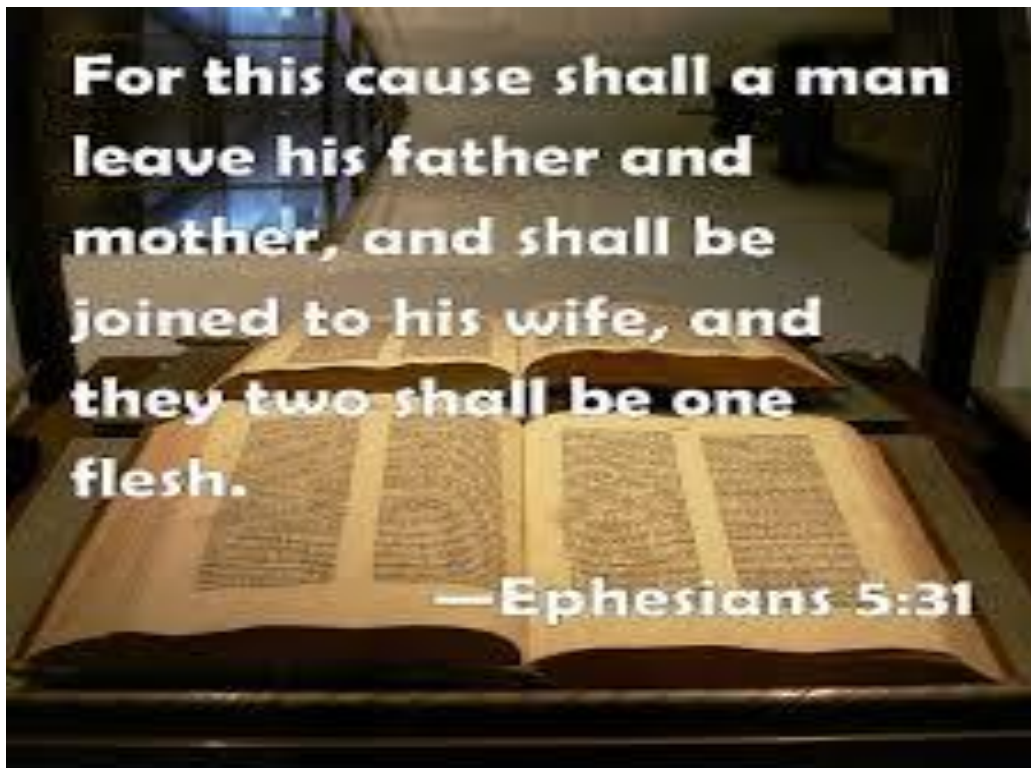


MARRIED IN THE LORD



**For this cause shall a man
leave his father and
mother, and shall be
joined to his wife, and
they two shall be one
flesh.**

—Ephesians 5:31

BY

Pastor, (Dr) Faith Nwaobia

First Edition

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Dedication

To my beloved wife,

Victory Chidinma Faith,

For your unwavering love, unwavering support, and the honor you bring to my life as my wife. You are the embodiment of grace, strength, and devotion.

This book is dedicated to you, my cherished partner, my best friend, and the love of my life.

May our journey together continue to be blessed by God's grace and filled with love, joy, and peace.

With all my heart,

Your loving husband,

Faith

Author's Note

"To be married is good, but being married in the Lord is the best," a brother I deeply respect once told me. His words resonate deeply, echoing the profound blessings and favor that accompany a marriage built on a foundation of faith.

God's design for humanity includes the beautiful tapestry of marriage. From the very beginning, He ordained it, a sacred union meant to reflect the unity He shares with His Son. This institution, divinely crafted, is a testament to His purpose for us to "dominate, occupy and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

The words of Jesus himself, recorded in Matthew 19:4-6, clarify the divine origin and purpose of marriage: "Haven't you read," he asked, "that the Creator from the beginning 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Marriage is a divine institution, a reflection of God's love and a powerful force for good in the world. This piece is written with the hope that it will inspire and guide God's people as they strive to live out their faith within the sacred bonds of marriage.

May God's grace continue to shower you abundantly, dear reader, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pastor Faith

THEME ONE

The Sacredness of Marriage: A Reflection of God's Love

Being married in the Lord is a profound blessing, a sacred union that mirrors the relationship between Christ and His Church. This isn't simply a metaphor; it's a powerful testament to the depth of God's love and the transformative power of faith within marriage.

