

GOING FURTHER

VALLEYDALE SUPPORT

Life Groups

Valleydale offers a variety of Adult Life Groups that offer support. For more information go to www.valleydale.org/lifegroups and click on the "Find a Life Group" link or stop by the Next Steps Desk in the lobby to learn which group might be a fit for you.

Stephen Ministry

This ministry is intended to match you with someone who has a similar life experience but is a little further along for the purpose of perspective, understanding and hope. You will be matched with a carefully selected church member who is supervised by the church and works in strict confidence. To learn more about this ministry, contact the ministry coordinator for a confidential conversation at 205.991.5282.

Marriage Idea Cards

Free resources and date night ideas available at the resource center in the lobby or at valleydale.org/family.

Date Night

An event sponsored by the church annually or twice per year. Visit valleydale.org/events for more information.

Professional Counseling

Valleydale provides onsite, Christ-centered professional counseling. Both male and female counselors are available. Counseling is offered for adults, teens and children. All counseling is confidential. For more information, visit www.valleydale.org/counseling or call 205.991.5282.

For more
resources, visit
valleydale.org/family
OR
visit our resource
center in the
lobby

Building a **STRONG MARRIAGE**



BUILDING A GOD-HONORING MARRIAGE

How can believers become intentional about building a God-honoring marriage?

PRIORITY ONE

Discover God's Design for Marriage

We must understand that every marriage is intended to be a masterpiece reflecting THE marriage between God and His people. Marriage is the most frequent metaphor used in the Bible to describe God's relationship with His people. In fact, writing to the Ephesians, Paul called marriage a *"profound mystery"* because the man represents Christ, the groom, while the woman represents His bride, the church. The marital union of husband and wife is a sacred reflection of the gospel itself.

PRIORITY TWO

Commit to a Covenant Marriage

Today's civil marriages are much like business contracts – easy to get into and easy to get out of. God's covenant with His people was a promise to remain eternally faithful even if His people were not faithful in return. In covenant marriage, both spouses are committed for a lifetime – in sickness and health, for better or worse. They do not threaten divorce or consider it as an option.

PRIORITY THREE

Pursue a Passionate Marriage

God calls us to pursue a passionate, thriving marriage. The Song of Solomon expresses the kind of love, joy and celebration God designed for marriage. That passion is built on much more than infatuation and sexual desire. It is rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy God created couples to experience as a foretaste of the eternal unity, communion and intimacy we can have with God. Prioritize a routine like date nights to fan the flame of intimacy in your marriage.

PRIORITY FOUR

Become Heroic in Marriage

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue humanity. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul connected Christ's sacrifice directly to marriage: *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"* (Ephesians 5:25) and *"Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands"* (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, mutual submission to one another requires giving up our own interests to heroically serve the other person.

PRIORITY FIVE

Fight for Your Marriage

Every couple will mess up. Too often, however, they also choose to give up. Throughout Scripture, God fights for His relationship with His people, remaining faithful in the face of unfaithfulness. He forgives again and again. No couple can avoid strife and arguments, but we can avoid giving the *"devil a foothold"* in our marriages by keeping short accounts and quickly restoring the relationship regardless of what happens. Prayer is a key part of fighting for your marriage. Statistics from Gallup and the National Association of Marriage Enhancement reveal that when couples pray together on a daily basis less than 1% end up getting a divorce.

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs
The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman
Simply Romantic Nights Kit from Family Life
Cherish by Gary Thomas
Grace Filled Marriage by Tim Kimmel
Sheet Music by Kevin Lehman
The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller