing for lifetime stability with a mate.

Recently, I put aside my own fears and opened my heart and life up to a truly wonderful man of God. Milt Walker, Co-Owner of God Works Magazine, opened his own heart to love me as well. He is a kind, gentle man. He is very wise as well. During our time of being in relationship, Milt has helped me to learn to act more selfless. I thank him.

It is Milt's love for me that gave me the idea to present our readers with The Love Issue. In this issue, couples opened their lives to share what makes their marriage work. It is my hope that our readers are inspired by positive images of Christian love and marriage. It is also my hope that the love shared within these pages ignites a desire in the hearts of all couples to trust God more, pray often, and work harder at making their marriage a success.

Join us as we celebrate Christian Love & Marriage!

- Ayana Elon

We sincerely thank all couples who participated in this issue. May God continue to strengthen each of you so that you can continue to glorify Him in your marriage ministry.



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GOD'S LOVE

God's love is immeasurable. It is greater than anyone can imagine. What is so amazing is that He loves me! With a tremendous love He saves me. With a powerful love He protects me. With an awesome love He heals me. With a mighty love He rescues me. With a miraculous love He restores me. With a wonderful love He strengthens me. With a marvelous love He guides me. With a compassionate love He sustains me. With a father's love He cares for me. With a caring love He watches over me. With a complete love He provides for me. With a perfect love He removes ALL my fear. With a exciting love He walks with me. With a creator's love He spared me. With a giving love He pours out many blessings over me. With an exceptional love He gives me grace. With an unique love He surrounds me with His favor. With an inconceivable love He clothes me in His righteousness. With a phenomenal love He gives me victory.

With an outrageous love He calls me friend. With a forgiving love He gave me salvation. With an extravagant love He overflows me with the Holy Spirit. With an enormous love He changes me from glory to glory. With a glowing love He shines His

light on me. With a merciful love He forgives me. With a spectacular love He reveals His love to me. With a understanding love He gave me wisdom. With a all-knowing love He plans my future. With a righteous love He directs my paths. With a holy love He purifies my heart. With a pure love He reveals His hidden truths to me. With a long-suffering love He is patient with me. With a protective love He empowers me. With an honest love He speaks to me. With a precious love He gives me blessed peace. With a beautiful love He anoints me. With a victorious love He delivers me. With abounding love He IS the answer to ALL of my prayers! And with a gracious love He gave up His one and only Son for all our sins.

Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" What an amazing love!

Steve Countryman was born and raised in a good Christian home in Phoenix Arizona. In 2004 God spoke to him letting him know that He would start sharing things with Steve that he would share with others. Little did he know how powerful and meaningful those things would be!

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Why Most Young People are Not Prepared for Marriage

This article speaks in generalities and what I have experienced in the young people I personally know today. I am not putting all 20-somethings into this category. You be the judge and decide for yourself if you are prepared for a lifetime marriage or not.

Most young people are not prepared for marriage because they have never been taught the wife/husband and the woman/man roles for marriage. Most women walk into marriage with the attitude of how her husband can make her happy 24/7 and both of them walk into the marriage with feelings of desire and lust. This is not to say they do not love one another, but it is to say which are you basing the marriage on, love or feelings.

Many times, because the husband does not truly know what his role is in the marriage, the wife in her disappointment becomes bossy and critical of her husband, but she does not know what his role is either, or hers for that matter. Then because of the lack of positive attention from his wife, the husband becomes bored and thinks he is not in love anymore.

Of course if you're going to have a marriage just like everyone else that will have a 50 to 60 percent chance rate of failure, then I suppose it does not matter if you have not been taught how to treat the opposite sex and love the person you marry. But if we want a godly marriage based on God's principles then we DO NEED to know a little bit about what is expected of us so we can honor God with our marriage, not turn it into a shambles.

A couple should never walk into marriage

thinking that the marriage is for their happiness and enjoyment, or think that our spouses are supposed to fulfill our every nonsensical whim and make us happy 24/7. That would be a fairytale marriage and there is no such thing as a fairytale marriage. The closest you will get to a fairytale marriage is if you manage your marriage under God's relationship principles. Love must be without dissimulation.

Have you ever noticed how the fairytale books always say in the end "*and they lived happily ever after*"? But this is

VERY misleading and presumptuous, would you say? It's just like telling small children about the existence of Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.

It is ridiculous to have your daughter grow up believing that she will be whisked up by prince charming and the marriage will be happily ever after. It's a delusion.

Let me show you the difference between the fairytale marriage and the Godly Marriage. Now remember, fairytale marriages don't last because reality sets in and couples cannot handle the stress put upon what they presumed would be happily ever after.

A couple should never walk into marriage thinking that the marriage is for their happiness and enjoyment.



Godly Marriage

- ◆ Godly marriages believe that happiness comes from within our spirit because of our relationship with God, and that marriage is made for honoring God, its creator!
- ◆ Godly marriages are based upon God's principles of love, serving one another in love, which ultimately honors God.
- ◆ Godly marriages are built upon commitment until death do you part rather than the "I'm not in love with you anymore" part.

Fairytale Marriage

- ◆ Fairytale marriages believe that happiness comes from each other, which makes marriage even more selfish.
- ◆ Fairytale marriages believe that love is a feeling, which causes people to think they are not in love anymore.
- ◆ Fairytale marriages never last because the fairytale eventually ends.
- ◆ Fairytale marriages are based on feelings rather than commitment.

- Angie Lewis

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FAITHFULNESS to YOUR SPOUSE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS to GOD

When you interview some spouses about their reasons for cheating or being unfaithful, some refer to an earlier offence by their partners as the main reason which fuelled their cheating action.

However this should not be so. Some people also seek the best and proven way to remain faithful and committed to their spouses. The best way to do this is by being faithful to God, who gave you your spouse.

Marriage should be seen as stewardship. Husbands and wives will give account of how they treated their spouses to God, who gave them these spouses. In Genesis 3:12, it states: "the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate". Thus Adam acknowledged the fact that God gave him his wife Eve.

Faithfulness to one's spouse becomes an easy thing, and an inherent part of you when you are being faithful to God. Faithfulness does not only entail, being truthful and not cheating. It also means being reliable, helpful and aiding in their development unconditionally.

When Job was being tempted in Job2:9, his wife said: "curse God and die!". But after this trial, Job stayed with her and had very beautiful daughters with her. Job remained faithful to God, in his life and in his marriage even in hard times.

Many spouses say, that their partner is a gift from God when things are going very well. But they tend to forget that, when problems come. The marriage vow is a vow taken before God, and not man.

When couples see faithfulness to each other as a duty to God rather than a duty to only themselves, then their marriage would be stronger and their bond would be unbreakable. Amen.

Anthony Osei Boateng is a writer, motivational speaker and teacher with publications on many websites and many magazines worldwide. His passion lies in e-evangelism.

Please send feedback and messages to his Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Anthony-Osei-Boateng/100678653316665>



Wisdom for Marriage

Cherish the bond of unity which you have before God, not trying to explain its mystery, but ever seeking to plumb its depths. At the core of this unity is love. Love has no bounds. It is as deep as the human heart and as eternal as the Divine itself. Let love be your passion, and it will become your peace; let love be your pursuit, and it will become your pleasure; let love freely grow, and its harvest will be bountiful. The seed of love will become the flower of the sublime. In love, you will assume the very likeness of the Prince of love, even Jesus. So follow love.

Be, therefore, patient with each other. Many quarrels result from misunderstanding and selfishness. Take time to listen to your mate and you will soon hear their heart which speaks deeper than words.

Be kind to each other. Avoid faultfinding. Criticism is an ogre, and sarcasm a brute. They wound deeply; they scar for life; few recover from their blows. Pleasant speech rejuvenates, and the soothing touch restores. Meekness is a costly jewel, a crowning adornment of perfection. Quietness is a precious covering, a fine garment of praise. Remember that anger is a cruel destroyer; it leaves misery in its wake. View grudges as lethal; bury them quickly. Never justify yourself in order to win advantage. Self-justification makes everyone a loser. Justice will eventually reach its home down the roads of compassion and forgiveness. Abandon your expectations; accept one another freely. Always seek to do what is right.

Be gentle with each other. Be sensitive to each other's needs. Affection is the tie of intimacy; it is the balm for healing. Covet it. It will revive you in the times of life's disappointments and tears.

Be considerate of each other, giving due respect. Put each other's interests before your own. Be

willing to offer the appropriate compliment--it will refresh the weary and lighten the load. Encouragement transforms a wasteland into a paradise; and little thoughtful surprises are like a morning dawn.

Be honest with each other at all times. Truth should always reign, for the Lord is always near. When trust dies, everything dies. Jealousy is monstrous. Never be suspicious of the other's intentions or actions. Believe each other's words and seek not for hidden meanings. Often the search is endless, and what is found is usually your own corrupt imaginings.

Be humble toward each other. Don't be overly concerned about your personal image. Be real. In the intimacy of marriage you can't fool your partner anyway. Reality is always a natural unfolding. Give your partner space to grow, and rejoice in their unfolding. In their freedom you both will fly. Don't ridicule or reject their dreams, but dream with them. Self-sacrifice is gain, and self-denial holds great reward.

