

## **Stages of a Marriage**

*Marriages go through stages every seven years including the dating time. Therefore if we are married five years and dated two years we are at the seven-year stage of the relationship ready to move into the next stage. Each stage has its own issues to resolve and negotiate as we navigate through marriage. Unresolved or un-negotiated issues continue on into future stages affecting the quality of the marital relationship. As we approach the end of each stage in the final two years we go through a transitional process evaluating the success of the stage we are in and our satisfaction with the relationship as well as our readiness to move into the next stage. This transitional time is often a period of flux and dissatisfaction as we do our reevaluation. This can lead to significant problems in the relationship and frequently affairs, separation, and even divorce can occur at these junctures if the couple is not able to successfully navigate into the next stage.*

**1. The first stage of a marriage, the first seven years including the dating time deals with the primary issue of togetherness.**

- ❖ *How do we spend our time?*
- ❖ *How do we spend our money?*
- ❖ *How do we invest our energy?*
- ❖ *What are we doing together and what are we doing separately and is this working or do we need to renegotiate?*
- ❖ *Is my spouse willing and able to take responsibility in this area or is he/she not willing or able to take the time, money, and energy to make this work? (Change = Commitment x Capacity)*
- ❖ *Principles of Togetherness:*

**Working on something together brings us together. Genesis 11:4** <sup>4</sup>Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies—a monument to our greatness! This will bring us together and keep us from scattering all over the world."

**Togetherness often brings conflict. Genesis 13:6** <sup>6</sup>But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. There were too many animals for the available pastureland. <sup>7</sup>So an argument broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.

**We have to trust each other and trust God to travel together towards a goal. Genesis**

**22:6** <sup>6</sup>Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the knife and the fire. As the two of them went on together, <sup>7</sup>Isaac said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son," Abraham replied.

"We have the wood and the fire," said the boy, "but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"

<sup>8</sup>"God will provide a lamb, my son," Abraham answered. And they both went on together.

**We need to learn to celebrate and play together. Exodus 10:9** <sup>9</sup>"Young and old, all of us will go," Moses replied. "We will take our sons and daughters and our flocks and herds. We must all join together in a festival to the LORD."

***We need to eat together as a couple. Exodus 12:46*** <sup>46</sup>All who eat the lamb must eat it together in one house. You must not carry any of its meat outside, and you may not break any of its bones. <sup>47</sup>The whole community of Israel must celebrate this festival at the same time.

***We need to learn to follow the Lord together as a couple. Exodus 19:7*** <sup>7</sup>Moses returned from the mountain and called together the leaders of the people and told them what the LORD had said. <sup>8</sup>They all responded together, “We will certainly do everything the LORD asks of us.” So Moses brought the people’s answer back to the LORD.

***We need to eat together in God’s presence and celebrate life! Exodus 24:11*** <sup>11</sup>And though Israel’s leaders saw God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they shared a meal together in God’s presence!

***Marriage joins together two previously separate families. Numbers 1:18*** <sup>18</sup>called together the whole community of Israel on that very day. <sup>o</sup> All the people were registered according to their ancestry by their clans and families.

***We need to present our offerings together to the Lord. Numbers 7:3*** <sup>2</sup>Then the leaders of Israel—the tribal leaders who had organized the census—came and brought their offerings. <sup>3</sup>Together they brought six carts and twelve oxen. There was a cart for every two leaders and an ox for each leader. They presented these to the LORD in front of the Tabernacle.

***We need to learn God’s laws together. Deuteronomy 5:1*** <sup>1</sup>Moses called all the people of Israel together and said, “Listen carefully to all the laws and regulations I am giving you today. Learn them and be sure to obey them!”

***Together we are to take care of each other’s family. Deuteronomy 25:5*** <sup>1</sup>Moses called all the people of Israel together and said, “Listen carefully to all the laws and regulations I am giving you today. Learn them and be sure to obey them!”

***We must learn to worship and teach our children to worship the Lord together. Deuteronomy 31:12*** <sup>12</sup>Call them all together—men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law. <sup>13</sup>Do this so that your children who have not known these laws will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.”

***We need to learn to come together to protect what God has given us. Judges 20:11.*** <sup>11</sup>So all the Israelites were united, and they gathered together to attack the town.

***We need to learn to grieve together and support each other in our grief. Ruth 1:14.*** <sup>14</sup>And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth insisted on staying with Naomi.

***We need to covenant together so no one pulls us apart and our love is inseparable. 1 Samuel 20: 8***

<sup>8</sup>Show me this kindness as my sworn friend—for we made a covenant together before the LORD

***We are together in life and death. We need to be there for each other regardless. 2 Samuel 1:23***

<sup>23</sup> How beloved and gracious were Saul and Jonathan!  
They were together in life and in death.  
They were swifter than eagles;  
they were stronger than lions.

***We need to stand side by side together against those that oppose us. 2 Samuel 23:9***

<sup>9</sup>Next in rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai, a descendant of Ahoah. Once Eleazar and David stood together against the Philistines when the entire Israelite army had fled.

***We must stay together and never leave one another. 2 Kings 2:2b***

But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!” So they went on together to Bethel.

***We need to make our decisions together. 1 Chronicles 11: 10***

<sup>10</sup>These are the leaders of David’s mighty men. Together with all Israel, they determined to make David their king, just as the LORD had promised concerning Israel.

***We need to praise God together for all he has done for us and who he is. 2 Chronicles 5:13***

<sup>13</sup>The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words:

“He is so good!  
His faithful love endures forever!”

At that moment a cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. <sup>1</sup>

***We listen to God’s word and read it together. Nehemiah 8:1***

<sup>1</sup>all the people assembled together as one person at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given for Israel to obey.

***We promise together to work and worship in the church. Nehemiah 10:39c***

“So we promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God.”

***We celebrate special occasions together. Job 1:4***

Every year when Job’s sons had birthdays, they invited their brothers and sisters to join them for a celebration. On these occasions they would get together to eat and drink.

***Together we console our friends and neighbors. Job 2:11***

<sup>11</sup>Three of Job’s friends were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him.