Just as Christ sacrificed Himself on the cross to redeem His Church, so too is marriage a testament to selflessness and love. In John 17:19, Jesus declared, "For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth." This echoes the sacredness of the bond between Christ and His Church, a bond built on love, sacrifice, and unwavering devotion.

The Church is often referred to as the bride, while Christ is the bridegroom. Similarly, within marriage, the wife is the bride, and the husband is the groom. This analogy isn't superficial; it points to the profound spiritual reality of marriage within the Christian faith.

To understand the sacredness of marriage, we must first consider the roles of Christ and His Church:

- Christ, the Head: He loves, cherishes, and protects His Church, sacrificing Himself for her redemption and salvation.
- The Church, the Bride: She is called to be holy, reflecting the love and devotion of her Bridegroom.

These roles offer a powerful framework for understanding the dynamics of a marriage built on faith:

- The Husband, the Head: He is called to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, sacrificing his own desires for her well-being. He leads with love, cherishing and protecting her, always striving to be the best husband he can be.

- The Wife, the Bride: She is called to reflect the holiness of the Church, embracing her role as a cherished partner, offering love, respect, and submission in her relationship. Her submission is not weakness, but a choice to walk alongside her husband, supporting and encouraging him in his leadership.

This sacred covenant requires constant attention and care. Hebrews 13:4 reminds us, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous." Marriage is not just a social institution, it is a sacred trust, a reflection of God's love and design for humanity.

This is a call to embrace the sacredness of marriage, to cultivate a relationship built on love, respect, and shared faith. It's a journey of growth, a testament to God's transformative grace, and a reflection of the divine bond between Christ and His Church.

A Husband's Sacred Calling: Love as Christ Loved

Husbands, you are entrusted with a sacred responsibility: to love your wives as Christ loved the Church. This love, as Paul powerfully describes in Ephesians 5:25-33, is a model of selflessness, sacrifice, and unwavering devotion. Let's delve into the depth of this passage:

1. Sanctification Through Love:

Paul urges husbands to "love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her." Christ's love for the Church is not just emotional; it's a transformative force that cleanses, refines, and elevates. Husbands are called to be instruments of this sanctifying love in their wives' lives.

2. Cherishing as Your Own Body:

Paul continues, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies." This is not simply an analogy; it's a call to deeply cherish and nurture your wife as you would care for your own physical well-being.

3. Reflecting Christ's Love:

"He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church." This powerful statement emphasizes that a husband's love for his wife is not a separate act but a reflection of his love for himself. By cherishing and loving his wife, he is truly loving and nurturing his own spiritual being.

Living Out the Call:

This love manifests in countless ways:

- **Providing for Her Needs:** Providing for your wife's physical and spiritual well-being is a fundamental expression of love.
- **Respect and Appreciation:** Treating your wife with respect and admiration is crucial. This means speaking well of her, celebrating her strengths, and valuing her contributions to your marriage and family.
- **Leading with Love:** Leading with love means prioritizing your wife's needs, making decisions together, and working as a team to build a strong and loving home.
- **Nurturing Her Growth:** Supporting your wife's personal growth, whether it's through her faith, education, or creative pursuits, is vital.

Remember: Marriage in the Lord is a sacred partnership built on mutual respect, love, and commitment. As you strive to live out the call of Ephesians 5, your marriage will become a testament to God's love and a beacon of hope for others.

God has positioned you as a husband to be used for stronger duties in the marriage in providing succor and protection to your wife. Embrace it brother.

Cultivating a Sacred Partnership: Roles and Responsibilities in Marriage

Marriage, especially within the context of faith, is a sacred covenant that requires both husband and wife to actively participate in building a strong and loving relationship. While the Bible offers guidance for both partners, it's crucial to interpret these teachings within the framework of mutual respect, equality, and shared responsibility.

The Husband's Role:

The husband, as the spiritual leader of the home, is called to embody Christ's love for the Church:

1. Honoring His Wife: Speaking well of his wife, both in public and private, is essential. This builds her up, showing his respect and appreciation for her. (1 Peter 3:7)
2. Providing for Her Needs: Providing financially and materially for his wife is a fundamental responsibility. (1 Timothy 5:8)
3. Supporting Her Spiritual Growth: Encouraging her relationship with God is vital. (1 Corinthians 7:16b)
4. Appreciating Her Efforts: Praising and acknowledging her contributions to the family is essential. (Proverbs 31:28b)
5. Leading with Respect: Never comparing her negatively to others; instead, make her a positive example for others.