Give to each other and you will never be in want. Support each other and you will never fall. Laugh with each other and you will never be poor. Pray with each other and you will never weaken. Above all, travel with each other, daily seeking Christ together--the Source and Fountain of love--for in Him are all your springs. Live in Him and He will live in you; and He Himself will perfect you in your love by giving to you His love.

Dr. Brian Allison (B.A., M.A., M.Div, D.Min.) is the therapeutic counselor at Maranatha Counseling Services, Toronto, and former Professor of Apologetics and Counseling, and lecturer in Theology, at Toronto Baptist Seminary. www.maranatha-counseling.com

Christian Marriage Help: Five Signs That Your Marriage Has Healthy Submission

be a part of a team and not be better than their teammates. A hus-

Are you looking for Christian marriage help having to do with submission? Ephesians 5:22 tells wives to submit to their husbands. It sounds fairly straightforward, but there are marriages that have unhealthy submission that is damaging to the wife and the marriage relationship. Here are five signs that your marriage has healthy submission:

Your husband asks you what you think about things and considers your input as important as his own. Marriage is a partnership. It involves two people, not one, who are joined into a sacred union. Husbands are not to forget that their wives are individuals whose feelings, thoughts, opinions, and needs are as important as their own. Husbands are admonished to love their wives as they love and care for themselves and when they do, they will care about their wives' input when making decisions and consider it equal to their own (Ephesians 5:28-29).

Your husband will not choose to do something that he knows hurts you or harms you. "Love

does no harm to its neighbor" (Romans 13:10, NIV) and a husband who loves will not want to do what he knows hurts his wife. Husbands are admonished to be kind to their wives and to consider them as the weaker partner (1 Peter 3:7). Women are not weaker in character, ability, nor in their contribution to the marriage; however, they are usually more emotionally sensitive and men must purposefully guard themselves as to not be harsh in the treatment of their wives and in the way they respond to them.

Your husband does not use submission to shut you down or control you. Submission is not meant as a tool to control wives or to shut them down. Men who use it to control are not acting in love. Men who use it to threaten and as a tool to get their way are also not acting in love. Your husband should not demand submission from you or blame you for marital problems because you aren't submissive enough.

Your husband also submits to you. Ephesians 5:21 tells us to submit to one another; this means husbands to their wives at times too. Leaders know that they must

band and wife are a team. Two become one and it requires give and take to make it work. Healthy submission involves mutual sacrifice from both partners.

You feel loved and cared for. The Apostle Paul describes marriage as a profound mystery where two become one flesh as a symbol of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-33). Therefore, the husband should love his wife as Christ loves the church. If the marriage is as God intended, the wife will be loved by her husband and feel cared for and nourished.

A marriage with healthy submission works because the partnership creates an atmosphere of mutual giving, cooperation, nurture, safety, mutual respect, and love. If your marriage has these five things, it is healthy; if it does not, then your submission is unhealthy.

- Karla Downing

.....
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MARRIAGE SECRET-SUCCESS SECRET TO HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP

In a husband and wife relationship, the first desire of the couple is to have a successful marriage. But many are ignorant of the success secret to a "heaven on earth" marital life. Marriage is to be enjoyed and not endured. Lay hands on the marriage secrets and you will have memorable story to tell generations after you. This article talks about one marriage secret that will change your attitude towards your spouse for the better.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered 1 Peter 3:7 (KJV)

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge Hebrews 13:4 (KJV)

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me Matthew 25:40 (KJV)

In a husband and wife relationship, ability to honor one another is a virtue that a couple should have if

they are to enjoy a successful marriage. Honoring one another among other things ensures that your prayers are not hindered. But then what is the yard-stick for honoring your spouse?

One major success secret is to honor your spouse as you honor God. This is the yard-stick. It is an act of worship unto God when you honor your spouse because he/she is a creation of God. God instituted marriage and He being a God of honor expects you to honor marriage by honoring your spouse.

Whatever you do to your spouse, do it as unto God. When you respond to or react against your spouse know that you have done it to God. Imbibing this truth and walking in it will help you to weigh whatever you want to say or do to your spouse before you do so: you will be able to determine whether your proposed action will honor God or not.

This marriage secret in a husband and wife relationship will help you to do what is right to your spouse even if you think he/she does not deserve it. Also, honoring your spouse as unto God will help you not to feel used by your spouse. You will walk in love with excitement towards your spouse know-

ing that it pleases God.

Now, your own benefits for walking in this success secret are as follows:

Your relationship with God will be intact because you are obedient to His instructions.

The enemy won't be able to attack your marriage.

Your spouse is provoked to honor you too as unto God

Successful marriage will ultimately be your portion.

You will become a role model both to your children and other people who desire to honor God and enjoy their husband and wife relationship.

In conclusion, it is possible to enjoy a "heaven on earth" marital life. Act on this marriage secret and the wine in your marriage will never run out. Even a dying relationship revives following this success secret.

.....
Ngozi Nwoke is a teacher and a counselor; A product and distributor of love. She has a passion to teach people how to enjoy God's love and fellowship for more fulfilling life. Want more fulfilling life? subscribe for free email updates today. <http://stepswithgod.com>



ONENESS IN SPIRIT; ONENESS IN LOVE

Many Christians are plagued with maintaining the spark and intimacy in their marriages. Some couples tend to drift apart, apparently after spending so much time with each other and "getting used" to being with each other. The basic solution to this problem is maintaining a oneness in spirit.

Couples become more strongly bonded to each other as they engage in regular spiritual activity together. This could be prayer, fasting, evangelism, etc. Mat 18:19 states: "again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (NKJV). This shows the interest God has in people agreeing or being one, concerning things which are in line with His will.

When couples regularly agree on spiritual issues, it builds up a unique oneness between them which later translates into their physical lives. They realize that apart from agreeing on spiritual issues, they tend to have the same mind when it comes to physical issues as well. From that point, it is no more difficult in agreeing on any issue. This oneness is administrated by the Holy Spirit. The couple finally experience in full, the meaning of becoming one flesh.

Gen. 2:24 states: "therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (NKJV). Becoming one flesh poses many challenges. This

predisposes your partner to be the only person in the world who can hurt you most deeply or, who can make you most happy, depending on how you harness this oneness.

The best way is to make God the head of your union by building your spiritual lives together. There is nothing wrong with couples praying individually or building up their spiritual lives separately. However, doing those things together would create a very powerful bond between the couple, and strengthen their love. Being human, arguments and disagreements may come, but the couple who are one in spirit have a better chance of surviving arguments and tend to resolve misunderstandings much easier.

In the same way that anti-Christian activities like blood covenants and many others invite the devil into lives of couples, excellent spiritual oneness brings God's love, peace, prosperity, joy and understanding into a marital union. Couples should unleash the full potential of their marriages by being one in spirit. Amen.

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Anthony Osei Boateng is a writer, pianist, singer, motivational speaker and teacher with publications on many websites and many magazines worldwide. His passion lies in e-evangelism. Please send feedback and messages to his page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Antony-Osei-Boateng/1006786533166>

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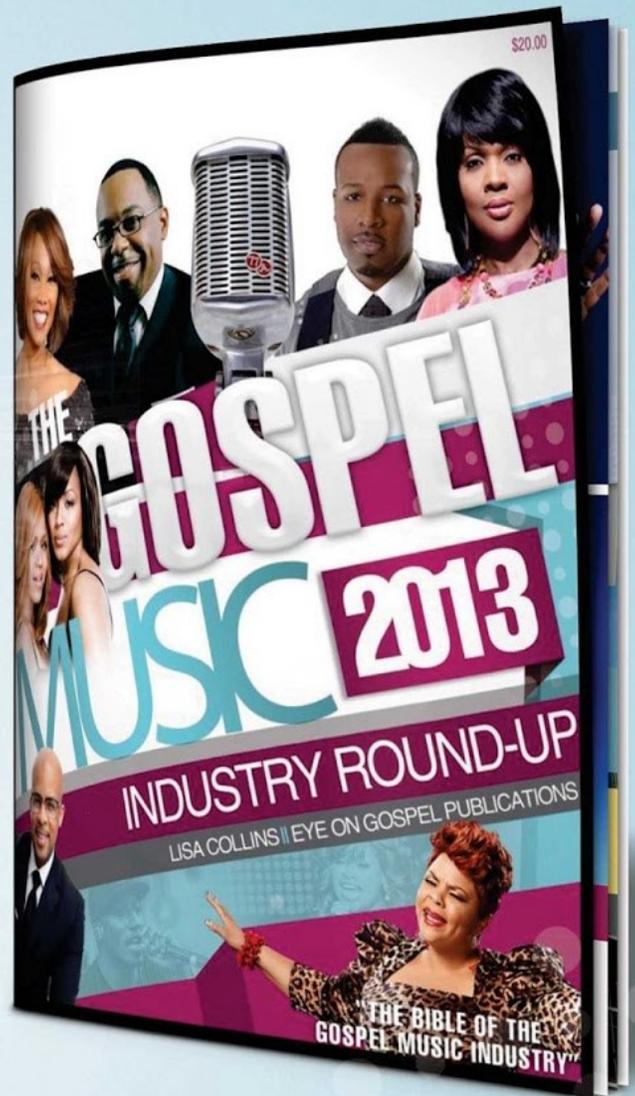
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KEVIN & CETELIA BULLARD

If you are a member of the popular social media network, Facebook, there is a good chance you have seen a message posted by Kevin and Cetelia Bullard. They are the duo behind Marriage Works!, a ministry that creates Christ-Centered resources and experiences that help couples build and sustain a healthy, functional marriage.

