

DEVELOPING THE SPIRITUAL UNION IN MARRIAGE

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Outline

1. Oneness + Order = God's Image in Marriage
2. Knowing
3. The Ingredients of Spiritual Connection

God's Image in Marriage

The Trinity

1. **Oneness:** Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all equally God, one essence, one purpose.
2. **Order:** Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Marriage

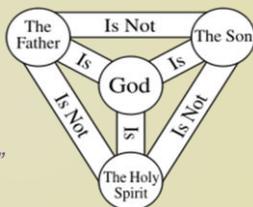
1. **Oneness:** all equally human, important, created in God's image, one in the marriage bond, one purpose.
2. **Order:** Christ, Man, Woman

Oneness

1. **Godhead**
2. **Marriage**
3. **Hindrances**

Oneness : Godhead

• **1 John 5:7** "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."



Oneness : Marriage

Ephesians 5:31-32
 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."



Oneness: Marriage

- The covenant between husband, wife, and God creates oneness.
 - God designed marriage to reveal His glory.
- Marriage symbolizes relationship between Christ and Church:
 - God is glorified when couples express their love for each other.
 - Physical union is an act of spiritual worship and obedience.

Oneness: Hindrances

- Temptations of self-interest, independence, & spiritual laziness
- No effort to seek oneness
- Fear of being open about spiritual things
- Not working through differences
- Not dealing with conflict and anger effectively
- Not following God-given roles
- Allowing something/someone to become a wedge between you

Order

1. Godhead
2. Marriage
3. Design: Husband & Wife
4. Submission

Order: Godhead



- *John 12:49-50*, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

Order: Marriage

1 Corinthians 11:3
"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

GOD

CHRIST

HUSBAND

WIFE

Order: Design



- Christ is the ultimate head of the union.
- It is God's design to have order in marriages and families.
- Spiritual oneness in marriage and Godly order will reveal God to the world.
 - What is the opposite of the above principle?

Order: Design - Husband

- Love your wife as Christ loved the church.
 - Your wife has a great need to feel loved, accepted, and secure.
- Leadership roles in the home are more about lovingly taking responsibility than being “in charge” or having the last word.
- Understand the husband (spiritual head) sets the standard (a pace-setter) for his family’s spirituality.
 - This does not mean the husband is more spiritual than the wife.

Order: Design - Husband

- Husbands should never feel they are “the boss.”
- You will not function as a leader in every situation.
- Consider your wife’s input in decisions:
 - This displays love to your wife and models mutual submission.
 - Submission will be easier when she is able to trust you are ‘in tune’ with her.

Order: Design - Wife

- Find ways to live out the role as a helper.
 - Your husband has a great need for respect and honor.
- Your role is not less spiritual or less important.
- Realize attempts to be “helpful” may be interpreted as criticism.
 - Consider thoughtfulness with suggestions
- Identify husband’s comfort with being a spiritual leader.
 - Is he insecure or passive?

Order: Submission

- To each other in the fear of God-
 - **Ephesians 5:21**
“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”
- Necessary during disagreement or uncertainty.
- Is not just finally agreeing.
- Takes humility and strength.
 - Is not a sign of weakness.
- Wife to her husband-
 - **Ephesians 5:22-23**
“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

Knowing

1. Husbands Know Wives
2. Wives Know Husbands
3. Practical Ways
4. Parents Know Children

Knowing: Husbands Know Wives

- 1 Peter 3:7** “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”
- Wives have need to feel cherished and connected.
 - Spiritual effectiveness is influenced by the understanding of emotional needs.

Knowing: Wives Know Husbands

- **Proverbs 31:27** “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”
- **1 Peter 3:1** “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;”
- Husbands have need to feel affirmed and respected.
- Your life can speak as loud as words.

Knowing: Practical Ways

- What is his/her love language?
- What are his/her spiritual gifts? Talents?
- What ways does he/she learn most effectively?
- What does he/she love to do?
- How is he/she fed spiritually?
- What things make him feel respected/her feel loved?



Knowing: Parents Know Children



- Periodically assess spiritual development [see “Spiritual Growth Charts For Parents”]
- Strive to meet the emotional needs:
 - Spend quantity and quality time with them.
 - Focused attention, eye contact, gentle physical touch.
 - Tame the tendency to run in too many directions.
- Children find it easier to respect parents when emotional needs are met.

