

Ten Commandments of Marriage

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ABSTRACT: The commandments essentially refer to the divine rules that have been set and commanded by God. The ten commandments of marriage are patterned after the Ten Commandments God gave Moses. Just as the Ten Commandments are needed for spiritual life, the marriage commandments are important because healthy and happy marriages require deliberate effort. The marriage commandments lay out the fundamental principles that all married individuals should consider for building a lasting love-filled marital relationship. This paper proposes a new set of ten commandment of marriage and comments on each of them.

KEYWORD: marriage, ten Commandments, ten commandments of marriage, marriage.

INTRODUCTION

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses approximately 3,400 years ago while the Jewish people were escaping Egypt and traveling to their promised land, now known as Israel. The commandments essentially refer to the divine rules that have been set, commanded by God, and put in writing. They are God's rules for living. They have stood the test of time. A lot has been written about these commandments [1-5]. Over the years, people have emulated these commandments and applied them to marriage. They came up with various versions of ten commandments for marriage. These commandments capture the essentials in happy and successful marriage. They are designed to make a difference in protecting your marriage and making it flourish.

Marriage is the foundational human relationship. It is the building block on which all familial relationships are established. Marriage is God's idea. He designed it. Marriage was created, ordained, and established by God right from the beginning of humanity to provide man need for companion. God wants your marriage to be exciting, happy, strong, and successful if you follow His blueprint. Good marriages do not just happen through sheer luck. They require deliberate effort and commitment. Marriage commandments have a fundamental role to play when it comes to married life characterized by satisfaction, peace, and joy

As mentioned earlier, several versions of ten commandments of marriage have been developed. Here we present three of them and our own.

Version 1: These ten commandments were developed by Ed Young. He shares the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not" of successful relationships, taken straight from the pages of God's Word [6].

1. Thou Shalt Be Selfless.

2. Thou Shalt Have No Strings Attached.
3. Thou Shalt Continually Communicate.
4. Thou Shalt Make Conflict Thy Ally.
5. Thou Shalt Avoid the Quicksand of Materialism.
6. Thou Shalt Flee Sexual Temptation-Online and Otherwise.
7. Thou Shalt Forgive Thy Mate-490 Times and More.
8. Thou Shalt Romance the Home.
9. Thou Shalt Begin Again and Again.
10. Thou Shalt Build a Winning Team.

Version 2: These ten commandments are developed by Tami Myer based on Exodus 20:1-17 [7]:

1. Thou shalt have no other lovers in your life.
2. Thou shalt have no affections or priorities which displace thy spouse.
3. Thou shalt not speak of thy spouse in a dishonoring way.
4. Remember to schedule a date with thy spouse. Guard it, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but on the seventh day, thou shalt relax and recharge with thy spouse.
5. Honor the father and the mother of thy spouse.
6. Thou shalt not wound with anger, cut with cruel words, or kill hope.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery, in thought or in deed.
8. Thou shalt not rob one another of attention, esteem, affection, or kindness.
9. Thou shalt not lie or deceive.
10. Thou shalt not compete or resent. For you “are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mark 10:8-9, NIV).

Version 3: These were developed by Stan Tatkin [8]:

1. Thou shalt protect the safety and security of thy relationship at all costs.
2. Thou shalt base thy relationship on true mutuality, remembering that all decisions and actions must be good for thee AND for thine partner.
3. Thou shalt not threaten the existence of the relationship, for so doing would benefit no one.
4. Thou shalt appoint thy partner as go-to person for all matters, making certain thy partner is first to know—not second, third, or fourth—in all matters of importance.
5. Thou shalt provide a tether to thy partner all the days and nights of thy life, and never fail to greet thy partner with good cheer.
6. Thou shalt protect thy partner in public and in private from harmful elements, including thyself.
7. Thou shall put thy partner to bed each night and awaken with thy partner each morning.
8. Thou shalt correct all errors, including injustices and injuries, at once or as soon as possible, and not make dispute of who was the original perpetrator.

