

## FAMILY PORTRAITS: Marriage (Is Your Marriage: Vacant Land or a Garden?)

Andy Deane · 4/21/2024 · Selected Scriptures

Let's discuss principles that make our day to day marriage even better than a once a year portrait. The following can also be applied towards building and repairing strong friendships as well.

### If you want your marriage to grow: treat it like a garden

1. Remove weeds: like laziness, busyness, unforgiveness, & selfishness
  - Galatians 5:13-15, *13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*
  - Which small weeds in your marriage need to be treated more seriously?
2. Plant seeds: like the Fruit of the Spirit
  - Galatians 5:22-23, *22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control...*
  - 2 Corinthians 9:6, *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*
  - What small habits can you do daily to plant these "seeds" of the fruit of Spirit into your marriage?
  - There is hope for struggling marriages! God offered hope to a struggling Israel in their worst moments and He can do the same for us: Ezekiel 26:34-36, *34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.'*

### If you want your marriage to grow: aim for the right kind of unity

1. Appreciate God's unique design of your spouse.
  - Genesis 1:26, *Let us make mankind in our image...*
  - Ephesians 2:10, *For we are God's handiwork...*
  - When we see our spouse's divine beauty we'll be less bothered by the things they do.
2. Resist declaring their differences as morally right & wrong.
  - James 4:12, *12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*
3. Recognize how God uses their differences to help us grow.
  - We may only desire marriage to be a place of happiness, but God's also desires it to be a tool for our holiness.
  - Romans 5:3-4, *3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.*
4. Create something new that is intertwined & woven together.
  - If you don't have capacity (patience & love) to overlook this difference, or if it's causing real problems, ask if change is possible.
  - Proverbs 19:11, *...it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.*
  - Romans 12:18, *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*
  - Philippians 2:3-4, *...not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*
5. Respectfully work towards sameness only on core issues.
  - Like: attending the same church, your family budget, your parenting goals, etc
  - Sameness on the goal should be accepted if Bible is clear on the matter.
  - Sameness on the method we use is more negotiable than we think.

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- Text 15 to (951)425-4425 to learn about the 7-Day "15-Minute / Day Marriage Challenge"
  - Text MARRIAGE to (951)425-4425 to discover resources to build your marriage foundation at Cornerstone.