

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE ARCHIVE

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2013

(Please let us know if links to articles do not work,
we may have it on file)

CONTENTS: (Ctrl+Click heading to jump to articles)

[ANOTHER TOOL FOR YOUR KITBAG](#)

[BLENDED FAMILY MINISTRY](#)

[BOOK RECOMMENDATION](#)

[COHABITATION AND AFFAIRS](#)

[DISTRESS AND DIVORCE / RESTORATION](#)

[FEATURED ARTICLES](#)

[FEATURED VIDEO](#)

[HURDLES IN MARRIAGE](#)

[INSIGHT TO STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP](#)

[LEGISLATION](#)

[MARRIAGE ENCOURAGEMENT](#)

[MARRIAGE PREPARATION](#)

[MARRIAGE WEEK](#)

[MENTORING AND COACHING](#)

[MILITARY MARRIAGE](#)

[MONEY](#)

[NEWS](#)

[OTHER MARITAL INITIATIVES](#)

[PARENTING / YOUTH MINISTRY](#)

[PARTING WORDS](#)

[RESOURCES TO PASS ALONG](#)

[VALENTINE'S DAY FOCUS](#)

[THE STATE OF OUR UNIONS](#)

[RESEARCH FINDINGS](#)

ANOTHER TOOL FOR YOUR KITBAG

Bridge Builders Christian Mediation, www.ChristianMediate.com, (503) 770-0282

Christian Mediators "Think of us as conflict fire fighters. When everyone else is running out of the building on fire (the raging conflict), we are running in." A mediation source with local offices covering the issues of marriage and family, church relations, business, non-profits, elder care and divorce:

The Peacemaking Marriage (by Doug Marshall, Mediator and Wilsonville Pastor) Have you ever been in conflict with your spouse? "Are you kidding?" Have you ever had to forgive them? "You mean put up with them?" Have you ever had to admit wrong? "I hate it when that happens." Have you ever had to negotiate with your spouse? "What's a negotiation?" These activities are basic to sustaining any relationship and are also a few of the primary steps to "Peacemaking." ... [Click to continue](#)

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

The Pastor's Family, by Brian and Cara Croft. Pastoral ministry can be a uniquely difficult calling not only for a man, but for his wife and children as well. The greatest challenge the pastor faces may well be his internal desires for approval, appearance, and success. Once he places these expectations upon himself, they will inevitably come to control him and dominate his decision-making so he may neglect his family in favor of ministry. In *The Pastor's Family*, Brian and Cara Croft call a pastor to the task of shepherding his family through the challenges of pastoral ministry, for if the pastor is not first the shepherd of his own family, he is unfit to shepherd God's people. This is a book for a pastor and his wife to read together, with much prayer and with many open discussions.

The Secrets of Surviving Infidelity by Scott Haltzman, MD. Released in April to rave reviews: "Rebuilding trust after an affair is not easy and requires a special kind of support and clear guidance. Scott Haltzman can show you the way. Taking the time to read this book will change your life." (John Gray, Ph.D., author); "This isn't just a supremely helpful book on understanding—and recovering from—infidelity. It's a great book on marriage. The honest, warmhearted, and wise insight Scott Haltzman provides here can bring you hope and much more—a path forward. This is the book you are looking for right now." (Scott Stanley, Ph.D., author and researcher); "Scott Haltzman gets down to what's needed: the nitty-gritty details of how to define infidelity, how to end it, and how to recover. The book is so good that it's also a great how-to-avoid-it manual that all married folks should read long before infidelity is even on the horizon." (Diane Sollee, M.S.W., SmartMarriages.com)

BLENDED FAMILY MINISTRY

How Machiavelli Saved My Family At the end of her rope with four young kids, a mother turns to an unlikely adviser—and learns how hardheaded rule can secure stability and happiness in the home. (By Suzanne Evans, Wall Street Journal)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323646604578400804035071688.html?KEYWORDS=how+machiavelli+saved+my+family>

Staying Close in Remarriage. Strong couples feel close to one another because they know what to do to make that happen. (by Ron L. Deal, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/blended-family/remarriage/staying-married/staying-close-in-remarriage#.USv3LzfDmEU>

Remarriage issues are very different from first marriages. A new book, 'The Remarriage Blueprint' by Maggie Scarf, focuses on the obstacles that seven remarried couples faced in combining families, bank accounts and daily routines. In her book, Scarf cites research that shows 40% of new marriages include one previously-married partner. She discusses challenges in remarriage and the forces that make the new partner an "outsider," from children and parenting tasks that put the couple at odds to the uniting of disparate family cultures. (by Sharon Jayson, USA Today) <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/12/remarriage-children-money-divorce/2806641>

Swimming in the Blended Family Ocean. Remarried couples – and especially those with children – swim in a different ocean than first-marriage couples. The water temperature can be a little cooler – trusting a spouse can be a challenge after you've been hurt in a previous relationship. There are unique under-currents – most everyone in the stepfamily has experienced a loss that is always just under the surface, influencing everyday interactions. They run into a few more sharks – think of loyalty conflicts and ex-spouses. (by Ron L. Deal, FamilyLife Blended) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/blended-family/helping-others/stepfamily-ministry-articles/swimming-in-the-blended-family-ocean#.Up0Ds9JDvuo>

COHABITATION AND AFFAIRS

5 Ways to Affair-Proof Your Marriage Before It's Too Late. Once you cross the line, it's too late. If you or your partner cheats, you can expect up to two years, maybe even three, of hard work and pain to get over the betrayal. If you make it through, and you may, trusting each other again can take even longer. Preventing an affair now while you can is the key. There are five ways you can do it and if you start today, it may not be too late. (By Tammy Nelson, PhD, Huffington Post) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tammy-nelson-phd/5-ways-to-affair-proof-your-marriage_b_3635942.html

Cohabitation: Good or Bad? When you move in together, live together outside of marriage, you start to learn some patterns that will not serve you well in the future. (Glenn Stanton, FamilyLife Today) www.familylife.com/audio/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/the-ring-makes-all-the-difference/20120320-cohabitation-good-or-bad#.USu_czfDmEU

Dangers of Cohabitation. The National Crime Victimization Survey of the Justice Department over 9 years reported that 65% of violent crimes against women were committed by a boyfriend or an ex-husband with only 9% caused by a husband. (By Mike McManus, Ethics and Religion Column)

Devaluing Marriage Is (Co)Habit-Forming Test driving a car might be a good idea, but a marriage? Forget it. (Family Research Council e-mail) www.frc.org/washingtonupdate/devaluing-marriage-is-cohabit-forming

Emotional Affairs and Infidelity. Even if two people are not engaged in a physical relationship, the emotional attachment can threaten the very foundation and fabric of the marriage. Here are a few reasons why. (Michele Weiner-Davis, Divorce Busting blog)<http://www.divorcebusting.com/blog/emotional-affairs-and-infidelity>

Falling Pastors One city. Three senior pastors of megachurches. And in just a six month period, three moral failures. Believe it or not, it just happened in Orlando, Florida. (Dr. James Emery White, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/dr-james-e>

Friend Or More? The Affair You Don't Realize You're Having. The best way to avoid having an affair is to be wary of people who don't care about the happiness of your marriage. (By Scott Haltzman, YourTango.com) <http://magazine.foxnews.com/love/friend-or-more-affair-you-dont-realize-youre-having?intcmp=HPBucket>

Hitching up,' for a strong middle class Strengthening the Middle Class Starts at Home (W. Bradford Wilcox and David Lapp, Fredericksburg (VA) Free Lance-Star) <http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2013/032013/03172013/758521/#>

How Marital Infidelity Became America's Last Sexual Taboo. Having an affair is one of the most immoral things you can do, according to a new Gallup poll. (By Hugo Schwyzer, The Atlantic) <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/05/how-marital-infidelity-became-the-last-taboo/276341/>

How to Prevent Cheating in Your Marriage We've become an 'anything-goes' society, in which the indiscretions of politicians, sports figures, and pop celebrities are practically daily news. (FoxNews.com)www.foxnews.com/health/2013/03/04/how-to-prevent-cheating-in-your-marriage/?intcmp=features

Remarriage rate declining as more opt for cohabitation. Cohabitation has opened up options for people that weren't there 20 years ago. It affords the benefits of marriage without the legal constraints. As cohabitation has become more accepted, remarriage has declined. (by Sharon Jayson, USA Today) www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/12/remarriage-rates-divorce/2783187

Surviving an Affair. When a spouse has an affair, it usually comes as a complete surprise even to him or her. That person often reports, "I had always regarded those who had affairs as selfish, misguided fools with no discipline whatsoever. I could not have imagined having an affair myself." (by Willard F. Harley, Growthtrac.com) <http://www.growthtrac.com/artman/publish/Surviving-am-Affair-1525.php>

The Cohabitation Complication. The key to making marriage work – and what sets it apart from cohabitation – is commitment. (By Dave Boehi, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/the-cohabitation-complication#.USu-DjfdmEV>

The Financial Rules of Cohabitation While experts say couples living together should have the same discussions about living arrangements as married couples, they advise unmarried individuals co-habiting take extra financial protections. (by Andrea Murad, FOXBusiness.com) www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2013/04/25/financial-rules-cohabitation/?intcmp=fbfeatures

Unmarried Cheating: Stepping Out in Unmarried, Serious Romantic Relationships. A recent study examines who is most likely to have sex with someone else while they are in a serious but unmarried romantic relationship. I am going to summarize the key findings for you here. by Scott Stanley, Sliding vs Deciding blog) <http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/2013/07/unmarried-cheating-stepping-out-in.html>

When Friendships Go too Far. Guarding against emotional affairs. (by Heather Riggelman, Today's Christian Woman)

Why Long-Married Couples Split. Is cheating always the kiss of death? (by Pepper Schwartz, AARP) <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/love-sex/info-06-2010/naked-truth-long-term-marriages-end.html#.Ub-nE9hC-R8.email>

Broken Marriage, Broken Church, New Beginnings. One of the greatest needs among church planters is emotional support, especially in their marriages. Justin and Trisha Davis know that reality all too well. In 2005, three years into a growing church plant in Indianapolis, Justin had an affair with a woman on his staff who happened to be Trisha's best friend. Although the church plant had launched under the watchful eye of two local, contributing churches and Justin met with accountability partners weekly, his fall was inevitable, he says, because his first mistress was the church herself. (By Melissa Riddle Chalos, Outreach Magazine) <http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/4295-justin-and-trisha-davis.html?print>