Kevin and Cetelia have been married since 2000 and are the parents of three great children: Max, Caitlin, and Kuria Joy. Their children are responsible for keeping their home filled with energy and excitement.

The couple pastored a church for almost four and a half years. During that time, they really saw the ups and downs that people face, especially in their marriage. That is what catalyzed them to

major in marriage.

While they enjoy a healthy marriage, the couple has also had to face trials. Like all married couples, they deal with the pressures of everyday life - finances, schooling, children, work, family, forgiveness, guarding against affairs & divorce, and the list goes on. They recognize they are susceptible to life's storms just as any one else.

Kevin & Cetelia both come from divorced homes, so they understand the pain and confusion caused by broken marriages. As a result, they are committed to making their marriage work, and helping other couples learn how to make theirs work as well.

The Bullards tell us what has worked for them.



GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

KB & CB Differences that have helped improve and strengthen us include how we view the world, and how we relate to our children. Regarding perspective, Cetelia tends to be more focused on the details while Kevin tends to be more big picture. While he can have ideas that seem really good in theory, Cetelia is there to ask questions to see if they have a legitimate chance of working. Together, we're learning how to think big and in a detailed manner.

As for relating to our children, Cetelia is definitely more nurturing than Kevin. This is wonderful, and needs to be balanced by Kevin's firmness so that the children don't take advantage of Cetelia. When Kevin is too firm,



Cetelia is there to remind Kevin to lighten up, remember that they're kids, and enjoy this time while they're young.

GWM Communication is very

important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

KB & CB As you noted, communication is very important. We've taught and taken cues from one another over the years to make our communication better. One of the things we've discovered is that we both prefer to process before talking. We give each other space to internalize, yet also know we need to talk. Along with this is being aware of what the other is doing prior to talking. We've both made mistakes by attempting to have a conversation at the wrong time. Another mistake we've made is addressing one another with the one tone of voice. These mistakes often overshadow what needs to be said, so we try to

watch these items. Since we're always surrounded by kids (we're homeschoolers), we also email and text one another a lot. There's often a lot of chatter in our home, and we find ourselves competing

against our children for each another's attention. So, using electronic communication works well for us.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a

healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

KB & CB Our marriage examples growing up were mixed. Cetelia's parents divorced when she was small, and Kevin's divorced when he was a freshman in college. So we saw a mixture of marital success growing up. It was not really until we were dating that we saw really good examples of marriage -- couples loving one another, helping one another, etc. This was very important for us at the outset of our marriage, and helped us get off to a good start in our marriage.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

KB & CB Our date nights were once really strong, but then all our baby sitters moved out of town! Currently, we're dating once every two months, but are hopeful that will increase since we're getting more sitters in the bullpen. In lieu of dates, we've been able to take a weekend trip away every three months since December, and that has been wonderful. We have a three-day trip coming up at the end of this month, and look forward to time away from the children.

WE'VE TAUGHT AND
TAKEN CUES FROM
ONE ANOTHER OVER
THE YEARS TO MAKE
OUR COMMUNICA-
TION BETTER.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

KB & CB Although it's not always easy for either of us, we have learned to apologize and forgive. We both realize that neither of us is perfect, and mistakes are going to be made. Cetelia is fond of saying, "If your mate owes you an apology, you owe him/her forgiveness." This is a good guide in our marriage. We know we've both been forgiven by God, through Jesus, for our sins, so we're quick to pardon one another. Of course, we talk about how we may have been offended, and express the need for not repeating the same offense. At the same time, we give each other space to be imperfect, and follow Galatians 6:1, which speaks of restoring a person in a spirit of gentleness.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

KB & CB Although it's not always easy for either of us, we have learned to apologize and forgive. We both realize that neither of us is perfect, and mistakes are going to be made. Cetelia is fond of saying, "If your mate owes you an apology, you owe him/her forgiveness." This is a good guide in our marriage. We know we've both been forgiven by God, through Jesus, for our sins, so we're quick to pardon one another. Of course, we talk about how we may have been offended, and express the need for not repeating the same offense. At the same time, we give each other space to be imperfect, and follow Galatians 6:1, which speaks of restoring a person in a spirit of gentleness.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

KB & CB We plan to stay married for the rest of our lives, so that gives us a future-oriented outlook. We have a picture for our marriage, and it's two rocking chairs. These two chairs on a porch in the mountains help us to deal with today's issues knowing that there's a future ahead of us. Because we both know the other has a future orientation, it adds security when we do fall short and miss the mark. Because we know the other is marriage-minded for the long haul, it's easier to commit ourselves to doing the right thing

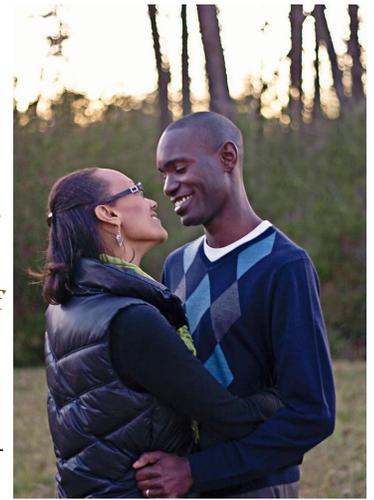
now for the future.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

KB & CB We pray together in some form every day, and it helps us spiritually. Depending on what's going on, we'll stop and ask the other to pray. We find that this is a chance for us to be intimate with our heavenly Father and one another. Prayer is intimate, and allows us to be vulnerable before one another.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

KB & CB We have set boundaries with friendships. We recognize the troubles that can spring from close friendships with the opposite sex, so we've developed some guidelines that work for us. We don't ride in vehicles with folks of the opposite sex, we both have access to one another's email and other social accounts at any time, and we talk. Kevin has shared with Cetelia when he was attracted to other females. Although this was awkward for them both, it allowed Kevin to get the attraction into the open, and invited Cetelia into the situation as a supporter, and prayer & accountability partner. Given the work we do, we are very mindful of our actions and attitudes in this area, and want to everything above board and in the light. ❤️



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GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

SUMMER I admired that he was a responsible single father the most.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

SUMMER TJ is more of a thinker and I am more with spontaneous action. I have found balance in being more thoughtful in my actions because of this characteristic he possesses.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

SUMMER Yes! I was as stubborn as a mule when I met him. Being in love taught me that there are no wins. We are in this together. I am not so prideful when it comes to this relationship; I'm more about compromise and wholeness.

"I am not so prideful when it comes to this relationship; I'm more about compromise and wholeness."

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

SUMMER We do. We pray together and apart. We also pray with the children. It does help the growth of the family spiritually.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the posi-

tive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

SUMMER TJ and I are like little kids when we are together. We are both jokers and like to tell stories especially about our day.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

SUMMER We do still have date nights. It's hard sometimes because he works a lot but when we plan one we definitely go through with it and have a blast and fall asleep extra early.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

SUMMER I make sure I look my best so that he will continue to see me in new ways and continually fall in love. He jokes that he created a monster, and this may be true. He was always the stylish one when we first met.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

SUMMER I don't know about this just yet. I have a BFF that is a male but he stays so far. I think TJ would rather just hang with guys although I don't mind him having platonic female friends. He thinks females can be a little tricky so he doesn't put himself in that position.

...Continued on page 35



RONALD & COLLEEN JOHN

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

RONALD The most things I admired about Colleen were her beauty and intelligence.

COLLEEN The thing I admired most about Ron was his character. The way he handled himself. He went hard in everything that he did and that included pursuing me.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

COLLEEN I have always been a very inward person, not antisocial, just very cautious about people. Ron taught me how to open up and try folks first; see the good in them before making quick judgments.

RONALD I have always been one to jump in without thinking, [act first, think later] and that way of thinking can get you in sticky situations. Colleen is very analytical and she taught me to slow down and be patient, think things through before jumping into anything. She especially taught me to always wait on God.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

COLLEEN We were very young when we got married and we had no one to teach us how to handle conflict. We pretty much learned on our own. No one taught us how to

fight fair or how to resolve conflicts. "I'm Sorry" became one of our powerful phrases. Forgiveness became a very powerful weapon in our marriage, even to this day. With 24 years of marriage, a few mistakes have been made on both our parts, but I can honestly say that we made it because of God's love and grace and the power to forgive.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

RONALD We do, as it is very essential in praying together. It keeps us connected to the Father. It strengthens our relationship with each other as husband and wife. It also gives us fuel as we encourage other married couples. Prayer changes things. Sometimes prayer is all you have when you are dealing with situations, such as finances, children, unemployment, death of a child, or just survival, [especially today's conditions in society]. Prayer keeps you focused on God and not your situations. It allows us to let God do His thing in our marriage.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

RJ & CJ We play practical jokes on each other. Laughter is a must between us. Our household is Comedy Central. Anyone who knows our family knows that laughter is in abundance.

Forgiveness became a very powerful weapon in our marriage.

