

A God-Guided Marriage

8 Biblical Principles for Love, Unity, and Lasting Commitment

JEFFREY PESCATELLO

Contents

Introduction 3

Chapter 1: Never Go to Bed Angry 5

Chapter 2: Guard Your Words in Anger 7

Chapter 3: Remove Divorce from the Vocabulary 9

Chapter 4: Lift Each Other Up 11

Chapter 5: Focus on What You Can Control 13

Chapter 6: Trust God with Your Finances 15

Chapter 7: Build a Budget Together 17

Chapter 8: Raising Children with a Foundation of Faith 19

Conclusion 20

Introduction



Marriage is one of God's most sacred gifts. It is a covenant designed not only to unite two hearts but to reflect His love, faithfulness, and grace. When a man and woman enter marriage, they are stepping into something holy. Marriage is not merely a partnership; it is a lifelong journey of growth, refinement, sacrifice, and deep joy.

Over time, many couples discover that love alone is not enough to sustain a strong marriage. Feelings rise and fall, circumstances change, and life brings unexpected challenges. What anchors a marriage through every season is a shared commitment to place God at the center. When God leads your relationship, every facet of your life is transformed. Your communication moves from conflict to understanding. You learn that mutual respect is the soil in which love grows. Your approach to finances shifts from a source of stress to a testimony of stewardship and trust. And for those called to be parents, your home becomes the primary mission field where you raise children with a firm foundation of faith.

When God is at the helm, your perspective shifts from self-protection to selflessness. Peace replaces chaos, purpose replaces confusion, and resilience replaces fear. The principles in this book are rooted in Scripture and strengthened through experience. They are simple but powerful practices that can transform the foundation of a marriage when applied consistently. It is our prayer that these pages will help you build a marriage that glorifies

God, strengthens your bond, and stands firm through every season of life.

CHAPTERONE

Never Go to Bed Angry



One of the most powerful commitments a couple can make is to never go to bed angry. Ephesians 4:26 reminds us, "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry". Allowing anger to linger overnight gives it time to grow roots. What begins as minor frustration can quietly turn into deep-seated resentment.

This does not mean every disagreement must be fully solved before sleep. Some issues require time, prayer, and thoughtful conversation to truly resolve. However, reconciliation can always begin with humility.

I'll be honest: as a new husband, this was one of the hardest things for me to learn. There were many times when I felt I was "right" in an argument, and it was incredibly difficult to be the first one to apologize. I had to learn to bite my tongue, "man up," and offer an apology anyway. I realized that if I didn't, a meaningless argument would escalate into something much bigger and more damaging.

As a newly married couple, one of the most important skills you must master is apologizing as quickly as possible. You have to go to your partner and talk, aiming to ease the bad feelings for both of you before the day ends. Pride is often the greatest obstacle to peace.

When both spouses choose humility over "being right," unity is restored more quickly. Prayer together at the end of a tense day invites God into the conflict and reminds both hearts that the marriage matters more than the argument. Make it a habit to end each day with peace, even if the final resolution is still in progress. A gentle word, a sincere prayer, or a simple "I am sorry" keeps small conflicts from becoming large divides.

CHAPTERTWO

Guard Your Words in Anger



Words have the power to build up or tear down. Proverbs 15:1 teaches, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger". In moments of frustration, the temptation to speak sharply can be strong, yet words spoken in anger often leave lasting scars that remain long after the argument is over.

Early in our marriage, my wife insisted on a rule that became a foundational lesson for us: never say something you cannot take back. She used an analogy that has stuck with me ever since: once the toothpaste is out of the tube, it is nearly impossible to get it back in. Our words are exactly like that. Once they are released, you cannot "Un-Say" them. Even when forgiveness is offered and the air is cleared, hurtful words can continue to echo in a spouse's heart for years.

By adhering to this "toothpaste rule" early on, we were able to avoid escalating small, daily frustrations into major, hard-to-fix problems. Protecting one another's dignity, even when you are upset, is a true act of love and maturity. When emotions rise, and your heart is racing, pause. Take a breath. Pray silently for wisdom before you open your mouth. Ask yourself: "Will these words bring healing, or will they leave a scar?".

A strong marriage is not one without conflict; it is one where conflict is handled with respect and restraint. Choosing gentleness does not mean ignoring problems; it means addressing them without damaging the foundation of trust. Guard your words carefully, as they shape the emotional safety of your home.

CHAPTERTHREE

Remove Divorce from the Vocabulary



Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. A contract is an agreement you can break if the other party doesn't perform; a covenant is a lifelong promise made before God. Malachi 2:16 reminds us of God's seriousness about the marriage bond. When a couple treats divorce as a casual option, even in jest, it subtly erodes the foundation of security and commitment.

The "No-Exit" Pact

At the very beginning of our marriage, my wife and I made a firm decision: we would never use the "D-word". We didn't even use it as a joke. We knew from the start that letting that word into our home was a dangerous idea. It's like bringing a weapon into a room; even if you don't intend to use it, the mere presence of it changes the atmosphere.