Economically speaking, marriage is not overrated. A Gallup poll shows married Americans tend to have an above-average income, which leads to more spending which stimulates the economy. Domestic partners come close to the spending of marrieds, those who remain unmarried still fall short of those who buckle down and tie the knot. Those who remain single spend the least, "at least in part because they have lower-than-average incomes." (by JJ Feinauer, Deseret News) <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865589473/Economically-speaking-marriage-is-not-overrated.html>

DISTRESS AND DIVORCE / RESTORATION

Grounds for Biblical Divorce. Today, I try to interpret the Bible's teachings on divorce - and there are many - as a selection of godly principles. With this approach, I find the Scriptures full of help which provides much truth to work with in helping hurting people. No two marriages are alike. Each needs individual attention. Any decision to divorce - or to recommend it - comes only after a careful consideration of a multitude of factors. Prayer and seeking God's will in every situation is essential. (by Roger Barrier, Preach It, Teach It blog) <http://www.preachit.us/the-team/roger-barrier/ask-roger/post/archive/2013/august/article/biblical-grounds-for-divorce-my-view> [teachit.org/about-](http://www.teachit.org/about-)

In Divorce, Are the Kids Really All Right? Divorce isn't something people understand or talk about, despite how common it is today. I still get weird looks when people find out my parents are divorced. – Becca (by Kim Ode, (Minneapolis) Star Tribune) <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/relationship/171027791.html?page=all&prepage=2&c=y&refer=y>

Should I Marry (Or Stay Married To) An Abusive Person? It may be physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. Whatever the type of abuse, it eventually destroys the abused and, ultimately, the abuser. (by Joe Beam, CrossWalk.com)

What I Wish I'd Known Before I Got Divorced A recent study by the Institute for American Values asked, "Does divorce make people happy?" They found that those who ended their troubled marriage in divorce weren't any happier than those who remained married. In fact, two-thirds of those who stayed married reported happy marriages five years later. (By Georgia Shaffer, Today's Christian Woman) http://www.todaychristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/what-i-wish-id-known-before-i-got-divorced.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=149748560&utm_campaign=2013

Is Divorce Contagious? A research team at Brown University analyzed three decades of data on marriage, divorce and remarriage. They found that study participants were 75% more likely to become divorced if a friend is divorced and 33% more likely to end their marriage if a friend of a friend is divorced. So divorce is contagious? (By Rich Morin, Pew Research Center) <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/21/is-divorce-contagious>

This Map Of U.S. Divorce Rates Shows Where Marriages Go To Die. But could where you live predict divorce with some degree of accuracy as well? It's possible. Note that Medford, OR, is the 4th most likely city in which to experience divorce. (By Ashley Reich, The Huffington Post) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/04/us-divorce-rate_n_4184261.html

Breaking Up is Hard to Do, Unless Everyone Else is Doing it Too: Social Network Effects on Divorce in a Longitudinal Sample. Divorce represents the dissolution of a social tie, but it is also possible that attitudes about divorce flow across social ties. To explore how social networks influence divorce and vice versa, we exploit a longitudinal data set from the long-running Framingham Heart Study. The results suggest that divorce can spread between friends. Clusters of divorces extend to two degrees of separation in the network. Overall, the results suggest that attending to the health of one's friends' marriages may serve to support and enhance the durability of one's own relationship, and that, from a policy perspective, divorce should be understood as a collective phenomenon that extends beyond those directly affected. (Rose McDermott, PhD, Brown U; James H. Fowler, PhD, UCSD; Nicholas A Christakis, MD, PhD, MPH, Yale U) http://fowler.ucsd.edu/social_network_effects_on_divorce.pdf The article **Divorce spreads like contagion** discusses this research. (By Vivian Wang, Yale Daily News) <http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2013/11/05/divorce-spreads-like-contagion>

Depression: 10 Fascinating Insights into a Misunderstood Condition. Depressed people feel helpless, hopeless, worthless and that their lives are out of control. Easy enough to state but much harder to treat, and still harder to deal with. But depression is a much more complex condition than many realize. It's more than just 'being sad' all the time or thinking that life has no meaning. (By Jeremy Dean, PsyBlog) www.spring.org.uk/2013/11/depression-10-fascinating-insights-into-a-misunderstood-condition.php#utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+PsychologyBlog+%28PsyBlog%29

"Hard" vs. "Soft" Reasons That Lead to Divorce. If both parties will each take personal responsibility and focus

on their own skills upgrade, the whole picture of their relationship turns around. Even one person can turn the marriage around. (by Gary Thomas, his GaryThomas.com blog) <http://garythomas.com/blog/lead-to-divorce>

FEATURED ARTICLES

A Pastor's Dirty Little Secret. The average size congregation in US is 89 people, according to Barna. Staffs are small and needs are great. In many situations the pastor needs to be a Bible teacher, accountant, strategist, visionary, computer tech, counselor, public speaker, worship director, prayer warrior, mentor leadership trainer and fundraiser. Who can be all of that? (Philip Wagner, www.philipwagner.com) **A Pastor's Dirty Little Secret by Philip Wagner - ChurchLeaders.com - Christian Leadership Blogs, Articles, Videos, How To's, and Free Resources**

A Time to Laugh. Why having fun keeps the joy in our marriage. Greg and I made a commitment that our relationship would never lose that sense of fun. So we've made it a priority. (Erin Smalley, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/15.48.html?paging=off>

Causes of Pastor Struggles? I've spoken on this topic for the past several years and have shared thoughts on this blog about the unique stresses of being a pastor or being in a pastor's family. (Phil Monroe, Musings of a Christian Psychologist blog) <http://wisecounsel.wordpress.com/2011/10/03/causes-of-pastor-struggles>

Dancing on the Edge. You think it won't happen to you, can't happen to you. You think, There's no way. Not me! Think again. I thought it was innocent at the time. It all came down to me being stupid and making a stupid choice, of enjoying sin and flirting with it. (by Anonymous, Focus on the Family) http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/divorce_and_infidelity/affairs_and_adultery/dancing_on_the_edge.aspx

How to Use Conflict to Grow Closer in Your Marriage. A report on the practical applications of Drs Les and Leslie Parrot's recent book, "The Good Fight: How Conflict Can Bring You Closer" (Whitney Hopley, Crosswalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/engagement-newlyweds/how-to-use-conflict-to-grow-closer-in-your-marriage.html?ps=0>

Is Your Marriage in a Rut? Climb out of your rut and try new things, here are some easy-to-implement ideas to give you a boost. Think of the word DATES to stimulate the "creative dating" quadrant of your brain. (Nancy C. Anderson, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/is-your-marriage-in-a-rut-1317293.html>

Making Beds. Jesus Christ gave me a precious opportunity to give myself to my wife—to show in action, without words, my deep love for her. (Cecil Murphey, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/making-beds.html?paging=off>

Millennials and Marriage. Young Americans have come to believe that they can only achieve "good" marriages through professional success and economic prosperity.

It's a cold, sleety Minnesota day, and I'm in a classroom with 25 undergraduate students, talking about marriage. This discussion is the culmination of a mini-unit in which (among other things) we examined sociological data showing worrisome marital trends in America. We discussed how various social problems, particularly among the poor, might be ameliorated through a strengthening of marriage. Charles Murray's portrayal of "Fishtown," combined with the New York Times' "Two Classes, Divided By 'I Do,'" painted vividly the challenges that a weak marriage culture creates for poor families. Now I put the question to the students: What might help? How can we better encourage people to get and stay married? A young man raises his hand. "This unit was interesting, but the university should offer whole classes on marriage. A lot of people don't realize how important it is, for their kids and just for having a happy life." Another hand. "They should talk about this in high school, too. It seems like we heard a lot of warnings about drugs and dropping out and safe sex. I don't remember hearing anything about marriage." (by Rachel Lu, Witherspoon Institute) <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/09/10481>

Protecting Your Pastor's Marital Fidelity. Each one of us has a personal responsibility to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind. But as a local body of believers, each church member has a responsibility to hold all other members accountable to live before God in righteousness so that the church might be holy before the Lord. For every local congregation this accountability should include walking alongside its pastor in order to help him keep his marriage vows before them and the Lord with joy. Here are some practical tips. (By Eric C. Redmond, Christianity.com) <http://www.christianity.com/church/pastors/protecting-your-pastors-marital-fidelity.html>

Romance Doesn't Have to Be Expensive. How to build intimacy in ways money can't buy. (Karen O'Connor, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/april/romance-doesnt-have-to-be-expensive.html?paging=off>

8 KEYS TO CREATING A LOVING, JOYFUL RELATIONSHIP. "Working on a relationship," doesn't mean that it has to be hard. It primarily means that you continually learn and grow toward being an ever-more-loving person. While we don't need to be in a relationship to continue to evolve toward being more loving, relationships trigger all that is unhealed within us, thereby offering us wonderful opportunities for healing and growth. (by Margret Paul, Huffington Post) [8 Keys to Creating a Loving, Joyful Relationship | Margaret Paul, Ph.D.](#)

The Gospel & Deliberate Complementarian Pastors. My concern: It is all too easy for us as pastors to affirm biblical manhood and womanhood and to contend humbly for the complementarian position, and yet still fail to intentionally and consistently apply this body of teaching to our lives and to our churches. Pastors must not only proclaim truth but practice truth. (By C.J. Mahaney, 9Marks Journal) <http://www.9marks.org/journal/gospel-deliberate-complementarian-pastors>

The Ministry of Marriage: For the Pastor. The best way to defend our church body from error is to proclaim the Scriptures boldly and to love our wives nobly. By strengthening our own marriages we set an example for the entire church and make it that much harder for the devil to break through our ranks." (by Cindy Wright, Marriage Missions International) <http://marriagemissions.com/the-ministry-of-marriage-for-the-pastor>

The Pastor's Wife: A Position or Juxtaposition? "What will your wife do if you become our pastor?" That was the question one church member asked my husband at a question-and-answer session at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC) He was candidating for the position of pastor. How did Mark answer? (By Connie Dever, 9Marks Journal) [Journal : The Pastor's Wife: A Position or Juxtaposition? | 9Marks](#)

The Woman Who Saved Marriage. Diane Sollee launched marriage education and stopped the divorce epidemic. (By Susan Heitler, Ph.D., Psychology Today) <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/resolution-not-conflict/201110/the-woman-who-saved-marriage>

Fight to reduce divorce an uphill battle. For the past dozen years, Oklahoma government and groups have spent more than \$70 million on a marriage program originally aimed at reducing the state's high divorce rate in hopes of fighting poverty.