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GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

LINDA This is a great question and will give us the opportunity to shine a light on an area that people need some clarity on in marriage. So many times people believe that if you've married the person that God has for you that you'll never have an argument or disagreement--that's not true. Most disagreements are more about personality and our reaction to things than marrying the wrong person. But to answer your question, I believe that in the "heat" of the moment the last thing we want to hear is a voice of reason that's urging us not be angry or to apologize. But what God has always allowed me to see is that oftentimes it's not even the issue that's the problem, it's the one that's out to divide your marriage that's gotten a foothold in the issue that's the problem. So, our goal has always been to get beyond the current issue, so that there's nothing for the enemy to hide in. Have we fully arrived? No. But we're definitely getting better at it than we were at year one, two and three, which were in my opinion the most difficult years and I'm truly happy about that, so, I know he is too.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

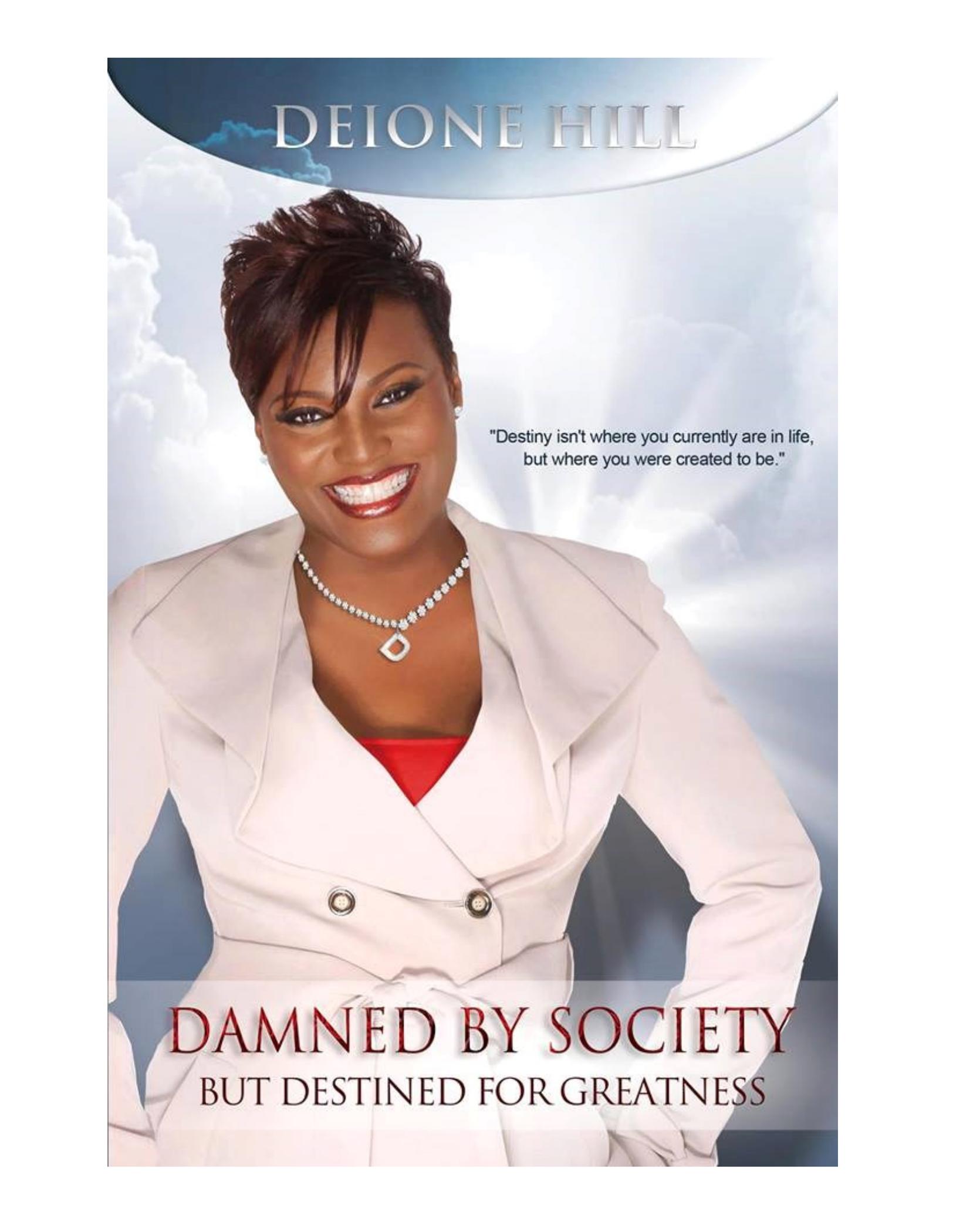
LINDA Yes. My husband and I pray together day, afternoon, night or just whenever the spirit leads. We pray for our marriage, the marriages of those we know, those we don't know very well, the Love Better Institute Ministry as well as our family and friends. My husband also anoints me before he leaves out for work in the mornings. I believe that praying together can only strengthen your marriage and we wouldn't have it any other way. God has given us great insight into our lives, ministry and future through prayer. We're excited about what He is going to do next.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

LINDA We love date night and although we don't have a set day of the week, we both understand that it's not about us living together and seeing each other all the time, but rather enjoying each other and spending uninterrupted quality time together outside of home. Sometimes it may not even be planned. Since all of our children are grown we can be pretty spontaneous and go to a movie matinee, or grab a leisurely bite at one of our favorite restaurants. We both love the beach so we can often be found walking hand in hand on the beach too. Marriage is your first ministry and aside from God we believe that you should make sure that you're nurturing your marriage more than any other relationship that you have. Not everyone ascribes to that, which is why divorce happens. Our goal, however, is to never stop being pro-active about our marriage.

Marriage is your first ministry.

...Continued on page 39



DEIONE HILL

"Destiny isn't where you currently are in life,
but where you were created to be."

DAMNED BY SOCIETY
BUT DESTINED FOR GREATNESS



TRAVIS & ANDREA BOYD

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

ANDREA What I admired the most about Travis was the way he really treated me like a lady at all times and how much he truly loved my son from a previous relationship. He truly loved him from day one and has proven that he loves my son as if he was biologically his.

There is no shame in admitting mistakes and learning from them.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

ANDREA Travis and I are like night and day. I am a little more aggressive and he is a lot more easy going. I like to plan things; he is really spontaneous. I am very time conscience and he is usually late. I am more structured and he is more of a free spirit. No matter how far apart we are in character, I think the two personalities mesh very well together. We balance each other and meet somewhere in the middle and make for a very well-rounded couple. It also has been helpful in child rearing. We usually can sit down and rationalize situations a lot better due to our differences.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

Forgiveness is very important in any relationship. When we mastered the act of asking for forgiveness, and sincerely

apologizing, and also realizing no one is perfect, our relationship blossomed and intensified. There is no shame in admitting mistakes and learning from them. Forgiveness is important for self growth as well. Practicing these two things were implemented very early in our relationship, and helped our love flourish.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

ANDREA In the beginning of our relationship praying together was not implemented and we continued to hit road block after road block. Since we started praying together, worship together and learn together, everything in our family life changed. We are a lot closer, growing fast and strong in the lord, and our bond is incredible. I honestly think praying together was the missing element in the beginning and we started operating as on entity.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

ANDREA My husband is very witty . Humor can be the difference between a disagreement turning into an argument. It lightens situations and alleviates stress. Let's not forget how wonderful it is to see your spouse's smile. That is always refreshing.

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TERRY & TOYA SCOTT

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

TERRY From day one, I really admired Toya's standards. She didn't bend and waver when it came to what she believed, and I loved it! What that showed me was that she valued herself. She loved herself enough not to allow me or any other guy to manipulate or "run game" on her. I always wanted a woman who wasn't an easy catch. I wanted to have to work for the opportunity to be in her life as opposed to someone simply throwing themselves at me.

TOYA Terry had a very welcoming personality. I felt like I could talk to him for hours about anything...and we did. He became my friend really early on and made me feel very comfortable. By the time we met in person, I was so relaxed around him...it felt like I knew him for years.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

TERRY I've always believed that people should choose someone who has strengths where they have weaknesses and vice versa. Toya has a stronger sense of discernment than I do. She often points out things that I would have never seen or thought of without her revealing it to me. It's a tremendous help to me (especially in ministry) because her discernment has actually protected me from some things (and people) that I would have been oblivious to had she not been in my life.

TOYA Terry is very compassionate and has a big heart when dealing with others. I desire to see people well but he is on another level. When I would be done with someone, he would start analyzing their childhood issues to make sense of their behaviors. By the time he breaks it all down, I do find myself praying for them and being a little more understanding.

Humor plays a HUGE part in our relationship!

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

TERRY Humor plays a HUGE part in our relationship! I'm truly thankful to God for blessing me to be married to someone that I can be my 100% self around. I'm a goofball at heart and so is Toya. We're also pretty animated people in our own right, which can add to the humor. I've always believed that you can't take yourself too seriously or you'll go crazy. Even after some of our "heated disagreements" we end up turning it into a mini comedy show by imitating another and laughing off what could have been some unnecessary drama and distractions.