The Wife's Role:

The wife, as a cherished partner, is called to actively participate in the marriage, reflecting the love and devotion of the Church:

1. Mutual Submission: Submission is not about obedience without question but rather about working together with her husband, supporting his leadership, and seeking mutual understanding. (Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:1-2, Colossians 3:18)
2. Nurturing the Relationship: Building a strong relationship with her husband, both spiritually and emotionally, is essential. (1 Corinthians 7:16a)
3. Creating a Welcoming Home: Making her home a place of comfort, joy, and hospitality is vital. (Proverbs 14:1)
4. Reflecting Honor: Living a life that brings honor to her husband and the family. (Proverbs 31:11, 28)

Understanding Roles Within Partnership:

While there are distinct roles in marriage, these are not meant to create a hierarchy of power. They are complementary, interwoven threads that create a strong and harmonious partnership. Both husband and wife have unique strengths and talents that contribute to the success of the marriage.

Remember:

- **Open Communication:** Open and honest communication is essential for resolving conflict and building a strong relationship.
- **Respect and Equality:** Both partners are valued equally, and their opinions matter.
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Decisions should be made together, with both partners actively involved.

By embracing these principles and striving to understand and fulfill their unique roles within the marriage, husbands and wives can create a truly sacred and fulfilling partnership that reflects the love and grace of God.

THEME TWO

Unlocking the Marriage Blessings: The Power of Partnership

Marriage, as God designed it, is a powerful and beautiful partnership, a reflection of the unity and love found in the relationship between Christ and His Church. From the very beginning, God recognized the need for companionship: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). He created woman from the man, signifying a deep connection and a shared journey.

This union, when founded on faith, unlocks a multitude of blessings, both spiritual and material:

The Blessings of a Christ-Centered Marriage:

- **Unity and Strength:** Just as the branches of a vine cannot bear fruit apart from the vine (John 15:5), a husband and wife, united in Christ, find strength and abundance together.
- **Peace of Mind:** A marriage grounded in faith fosters peace and security, creating a sanctuary from the storms of life.
- **Companionship and Friendship:** Marriage offers a unique bond of companionship, a deep friendship built on shared faith and purpose.
- **Intimacy and Love:** A marriage blessed by God experiences intimacy, both physical and emotional, that brings joy and fulfillment.
- **Honor and Respect:** Mutual respect and honor are fundamental to a healthy and lasting marriage.
- **Fruitfulness:** God blesses marriage with the potential for children, a gift that brings joy and responsibility.

- Financial Uplifting: Marriage can provide financial stability and shared resources, creating opportunities for growth and prosperity.
- Direction and Purpose: A marriage rooted in faith provides a clear sense of direction and purpose, guiding both partners towards a shared vision.
- Ministerial Opportunities: A strong, faith-filled marriage opens doors to serve others, making a difference in the world together.

The Impact of a Godly Marriage:

- Understanding Within the Body of Christ: A marriage blessed by God becomes a model for other believers, demonstrating the power of love, respect, and unity.
- Nurturing the Next Generation: Children raised in a loving, Christ-centered home are more likely to inherit a strong faith and values.
- Growth in Forbearance: The journey of marriage encourages patience, understanding, and forgiveness, qualities that spill over into other relationships.

The Power of "Abiding" Together:

Just as Jesus emphasized "abiding" in Him to bear fruit, a husband and wife must continually seek to abide together, through challenges and joys, to experience the fullness of God's blessings. This means:

- Communicating Openly: Sharing thoughts, feelings, and struggles honestly with each other.
- Seeking Forgiveness: Gracefully forgiving each other and moving forward.
- Praying Together: Making time to pray together, seeking God's guidance and wisdom for their marriage.

Remember:

Marriage in the Lord is a powerful journey, a reflection of God's love and a testament to His transformative power. As you strive to live out your faith within your marriage, you will unlock immeasurable blessings and witness the fulfillment of God's plan for your lives.

Navigating the Journey: Building a Strong and Lasting Marriage

Marriage is a beautiful adventure, full of unique joys and challenges. While every couple's journey is different, there are fundamental principles that can help build a strong and lasting foundation.