During that time, however, the rates of divorce, unmarried cohabitation and single-parent families have increased in Oklahoma and the nation, while the percentage of households with married couples has declined, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. (By Clifton Adcock The Norman (ok) Transcript)

<http://www.normantranscript.com/headlines/x517512506/Fight-to-reduce-divorce-an-uphill-battle>

[FEATURED VIDEO](#)

Is Marriage the Answer to Poverty? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, having parents who are married decreases a child's probability of living in a poor household by more than 80 percent ... that's better than any government program.

John Wooden was a great basketball player and as the UCLA coach won 10 NCAA national champion- ships in a span of 12 years. He had a very special love for his wife Nellie and that is the subject of January's video clip.

Piper, Carson, and Keller on Sustaining the Covenant of Marital Love. What sustains the marital bond and affections over the long haul? Three men with a combined 116 years of marriage reflect on what they've learned from God's Word and others along with their experience. Piper, Carson, and Keller on Sustaining the Covenant of Marital Love

Preparing for Marriage, Randy Alcorn gives advice to engaged couples about how to prepare for marriage. He encourages engaged couples to learn from couples who have been married a long time and are in a healthy relationship.

Restore, by Chris August. lyrics at http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/c/chris_august/restore.html Nobody's growing old together, we've made it easy just to quit

Love has become a negative percentage, why do we bother to commit
We've got a long list of excuses, ways we try to justify
Well, I propose to you the truth is, marriage does not have to die
CHORUS

I know you're feeling like it's falling apart and it can't go on anymore
But God is a God who knows how to heal so just give it up to the Lord
And He will restore
He said with this ring I promise, and with I do she said forever
But right now if they're being honest they don't know if they'll stay Together
Let's fast forward to the future after struggling on their own
They finally figured out they needed Jesus in the middle
Now I'm watching God rebuild their home
CHORUS

The enemy tries to come and divide
Trying to get us to give up the fight
But darkness will always lose out to light
'Cause we've got the power of Christ on our side
I see you growing old together
I pray I find a love like yours
So if you're feeling like it's falling apart and it can't go on anymore
God is a God who knows how to heal so just give it up to the Lord
And He will restore

Like it was before
You may have strayed off course
But He will restore

The Best Marriage Advice? Don't Give Advice A tension point for many couples: the giving and receiving of advice. Experts say men hear advice from women as scolding while women often hear advice from men as condescending. Elizabeth Bernstein and Dr. Anna

The Marriage Prayer by John Waller. John dedicates this song "to all the married couples or those who seek to getting marry someday or soon...hoping every couple/single put God first in everything they do. May all the men and women seek to love God more than anything else..."

Married to a Masterpiece <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f-0Cncm33o>

HURDLES IN MARRIAGE

A Choice Between Feeding Your Children or Getting Married Removing marriage penalties for low-income Americans is one step toward rebuilding our middle class. (David Blankenhorn, Elizabeth Marquardt , and Amber Lapp, Huffington Post blog)http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-blankenhorn/marriage-penalties_b_2775010.html

5 Ways Conflict Can Bring Couples Closer Five common couple fights and advice on how to use conflict to build trust. (By Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott, Bookish.com)<http://www.bookish.com/articles/drs-les-and-leslie-parrott-5-ways-conflict-can-bring-couples-closer>

8 Ways to Take a Stand for Your Marriage. Dr. Bill Doherty says that most couples give up too easily on their marriages. They start down a path and then head toward divorce as if it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. As stresses and dissatisfactions mount, they need marital leadership to stay afloat. (by Dr. Bill Doherty, iMom.com)
<http://www.imom.com/mom-life/marriage-and-love/8-ways-to-take-a-stand-for-your-marriage>

10 Ways to Save a Struggling Marriage. There are many good strategies if we want to restore an ailing or "under the weather" marriage. iMOM suggests 10 strategies for women who want to get the ball rolling. (from iMom)
www.imom.com/mom-life/marriage-and-love/10-ways-to-save-a-struggling-marriage

Across the Miles. With the right plan, distance couldn't keep us apart. Why had we never thanked God for the gift of living in the same house and talking as much as we wanted for free? Now if we're having trouble getting through to each other, one of us will call the other's cell—even if we're in the same room. It's a light-hearted reminder to make time to talk. (by Renny Gehman, Marriage Partnership)
http://www.todaychristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/across-miles.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=200533973&utm_campaign=2013

A Global Love Affair. Marriages among different nationalities are up, but so are the tax and estate issues. (Neil Parmar, Wall Street Journal Money Magazine)http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324266904578463152872446688.html?mod=WSJ_WSJ_Money

Can We Talk? 7 tips to get your spouse to open up. (Elaine Creasman, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/can-we-talk.html?paging=off>

Don't Get Stuck in the Empty Nest. I challenge you to look at this season in your life as merely a transition to "Prime Time." (by Dennis Rainey, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/challenges/empty-nest-and-midlife/dont-get-stuck-in-the-empty-nest#.Ubp18diDlWA>

Don't Say, "We Grew Apart". In marriage, we are the gardeners, not the plants. (Patricia Hartman, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/february/dont-say-we-grew-apart.html?paging=off>

God Makes a Way Through the Impossible He saved our marriage in the wake of unbearable tragedy (By Gerard Long, Today's Christian Woman)<http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/march/god-makes-way-through-impossible.html?paging=off>

How to Make Your Mid-life Dynamite. We each have choices, and often at pressure-packed transitions, like midlife, we reach a pivotal point where our decisions and choices can wreak great havoc, chaos, and destruction. (Pam and Bill Farrel, CrossWalk.com)

If You Were Sexually Involved Before Marriage. In my book SOS: Sick of Sex, I plead with women to believe God's truth about sexual intimacy. One problem afflicts those who were involved in premarital sex with their husbands. Even after years of marriage, and even after understanding God's forgiveness, they still feel a great deal of guilt and shame when it comes to sexual intimacy. (by Robyn McKelvy, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/staying-married/romance-and-sex/if-you-were-sexually-involved-before-marriage#.Ui4L59K-qHM>

Is Your Patience Running Thin? My lack of patience and the love I said I had for my wife and kids were in direct contradiction of each other. Because if I really loved them I would have also been patient with them. (by Jack and Janet, [Redeeming Marriages](http://RedeemingMarriages.com))<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=54fa0803b3a28946f6b265a1b&id=3111da7b99&e=8772b439d6>

Kids of divorce aren't as resilient as we'd like to believe they are The real effect of divorce comes when kids become young adults and begin to seek out their own relationships. (by Jeff Snow, Northumberland (Ontario, CN) Today) www.northumberlandtoday.com/2013/03/07/kids-of-divorce-arent-as-resilient-as-wed-like-to-believe-they-are

Learn to Love Your Husband – Again Our marriage changed when God gave me the grace to choose my husband each day. (Virelle Kidder, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/learn-to-love-your-husband-again.html>

Marriage advice: Cherish wife for a stronger marriage. For women, being cherished is the culmination of love, respect, and desire. Cherishing your wife strengthens the bond of your marriage and adds a sense of joy and peace that will carry your wife through even the toughest times. (by James Sheridan, (Ft Wayne, IN) News-Sentinel) <http://www.news-sentinel.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130828/LIVING/308289993/1008>

My Husband Won't Talk - Working Through Communication Problems. Poor communication is a symptom of a deeper problem. [If you have a communication problem, there are more than likely underlying heart issues which have to be resolved.](http://www.CounselingSolutions.com) (by Rick Thomas, [Counseling Solutions](http://CounselingSolutions.com))

Narcissistic Men and The Women Who Love Them. You may have already committed or perhaps been married to a narcissistic man. It happens to a lot of women. (by Dr. David B. Hawkins, CrossWalk.com)

Renewing My Marriage. Our relationship changed when God gave me a new attitude toward my unbelieving husband. In the book *Winning Him without Words*, I share a story of sitting at a traffic light and talking to God about respecting my husband. That day God made it very clear that I should treat my husband no differently than if he were a believer. Respect him, pray for him, and love him as if he already were a believer. (by Dineen Miller, Today's Christian Woman) http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/july/renewing-my-marriage.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=195051098&utm_campaign=2013

Saving Your Marriage: Are You Willing to Pay the Price? God knows your pain, feels your pain and cares about your pain. He promises to see you through this terrible experience to a brighter day. (Dr. David Hawkins, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/saving-your-marriage-are-you-willing-to-pay-the-price-1416717.html>

Taking Steps to Pursue Passion. Romans 4:20-21 says that Abraham was “fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.” Faith requires that we put our confidence and belief in what God has said. It goes beyond what we think; it impacts the way we behave. What kind of step is God asking you to take toward pursuing passion? (Linda Dillow and Dr. Juli Slattery, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/taking-steps-to-pursue-passion.html>

The Greatest Marriage Advice No One Wants to Hear. You feel stuck. Your satisfaction has dropped to an all time low. What do you do now? (From iMom.com) <http://www.imom.com/mom-life/marriage-and-love/the-greatest-marriage-advice-no-one-wants-to-hear>

The Long Walk Regaining Trust. Suggests steps to take in restoring faith. (Dr. David B. Hawkins, CrossWalk.com) <http://m.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/doctor-david/the-long-walk-regaining-trust.html>

The Perfect Wife Scorecard. I just knew I was failing miserably, and I had my tallies to prove it. During one summer of my life, I made the ill-fated decision to join a recreational co-ed softball team. Admittedly, it was a match of convenience—I was looking for community, and they were looking for another female to fill one of the slots—but I was confident it was only a matter of time before we hit it off. So to speak. (Stephanie Rische, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/june/perfect-wife-scorecard.html?paging=off>