9. Thou shalt gaze lovingly upon thy partner daily and make frequent and meaningful gestures of appreciation, admiration, and gratitude.
10. Thou shalt learn thy partner well and master the ways of seduction, influence, and persuasion, without the use of fear or threat.

Version 4: These commandments are developed by the authors. They are based on the commands of God. We believe that these commandments are better than the previous ones and are more comprehensive.

1. You must make Jesus Christ the foundation of your marriage.
2. You must pray with and for your family.
3. You must be vigilant and sensitive to the enemy's attack.
4. You must communicate with, talk, and listen to your spouse.
5. You must understand your spouse's basic needs and be willing to meet them.
6. You must overcome selfishness and put your partner's needs before yours.
7. You must love your spouse deeply because love covers a multitude of sin.
8. You must commit and stick with your wife regardless of what the future holds.
9. You must be a good steward of the money God has entrusted into your care.
10. You must make forgiveness an ally of your marriage.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

We will now focus on the ten commandments of marriage that we develop and comment on them [9,10].

1. *You must make Jesus Christ the foundation of your marriage:* Wise couple build their marriage on Jesus, the solid rock (Matthew 7:24-27). Regardless of their cultural weather, wise men and women build their houses and their lives on Christ's words. The marriage will survive because their lives rest on the solid foundation of Christ. Anyone who ignores the word of Jesus is the foolish person who builds his house on sand. A marriage without Christ goes from one crisis to another. A Christian marriage is a triangular affair—God bringing together a man and a woman. Life without God is futile; so is a marriage not centered on Christ. a Christian couple has the best possibilities for a happy, successful marriage because their marriage has a third person—Jesus Christ. It is he who provides meaning, guidance, and direction to their marriage. If the man and woman are properly related in a personal way to Christ, they will most likely be properly related to each other. This is why both the husband and wife should have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior prior to their wedding. It is only when Christ is the Lord of your marriage that your home will abide in lasting peace and blessing. You need Christ to help you build a long lasting relationship. "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1). Jesus said: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Therefore, a Christian marriage must be solidly based on God's Word. This is achieved by reading the Bible together as a couple and putting the Christian principles to practice.

2. *You must pray with and for your family:* Prayer is part and parcel of Christian living. They say the family that prays together stays together. A prayerless Christian is a weak believer. Just as man needs air to survive, a family needs prayer to exist spiritually. A prayerless family is spiritually weak and insensitive to spiritual attacks. Prayerlessness leads to trouble in a marriage God does not talk to those who have no time to listen. God does not reveal his secrets, his mind, his plans, and his purposes to a prayerless believer or family. Prayer is essentially aligning ourselves with the purposes of God. It is the divine rule for living. Prayer changes things because God answers prayer and gets involved in our affairs when we cry to Him. Praying

calms disturbing forces, allays tormenting fears, and brings conflict to an end. Prayer brings joy and peace into one's soul. Prayer casts all our anxieties on Christ (1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6,7). As you pray for and with each other at various times, your relationship grows deeper. In your prayer, you may need to **Pray Until Something Happens**. Pray **FOR** each other and **WITH** each other and see what God will do. Figure 1 shows a couple praying together [11].

3. You must be vigilant and sensitive to the enemy's attack: Vigilance is paying attention to what is going on around you. Few Christians today are aware that they are engaged in a spiritual war. Families are confronted with conflicts under many different circumstances. Your archenemy is Satan along with his demons. Satan opposes everything God does. No matter from which direction you look at Satan, he has no good side. He is a liar, he is a cheat, he is an imitator, he is an opposer. He opposes and hinders God's will in the world, in the church, in your home, and in your life. He opposes prayer in many ways. He prevents believers from prayer through laziness, self-indulgence, wrong teaching, and wrong attitude toward prayer. Satan also attacks marriages with the goal of making them ineffective. He attacks the marriage institution in form of marital conflict, separation, and divorce. He also attacks the family system, the church, and the society at large. Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). He is not without power. Paul warned that we should not be ignorant of the devices of Satan lest he gain advantage over us (2 Corinthians 2:11). There are three channels through which Satan can gain access to the citadel of a man's life. Satan can enter through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Jesus was tested in these three areas, yet without sin (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15).