Cultivating a Thriving Partnership:

Here are some key practices to consider:

1. **Open Communication:** Share your thoughts, feelings, and opinions with each other openly and honestly. Create a safe space for vulnerability and understanding.
2. **Praying Together:** Make prayer a regular part of your relationship. Seek God's guidance, wisdom, and strength as you navigate the challenges and celebrate the joys of marriage.
3. **Seek Support Within the Relationship:** When facing difficulties, turn to your spouse first. Together, discuss options and seek advice from trusted friends or mentors if needed.
4. **Resolve Conflicts Together:** Make every effort to resolve disagreements within the marriage. Avoid involving third parties unless absolutely necessary.
5. **Don't Let Disagreements Linger:** Address issues promptly and respectfully. Leaving unresolved conflicts can lead to resentment and tension.
6. **Honesty and Integrity:** Be truthful with your spouse, even when it's difficult. Honesty builds trust and strengthens your bond.
7. **Positive Affirmations:** Speak positively about your spouse, both to them and to others. Words of affirmation nurture love and appreciation.
8. **Listen Before Judging:** Always hear your spouse's perspective before jumping to conclusions. Seek to understand their feelings and motives.
9. **Transparency and Trust:** Be open with your spouse, sharing your thoughts and feelings without secrets. Trust is the foundation of a strong marriage.

10. Acceptance and Contentment: Accept your spouse for who they are, embracing their strengths and weaknesses. Seek contentment and fulfillment in your unique relationship.

Peace as the Cornerstone:

Ultimately, peace is the cornerstone of a happy and blessed marriage. When husband and wife live in harmony, respecting each other, communicating openly, and seeking God's guidance, their home becomes a haven of love, joy, and peace. This is the foundation for experiencing the fullness of God's blessings within the sacred covenant of marriage.

Remember

Marriage is a journey, not a destination. Through patience, perseverance, and a commitment to these principles, you can build a strong and lasting relationship that honors God and brings joy to your lives.

THEME THREE

Marriage and Romance: The Intimate Dance of Marriage:

Marriage, at its core, is a union built on intimacy, a deep connection that encompasses emotional, spiritual, and physical closeness. Romance, an essential element of this intimacy, adds a vibrant and passionate layer to the marriage tapestry.

Romance: More Than Just a Feeling

While often described as a feeling of emotional attraction, romance is a complex interplay of emotions, desires, and actions. It's about expressing strong romantic love, a longing to connect with your partner on a deeply intimate level, both emotionally and physically.

Genesis 2:25: A Glimpse into God's Design

The passage from Genesis, where Adam and Eve are "both naked, the man and his wife, and are not ashamed," hints at the inherent connection between marriage and romance. God designed marriage to be a union where intimacy and love are freely expressed, without shame or restraint.

The Chemistry of Romantic Love:

Romantic love, as many studies have shown, is fueled by a cocktail of chemicals in the brain that create feelings of euphoria, excitement, and intense passion. This "love high" is often triggered by:

- **Shared Experiences:** Engaging in activities together, whether it's a shared hobby, a romantic getaway, or simply enjoying a quiet evening at home.
- **Physical Touch:** Holding hands, cuddling, kissing, and other forms of physical affection release hormones that enhance feelings of closeness and connection.
- **Kindness and Appreciation:** Expressing love and appreciation through words, gestures, and thoughtful acts can spark and sustain romance.

The Evolution of Romantic Love: From Obsession to Covenant

Marriage, a journey of discovery and growth, often involves a transformation in the way romantic love is experienced. Understanding these stages can help couples navigate the natural shifts and cultivate lasting intimacy.

Stage One: The "Obsession" Stage (Early Marriage)

- **The High of Infatuation:** Early marriage is marked by a heightened sense of passion and excitement. This "obsession" stage is often fueled by a whirlwind of new experiences, shared dreams, and a deep sense of connection.
- **Euphoria and Intensity:** You feel a constant need to be together, with a high level of physical attraction and a desire to share everything. There's a sense of blissful contentment, where mistakes seem insignificant and disagreements are quickly resolved.
- **The "Honeymoon" Phase:** This period is often described as the "honeymoon" phase, filled with laughter, romance, and a sense of wonder.

- A Temporary Stage: Unfortunately, this intense phase of romantic love typically doesn't last forever. The initial "obsession" tends to subside after the first couple of years.

Stage Two: The "Covenant" Stage (The Long Haul)

- The Shift in Dynamics: As the relationship matures, the intense passion of the early stages often fades, making way for a deeper, more enduring love. This transition can be challenging for some couples, as it requires a shift in perspective and a deeper understanding of commitment.
- The Importance of Covenant: This stage is called "covenant romance" because it's about consciously choosing to love your partner, even when the initial infatuation has waned. It's about nurturing the bond, making sacrifices, and continually working to understand and meet each other's needs.
- Challenges and Growth: This stage can bring new challenges, such as the stress of everyday life, financial pressures, and the demands of raising children. However, it also offers an opportunity for deeper intimacy, a shared sense of purpose, and a deeper understanding of each other.