TOYA Oh my goodness! Did he just admit to being animated? It is very true. We are extremely animated. We also make up a lot of random songs about each other, our conversation, or whatever is going on at the moment. They will never be heard by anyone else...y'all are not ready for us!

...Continued on page 42



STAN & CINDYE COATES

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

CINDYE I admired how he was more devoted to God than me. I knew I would never be his focus and that gave me peace. I also admired that he tithed.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

CINDYE My husband is very serious and task-oriented. I am more light-hearted and people oriented. Stan is more detailed. I am more "big picture". We are a great team.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

CINDYE We are constantly owning our mistakes. It's a way of life.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is some-

thing the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

CINDYE We pray together every day and have do so for the past 29 years; even if it is in a text.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

CINDYE We always schedule fun time. We laugh a lot; We do not take ourselves too seriously. We love funny old movies.

We pray together every day.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

CINDYE YES!

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

CINDYE We make sure we get plenty of rest, eat the right foods, and have time alone. We avoid negative things and we try to spoil each other by

making personal sacrifices.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

CINDYE It effects the way we manage our money. We invest in our future.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

CINDYE Wearing our wedding rings and always telling opposite sexes that we are happily married is important... Nobody questions.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

CINDYE I did not. My parents were divorced when I was five. I was raised by a single mom. Stan's parents have been married over sixty years!

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HECTOR & SYLVIA JOYA

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

SILVIA I admired most his intelligence and sense of humor.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

SILVIA In the beginning neither of us said [sorry], then I learned to say it because I was confronted by the word of God. After that, my husband also realized the importance of forgiveness to cultivate a healthy relationship.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

SILVIA We do pray together now and then but not as much as I would love to. We do read the bible together more and often. We love to discuss different topics and encourage each other with the word. Would definitely love to create a habit of praying more together, it would definitely benefit both of us to become stronger in faith and stay closer to the heart of God.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

SILVIA Of course laughter is very important for us. It is one of my husbands qualities, he has a great sense of humor

and has helped me to laugh during tough times and in time of discouragement. We always remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

HECTOR We still have date nights of course. Very important for us to have our own time and space to talk and reconnect.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

HECTOR When I was growing up the best example I saw was my parents. I admired the way my dad would resolve a problem. When my mom seemed to go desperate, and in hard times he would comfort her and make us feel safe. They hardly argued in front of us.

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

SILVIA Communication has been a challenge for us but not impossible. We used to mistake good communication with being on top of each other, calling all the time and not giving enough space that the other person deserved. But thank God we learned by attending marriage conferences and by seeing other couples good examples of good communication. We communicate by listening to each other,

...Continued on page 43



JAMAAL & SHAVAWN KELLY

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

JAMAAL Beyond the fact she is gorgeous, I loved her bubbly personality and sense of humor

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

JAMAAL I'm a procrastinator and at times a little all over the place and she is very organized and stays on top of due dates. I've helped her to loosen up and not be worried about things especially things we cannot directly affect and she has helped me to be more punctual and organized.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

JAMAAL This is something we are actually learning how to do effectively. Unfortunately, before we were married I betrayed her trust and had to begin the long road of recovery to gaining it back. My apologies used to fall on deaf ears because of what I did in our past but for the past couple of months, we have been going to bible study and the Pastor and First Lady there are dynamic! Every time we go they have something for us to take away and apply it in our marriage. She is learning to forgive and forget as I'm learning to not say certain things and remain patient with the healing process from what I did.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so,

how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

JAMAAL We honestly don't pray nearly as much as we should but it is something that we have started to work on. We do read scripture together and beyond going to church, us going to bible study has helped with arguments before they even start.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

JAMAAL My wife is hilarious! She can do voices, we talk a little junk to each other and we overall just have a good time. Often times when we are out and about, people feel left out because we are in our own world with inside jokes and laughter.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

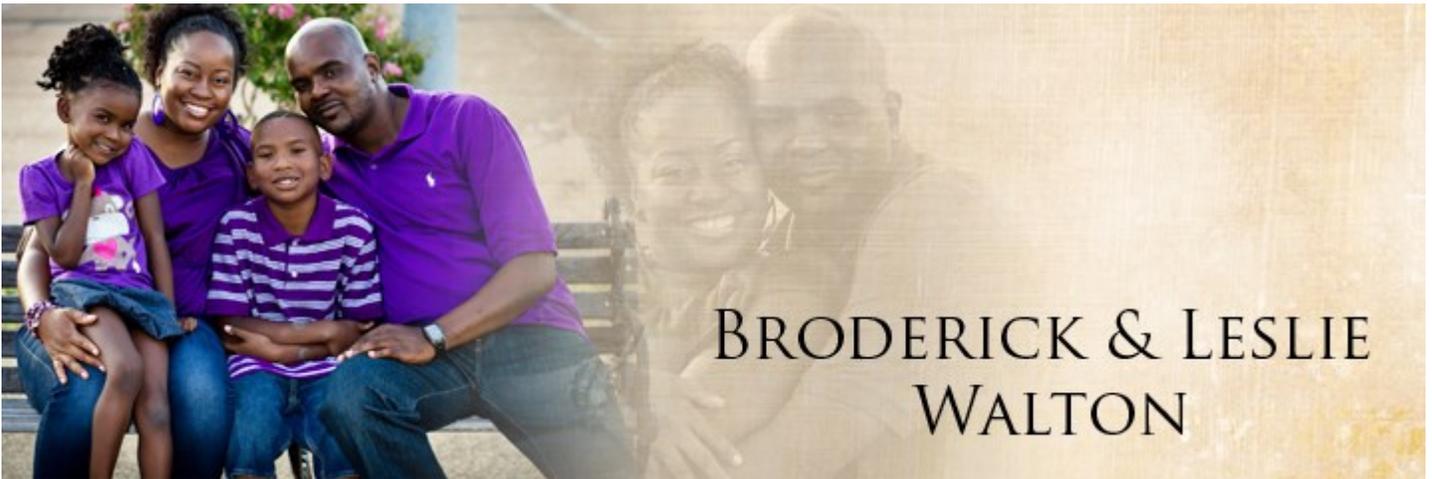
JAMAAL Absolutely! It's highly essential to spend that one on one time outside of the normal routine. When our son's grandmother can watch him, we go out to the movies, dinner, walking or even a play or live music.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

JAMAAL Spontaneous flowers, romantic emails, full body rub downs for no reason, etc.

When we are out and about, people feel left out because we are in our own world.

...Continued on page 44



BRODERICK & LESLIE WALTON

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

BRODERICK Looking back now, I didn't have any good examples of healthy marriages up until about 10 years ago. . . Most of the marriages around me were either abusive or couples who chose to stay together because of kids, finances, pressure from outsiders, etc. The best example that I've experienced is the one of my mother and step father. They've been married for 10 + years now and they've showed me what it looks like with God as the head and the meaning of for better or for worse. They've taught me through their ACTIONS that anything is possible if TWO believe in God and love.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

BW & LW Definitely!! We try to have a minimum of 2-3 a month. They vary from Redbox movies and snacks at the house, walks in the park and sight seeing, or out on the town enjoying music or dinner.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

BW & LW Laughter helps maintain balance in our marriage. Whether it's us acting goofy out in public or just in a world of our own within the comfort of our house, laughter has brought us through some times when we may have been going through a tough time in our covenant or either a long day at work.

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

BW & LW Honestly, communication is something that we're working on DAILY. Coming from two different backgrounds and environments, we're learning to set aside the way we've been taught to learn what works best for US. Hearing each other out and making one another a priority has us growing better as one with communication. We're learning that no matter the issue we can't forget that we're on the same team through it all.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

BW & LW Prayer time is a MUST in our marriage. God brought us together and we honor him daily via prayer for being the head of our lives. We pray together and for each other on the regular. It keeps us connected with God and shows him that we're nothing without him. When we're going through tough times in our covenant and need peace and answers, sincerely giving it to God in prayer has ALWAYS brought about solutions. ♥

To find out more about Broderick & Leslie, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

Laughter helps
maintain balance in
our marriage.



DARYEL & GENITA HILL

GWM In the beginning, what did you admire most about your mate?

GENITA When I first met my husband in person outside the physical he is truly one of the most humble men I know and has such humility you can help but recognize it, it was one of the first traits my mother recognized about him. My husband says he loved the fact that I am goal oriented, independent and have a zeal for life, or you can say tenacity and strong willed, I am always doing something to make myself a better person.

GWM What are some differences that have actually helped improve and strengthen you?

GENITA We are both goal oriented but I tend to be a little more driven than my husband and meet and beat deadlines not sure if that is the military side of me. I tend to push my husband and inspire him while he is being a very supportive with my goals often putting his off so that I may accomplish mine. These traits bring balance because sometimes I can be working towards so much I forget that you are suppose to live and enjoy life which my husband helps me remember that at times.

GWM Have the two of you learned to practice saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness? How have these two acts helped you in your marriage?

GENITA No relationship is perfect, there are time where we have heated fellowship or a simple disagreements usually it either ends where we agree to disagree and find

ourselves loving on one another again like nothing never happened and there are times where an apology is needed out of respect from one another especially if I was wrong and vice versa it just shows that we love each other enough to say we are sorry and apologize. Forgiveness is so easy we you genuinely love one another to move forward.