4. You must communicate with, talk, and listen to your spouse: Communication has always been a crucial aspect of the development of humanity. It has always been a major problem in most homes. It is often the missing link in unhappy marriages. It is the lifeblood of strong relationships. Ability to communicate is fundamental to a successful marriage. Communication is therefore not a dispensable luxury in a successful marriage; it is an indispensable necessity. Communication involves transmitting and receiving signals or talking and hearing. A couple cannot really know each other unless they talk and confide in each other. We must understand the mechanism of talking before we can be effective communicators. Honest or open talk is perhaps the best medicine for a shaky marriage, because it helps husband and wife understand what each other is feeling. Listening is more than hearing. Few people really take the time to listen to others. True listening requires discipline and full concentration. Listening is not our natural preference. You must be willing to give and take, transmit and receive, talk and listen. Listening to a person makes him/her feel loved, respected, and esteemed. In order to communicate effectively, we must overcome certain communication barriers or killers. These include anger, selfishness, silence, wrong words, and wrong timing. Communication is a learned behavior. Here are some of actions you can take to enhance your ability to communicate and enjoy a happy marriage: tame your tongue, spend more time together, and learn to accommodate. Sweet words are so much easier to digest than bitter ones. The goal of communication is to bring husband and wife to a point of agreement on an issue. Effective communication is a marriage booster. Married partners increase their understanding of each through effective communication. The happiest couples are those who talk the most with each other.

5. You must understand your spouse's basic needs and be willing to meet them: Understanding is an important aspect of marriage. In a husband-wife relationship, it is important that we understand how and why men and women reason and behave the way they do, what they like or dislike. To have a happy, successful marriage, you need understanding. You need to understand the differences in people, understand your roles as a husband, understand your roles as a wife, understand your husband's needs, and understand your wife's needs. Many times women get hurt unnecessarily because they do not understand their men. If the man's needs go unmet, he becomes frustrated and unfulfilled. There are basically four things your husband needs: significance, sexual fulfillment, an attractive wife, and domestic support. Understanding and meeting your

wife's needs is a golden key to a happy, successful marriage. Your wife's basic needs include six things: love and affection, conversation, financial security, honesty, companionship, and family commitment. Women need men and men need women. Learn to stay more at home and enjoy wifely companionship. If you do, your wife will end up being your best friend—the goal of a happy, successful marriage. Set realistic expectations both for what you may learn about your partner's character and habits as the relationship progresses.

6. You must overcome selfishness and put your partner's needs before yours: Selfishness is the number one enemy of your marriage. It attacks the very foundation and heart of the home. It defeats God's purpose for marriage, which requires that a husband and wife complement each other since we all are dependent creatures. Selfishness is a do-your-own-thing syndrome. It is one of the major hindrances to the oneness that can make marriage enjoyable and fulfill all the purpose of God for it. It leaves destructive marks, making the relationship look like an emotional battlefield. The characters, personality and presentation of selfishness is often unknown during marital partner selection, courtship, marriage management or divorce management by partners, counselors or by church preaching as to build up marriage and prevent divorce. As couples get comfortable with one another, they often become very selfish with their individual time. Marriage is about putting away your selfish habits and working as a team with your partner. A selfish spouse who hides money, hides debt, and spends money without the other spouse knowing or approving it. Do not try to kill your marriage with selfishness. Let not man through selfishness put asunder what God has put together. A good marriage practices mutual submission. Ephesians 5:21 commands us to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Marriage is not a 50/50 deal. It's a 100/100 deal—each willing to surrender all to the other person.

