
For newly married couples

Being married is a truly wonderful and fulfilling thing. You get to spend every day with the person you love and adore. You want to wait on their every need just to see them smile, loved, and cared for and all the while you're forging a new and exciting life for yourselves. Ambition is high and every day is filled with a kind of easy joy and lingering charm.

The thing is, while this is such a joyous time in your lives it's also quite strange.

A real and deeply loving connection

Prior to being married both parties are single and largely independent. Even with commitments to education, work, family, and an ecclesia, being single is quite a free lifestyle. Then you meet the special person that changes your whole world. You take an interest in them and start going out together. You begin to learn all kinds of things about them and eventually fall in love. Not a fleeting or fanciful love, but a real and deeply loving connection. You start dedicating your time, money, and energy towards being with this person. You start taking on more commitments with this person and their family. Things get busier but you start thinking and acting as a couple. Then one day after getting to know this person so well and falling so utterly and completely in love you decide to / receive a proposal. From this moment on till your honeymoon the craziness turns up to 11. You have some huge life decisions to make, not to mention a wedding to plan. All your time, effort and focus are placed into planning your future. But after all the mayhem and stress of this stage you finally make it to the wedding day. As every married couple will tell you it's such a joyous day but a complete blur. Then just like that you are married and are living your life together.

Not two but one

So why is this a strange time? Well, when you were single you could be completely flexible with your time and money, and while you were dating and even engaged you were still largely independent to decide things for yourself. But from the moment of your wedding day when you commit yourselves to each other before God you stop being two people and become one. Now of course you are still two people, but you no longer have the flexibility of time and money that you once had previously, you operate as one. This means making decisions together, taking on the other's commitments as if they were your own, being completely selfless towards the other in all things. Yes it's true that you practise this while dating and being engaged, but once married the commitment to acting as one is all encompassing. This can be strange. It takes time to fully adapt to. After all you have spent your whole lives doing the very opposite. To compound this, newly married life is full of logistical challenges. All of a sudden you may have to find a new job, move into a new house, plan the meals, do the shopping and then there is a never-ending amount house work to be done. You have to be very conscious of money flow and balancing your work, ecclesia, friendships, family and other commitments.

To go through this process of starting to think and act as a couple is very strange indeed.

Becoming more complete

But it is worth it. When you let go of yourself and let someone else become so deeply a part of you, you begin to change and become a better and more complete person. You gain perspectives on life that you haven't before, you start to learn and experience what true selflessness and devotion is, what true Agape love is. By giving yourself over you gain so much. All the blank parts

of your being become filled with the other and there is a completeness and joy in your heart that cannot be expressed.

This also brings us closer to understanding our heavenly Father's love for us.

"...to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19

So how do you get through this crazy time in your lives? Well to put it simply: in all things work together, take time for each other and include God in all aspects of your marriage.

Work together

There will be happiness and there will be sadness, there will be triumphs and there will be failures but work together through all these times. Avoid the temptation to take things into your own hands just to get them done. It can seem like the list of jobs gets longer and longer and there are not enough hours in the day to do the important things let alone what you have ambitiously set out to also achieve. So, work together as you settle into a new routine, find the best way to achieve your goals and grow through the process. Focusing on these jobs and ambitions alone for too long though, even if they are shared, will only create distance between you and the person you love. Listen to each other and take some time out of your lives to spend together. This might seem a strange concept since you now live together and see each other all the time, however, you will find the speed that life carries us reduces the quality of that time significantly.

God is part of your marriage

One of the most important things to remember is that God is a part of your marriage too. You probably know the quote from Ecclesiastes 4:12, some of you may have even had this quote read during your wedding ceremony:

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. But a cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

As a couple, you should include God when making decisions together, when sharing meals and in all aspects of your lives. By including God, you are building a relationship that is so strong it will be near impossible to break.

For some people, all these things will come easy and for some it will take a little more effort, but the happiness, love, understanding, compassion, and fulfilment that comes from being married is worth the commitment every day of the week.

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."

1 John 4: 11-12