GWM Do you have prayer time together? If so, how do you think it helps you grow spiritually? If not, do you believe it is something the two of you can benefit from as a whole?

GENITA It's strange you ask that because we just had our first child together and it was laid on my spirit to say to my husband that we don't pray together as much any more. We both pray individually and have our intimate time with GOD but need to get back to that place of prayer where prayer will often have us in a place of Worship. It is awesome when we do because there is a shift that takes place. All married couples need to pray with each other the benefit is GOD see's that couple as one as a whole the prayer within itself is fellowship as one with GOD.

GWM Laughter is a great way to enjoy the positive side of your marriage. In what ways do you cultivate humor with your mate?

GENITA My husband and myself are comedians as well as our children. Rather we are joking about our faults or something that happened at work we always find a way to laugh. There has been times when I came home from...

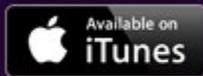
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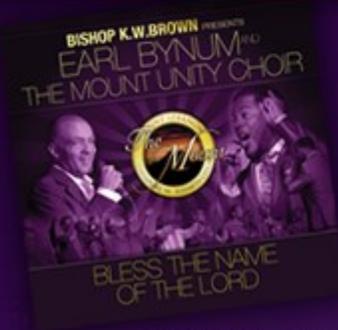
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GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

SUMMER Growing up I didn't see any examples of marriage. My mom was a single mom. My grandmother was a widow and everyone around me was single.

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to com-

municate with each other that is effective?

SUMMER I think effective communication is something that is constantly worked on. As I mentioned before, I'm a stubborn person and he is quiet. We schedule talks and this works for us. We do our best to keep the communication open and have regular talks daily. We still talk on the phone all day as well as text. ♥

To find out more about TJ & Summer, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.



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...continued from page 22

GWM Do you still have date nights?

RJ & CJ Yes we do. It might be a movie night, dinner at a jazz club, or a simple walk over the Brooklyn Bridge. We make sure that we make that a priority in our relationship. There was a time when we didn't and it had a very negative impact, but we learned that we can't give all our time to others and leave each other out. We thought that the time we were spending with each other in ministry was enough, but later realized that we needed to have quality time with each other and we made this a priority.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

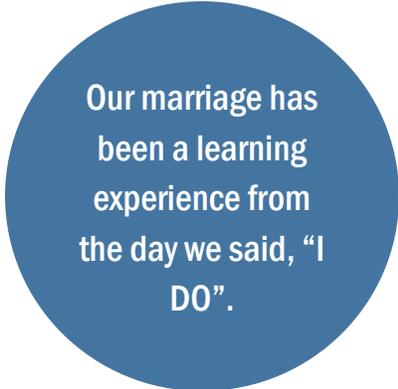
RJ & CJ We try to experience different things together and we also try to break up the doldrums of everyday by surprising each other. For example, packing a weekend bag and just up and leave on a Friday without planning anything.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

RONALD We've been married for 24 years, together 27 years and raised 4 beautiful children, 3 on earth, ages, 23, 22, 17 and one in Glory, lost her when she was 3, she would have been 15. Colleen and I have been through some tough experiences but through it all we survived with God's help and our love for each other. If someone asked me if I would do it all over again, I'd say "YES" in a heartbeat. The marriage Cee and I have today is

solid. Every experience, some good and some not so good and of course the great moments, these are the things that I cherish. I am looking forward to our Golden Years.

COLLEEN Our marriage has so many chapters; it is a book of a never ending story. We have indeed been through so much, and even when I wanted to give up, I couldn't, because the love Ron and I share would draw us in even closer. And God's love permeating in our lives has made our love even extra special. Our marriage has been a learning experience from the day we said, "I DO" and we have taken every experience to make us stronger, collectively and individually both in the natural and in the spiritual matters of our lives.



Our marriage has been a learning experience from the day we said, "I DO".

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

RJ & CJ There are boundaries set and we respect those boundaries. The key for us is making the other feeling secure in the relationship. Doubts, fears and insecurities should never be a part of anyone's marriage. Outside interference regardless of how insignificant it might seem, should never interfere with one's marriage. There are unspoken boundaries that should

never be crossed.

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

COLLEEN One thing we have learned is communication is important; good communication is very important. We have been together for so long, we pick up cues from each other. I know when Ron is upset about something, not so much by what he is saying but more so of what he doesn't say. It's hard for Ron to hide things from me, we are so in tune with each other on so many different levels that we pick up things off of each other. Because of those cues, it allows us to open up the communication lines and talk what is in our minds and our hearts.

RONALD I know my wife Cee very well, whenever there is a situation or problem arises, she likes to deal with it head on. However, if I come home from work having a bad day, she senses it and will come later to talk about it. I always know when something troubles Cee, when she gets quiet and in her own zone. She tries to hide it, but I will ask her and encourage her to tell me what is on her mind. In communication, what we don't hear is as important as what we do hear.

...Continued on next page

Personal Note from the Johns:

We've been married 24 years strong and we are still in love with each other. We believe the three keys to a successful and healthy marriage are as follows:

- **Put God first in everything, as He is in control of what we do.**
- **Marriage, as there is nothing more important than your spouse. Think about it, a happy marriage yields a happy home and this spills into your family life as well.**
- **Ministry, if you are involved in ministry it should not take precedence over your spouse. One must be able to tend to their marriage and their home before they can meet the need of others.**

Marriage is not a job, it's work. You can only get out of it, what you have invested. ♥

To find out more about Ronald and Colleen, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.



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Rekindling the Flame in Your Marriage

There are three things that are essential to the success of any relationship:

1. Love
2. Attraction
3. Trust

For the purpose of this article, we will focus on the attraction part of a relationship.

Attraction is where every relationship starts. It is often confused with love because it is much more of the warm, fuzzy emotion that people look for in their love relations. But attraction represents all the things that you like. Perhaps you like the way she walked, the way he looks, the way she introduced herself, the way he gives you security, the way her hair sweeps across her face, the way his eyes soften when he sees you, or whatever it may be.

This attraction isn't love, but it is a powerful force and all relationships begin right here. They also have a nasty habit of ending right here. Too many marriages that I counsel have lost that attraction to one another. They no longer see what they once saw; they no longer retain the interest they once did. They don't feel attracted anymore.

Unfortunately, this is very common. When you were first getting to know each other, you purposely looked for things that you had in common. You wanted to find things that pulled you together. You talked, you dreamed together, you discussed history, you explored each other's likes and dislikes, and you tried new things together. These things helped you stay attracted to each other. You put your best foot forward.

But now you're married. Now you claim you don't have time for that nonsense anymore. Now you don't have time to talk, or explore each other's feelings. Now you find yourself attracted to someone else.

Don't let that happen. You need to rekindle the flame of attraction in your marriage. To do this, you must revert back to when you were first getting to know each other.

Here's a profound thought: whatever it was that first pulled you to each other will also be the same things that keep you together. Here are some ideas:

1. Have some sort of date each week. Spend time alone with your spouse. You used to find reasons and excuses to spend time together, do so again.
2. Do new things together. Find out if there are new things that you would like to do together. When you share common interests and then explore those interests together, you rekindle the attraction.
3. Talk. This is essential. When you first sought to get to know each other you talked. Now you struggle talking. You need to take time and talk. Learn to communicate. This is essential!
4. Keep an air of decorum and mystique about you. That was attractive when you first met, keep it so now that you are married.
5. Build or create something together and dedicate it to the other. When both of you have a vested interest in something that you both made and have given to the other, that will rebuild attraction. My wife recently wrote a song for me. She dedicated it to me, gave it to me so to speak, and I found that incredibly attractive.

Keep the flame in your marriage alive.

- Greg Baker

More at: <http://articles.christianbaptists.com> Or <http://www.fitlyspoken.org> for books on communication and social skills in relationships! Specifically, our books 'Fitly Spoken' and 'Restoring a Fallen Christian'.

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GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

LINDA When we were on a recent road trip my husband was in a gift shop just looking around and God kept prompting him to purchase a particular item for me. He said he walked by the item a few times before finally going to the register and purchasing it. When he came back to the car he gave me the item, which was a cute engraved hanging plaque, and I burst into tears. I use that as an example because keeping your marriage fresh is as simple as listening and taking cues from God.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

LINDA Being committed for life could easily lead one to take the other for granted because you feel that they're not going anywhere and they're stuck with you, but in our case it has led us to know that we are building something for the Kingdom and because of that we are in it for the long haul. Neither of us are looking to trade each other in for a newer model. Neither of us are seeking perfection because no one is perfect. God loves us flaws and all, and so we like Him love each other no matter what because we know we were united for a purpose--a Kingdom purpose, a purpose that is assisting others with learning to love like Him.

GWM How did your mate reassure you during the early part of your courtship when mixed feelings were inevitable?

LINDA When my husband and I started dating, although I don't like to use that term because dating is really so purposeless and we definitely had a purpose, we knew we were going to get married from the first few days of conversation. We knew we weren't going to just "kick it" or "chill" or just let each other come over when we were in town. We reassured each other of the fact that I was his and he was mine after both individually praying about it and then coming together in prayer. We made prayer our routine after that. He was in New Jersey and I was living in North Carolina. We would talk daily and before we would end our last conversation at night we'd end it with prayer and he would always say, "I'm coming to get you. I'm going to marry you." I was certain of it. I believed him, but even more than that, I believed God!