Understanding Love Languages:

Dr. Gary Chapman, a marriage counselor, identified five love languages that people use to express and experience love:

- Words of Affirmation: Expressing love and appreciation verbally, through compliments and words of encouragement.
- Acts of Service: Doing thoughtful things for your partner, such as chores, errands, or small gestures that show you care.
- Receiving Gifts: Giving gifts that are thoughtful and meaningful, showing your love through tangible expressions.
- Quality Time: Spending focused time together, engaging in activities you both enjoy, and giving your partner your undivided attention.

- **Physical Touch:** Expressing love through physical affection, such as cuddling, kissing, and holding hands.

The Key to Rekindling Romance:

Understanding your spouse's love language is crucial for nurturing and deepening your romantic connection. Here's how:

1. **Discover Their Love Language:** Observe your spouse's reactions to various expressions of love. What makes them feel most loved and appreciated? What are the things they seem to crave?
2. **Speak Their Language:** Once you understand their primary love language, make a conscious effort to express love in that way. For example, if they appreciate gifts, surprise them with small tokens of affection. If they value quality time, plan special outings or dedicate time for uninterrupted connection.

Remember:

Romantic love, like all aspects of marriage, is a journey that requires conscious effort, communication, and a willingness to understand and appreciate your partner's unique needs. By embracing the power of love languages and committing to building a lasting covenant, you can rekindle romance, deepen your connection, and create a marriage that is both fulfilling and enduring.

Conclusion: Embracing the Journey of Marriage in the Lord

As we conclude this exploration of "Married in the Lord," we find ourselves standing at a crossroads—a place where faith and love intersect, where two become one, and where the promise of a lifelong journey unfolds. We've delved into the sacredness of marriage, uncovering its profound connection to God's design and the transformative power of a covenant built on faith. We've explored the blessings that flow from a Christ-centered marriage, a union that brings peace, joy, purpose, and a wealth of spiritual and material gifts. And we've journeyed into the intricate world of romance, understanding its complexities and discovering strategies to keep the flame of love burning bright.

Through each chapter, we've uncovered principles that can guide us as we navigate the intricate tapestry of marriage. Remember the key themes that have illuminated our path:

Theme One: The Sacredness of Marriage:

- Marriage, as a divinely ordained institution, is not merely a social contract but a sacred covenant, a reflection of God's love and His design for humanity.
- It's a union where two become one, a powerful expression of unity and commitment, mirroring the relationship between Christ and His Church.
- The foundation of a sacred marriage is built on faith, respect, love, and a shared commitment to living out God's will.

Theme Two: Unlocking the Marriage Blessings:

- A marriage grounded in faith unlocks a multitude of blessings, from peace and joy to financial stability, spiritual growth, and the opportunity to raise a God-honoring family.
- Cultivating a Christ-centered marriage requires open communication, forgiveness, shared prayer, and a willingness to embrace the unique challenges and triumphs that come with a lifelong commitment.
- Understanding and speaking each other's love languages is essential for nurturing connection, intimacy, and a thriving marriage.

Theme Three: Marriage and Romance:

- Romance, a vital component of a fulfilling marriage, is not just a fleeting feeling but a dynamic force that requires nurturing and intentionality.
- The journey of romantic love often unfolds in stages, from the initial "obsession" stage to the deeper "covenant" stage, where love matures and deepens.
- Understanding the chemistry of love, the power of shared experiences, and the importance of expressing affection through various love languages are crucial for keeping the flame of romance alive.

Looking Forward:

This book has served as a starting point, a foundation for understanding the principles of a successful marriage in the Lord. It's a journey that continues to unfold with each passing day.

As we move forward, we invite you to delve further into the richness of God's Word and seek His guidance for your own marriage. Embrace the challenges and celebrate the triumphs. Remember, marriage is a lifelong adventure—a sacred covenant that offers a path to fulfillment, joy, and a love that endures for eternity.

A Call to Action:

- Share this book freely with other believers and Christians worldwide. Let the insights and principles contained within inspire couples on their journey of love and commitment. This book is a gift from God to His people.
- Continue to grow in your marriage. Make time for intentional conversation, prayer, and seeking guidance from God's Word.
- Be a blessing to other couples. Offer support, encouragement, and a listening ear to those navigating the complexities of marriage.

May God bless your marriage abundantly and grant you a lifetime of love, joy, and fulfillment!