When Your Husband is Addicted to Pornography What has God revealed to you about your husband's sexual addiction? (By Vicki Tiede, Growthrac.com) www.growthrac.com/artman/publish/when-your-husband-is-addicted-to-pornography-1505.php

How to Rest in Grace While God Works in Your Marriage. When you base your marriage on grace, you can let go of the burden of trying to change it yourself and rest in the confidence that God will work *through you* to bring about change. (by Whitney Hople, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/how-to-rest-in-grace-while-god-works-in-your-marriage.html>

Marriage Isn't For You. To all who are reading this article—married, almost married, single, or even the sworn bachelor or bachelorette—I want you to know that marriage isn't for you. No true relationship of love is for you. Love is about the person you love. (by Seth Adam Smith, his SethAdamSmith.com blog) <http://sethadamsmith.com/2013/11/02/marriage-isnt-for-you>

INSIGHT TO STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

9 Struggles of Being a Pastor's Wife that Every Pastor Must Know. Ministry is a way of life that requires us to constantly pour ourselves out for others, giving sacrificially of our time, resources, and emotions. It is a life that demands selflessness as <http://engagingchurchblog.com/9-struggles-of-being-a-pastors-wife-that-every-pastor-must-know>

Believing in Marriage? At a recent relationship and marriage education conference, distinguished professor and author Dr. Pat Love challenged the audience to consider their beliefs about the permanence of marriage. (By Julie Baumgardner, President First Things First) <http://firstthings.org/believing-in-marriage>

Deciding to Love. You may not feel tender, sympathetic, and eager to please, but in your actions you must be tender, understanding, forgiving, and helpful. And, if you do that, as time goes on you will not only get through the dry spells, but they will become less frequent and deep, and you will become more constant in your feelings. This is what can happen if you decide to love. (from Timothy Keller's book *The Meaning of Marriage*) <https://www.marriagevine.com/index.php/deciding-to-love>

Defending Your Marriage From External Stressors. If God is stirring your heart to strengthen your marriage, this series of eight brief articles is for you. They are designed to provide insight, encouragement and practical advice to those seeking to protect their marriage from the external stressors that threaten it. (by Dr. Harold L. Arnold, Jr., Focus on the Family) www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/strengthening_your_marriage/defending_your_marriage_from_external_stressors.aspx

Does It Count as a Family Dinner If It's Over in Eight Minutes? Many parents insist on maintaining regular family dinners and feel guilty when they fail, given the list of child-development benefits researchers say are associated with the ritual. These [inhttp://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323981304579079720375700820.html](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323981304579079720375700820.html)

Friendship in Marriage. Become better friends as husband and wife. You know the pay off when the friend you saw at breakfast is the same friend you can't wait to see when you come home at night. This friendship, more than any other, is loyal and lasting. And though we do sometimes take it for granted, we wouldn't trade it for anything. (by Dr. Leslie Parrott with Dr. Les Parrott, Focus on the Family's Thriving Family Magazine)

http://www.thrivingfamily.com/Features/Magazine/2011/friendship-in-marriage.aspx?utm_source=nl_focusenews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=160310&refcd=160310

What Makes Us Happy, Revisited. In June 2009, *The Atlantic* published a cover story on the Grant Study, one of the longest-running longitudinal studies of human development. The project, which began in 1938, has followed 268 men for 75 years, measuring an astonishing range of psychological, anthropological, and physical traits – from personality type to IQ to drinking habits to family relationships – in an effort to determine what factors contribute most strongly to human flourishing. A recent book *Triumphs of Experience* provides a summation of the insights the study has yielded. (Scott Stossel, *The Atlantic*) <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/05/thanks-mom/309287>

LEGISLATION

Florida Lawmakers Introduce Marriage Education Bills Legislators filed bills last week that, if passed, would create a Marriage Education Handbook designed to help strengthen relationships between couples. (by Bethany Monk, Focus on the Family's Citizen [Lwww.citizenlink.com/2013/03/06/take-action-florida-lawmakers-introduce-marriage-education-bills](http://www.citizenlink.com/2013/03/06/take-action-florida-lawmakers-introduce-marriage-education-bills))

7 Warning Signs Your Marriage is in Trouble Get help when things start going downhill. Nip things in the bud. [And if you're wondering how to know when your marriage is headed for trouble, read on. \(Michelle Weiner Davis, Divorce Busting blog\) http://www.divorcebusting.com/blog/7-warning-signs-your-marriage-is-in-trouble](http://www.divorcebusting.com/blog/7-warning-signs-your-marriage-is-in-trouble)

Divorce Reform Moving in Three States. Mike McManus predicts some states will pass Divorce Reform next year. It's about time! (By Mike McManus, Ethics and Religion Column) <http://ethicsandreligion.com/columns/2013/C1658.htm>

MARRIAGE ENCOURAGEMENT

A Child-Centered Life What to do when your world revolves around your kids. (Jill Savage, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/child-centered-life.html?paging=off>

Alone Together How does the one stated goal of marriage, God's desire to alleviate a person's aloneness, fail to come true for so many husbands and wives? (Tim Gardner, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/7.48.html?paging=off>

A man's top 5 reasons to grow up and get married. Whether you're young old, male, female, marriage (when done correctly) will make your life, and this country better off. The facts are undeniable. (By Steven Crowder, FoxNews.com) <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/01/26/man-top-5-reasons-to-grow-up-and-get-married>

Branded! Branding creates a relationship with the marketplace. Because no matter what "business" it turns out you're in or who your "marketplace" is—be it a particular community in need, your church family, or your actual family—serving together in a way only the two of you can creates a better relationship with each other! And anything that does that is good business. (Caryn Rivadeneira, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2008/september/branded.html?paging=off>

Change Your Expectations What about you? Where have you realized that you have unrealistic expectations that need to change to realistic expectations? (Jill Savage, *The Go-To Mom* blog) <http://www.jillsavage.org/?p=5366>

Couple Time Marriage is not a "done deal" at the altar, followed by happily ever after. It's a continuous, daily "I do." (Tammy Darling, Today's Christian Woman) www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/march/couple-time.html?paging=off

Creative Ways to Make Friends As a Couple. When we were newlyweds, Dave and I prayed specifically asking God to bless us with Christian "couple" friends. God answered beyond our wildest expectations and He continues blessing us with new friends. (Janet Thompson, SouthernGospel.com) <http://www.southerngospel.com/Family/Marriage/11700331>

Don't Let Retirement Stress Marriage: Plan to be busy. Most couples don't prepare well psychologically for retirement. (Rodney Brooks, USA Today) www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/brooks/2013/06/17/retire-psychological-family-stress/2424623

Equipping Couples for Lifelong Love Bill and Geri Masuzzo are committed to helping engaged couples learn how to be married. (by Mary May Larmoyeux, FamilyLife) www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/engagements-and-weddings/equipping-couples-for-lifelong-love#.UT5TaTdaaw

Five Marriage "Rules" Every Couple Should Break – Sometimes. Some surprising advice from experienced spouses. (by Karen O'Connor, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/five-marriage-rules-every-couple-should-break.html?paging=off>

For the love of a good marriage We must promote long-term relationships in the black community (James E. Causey, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel) <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/for-the-love-of-a-good-marriage-688v2q6-196580201.html>

How Forgiveness Can Restore Romance in Your Marriage. Like many Christians, Herbert and Zelmyra Fisher said they tried to please God and each other in their marriage. But they acknowledged times when they fell short, just as everyone does in this fallen world. In fact, since the Fishers were married for 86 years – from 1924 until Herbert's death in 2012 – they had more time dealing with the daily challenges of marriage than anyone else on Earth. The Guinness Book of World Records declared the Fishers the world's longest living couple in 2010. That same year, this North Carolina couple reached out on Valentine's Day via the social media site Twitter to answer the public's questions about how they maintained a romantic marriage for so long. (by Whitney Hopley, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.kfax.com/marriage/11699975>

4 Reasons Being Happily Married Could Make You A Better CEO. Leading a company takes vision and a major commitment, not unlike marriage--and being happily married translates very well into the boardroom. (by Steve Cooper, Forbes Magazine) <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevecooper/2013/07/31/4-reasons-being-happily-married-could-make-you-a-better-ceo>

40 Lessons from 40 Years of Marriage. After six children, 19 grandchildren, and decades of married life, I've learned some things. I think of them as 40 lessons from 40 years of marriage...and family...and life. (by Dennis Rainey, FamilyLife) [40 Lessons from 40 Years of Marriage \(Entire List\)](#)

How To Help A Troubled Marriage. Our work with thousands of marriages in crisis provides us with insight that you can use. (Joe Beam, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/divorce-and-remarriage/how-to-help-a-troubled-marriage.html?ps=0>

How to Love A Husband Loving a husband might sound easy, and in a way, it is. Once you learn how. The hard part is to keep it up. (Prairie Princess, hubpages.com) <http://prairieprincess.hubpages.com/hub/How-to-love-husbands>

Marriage Is for Holiness, Not Just Happiness. It's not that God doesn't want our marriages to bring us deep satisfaction and happiness, it's just that marriage is bursting with opportunities for deeper spiritual growth—opportunities we may be missing if we're not asking all the right questions. (By Paul and Halee Scott, Marriage Partnership) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/february/marriage-is-for-holiness-not-just-happiness.html?paging=off>

"One Another" How 12 New Testament verses transformed our marriage. (Tammy Darling, Today's Christian Woman) http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/one-another.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=176848501&utm_campaign=2013

Put a Stop to 'Do I Look Fat?' Betsy and Jarom Schow agree that the biggest problem they've faced in 12 years of marriage isn't money, sex or parenting. It's weight. (By Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323940004578255722852474856.html?mod=WSJ_hps_MLDDLE_Video_Third

7 Things Pastors' Wives Wish They Had Been Told Results from a survey of pastor wives. (Thom S. Rainer, Baptist Press, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/women/7-things-pastors-wives-wish-they-had-been-told.html>

Small Acts, Big Love People who put their mates' needs first make themselves happier too! (By Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal) [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323696404578297942503592524.html](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323696404578297942503592524.html?mod=WSJ_hps_sections_li_festyle)