Keeping your marriage fresh is as simple as listening and taking cues from God.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

LINDA We have had to set boundaries--yes, indeed. It's a must. It's part of what we teach in our ministry too. There is no way that you can grant women an all access pass to a married man no matter how many years they've been friends and there is no way you

can grant men and all access pass to a married woman no matter how many years they've been friends either. Once a couple is married, things MUST shift and people must understand that nothing trumps a marriage covenant. Once everyone is in their name and the boundaries are respected it gives the marriage room to grow, thrive and glorify God.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

LINDA I can't say that I had a clear, good example of what marriage was growing up in the home. I believe that's why I'm so dedicated to showing people what the word of God says and how why you choose to marry matters so that you aren't exposing yourself to domestic violence, heartache, manipulation and opening up your children to possible abuse. I did have an aunt who was married to her husband for 35 years. He passed away a few years ago. I believe though that all children should have that good Godly example of love though right there in their own home so they won't have to grow up and go through the pitfalls of love and keep dusting themselves off to get it right. It's not a fail safe method, but a good example gives them a blueprint (if you will) of what to look for and what not to accept when it comes to a mate.

...Continued on next page

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

LINDA Communication is one of the keys to a successful marriage. Some men shut down while a lot of women want to just talk it all out until the topic has been exhausted. I believe that once you learn the communication style of your spouse you can get your point across and overcome any obstacle that you're up against. Even when you discover your spouse's communication style, however, compromise may still be necessary to communicate effectively. My husband had to learn to be more open and expressive and share what he's feeling while I've had to learn to not make everything a long drawn out scenario. We're still working on it, but we love discovering, learning and growing in marriage together and teaching other couples how to do it as well. ♥

To find out more about Calvin & Linda, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.



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Three Strands

by Lynn Gipson

Standing alone against the wall
Pride goeth before the mighty fall
A weary man can't find his place
Evil then attacks it's prey

Walking through the world alone
Terror in his soul as one
Loner's heart beats fearfully
Spirit cries out tearfully

Enemies line up to call
On he who stands alone at all
Fighting ever viciously
Tearing at him ruthlessly

Suddenly from heaven's floor
A loving woman comes ashore
Where one was standing all alone
Now are two and twice as strong

Evil now must stand back
Twice the powerful attack
One is easy, two are harder
Satan retreats into his harbor

No longer is the one alone
Two have made the union strong
Vows of love and honor follow
Standing before God's alter

Twice the strands the cord is stronger
Strife and weakness are no longer
Two now stand together as one
Fear and agony, they are gone

Now comes into play the third strand
God in heaven does command
The first two cords of this new life
A repented man and his wife

God joined together this woman and man
Bound to each other by two strands
The third one makes the bond unbroken
For it is God's, and he has spoken

One alone can be easily attacked
Two together can fight back
Three even better, with our Lord
For three strands cannot be easily torn.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

ANDREA For a very long time we did not implement date night. We did things together, but not a defined "date night". Within the past year we have started defining it and I have to say it is totally amazing. We find ourselves acting like giddy teenagers again. We really get excited to spend time away from the pressures of life and focus on each other. It's just us, no kids, no bills, no business...etc. We challenge ourselves to do creative things on date night. It definitely keeps your marriage strong and ensures the love continues to grow.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

ANDREA We keep our marriage fresh by always thinking outside the box. We pretend that we don't totally have the other person yet and constantly coming up with ways to win the other persons love. We try to always continue to court the other person.

When we look at each other, I see a part of myself. With that being said, I like being happy, so why would I not want to see my other half happy, not just existing. My goal in our marriage is that we never become complacent, take each other for granted and to not become boring. We want to live our lives as if it is an adventure with new exciting ventures and experiences each day. We still flirt with each other like we just met. We are life partners, and I want us to be excited about each new given day and about spending the rest of our lives with each other.

GWM How did your mate reassure you during the early part of your courtship when mixed feelings were inevitable?

ANDREA My husband always made this very easy for me. He has always been very open and honest with me throughout our relationship. He would rather hurt my feelings than to lie to me. This aspect of his personality has always given me piece of mind.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

ANDREA Respect, Trust and Love: These 3 aspects of our relationship are the only defining rules in our marriage.

If each of us continue with these 3 aspects there is no need to worry about the opposite sex. We both love each other as if it was ourselves. Therefore there are no worries and no boundaries. We would never put the other in a situation that would make the other feel inferior.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

ANDREA I don't think either of us had a full experience with watching fully healthy relationships. There were positive/negative aspects on both sides that were witnessed. I think we both took the positive attributes we witnessed and applied them, and rejected the negative. We created our own path, evaluated what worked, and what didn't, and never get to complacent and stop learning.



“We try to always continue to court the other person.”

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

ANDREA We are so different with the way we communicate. It's like learning a foreign language. We have learned that we may not speak the same language, but we totally understand each other. That comes from years of getting to know your spouse. There still are some miscommunication situations from time to time, but knowing your spouses character helps eliminate the confusion. ❤️

To find out more about Travis & Andrea, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

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GWM Do you still have date nights?

TS & TS All the time! Whether it's just going to see the latest movie, going out to eat or simply walking through one of the local parks, date night is definitely one of the main ingredients to maintaining a healthy and fresh marriage.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

TERRY We keep things fresh in our marriage by keeping ourselves fresh as individuals. The more you grow and develop as an individual, the more you can bring to your relationship. I love watching my wife grow and develop as a person and as a minister. Her independence is sexy to me. It's a good feeling to sit back and watch your spouse do their thing. As we both grow and bring new adventures into our relationship, it naturally evolves and brings a new freshness to the equation.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

TERRY Definitely! One of our rules in marriage is, "if they can't be friends with the both of us, they don't need to be friends with neither of us." When I was single, the majority of my friends were females. After marriage, I only have about 3 women in my phone (who aren't relatives) that I haven't deleted. The majority of my friends now are married men. I've seen what a lot of these "new friendships" with the opposite sex can do to a marriage. You'd be surprised at how many people will try to approach you simply for the sport of it, just to see if they can get or attract someone who's married. We try to keep it as simple and as transparent as possible when it

We make every effort to protect our relationship from any harmful influences.

comes to the opposite sex. We have no secret about who's in our phones and who's on our Facebook pages. If you're not friends with the both of us, you're not friends with either of us (point blank period!).

TOYA You know, the Bible talks about the small foxes that spoil the vine (Song of Solomon 2:15). It is important to discern and understand people's roles in your life. If they are to be a friend or if they are an assignment sent by the enemy. We make every effort to protect our relationship from any harmful influences. ❤

A NOTE FROM THE SCOTTS



We just want to thank God Works **YIELDING HEARTS** Magazine for this opportunity to share a little bit about our lives. You can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/yieldinghearts or twitter [@yieldinghearts](https://twitter.com/yieldinghearts).

Our heart's desire is to see more healthy God filled relationships in the body of Christ. To all those out there who desire God to send you a mate, always remember to put God first and to love you first before attempting to love someone else! Much Love & Respect, Terry & Toya Scott!

To find out more about Terry & Toya, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

Weekly Devotionals are coming soon to the God Works Magazine blog.

Sign-Up to receive the devotionals in your inbox today at <http://GodWorksMagazine.wordpress.com>.

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GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

CINDYE This is the greatest tip I can share: There are times when we cannot talk about things due to schedules, kids, interruptions, distractions, etc., so we write each other letters. We have written each other letters that have sometimes been 20 to 30 pages long; They are awesome! That way you can get everything out and the reader can read it over and over and over then you can discuss what was written when time permits.

Also, we never make a decision unless we are in agreement. If we can not get into agreement , we wait until we are in agreement . Sometimes it's more about timing than it is the issue. ♥

To find out more about Stan & Cindye, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

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speaking nicely about him or her, knowing each others desires, and good eye contact when having an important conversation. It is very important to know the best time to have that conversation etc. ♥

To find out more about Hector & Sylvia, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.



“FULFILL MY JOY BY BEING LIKE-MINDED, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING OF ONE ACCORD, OF ONE MIND.”
- PHILIPPIANS 2:2

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GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

JAMAAL Since we both understand that this marriage is forever, we know if we have a disagreement we must resolve it a lot quicker than when we were just dating. We used to just hang up the phone or just leave but now we are in a God ordained covenant, we have come to understand that our own pride, miscommunication, and attitudes must be kept in check to be sure we are aligning ourselves with His Will.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

JAMAAL Because of our past, it's hard to introduce new friends that are girls. And honestly I don't need new girl friends. The ones I had before are still here unless there was some type of inappropriateness associated with the friendship. As far as my wife, I'm ok with her having friends however most guys that "want" to be friends with her start off by trying to "holla" at her so that gets killed immediately. The friends she had before we became a couple are okay with me.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

JAMAAL I thought I did, until I turned 8 years old and my father sat me down and told me he was moving out.

Immediately I thought it was something I did, but quickly learned that he was being unfaithful and had been for a very long time. All of my friends in my neighborhood had both parents there so they were good examples, just when it came to our household I learned what not to do.