Let's be honest: when you're in the heat of a fight, that word might pop into your head. It's a natural human reaction to want to "escape" when things get intense. But we have to realize there is more going on than just a disagreement. The Devil is always looking for a way to separate you from God, and one of his favorite ways to do that is by driving a wedge into your marriage. If he can get you to say that word, he's found a crack in your foundation. Once that word is spoken, you can't un-ring that bell. You have to recognize that the urge to

"quit" isn't just a feeling—it's an attack on the covenant God joined together.

Reverting to the Protocol

When the pressure rises, that is exactly when you must revert back to Chapter 2: Guard Your Words in Anger. You must discipline yourself never to say anything you can't take back. In the military, you rely on your training when chaos breaks out. In marriage, your "training" is the commitment you made to never speak the word "divorce".

Navigating the "Newness"

This is especially hard when you are a newly married couple. You are just beginning to learn each other's habits—the good, the bad, and the ones that drive you absolutely crazy. In those early years, those quirks can feel like major obstacles. You might think, "Is this what the rest of my life looks like?". But as you grow closer together and keep the door to "escape" locked, those annoying habits eventually just become "normal". They become part of the rhythm of your shared life. You stop trying to change the other person and start learning how to maneuver together.

Choosing Resilience Over Escape

Eliminating the "D-word" reinforces the mindset that the marriage is permanent. Challenges will come, and seasons of strain are inevitable, but when both spouses are fully committed to working through hardship rather than escaping it, resilience grows.

> *(A Note on Safety: This principle does not ignore situations involving abuse or danger, where safety must come first. God values your life and your safety, and in those instances, seeking professional help and safety is the priority.)*

However, amid the normal struggles of marriage, financial stress, parenting exhaustion, and business failures, a shared commitment to stay and fight for the relationship builds a unique kind of strength. When the "emergency exit" is closed, you are forced to use your energy for growth, communication, and prayer. Security fosters vulnerability, and vulnerability is the only soil where true intimacy can grow.

CHAPTERFOUR

Lift Each Other Up



Every marriage will face seasons when one spouse feels discouraged, overwhelmed, or uncertain. In those moments, encouragement becomes a lifeline. First Thessalonians 5:11 instructs us to "encourage one another and build each other up".

The Partnership of the "Lean Years"

I've seen this firsthand in my own marriage. When I'm starting a new business, my wife is always there to help me, just as I have been there to support her in her ventures. When you start a business, or a new career, or even the journey of being a stay-at-home parent, there are so many moving parts. You never truly know if you're going to make money or if the effort will pay off. In our lives, there have been many lean years followed by one great year. During those lean times, the stress and tension are real. It's easy to let that pressure drive a wedge between you. But having her there to lift me up when things weren't great didn't just save the business; it helped our marriage and our careers.

The Universal Truth is this: it doesn't matter if you own a multi-million dollar company, are just starting a career, or are a stay-at-home parent; every "vocation" has its own set of unique challenges. Every path requires the unwavering support of a spouse who refuses to let the

other sink.

Speaking Life into the Struggle

Be intentional about speaking life into your spouse, especially when the "results" aren't showing up yet. Notice their effort, affirm their character, and remind them of their identity in Christ, not just their performance in the world. When one is weary, the other must provide the strength they lack. When one feels doubt, the other must speak the truth. This isn't just about "being nice"; it's about being a pillar.

You can:

- **Affirm the Effort:** "I see how hard you are working for our kids and family".
- **Affirm the Character:** "I'm proud of how you handled that situation".
- **Affirm the Future:** "God has seen us through the lean years before; He will do it again".

Small Acts, Big Impact

Small acts of support matter: a thoughtful note, a prayer offered aloud, or a reminder of past victories. These gestures communicate a vital message: "We are a team". In a world that is quick to criticize and even quicker to judge success by a paycheck, let your marriage be a sanctuary of unwavering support.

CHAPTER FIVE

Focus on What You Can Control



Life brings many circumstances beyond your control, such as financial fluctuations, health challenges, workplace stress, and family conflicts. Philippians 4:6-7 encourages believers to bring worries to God in prayer and to trust Him for peace. However, finding that peace often requires a tactical shift in how we view our problems.

In the military, I learned a vital lesson about survival and efficiency: solve the problem at hand. In high-pressure environments, there is a constant stream of "noise" and external chaos that you simply cannot change. If you focus on the noise, you get overwhelmed and paralyzed. But if you address the immediate problem, it usually smooths out other distractions in your life.

Marriage and family life are no different. You don't need to fix every issue simultaneously. You must learn to distinguish between what is "noise" and what is the "mission". One of the things I learned from my business partner was a saying that has stuck with me, and now my wife and kids always say to me: "By the inch, it's a cinch; by the mile, it's a trial".