10 Questions Every Husband Should Ask His Wife Annually. An annual exercise to listen to your wife's words and hear from her heart. One year Tom Elliff decided to elevate the discussion and, in the process, open himself up in a way few husbands ever do. He developed his list of questions over a few months, basing them on issues he knew were of concern to Jeannie, and then sprung them on her at breakfast one morning during a retreat in the Rockies. (by Dennis Rainey, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/staying-married/husbands/10-questions-to-ask-your-wife-every-year#.Udr7VNj3TAk>

The Power of Forgiveness in Marriage. When we let go of wrongs, we loosen Satan's grasp on our relationships. (Domeniek L. Harris, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/april/power-of-forgiveness-in-marriage.html>

Things Don't Fall Apart. We Do. We either make things better by our behavior, or we make them worse. So, let's get busy making them better. (Dr David Hawkins, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/doctor-david/things-don-t-fall-apart-we-do.html>

What I Find Most Attractive about Your Husband It's the one thing I like best about a man. (Shari Popejoy, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/january/what-i-find-most-attractive-about-your-husband.html>

How to Keep Having Fun Together in Marriage. Eating dinner a few tables away from mine on a restaurant patio in Florence, Italy, a senior citizen couple enjoyed their meal together. They smiled, laughed, gazed into each other's eyes, and even held hands in between using their hands to eat. They seemed as happy as newlyweds, but after talking with them briefly on my way out of the restaurant, I was shocked to discover that they'd been married for several decades. (by Whitney Hopler, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/how-to-keep-having-fun-together-in-marriage.html>

How to Use Conflict to Grow Closer in Your Marriage. A report on the practical applications of Drs Les and Leslie Parrot's recent book, The Good Fight: How Conflict Can Bring You Closer. (by Whitney Hopler, Crosswalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/engagement-newlyweds/how-to-use-conflict-to-grow-closer-in-your-marriage.html?ps=0>

I Didn't Love My Wife When We Got Married. I'm a ridiculous, emotional, over-sentimental sap. I guess that's why I told my wife I loved her on our second date. No, love isn't an emotion or even a noun. It's a verb. Better defined as giving. As putting someone else's needs above your own. (by Elad Nehorai, Huffington Post) www.huffingtonpost.com/elad-nehorai/i-didnt-love-my-wife_b_3908956.html

Is it a Sin to Marry a Divorced Person? The woman I love left her ex-husband due to battery, not adultery. I've read several passages in the Bible where our Lord Jesus Christ condemns marrying a divorcee. (By Kris Swiatocho and Cliff Young, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/is-it-a-sin-to-marry-a-divorced-person.html?ps=0>

Keeping Marriage Going Strong Into Your Golden Years. The trend of long-married couples calling it quits has been growing. However, there are some steps couples can take to keep their relationships going strong. (from (Florence, AL) Courier Journal) http://www.courierjournal.net/community/article_029cb0ac-0f2e-11e3-9b48-001a4bcf887a.html

Make the Most of Mid-Life Marriage. It will take time to be your husband's girlfriend. He'll need time for you to listen to his heart, to be his sounding board, to be his date and his sexual playmate. One day over lunch, Karen said to me, "Pam, it takes a lot of time to be your husband's girlfriend. I have to shave my legs every day!" (by Pam and Bill Farrel, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/make-the-most-of-mid-life-marriage.html>

Marriage Advice: Sharing a Hobby Is Good for Your Relationship. Each Partner Has to Work to the Goal of Doing This Activity More Than Once Together. (By Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324063304578523151798382178.html?mod=WSJ_hps_sections_li_festyle

Marriages Are Like Snowflakes. Relationships are as unique as the people in them. I still enjoy reading books and articles about marriage, but now I keep them in perspective. Instead of comparing my marriage to someone's latest theory, I remind myself that my husband and I were both uniquely designed by God and that our marriage isn't a statistic; it's a gift. Today, I don't seek to make my marriage "perfect"; I try to make it a place of grace, a model of God's love, a genuinely good marriage. (by Alexandria Lopez, Marriage Partnership0 http://www.todaychristianwoman.com/articles/2013/august/marriages-are-like-snowflakes.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=200533973&utm_campaign=2013)

Riding the Waves of Life ... Together Turns out marriage and kayaking the Na Pali Coast have a lot in common. (by Jesse and Stephanie Florea, Today's Christian Woman)

Sex: God's Got an Opinion. Everyone's got an opinion about sex – your mother, your hairdresser, your friends, and we're sure your husband does too. But did you know that God also has an opinion...a definite, distinct perspective? does that surprise you? Where is God's opinion about sex expressed? (Linda Dillow & Dr. Juli Slattery, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/sex-god-s-got-an-opinion.html>

The Importance of Mutual Respect . In fact, a relationship without mutual respect will be dysfunctional in some way. (by David B. Hawkins, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/doctor-david/the-importance-of-mutual-respect.html>

Top Ten Ways to Make Your Husband Happy. "Our role is not to figure out how to fix our spouse. Our role is: How do we reflect Christ in the marriage?" (by Arlene Pellicane, CrossWalk.com)

Top Ten Ways to Make Your Wife Happy. Although the mystery between men and women is sure to continue, here are ten proven activities to make your wife happy. (by Arlene Pellicane, CrossWalk.com)

Why Marriage Can Be Good for Your Health. A 2006 study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community found that, compared with married people, people who are widowed, are divorced/separated or have never married are more likely to die earlier. (Buffalo (MO) Reflex) http://buffaloreflex.com/living_better/why-marriage-can-be-good-for-your-health/article_90d433db-9bfb-555f-8032-36cb28b33fa3.html

30 Conversation Starters for Couples. Yesterday I had a friend tell me she sometimes runs out of things to talk about to her man. That got me to thinking, wouldn't it be nice if someone made a list of conversation starters that could be used by a husband and wife for a whole month? Which then got me to thinking, well, dang ... I'm a writer. (by Tracey Eyster, MomLifeToday.com) <http://momlifetoday.com/2012/08/30-conversation-starters-for-couples/>

Couple's marriage skits go viral on YouTube channel, 'Modern Marriage Moments'. Brandon and Stephanie Matias created their own YouTube channel, "Modern Marriage Moments" where they act out slightly exaggerated scenes many couples find themselves in. After four years of marriage, Brandon and Stephanie Matias wouldn't consider themselves marriage "experts," but they have learned how to laugh through the hard times which has been a theme to their viral YouTube skits. "One of the goals is to show that even though we go through these moments, which everybody does, that there's still hope and that there's still a way to stay together and work it out." (By Sarah Petersen, Deseret News) <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865590898/Couples-marriage-skits-go-viral-on-YouTube-channel-Modern-Marriage-Moments.html?pg=all>

Eating Salt Together: The Real Life of a Home. We don't need the latest study to show us that we are losing the ability to live in communion, even with those closest to us. And not only does this problem start in our homes, it grows there. Home—the very word should resonate with feelings of warmth, belonging, togetherness. It should be the most reliable place of real personal intimacy, the surest antidote to the great bane of human existence: loneliness. But more and more, it is not. (by John A. Cuddeback, Institute for Family Studies blog) <http://family-studies.org/eating-salt-together-the-real-life-of-a-home/>

Friends Help Friends Stay Happily Married. I need girlfriends who will look out for my marriage. Friends who will be vigilant against bad attitudes, harsh words or unkind treatment... that I unleash on my husband. Friends who won't just "allow" me to put my husband before them, but who actually encourage me to do so. (by Mary Osborne, her iBelieve.com blog) <http://www.ibelieve.com/blogs/marie-osborne/friends-help-friends-stay-happily-married.html>

Fun in Marriage? Put on your calendar 2 hours in the next week for time alone with your husband. Write it in ink not pencil. Of course you don't have time for this. But you can't afford *not* to do this. Plan something crazy and fun. (by Susan Yates, MomLifeToday.com) <http://momlifetoday.com/2011/11/fun-in-marriage/>

How building a happy marriage can lead to healthier, longer life. When it comes to how your relationships can affect your health, Lund said an unhappy marriage increases your likelihood of getting sick by about 35 percent and you can even shorten your lifespan by about four years. (by Caitlin Murphy, Seattle KING 5)
www.king5.com/health/How-building-a-happy-marriage-can-lead-to-healthier-longer-life-233863071.html

Norway's mission reposition: state says date nights key to good marriage. Oslo government channels Cupid and Barry White and says parents must make time to be lovers too, as divorce rate rises. Divorce rates are at 40% in Norway, with those aged 40 to 44 most likely to split from their partners. (by Helen Russell, The Guardian, Oct 29, 2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/29/norway-state-date-nights-marriage-lovers>

Ways to Romance Your Spouse in the New Year. Holidays can provide that extra time for romance most couples desperately needed in today's fast paced, booked up schedules. Consider how you might weave a little romance into your marriage over Christmas or New Year's. (by Pam and Bill Farrel, CrossWalk.com)
<http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/ways-to-romance-your-spouse-in-the-new-year.html>

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

A Mother, a Son and a Wife Research shows mothers have greater anxiety over their sons marrying than when their daughters marry, and it could be a source of tension for newlyweds. (Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal)
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324787004578495062128171822.html?mod=ITP_personaljournal_0

Before You Say "I Do" Premarital Questions Before you say "I do," you need to make sure you know your potential mate well. Here are some questions to get you started. The answers can help you determine in what areas you mesh, and what areas are "red flags." (By Family First Staff, Family Minute by Mark Merrill)
<http://www.familyminute.com/articles/family-life/singles/before-you-say-i-do-premarital-questions>

Choosing a Life Partner The biggest decision you'll make outside of choosing to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. (by Ron Mehl, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/choosing-a-life-partner#.Ubpy5diDlwA>

Don't Waste Money on Your Wedding! A couple will still be just as married whether or not the guests go home with "Amanda 'n' Drake 4EVA" commemorative matchboxes or the bridal gown has a designer label. So how does a couple decide to save or splurge? Here's a little perspective from people who have taken that pricey stride down the aisle. (By Kat Kinsman, CNN) http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/13/living/matrimony-biggest-money-waste/index.html?sr=sharebar_twitter

Eat, Pray, Love – and Marry People's expectations for their spouses changed drastically and dangerously. With every generation over the last one hundred years, people have escalated their expectations. (Elizabeth Gilbert, Mindful.org) www.mindful.org/in-love-and-relationships/intimate-relationships/eat-pray-love%E2%80%94and-marry