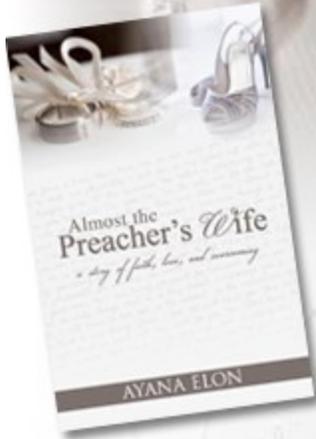
GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

JAMAAL As I stated before we are learning how to do it effectively. There's no way we will be able to figure each other out completely because we are always changing as people and we are different sexes. The most important thing to do is be patient and be slow to anger when issues arise. Also it's imperative to take past mistakes in communication and apply it to present and future problems. You can't do the same thing over and over again hoping for a different result. Literally that would be insane! Also, now that we are becoming more and more immersed in God, it's becoming easier to know what we want from each other and squash disagreements that used to turn into blow out arguments. ❤️

To find out more about Jamaal & Shavawn, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

"Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love All the wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised."

- Song of Solomon 8:6-7



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work feeling upset or down and I can come home to a husband who has the ability to make me laugh.

GWM Do you still have date nights?

GENITA Well we just welcomed a new baby on April 9th, 2013 so date nights are rare commodity right now. However, before our new arrival we understood that time would be limited and on my husbands off days we made it mandatory to have movie nights, dinner and even at times I would leave work early and meet my husband at his job for lunch. Which I am thinking will be a very creative way for us to have time alone again is simply meeting him at work for lunch.

GWM How do you keep things fresh in your marriage?

GENITA My husband often treats me like I am his girlfriend and I do the same. What I mean by that is we text each other love notes and compliment each other often. We can simply just walk past one another and shout out a compliment. We even flirt with one another.

A very transparent approach is your spouse should be your everything, your boo thang, boyfriend, fling, chic on the side, side piece and jump off. I think you get the point.

GWM How does being committed for life influence your actions towards each other?

GENITA We make every effort not to keep anything from one another, to always be honest, open and communicate our feeling. The worst thing that can happen in a marriage is one spouse keeps something from the other and to find out years later. Another thing is, we often talk about the future, future goals and how we see our marriage in 20 years or so.

GWM Have the two of you set healthy boundaries for friendships with the opposite sex?

We have. In the beginning we both had friendships of the opposite sex and we have come in agreement about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable behavior.

We have found ways to communicate.

GWM Growing up, did you have a good example of what a healthy marriage looked like? Explain.

My husband had his grandparents who now have been married for 60 years and shower each other with love even now in their 80's. However, my story is a little different. I generally witness common law break ups, my grand parents stayed married until my grandfather's death. However, they had lived apart for 20 years due to infidelity. My parents were also married but separated. Even in church I witnessed marriages being ripped apart. It wasn't until my adulthood where I saw great examples of loving marriages outside of my family and environment.

GWM Communication is very important. Couples have different communication needs and styles. Have the two of you found a way to communicate with each other that is effective?

GENITA It was challenging at first because my husband is a man of very few words and I am rather verbal in communicating but I truly believe this balances us. It helps my husband communicate more and help me know exactly when I should and should not. We have found ways to communicate and with a busy life we generally wait towards the end of the day when the kids are sleep and update one another on things rather it be work or school, or simple small talk about family and ministry. ❤️

To find out more about Daryel & Genita, visit our blog at <http://godworksmagazine.wordpress.com>.

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Photo Credit: krystalskitsch (flickr)

Five Wise Ways To Save Your Marriage

- Angie Lewis

There are many things that couples can do to save their marriage. Although circumstances for each marriage are different, what I'm going to discuss in this article applies to every marriage.

1. Be Willing To Work on Your Marriage

Couples need to be willing to pick up the pieces and work with their spouse. Humble yourselves to each other. So many times couples blame one another for the disarray of the marriage because they are hurting inside. No one wants to feel hurt, pain and suffering. But what happens when we don't even try to forgive? The broken pieces of the marriage remain on the floor!

If no one is willing to pick up the pieces the marriage will remain broken. Negative emotions, past baggage, guilt and vulnerability will be carried with you into the next marriage or relationship. Don't think that remarriage is going to make you happy or solve your problems. That's not reality. The reality is you can pick up the pieces and resolve your marital problems and be a better marriage partner because of it.

2. Change Attitude From "Don't Care" to Committed

So how do you change an attitude from "don't care" to committed? You just do it. Understand that you probably walked into the marriage with non-commitment, even though your feelings told you otherwise. This day and age, many of us have not been taught the value of marriage, and many of us don't know what the bible says about marriage. This "don't care" attitude about the sanctity of marriage is what is killing marriages and families. What does God say about marriage? God says marriage is for a lifetime.

3. Forgive and Encourage Daily

Realize it's not just the big things that need forgiveness, but the everyday small things too. Forgiveness works very closely with acceptance. In marriage couples need to accept and tolerate the person they married. Forgive your husband for leav-

ing the toilet seat up and watching too much television. Forgive your wife for not being a good cook or house cleaner. Do these small things really mean an end to the marriage?

We all have areas that need improved on. The best way to improve on ourselves is to encourage each other. Does that seem backwards to you? It is not backwards when you look at the big picture. When you encourage the person you married, you will be lifting them up in spirit, and in turn, they will see the positive aspects in you and do the same. Couples absolutely need to encourage one another every day. Instead of finding fault and bringing each other down, find the good in one another and bring each other up.

4. Appreciate Each Other More

This area in marriage is greatly lacking. Do you want to know why? Some of us take our marriage and everything in it for granted. Some of us never stop to think about all that our spouse does for us. Do we expect too much from the person we married. We somehow think that if only they would do this, or change to be like that, then we would be happy. But this kind of thinking is not reality, is it?

Stop and notice your marriage. When was the last time you told your spouse how much you appreciate them for all they do? Don't let the doldrums of marriage make you emotionally lazy. Show your appreciation in acts of kindness and love every single day of your marriage.

5. Realize Who The Creator of Marriage Is

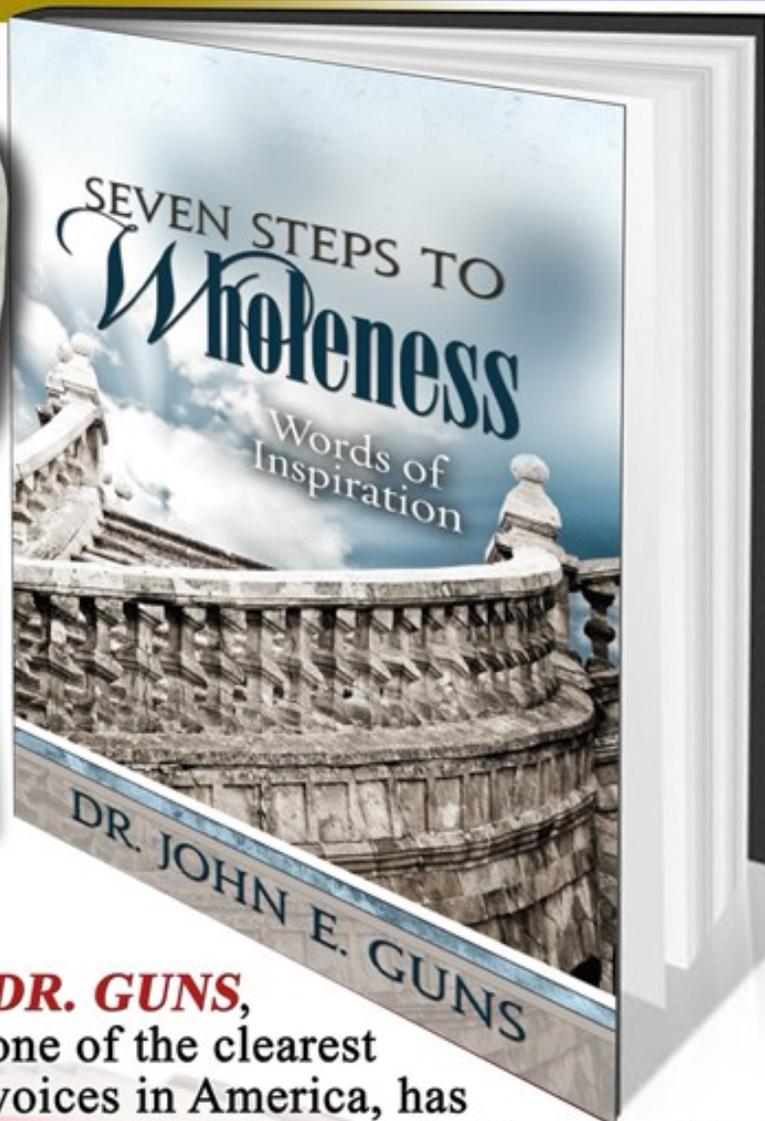
Jesus Christ has already laid out the architectural design for a Christian marriage. He has given us the wisdom and the knowledge to live marriage God's way! If we manage our marriage under our own understanding it will have difficulties and possibly fail. We absolutely have to put God first so we can understand how to love the person we married in the ways of Christ. God is the Master Architect of marriage and for a happy marriage we need to base our actions on His design.

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