Knowing: Grandparents Know Grandchildren

- Communicate to your grandchild a particular trait you value in them.
- At milestones, reflect on how you have seen God work in them and their gifts, talents, and interests.
 - Can be brief
 - Remember consistency
- Use “blessing” scriptures (*Numbers 6:24-26; Ephesians 3:17-19*) as a guide to pray for your grandchildren.



The Ingredients Of Spiritual Connection

1. The Word
2. Prayer
3. Worship
4. Fellowship
5. Giving / service

Ingredients: A Menu

- Most important connection as couple/family.
- Heart-focused, not checkmark-focused.
- Be creative, find what works for you.
- Recognize and adapt to the ebb and flow.
- Seek to be intentional and realistic.
- Learn from others.

Ingredients: Prioritize the Big

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>I (MANAGE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis, Emergencies • Deadline-driven projects • Last-minute preparation for scheduled projects 	<p>II (FOCUS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation / Planning • Values Clarification • Exercise • Relationship-building
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>III (AVOID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruptions, some calls • Some mail / reports • Some meetings • Many "pressing" matters 	<p>IV (TRIVIAL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivial busywork • Junk mail • Time wasters • Escape activities • Some phone / email messages

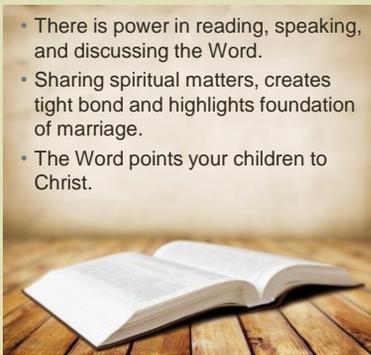
Source: Stephen Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

The Word

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
John 17:17

Ingredients: The Word

Colossians 3:16
"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."



- There is power in reading, speaking, and discussing the Word.
- Sharing spiritual matters, creates tight bond and highlights foundation of marriage.
- The Word points your children to Christ.

Ingredients: The Word – Application

- Read together at breakfast or bed time.
 - Read with your family after meals.
- Go through a Bible study or devotional book together.
- Pick a topic to study separately, then discuss what you learned.
- Memorize scripture together.
- Review insights from sermons.
- Speak the Gospel message to each other
 - "(Spouses name), you are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)

Ingredients: The Word – Resources

SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND GROWTH

RESOURCES

Spiritual Growth: Moving from Milk to Meat Discussion Aids (254 kb)
This series of discussion aids follows the outline of the presentation: *Spiritual Maturity: Moving from Milk to Meat*. They are meant to build conversation and discussion around several key principles of spiritual growth. They can be used to supplement the presentation or as stand-alone small group discussion aids. Each lesson is focused around a theme scripture and teaching points, a few discussion questions, and a personal reflection section to encourage application. [ACFFS]

Foundational Truths of My Life with God (48 kb)
This brief document explores truths of God's presence in our lives. [Ortberg]

God's Promises to the Believer (168 kb) **Las Promesas de Dios para el Creyente** (200 kb)
This document highlights God's promises to the believer for encouragement and faith building. [ACFFS]

Our Negative Thinking Versus God's Promises to Us (76 kb)
This brief document gives a scriptural response to negative thinking by focusing on the promises found in the Bible. [ACFFS]

ACFFS Website>Spiritual Growth>Spiritual Maturity and Growth

Prayer

"Pray without ceasing."
1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ingredients: Prayer

Colossians 1:9-10 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

- Praying together builds intimacy. (i.e. as couple, with God)
- Prayer can happen individually, as a couple, and as a family.



Ingredients: Prayer – Application

- Pray daily for each other and for each of your children.
- Husbands - pray out loud with your family daily.
- Pray aloud together at bed time.
- Set a day of the week to pray for certain topics.
- Share prayer requests with each other.
- Schedule family prayer time and keep a prayer journal.
- Pray scripture together
 - *Psalm 119:33-37, Ephesians 1:17-23*

Ingredients: Prayer – Resources

PRAYER: AN ADVENTURE WITH GOD

This instructive and comforting Bible study from InterVarsity Press has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of 12 lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Copies of this study can be purchased from [Bookstore](#) on this website.