7. You must love your spouse deeply because love covers a multitude of sin: Love your spouse as yourself. Love him/her unconditionally. Love always means sacrifice. Love aims at unity. Love pursues peace. "Love is not rude, it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Love in marriage must be nurtured by affection, appreciation, care, concern, compassion, empathy, understanding, support, and intimacy. If you love your spouse, you will love his/her relatives. Among those relatives, your mother-in-law and father-in-law are probably the two most valuable relationships. They have sacrificed a lot to bring up and train the person you are now married to. You owe them a lot. They deserve your respect, love, and appreciation. If you love your spouse, will totally avoid getting competitive with him/her. For example, If your wife is earning more than you are, it is much better to be her support system rather than compete with her. If you love your spouse, you will be realistic in your expectations, realizing that humans are flawed, imperfect beings. Figure 2 shows an old couple still expressing their love for one another [12],

8. You must commit and stick with your wife regardless of what the future holds: Marriage is a covenant, a sacred bond, which is entered into by a man and a woman, in which they make a pledge to each other before God. In wedding ceremonies, the bride and the groom pledge to remain together, to be faithful to one another, and to love one another. Having made this pledge, they are committing to a life together as "one flesh." So marriage is grounded in the basic principles of intimacy, passion, and commitment. Commitment and marriage go hand-in-hand. No job, vacation, career, children, or hobbies should be allowed to take place of our commitment to the marriage relationship. Commitment helps you remain loyal to your spouse when things are tough. Strong marriages last because they have a commitment beyond their emotional response to each other. Be a promise keeper, not a promise breaker. Let your yes be yes, and your no be no. You demonstrate your commitment by spending time with your spouse. You need to create time when you put electronic gadgets away and focus on each other. When both partners spend quality time together, they know each other deeply and they develop sexual intimacy.

9. *You must be a good steward of the money God has entrusted into your care:* Money is one of the most common causes of conflict among married couples. How we handle money is the best outside reflector of our true inner values. It is a true index of our Christian testimony. That is why financial transparency and collaborative financial planning are important in marriages. The fundamental position of the Scriptures on money is that of stewardship. We are stewards of all God has entrusted to our care—talent, treasure, and time. By a steward, we mean one who manages another's property. God is the owner; each of us is a steward or manager. Since God is the original supplier of all our possessions, we are accountable to him for the wise use of the resources he gives us. It is not the amount of our resources but our faithfulness that is important in stewardship. Paul said, "It is [essentially] required of stewards that a man should be found faithful—proving himself worthy of trust (1 Corinthians 4:2, AB). Figure 3 show a couple having serious problem with their money [13]

10. *You must make forgiveness an ally of your marriage:* Forgiveness is important in marriage where husband and wife are bound to offend each other. As long as you live in this imperfect world, interacting with imperfect people, you are bound to offend someone or someone is bound to offend you. There is no perfect marriage in the world. Every married couple argue and sometimes disagree and fight. Even the best of marriages and the most compatible people experience serious and difficult challenges over the years. We all have flaws, bad moments, and bad days. When your spouse offends you, you have a choice to either forgive or not forgive them. Unforgiveness occurs when you choose not to forgive and be kind to the person who has offended you. It is either doing nothing about the hurt or attempting to punish the transgressor somehow. Studies show that unforgiving, selfish, negative people do not live long but die earlier. Forgiveness is key to your own happiness. Forgiveness in marriage is necessary to have a healthy, lasting relationship. One can say that a happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers. Jesus said, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14,15). Someone has said, "If you would increase your happiness and prolong your life, forget your neighbor's faults.... Forget the peculiarities of your friends, and only remember the good points which make you fond of them.... Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday; write upon today's clean sheet those things lovely and lovable." The keys to forgiveness in marriage are shown in Figure 4 [14].

CONCLUSION

If you apply these golden rules to your marriage, you will have a strong, happy, and successful marriage. Living by the ten commandments EVERY DAY that will propel you forward in experiencing the kind of life God wants for you physically, emotionally, relationally, financially, and spiritually. You will enjoy your marriage and have a foretaste of heaven on earth. For more information about the ten commandments for marriage, one should consult the books in [6,9,10,15-19.]

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Figure 1. A couple praying together [11].



Figure 2. A old couple still expressing their love for one another [12],



Figure 3. A couple having serious problem with their money [13]



Figure 4. The keys to forgiveness [14].