Find a Man Today, Graduate Tomorrow Susan Patton told young women to look for a mate in college. Liberals went crazy. My mom said the same thing. (By Emily Esfahani Smith, Wall Street Journal)
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324100904578402550244371508.html?KEYWORDS=find+a+man+today+graduate+tomorrow#articleTabs%3Darticle>

How to Find a Good Deal on an Engagement Ring. Here are some tips from Eisinger and Anja Winikka, site editor at TheKnot.com, for saving on engagement rings (by Kate Rogers, FOXBusiness)

How Routines Protect Your Marriage Routines help you say "no" so you can better keep your priorities in line. Open communication stems from spending quality time together and trust is built when you protect your marriage in such a way. (By Samantha Krieger, Growthtrac.com) www.growthtrac.com/artman/publish/how-routines-protect-your-marriage-1474.php

How Values and Needs Play Out in Relationships. Why couples argue. It is best to think of human motivation as the assertion of core values, not as psychic energy. We are a species motivated to assert our values. (by Steven Reiss, Ph.D., Psychology Today)

Like, a Virgin? Christian courtship and the awkward question of sexual history. (Russell D. Moore, Touchstone Magazine) <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=24-03-016-v>

Love Is Not Enough: Important Considerations Before Marriage Allow me to suggest to you four broad areas to take a good look at before getting married. (by Deb Schwarz Hirschhorn, James Russell Lingerfelt blog)
<http://jamesrussellingerfelt.wordpress.com/2013/10/01/love-is-not-enough-important-considerations-before-marriage>

Not Your Soul Mate. Instead of looking for a "soul mate," singles should be looking to the Lord as they proceed toward marriage. Then they can have confidence in His leading as they choose the person they will love for the rest of their lives. (by Suzanne Hadley Gosselin, Boundless blog)
<http://community.focusonthefamily.com/b/boundless/archive/2013/07/25/not-your-soul-mate.aspx>

Premarital Wisdom: The Truth About Marriage How would your marriage be different if you had been handed an honest, comprehensive guide on what to expect after the wedding? (by Sheryl Paul, Huffington Post)
www.huffingtonpost.com/sheryl-paul/the-truth-about-marriage_b_2612866.html

Preparing Couples for Marriage and for Life A pastor of evangelism finds that using Preparing for Marriage allows me to connect with couples at a key time in their lives. (by Kirk Bane, FamilyLife)
www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/engagements-and-weddings/preparing-couples-for-marriage-and-for-life#.UT5SZTdtaw

Should I Stay or Should I Go? Five Predictors (and Five Not So Good Predictors) of Relationship Success. (by Benjamin Lee, Science of Relationships) <http://www.scienceofrelationships.com/home/2011/8/29/should-i-stay-or-should-i-go-five-predictors-and-five-not-so.html>

Study Finds First Year of Marriage Is Not the Happiest Couples often build up to their wedding day "as the best day of their life" and then find reality biting as they tote up their wedding bills and get back to work after the honeymoon. (For Your Marriage) <http://foryourmarriage.org/study-finds-first-year-of-marriage-is-not-the-happiest>

Study: Web dating = longer marriages. Marriages Forged on the Internet May Last Longer. (By Health day News, Oregon Faith Report) <http://oregonfaithreport.com/2013/06/study-web-dating-longer-marriages/>

The Case for Getting Married Young Marriage actually works best as a formative institution, not an institution you enter once you think you're fully formed. (by Karen Swallow Prior, Atlantic)
www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/03/the-case-for-getting-

Why Christian Marriage Matters. Three contemporary views of matrimony reduce the concept to less than what God intended. (Halee Gray Scott, Today's Christian Woman)
<http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/april/why-christian-marriage-matters.html?paging=off>

Heartbreakers get a bad rap in the marriage stakes. A problem arises when a low-frequency dater meets a high-frequency dater and doesn't know it. He or she can tell that the high-frequency dater is interested, but can't tell whether or not it is because that person is nearly always interested (an "easy lover") or similarly cautious and genuinely finds him or her extraordinary. (by Peter Martin, Canberra Times)
<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/heartbreakers-get-a-bad-rap-in-the-marriage-stakes-20131102-2wt5l.html>

What Makes a Woman Significant? What does a "godly woman" look like? How can a woman fulfill the eternal purpose for which God created her? Thankfully, the Word of God gives us the instructions we need. One of my favorite biblical role models is Mary of Nazareth. In her life I have found a wealth of wisdom for my own walk with God. Her story illustrates many of the characteristics of the kind of woman God uses to fulfill His redemptive purposes in our world. (by Nancy Leigh DeMoss, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/life-issues/relationships/women/what-makes-a-woman-significant#.UNJ5rKzHxc0>

MARRIAGE WEEK

MARRIAGE WEEK (Feb 7 - 14) Start Planning a Celebration for Your Church There are a several handouts at [Every Marriage Matters website](#).

MENTORING AND COACHING

Men Who Won't Grow Up. Husbands and fathers need to step up and take responsibility for raising the next generation. Boys growing up without fathers need men who will step into their lives and mentor them. And young men who refuse to grow up need peers and mentors who will exhort them to act like men. (by Dave Boehi, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/life-issues/relationships/men/men-who-wont-grow-up#.UfbUsqz3TAK>

MILITARY MARRIAGE

A Dual Tale of Love and Sacrifice Nothing says spring like a good love story -- and nothing says love like the life shared by Ian Ralston, a quadriplegic veteran of the war in Iraq, and Nicole Sanders. (By Cristina Corbin, FoxNews.com) <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/04/06/dual-tale-love-and-sacrifice/?intcmp=features>

MONEY

A marriage license isn't license to take on wedding debt. Every year I get questions about the high cost of weddings. Here are some that came up in a recent online chat. (By Michelle Singletary, Washington Post) http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/a-marriage-license-isnt-license-to-take-on-wedding-debt/2013/06/20/d98dcd9a-d82d-11e2-a9f2-42ee3912ae0e_story.html

Chart of the Week: Marriage Guards Children Against Poverty. As a Senator, Barack Obama was right—there are serious disadvantages to being raised without a father. (Sarah Jean Seman, Heritage Foundation) <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/07/14/chart-of-the-we>

Decline in marriage costly to society. Tying the knot leads to healthier families, of course, but it also has an economic benefit for the rest of us. (by Christian Schneider, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel) <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/decline-in-marriage-costly-to-society-b9912433z1-207950871.html>

5 Money Questions to Ask Before You Marry. You may think you're a perfect match, but one of the biggest compatibility tests is merging finances (By Geoff Williams, US News & World Report) <http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2013/06/04/5-money-questions-to-ask-before-you-marry>

Preserve Your Marriage by Making 5 Smart Money Decisions. Nearly two-thirds of married couples talk little or nothing about money before they say, "I do." (Megan Pacheco, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/preservie-your-marriage-by-making-5-smart-money-decisions.html?ps=0>

In our opinion: Stable marriage is the key to ending the cycle of poverty. The evidence is clear. Nothing can end the cycle of poverty quite like a stable marriage. So why isn't this a higher national priority? The decline of marriage in the United States has not been an equal-opportunity failure. College educated and affluent young people still tie the knot at the rate of about 84 percent. Among those with the least education, however, the rate is only about 48 percent. (Deseret News editorial) <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865589587/Marriage-and-the-poverty-cycle.html>

NEWS

A Conversation with Gary Chapman. Best-selling author Gary Chapman talks with us about his book, Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way. learn how to process anger in a positive way — that I could help a lot of couples. And that's really what I'm trying to do: provide practical ideas on how to handle anger in a positive way. (By Jim and Sheri Mueller, Growthtrac.com) <http://www.growthtrac.com/artman/publish/gary-chapman-anger-1182.php>

Finally! New York City to Tackle Unwed-mom Epidemic Seven out of 10 babies born in The Bronx in 2010 were born to unmarried parents. Robert Doar, Bloomberg's determined Human Resources commissioner, has a plan to confront many young people who believe "that somehow or other the government" will take care of them. The message will strive to be positive by getting potential parents "to consider the likelihood that their children will do well in school or succeed economically" if mom and dad are married. (By Michael Goodwin, New York Post) http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/final_city_to_tackle_unwed_mom_epidemic_PsyThip8sCdXvVBbTI6hdK

How to Live in a World Where Marriage Is in Decline. Public policy should catch up with the reality that fewer and fewer children are being raised in homes with two married parents. (by Philip Cohen, Atlantic) <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/06/how-to-live-in-a-world-where-marriage-is-in-decline/276476/>

Love for the long haul Will and Colene Norton say the secret to 73 years of 'compatibility' in marriage is God. (Susan Olasky, World Magazine) http://www.worldmag.com/2013/02/love_for_the_long_haul

Recent marriages are lasting longer. A chart showing percent of the married women attaining their 10 and 20 year anniversaries. (familyfacts.org) <http://familyfacts.org/charts/160/recent-marriages-are-lasting-longer>

The Decline of Marriage and the Rise of Unwed Mothers: An Economic Mystery The real question here isn't "Why so many babies?" It's "Why so few marriages?" And we have an answer. (By Derek Thompson, Atlantic) <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/201>

The Marriage Movement Creating a renewed marriage culture by strengthening our commitment to marriage. ([Beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com/Love-Family/Relationships/Marriage/The-Marriage-Movement.aspx)) www.beliefnet.com/Love-Family/Relationships/Marriage/The-Marriage-Movement.aspx

The Social Costs of Pornography. Pornography is ubiquitous in the American culture – a silent killer of millions of marriages. This week Dr. Patrick Fagan of the Family Research Council delivered a milestone address and PowerPoint presentation to expose porn's harm to the individual, the family and the culture. Fagan warns: "Young men who become addicted should not marry until that addiction is cleared up. Similarly, no woman should ever marry a man addicted to pornography." (By Mike McManus, Religion and Ethics Column) <http://ethicsandreligion.com/columns/2013/C1664.htm>

OTHER MARITAL INITIATIVES

OK Policy Roundtable: Should the State of Oklahoma be Promoting Marriage? One theory states that the best remedy for lower-income individuals attempting to juggle work and child care responsibilities is a two-parent family. (by Gene Perry and Kate Richey, Oklahoma Policy Institute blog)