Topics included in this study:

- Conversing with God: Abraham
- Discovering God's Will: Moses
- Answered Prayer: Nehemiah
- Prayer & Spiritual Conflict: Daniel
- Praying for the Nation: Ezekiel
- Praying for Everyone: Paul
- Relying on God: David
- Being Honest with God: Hannah
- Thanking God: Mary
- Blessing Other People: Paul
- Praying Together: The Early Church
- Praying with Confidence: Jesus

ACCFS Website > Teaching > ACCFS Sponsored Bible Studies

Worship

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."
Psalms 34:3

Ingredients: Worship

- Different ways to worship:
 - Individual
 - Couple & Family
 - Congregational



Psalms 35:18, "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people."

Ingredients: Worship – Application

- Take time to prepare your heart prior to church.
- Keep your personal devotional time vibrant.
- Meditate on God's Glory, His plans, His power, and His Love.
- View worship as a lifestyle.
- Share with your spouse spiritual insights and personal worship moments from your week.
- Sing and listen to edifying music.

Ingredients: Worship – Resources

The Beginners Family Worship HANDBOOK



A simple guide for starting family devotions in your home.

ACCFs Website>Parenting>Family Devotions

Fellowship

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

1 Corinthians 12:18

Ingredients: Fellowship

- *Personal fellowship with the Triune God*
 - **1 John 1:3** *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”*
- *Leads to Christian Community*
 - **1 John 1:6-7** *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

Ingredients: Fellowship – Application

- You were made to become part of God's family.
- Seek to deepen your relationships by:
 - **Sharing Life** – celebrate milestones, experiencing the various stages of life.
 - **Mentoring** – the more experienced teaching, coaching, and guiding the less experienced.
 - **Accountability** – allow others to hold you accountable to live Biblical standards.
 - **Support** – lifting each other up during difficult times.
 - **Encouraging** – building up and edifying others.

Ingredients: Fellowship – Resources

GENERAL MENTORING INFORMATION

RESOURCES

Mentoring (198 kb) ©
This document defines and describes mentoring. It gives characteristics of mentoring relationships and steps are outlined to guide individuals who desire to find a mentor or desire to mentor others. [ACCFs]

Mentor Plan Worksheet (87 kb)
This worksheet will help the mentee and the mentor establish a mentoring plan. [ACCFs]

Accountability Questions (35 kb) ©
This is a simple list of questions for use between accountability partners. [ACCFs]

Spiritual Health Assessment (119 kb) ©
This assessment helps the reader determine personal spiritual health. [LifeWay]

Guidelines for Effective Listening (144 kb) ©
To help enhance relationships, this document lays out ten guidelines for effective listening. [ACCFs]

Influencing Skills (31 kb) ©
This document gives you a list of influencing techniques to help and support another person. [ACCFs]

ACCFs Website>Relationships>Mentoring>General Mentoring Info.

Giving - Serving

“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”

Proverbs 11:25

Ingredients : Giving/Serving

- **God is the best giver.**
 - **James 1:17**, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
- **We are to be follow His example.**
 - **Luke 6:38**, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Ingredients: Giving/Serving - Individually

- Spouses serving style may be similar or different.
- Encourage one another in your individual serving roles.
- Learn your individual spiritual gifts and talents
 - ACCFS has a self-study on spiritual gifts available called “Understanding and Developing Spiritual Gifts”



Ingredients: Giving/Serving - Couple

- Couples are encouraged to find ways to give-serve together.
 - Frequency may depend on serving styles



Ingredients : Giving/Serving - Family

- Model servant-lifestyle to your children.
- Serving together will impress your children about the REALITY of your faith more than will words alone.
- Children need to learn through repeated experiences:
 - Learning to live life as a “living sacrifice” is not natural.
 - Children need help understanding their standard of living is higher than most of the world.
 - Helping your children develop a thankful/generous attitude takes work.

Ingredients : Giving/Serving – Application

- Discuss and teach tithing to your children.
- Discuss and prioritize your giving opportunities as a couple/family.
- Talk about each family member’s gifts and talents.
 - Find ways to use those gifts and talents.
- Take your family on a mission trip.
- Family nights with service project.

Ingredients : Giving/Serving – Resources



Serving as a Family

By [Grace Fox](#)

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www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual-growth-for-kids/serving-as-a-family/raising-world-changers

Personal / Couple Reflection Questions

As a couple reflect on “The Ingredients of Spiritual Connection.” If you were to focus on strengthening one “ingredient” as a couple/family, which one would it be? Think about one or two practical ways you could strengthen this part of your spiritual connection.