When you look at the "mile", the years of paying debt on your home or the decade of parenting ahead, it feels impossible. That is the trial. But when you break it down to the next

"inch," you find you have the strength to take that one step. Focus on the things that will move you closer to God and forward, not the weights designed to drag you down. While you cannot control every outcome, you can control your attitude, your reactions, and your faith.

Instead of fixating on what cannot be changed, focus on what you can do together:

- **Communicate clearly:** Speak to the problem, not the person.
- **Pray consistently:** Take the "noise" to God so you can focus on the work.
- **Take the next "inch":** Make wise decisions for today, and let tomorrow's miles take care of themselves.

Release the rest to God. Peace is not found in perfect circumstances, but in the tactical decision to trust in God's sovereignty while handling the task right in front of you. Focus on the mission and trust that God is handling the miles while you navigate the inches.

CHAPTER SIX

Trust God with Your Finances



Psalm 24:1 reminds us that everything belongs to the Lord. Viewing finances through this lens transforms how money is handled within marriage; instead of ownership, there is stewardship. In our marriage, we have found peace and stability by living by the 10-20-70 Rule. This framework ensures that God is honored first, the future is secured second, and daily needs are met with what remains:

- **The First 10% (Tithing):** The first tenth of your income goes back to God. Generosity aligns the heart with His purposes and acknowledges Him as the ultimate Provider.
- **The Next 20% (Savings & Investing):** This portion is dedicated to building your future and creating a safety net. By prioritizing savings and investments early, you protect your household from future strain.
- **The Remaining 70% (Living Expenses):** This covers everything else—housing, transportation, food, utilities, and lifestyle.

Living below your means in this way prepares you for financial emergencies and prevents the "paycheck-to-paycheck" cycle that causes so much marital stress. When a couple prioritizes honoring God and practicing discipline, they invite Him into an area that often

creates division. Decisions become clearer when stewardship is rooted in faith rather than fear. Prayer should be part of budgeting, spending, saving, and giving. When God is acknowledged as the provider, financial pressure loses its power over your peace.

CHAPTERSEVEN

Build a Budget Together



Unity in finances requires intentional planning. Proverbs 21:5 says, "The plans of the diligent lead to profit". A shared budget reflects shared priorities and, more importantly, shared trust.

From the very start of our marriage, my wife and I agreed on a vital principle: it is our money, not "mine" or "yours". We have always maintained joint bank accounts and investment accounts. We believe that hiding money or maintaining secret spending habits creates a wedge that is difficult to remove. When both spouses understand exactly where the money is and where it is going, it is much easier to handle shortfalls when they occur. If an unforeseen issue arises, you face it as a team. However, if one person is hiding spending or accounts, dealing with a crisis becomes nearly impossible because the foundation of trust has been cracked.

Always remember: your children are watching you. They are constantly picking up your habits, both the good and the bad. Outside of their love for God, financial literacy is one of the most important gifts you can give your children. By modeling transparency and the 10-20-70 rule, you are teaching them how to live a life of freedom rather than debt and secrecy.

Regularly review income, expenses, and savings goals together. This fosters open communication and prevents the misunderstandings that lead to resentment. A budget is not meant to be restrictive; it is meant to be clarifying. During abundant seasons, practice discipline; during lean seasons, adjust with patience. When both spouses participate fully in financial planning, trust deepens and decisions feel collaborative rather than imposed. This total transparency reduces tension and strengthens your partnership.

CHAPTEREIGHT

Raising Children with a Foundation of Faith



For couples blessed with children, parenting is one of the most meaningful responsibilities in marriage. Proverbs 22:6 encourages parents to train up a child in the way he should go. Children learn more from what they observe than from what they are told. A home where prayer is practiced, forgiveness is modeled, and love is visible leaves a lasting imprint. Plant seeds of faith consistently by reading Scripture together, praying openly, and engaging in honest conversations about God's truth.

One of the most impactful habits we started as new parents was using the Bible App. Every night, as part of the bedtime routine, we would turn it on for our children. It wasn't just about the stories; it became a comforting routine that allowed them to fall asleep in peace, surrounded by the Word of God. The fruit of this consistency showed up years later. By the time they were seven or eight years old, they didn't need to be told to listen; they would come into the room and ask, "Hey Dad, can we listen to Genesis tonight?".

When the Word of God becomes the "language" of your home, it becomes something your children seek out on their own. Parenting will not be perfect, and mistakes will be made, but humility and consistency matter more than flawlessness. Trust that the seeds planted in faith will bear fruit in God's perfect timing.

Conclusion



A God-guided marriage is built over time through humility, forgiveness, discipline, generosity, and prayer. It is strengthened in ordinary daily choices more than in grand gestures. When you refuse to let anger linger, guard your words, remain fully committed, encourage one another, steward finances faithfully, and lead your family with intention, you are building more than a household; you are building a legacy.

Marriage will stretch you, refine you, and reveal both strengths and weaknesses. Yet when Christ remains at the center, every season has purpose. May your marriage reflect God's love, may your home be filled with peace, and may your commitment remain steady and strong. Always seek Him first, trusting that He will guide every step of your journey together.