PARENTING / YOUTH MINISTRY

Boys Will be Boys - Stepping Up to Become Men. One of the biggest needs in our generation is for men to step into the lives of boys to train them, equip them, and cheer them on to grow up as they begin the process of "manning up." (by Dennis Rainey, [FamilyLife's Stepping Up blog](#))

Establishing Dating Guidelines for Your Teen. For us, dating or courting is a small part of the overall process of determining God's will for discovering your life partner in marriage. (by Dennis and Barbara Rainey, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/parenting/ages-and-stages/teens/establishing-dating-guidelines-for-your-teen#.UbdSGNg2yEY>

Five of the Best Gifts You Can Give Your Children. What parent doesn't want to give good gifts to their kids? But what kind of gifts should they choose? (by Rebecca Barlow Jordan, [CrossWalk.com](#))

Marriage Makes Fiscal Sense. Parents should personally communicate to their children the social and personal costs of unwed parenting – from economic hardships that can occur to the difficulty of raising a child alone. The path to prosperity requires a robust marriage culture – it matters for both individuals and for America. (Andrew T. Walker, [Heritage Foundation's blog The Foundry](#)) <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/02/12/marriage-makes-fiscal-sense>

Parent's Influence on Adolescents' Sexual Behavior. Parents' marital status, their disapproval of and discussion with teens about the standards of behavior and the social and moral consequence of teen sexual activity as well as parental monitoring all appear to impact teens' decisions to engage in sexual activity. (From FamilyFacts.org of [Heritage Foundation](#)) <http://familyfacts.org/briefs/42/parents-influence-on-adolescents-sexual-behavior>

Parents Urged to Intervene in Teens' Online Life. Most parents are aware of the online excesses that school kids are indulging in on social networking sites like Facebook, but many are shocked when they find it in their local school or their own home. ([William West, Mercator.net](#))

Sexual Iconoclasm Christian honesty about the harm of fornication. Marriage seems to solve the sin problem of "premarital sex." But the fornicator now married, unlike the repentant adulterer now caught, often doesn't see the ongoing nature of his problem. (Russell D. Moore, Touch Stone Magazine) <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=26-01-020-v>

Some Basic Facts About the High School Class of 2013, from a Child Trends report. (by Dr Scott Stanley, [Sliding vs Deciding blog](#)) <http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/2013/06/some-basic-facts-about-high-school.html>

The Power of Talking to Your Baby. The greater the number of words children heard from their parents or caregivers before they were 3, the higher their IQ and the better they did in school. TV talk not only didn't help, it was detrimental. (Tina Rosenberg, New York Times, Apr 10, 2013) <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/10/the-power-of-talking-to-your-baby>

Traditional Fatherhood Still Essential. When advocating for traditional family life, conservatives need to remember that a two-parent household is not all that's needed. As Wilcox demonstrates, children need a two-parent household in which both mother and father are engaged with and committed to their children and to each other. (By Claire Healey, Spectator) <http://spectator.org/blog/2013/07/31/traditional-fatherhood-still-e>

Walking into a New Covenant. How preparations for parenthood have changed our marriage. (Ann Swindell, Marriage Partnership) <http://www.todaychristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/walking-into-new-covenant.html?paging=off>

When Your Children Have Mental Illness. Keeping your stressed marriage healthy. (Diane Ramirez, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/may/when-your-children-have-mental-illness.html?paging=off>

Who's Your # 1 Priority – Your Spouse or Kids? When TV personality Giuliana Rancic said she puts her marriage first over motherhood her comments made headlines across the nation. It has spurred a debate over how couples should prioritize relationships. (Jim Daly, Focus on the Family) community.focusonthefamily.com/b/jim-daly/archive/2013/03/06/who-39-s-your-1-priority-your-spouse-or-kids.aspx

Women Breadwinners: A Holy Calling? Perspectives from couples who reflect a growing trend. (Keri Wyatt Kent, Today's Christian Woman) <http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/april/women-breadwinners-holy-calling.html?paging=off>

What Happens When Kids Grow Up On Unlimited Access To Pornography, an insightful 16 minute video <http://www.upworthy.com/this-is-what-happens-when-kids-grow-up-on-unlimited-access-to-pornography?c=ufb1>

10 Current Psychology Studies Every Parent Should Know. One of the many reasons parenting is an impossible job is that everyone is giving you advice, and much of it is rubbish. Frankly, it's amazing we've all made it this far. So, bucking the trend of random anecdote and superstition, here are ten recent psychology studies that every parent should know. Whether parents are happier than non-parents, why siblings are so different, the perils of discipline, bedtimes, TV and more... (by Jeremy Dean, PsyBlog) www.spring.org.uk/2013/11/10-current-psychology-studies-every-parent-should-know.php#utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+PsychologyBlog+%28PsyBlog%29

America's Marriage Problem is Incompetence. Until the last century, marriage was not an endeavor, but an institution. For better or worse, that institution provided the foundation for American society to go about its business of being productive and raising new generations that would be even better able to enjoy opportunities for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. (By Seth Eisenberg, FatherhoodChannel.com) <http://fatherhoodchannel.com/2013/10/31/americas-marriage-problem-is-incompetence-031/>

Broken homes, broken boys. More needs to be done to help the sons of single moms because they tend to do worse than the daughters. Researchers found that among boys they studied, the ones without fathers were more likely to be incarcerated, but they also found that those who lived with stepfathers were at even higher risk of incarceration than the single-mom cohort. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/commentary/la-oe-hymowitz-boys-and-divorce-20131031,0,7964378.story#axzz2jJAQEEAv>

Five of the Best Gifts You Can Give Your Children. What parent doesn't want to give good gifts to their kids? But what kind of gifts should they choose? Here are five of the best gifts you can give your children. (Rebecca Barlow Jordan, CrossWalk.com) http://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/kids/five-of-the-best-gifts-you-can-give-your-children.html?utm_source=Crosswalk&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=121812&ps=0

PARTING WORDS

Childbearing and Marriage. Bringing the relationship between childbearing and marriage back into sync among today's twentysomethings will not be an easy task. Policy makers, including religious leaders, and the shapers of our popular culture need to be brought into a meaningful conversation on ways the institutions they represent can renew the terms of relationships, marriage, and parenthood. - [The report, Knot Yet, authored by The National Marriage Project.](#)

Divorce Among Couples of Faith. For people who really do take their faith seriously, there is a significant drop in risk of divorce. What they mean by that is—and it's not just Christians—but people who go to church or religious services, not every Sunday but more Sundays out of the month than not, read religious texts together, the Bible, pray together—their risk of divorce is dramatically lower than people in the general population. We need to know that faith really does make a difference in our lives and in relationships. – Glenn Stanton, Focus on the Family

DID YOU KNOW? Signs of Imbalance with Facebook: **1.** You lose sleep over Facebook. **2.** You spend more than one hour on Facebook. **3.** You become obsessed with old loves. **4.** You ignore work in favor of Facebook. **5.** Getting off Facebook leaves you in a cold sweat. **by Jason and Kelli Krafsky, from their book: Facebook and Your Marriage.**

Children of Divorce More Likely to Become Smokers Researchers found that people whose parents had divorced when they were children were at a significantly increased risk of initiating smoking. (By Lindsay Abrams, [The Atlantic](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/study-children-of-divorce-more-likely-to-become-smokers/274043)) www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/study-children-of-divorce-more-likely-to-become-smokers/274043

College fails to lower divorce for black women A college education is linked to lower divorce rates for white women, but black women are not getting the same benefit. (Steve Manas, Rutgers University) www.futurity.org/top-stories/college-fails-to-lower-divorce-rates-for-black-women

Early sex leads to poorer relationship quality Researchers have discovered that among low - to middle-income subjects, the speed of entry into a sexual relationship was quite fast - many began having sex within a month of dating. They also discovered that this speed seems to be damaging to couples' relationship satisfaction. (by Nicole King, Mercator.net)

Family Environment and Children's Prospects for Marriage. Children from intact families are more likely to have positive attitudes toward marriage and higher expectations for their own marriages. In adulthood, they are less likely to form a high-risk marriage, to undergo divorce, or to cohabit, and they tend to enjoy a higher quality of marriage. (by FamilyFacts.org of Heritage Foundation) <http://familyfacts.org/briefs/39/family-environment-and-childrens-prospects-for-marriage>

Funny Church Signs. Enjoy! www.beliefnet.com/iLoveJesus/Features/Worlds-Best-Church-Signs.aspx

Hang in There, It'll Get Better. 86 percent of unhappily married people who stick it out find that, five years later, their marriages are happier, according to an analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households. Most say they've become very happy indeed. In fact, nearly three-fifths of those who said their marriage was unhappy in the late '80s and who stay married, rated this same marriage as either "very happy" or "quite happy" when interviewed again in the late 90's.

Here's a secret – marriage is America's most effective anti-poverty program. In spite of other disagreements, there is one aspect about marriage that both the left and the right can find to agree on. Marriage is a valuable anti-poverty program. five reasons why we need to start a movement to re-value and strengthen marriage are provided. (By Sheila Weber, FoxNews.com) www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/02/13/why-marriage-is-best-anti-poverty-program

How Therapy Can Be Hazardous to Your Marital Health. I take no joy in being a whistle blower, but it's time. There are a lot of problems out there with the practice of therapy. (William J. Doherty, PhD, Family Social Science Department, University of Minnesota, 1999 Smart Marriages Conference) <http://www.smartmarriages.com/hazardous.html>

Husbands Who Love Their Wives as Christ Loved the Church. A few years ago, a friend shared with me the sacrificial love her husband had shown her early in their marriage as they encountered the effects of her sexual abuse as a child on their own sexual relationship in marriage. That story reminds me much of Ephesians 5's exhortations of sacrificial love for husbands toward their wives. (by Wendy Alsup, Practical Theology for Women) <http://www.theologyforwomen.org/2012/03/husbands-who-love-their-wives-as-christ.html>

Interesting Men start to wonder if [marriage is] going to work out when there are a lot of hassles and negatives with their mates. Women start to wonder if it's going to work out when there is the absence of positives with their mates. – Dr Scott Stanley

Memorable Proposal Stories. Readers of a FamilyLife newsletter respond with their creative proposals. (by Dave Boehi, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/memorable-proposal-stories-from-our-readers#.USvGTDfDmEU>

Nine facts about marriage and childbirth in the United States Helpful facts and charts to get your point across (By Ezra Klein, Washington Post) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/03/25/nine-facts-about-marriage-and-childbirth-in-the-uni>

On anniversaries, the wise husband always forgets the past -- but never the present.

Our homes are fishbowls disguised as houses. When the spiritual tide is out, all the little tadpoles want to swim in their own tide pools. But when the spiritual tide is in, they all swim harmoniously together as though somebody other than themselves were orchestrating every move. – Neil T. Anderson in his book *The Christ Centered Marriage*

Perfection Someone once said that a perfectionist is a person who takes great pains and passes them on to others. – Kathy Collard Miller

Preschool debate obscures core problem 'Fragile families' harm children's development. (The Editorial Board, USA Today)www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/02/20/universal-preschool-state-of-the-union/1934361

Relationship Beliefs Can Lead to Unrealistic Expectations of Romantic Partners. Even people in the happiest relationships tend to have some things that they wish they could change about their partners. But can a partner ever really change? (By Samantha Joel, Science of Relationships)
<http://www.scienceofrelationships.com/home/2013/2/18/relationship-beliefs-can-lead-to-unrealistic-expectations-of.html>

Repentance Christians are called to be experts in repentance. The most mature among us are not those who seem never to offend God and man, but those who know they are going to sin and who actively hunt their sin down, in part by engaging with their spouse or loved ones. - Owen Strachan

The Loneliness of the Empty Nest. Couples eagerly awaiting this day might be in for a surprise. In the sudden quiet may come the discovery that years on a treadmill - raising children, building careers -- have left them very different people than they were in their 20's or 30's. In short: They've woken up with a stranger. (by Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal)[Can Empty Nesters Still Have a Happy Marriage? - WSJ.com](http://www.wsj.com/articles/Can-Empty-Nesters-Still-Have-a-Happy-Marriage-1127777777)

The Thing About Sex. There is a call here for husbands to think about sex from a biblical perspective and to learn to express this to their wives. It truly is one of God's gifts to us. (Tim Challies, CrossWalk.com)
<http://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/challies/the-thing-about-sex.html>

Too many couples marry for better or for worse, but not for good.

20 Things You Can Say "No" To. in the spirit of creating space in your life for growth and happiness, I hereby give you permission to say "no" to anything that no longer serves you and your family. Anything that is not truly in alignment with your values <http://www.theresaceniccola.com/conquering-overwhelm/twenty-things-you-can-say-no-to-now/>

Wedding Costs Two weeks ago I attended a \$100 a plate wedding, held in a fancy tent on a beautiful lake. Last weekend I attended a \$15 plate wedding, held in a state park storm shelter on a beautiful lake. You can spend a million or spend a pittance and still a wedding is the very same celebration of life and love a couple shares with family and friends. All the rest is just a difference in the price tag. – Anonymous

What's at stake? We believe that the strength of a nation depends upon the strength of its families. We've already seen the results of redefining the concept of marriage over the last few decades; do we want to continue experimenting? Are we better off morally and spiritually as a nation? Are our children better off emotionally with the weakening of the family unit? Can our nation survive the social re-engineering of its most basic unit, marriage? We are convinced that America's future will not be bright if we continue allowing gay marriage to undermine and redefine an institution God created. It's time to take a compassionate stand for the real thing. - Dennis Rainey and Bob Lepine

"The greatest threat facing the western world is not climate change or global warming," writes Kevin Andrews. "It is not the continuing financial crisis. Nor is it the threat of radical Islam. The greatest threat is within. It is the steady, but continuing breakdown of the essential structures of civil society – marriage, family and community." – Kevin Andrews, Member Australian Parliament

RESEARCH FINDINGS

For the richer, not the poorer. They might spout liberal sentiments but it's the affluent who are reaping the benefits of marriage. The tragedy of modern life is that the virtues that contribute to a happy life are increasingly limited by class and economics – certainly between whites and minority populations but also, as recent research has shown, among whites. It's not that upscale whites are intrinsically more virtuous; it's that the moral habits that give rise to a happy life are tied to stable families and larger cultural communities – things that increasingly exist only among the prosperous. (by Robert Hutchinson, Mercator.net)
www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/for_the_richer_not_the_poorer

Marriage inequality' is more important than income inequality. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) has released an interesting new study: Cohabitation and the Uneven Retreat from Marriage in the U.S., 1950-2010. It no surprise that the NBER finds cohabitation more commonplace in America today than in 1950. But the statistics show a revealing difference between socio-economic classes. (By Phil Lawler, CatholicCulture.org)
<http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/otn.cfm?id=995>

Race and ethnicity, education and economics are linked to how well American families fare. After a period of relative calm during the 1990s, rapid changes in American families began anew during the 2000s, a new analysis suggests. Young people delayed marr www.news-medical.net/news/20130911/Race-and-ethnicity-education-and-economics-are-linked-to-how-well-American-families-fare.aspx

The New Unmarried Moms. We've reduced teen pregnancy, but now childbearing outside wedlock is exploding among 20-somethings. (By Kay Hymowitz, W. Bradford Wilcox and Kelleen Kaye, Wall Street Journal) <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323826704578356494206134184.html>

The Perils of Giving Advice. Even when well intentioned, it hurts marital satisfaction for the giver and receiver. (By Elizabeth Bernstein, Wall Street Journal) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324637504578565350148621048.html?mod=ITP_personaljournal_0

Want to Draw Your Husband Closer? Here's How. Do you have times when you feel as if you walk alone in your marriage? Are there things you don't understand about your man that drives a wedge between the two of you? (Cindi McMenamin, CrossWalk.com) www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/want-to-draw-your-husband-closer-here-s-how.html

RESOURCES TO PASS ALONG

Are You Ready for a Deep Dive in Your Marriage? Make sure you are prepared for the journey of a lifetime. God has some amazing things in store for you and your spouse! (By Mark Pyatt, GrowthTrac.com) <http://www.growthtrac.com/artman/publish/are-you-ready-for-deep-dive-in-your-marriage-1488.php>

Building a Divorce-Proof Marriage Tips from what we learned – the hard way. (Tammy Darling, Today's Christian Woman) http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2013/january/building-divorce-proof-marriage.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=149748560&utm_campaign=2013

Counting the Cost of Family Failure The continuing upward movement of the cost of family failure doesn't even begin to take into account the often intense pain and suffering felt by those experiencing family failure. ((UK) [Relationships Foundation](http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/Web/News/News.aspx?news=150&RedirectUrl=/Web/default.aspx)) www.relationshipsfoundation.org/Web/News/News.aspx?news=150&RedirectUrl=/Web/default.aspx

Good Communication Begins With Active Listening. The No. 1 killer of good communication is lack of listening skills. (by Judge James E. Sheridan, (Ft Wayne, IN) [News-Sentinel](http://www.news-sentinel.com))

Healing From Your Sexual Past. It's Christ's opinion alone that matters. And He finds us loveable. Sometimes that's hard to believe if everyone in our life has wanted us for their own selfish motives. But you can trust God. (by [Barbara Wilson, FamilyLife Canada blog](http://www.familylife.com))

How Do You Change a Bad Attitude? After a Christmas storm knocked out electricity, my biggest struggle was dealing with a sour mood. (Also, click on the follow-up article at the end.) (by Dave Boehi, FamilyLife) http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/archived-content/marriage-memo/how-do-you-change-a-bad-attitude#.URAAe_JX-EU

How to Choose a Good Marital Therapist. Not all couples therapy is created equal. Most therapists are well-meaning, but not always qualified to do marital therapy. That's why I want to offer some guidelines for you to consider should you seek professional help to improve your marriage. (by Michele Weiner-Davis, Psychology Today) <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/divorce-busting/200910/how-choose-good-marital-therapist>

Real Love: A Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13 That, my friends, is what real love is. (by David Sanford (Corban University), [CrossWalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com)) <http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/real-love-a-paraphrase-of-1-corinthians-13.html>

Ten Questions to Ask at the Start of a New Year. The beginning of a new year is an ideal time to stop, look up, and get our bearings. To that end, here are some questions to ask prayerfully. (by [Don Whitney, Center for Biblical Spirituality](http://www.centerforbiblical.com))

That Loving Feeling Takes a Lot of Work Dr. Sonya Lyubomirsky, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside, recommends strategies of making time to be together and talk, truly listening to each other, and expressing admiration and affection. (By Jane E. Brody, New York Times) <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/that-loving-feeling-takes-a-lot-of-work>

Understanding the Deeper Purposes of Sex. Sex is not an end in itself; it points to the deeper reality of the gospel. (by Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas, FamilyLife) [http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/understanding-the-deeper-purposes-of-sex](#)

Why Marrieds Tend to Be Richer: It's Complicated. Couples who get and stay married can have as much as four times the wealth of their single or divorced peers. (By Allison Linn, CNBC.com) <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100460142>

VALENTINE'S DAY FOCUS

Married to Mr. Unromantic But I've learned to appreciate his other wonderful qualities. I already have what's important in my life. God's given me a spouse whose practical side is a perfect balance to my emotional, creative side. Given a choice, I'd rather have a husband who's practically perfect than flowers, songs, and poems any day—and every day! (Judy Chaney, Today's Christian Woman)

http://www.todayschristianwoman.com/articles/2000/january/8.36.html?utm_source=marriage-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12324601&utm_content=150549715&utm_campaign=2013

Romancing Your Man It comes down to one simple principle – love your neighbor as you would want to be loved. (by Barbara Rainey, FamilyLife) http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/staying-married/romance-and-sex/romancing-your-man?utm_campaign=mm-20130121&utm_source=CON&utm_medium=email-n&utm_content=Link-Header-Trouble_reading#.UP3WTayQSEU

7 Tips For Being An Awesome Husband Even the greatest athlete benefits from coaching. Though I realize that husbands reading this likely are already awesome, I offer these tips as a marriage coach. (Joe Beam, CrossWalk.com) <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/relationships/7-tips-for-being-an-awesome-husband.html>

Thirty Ways to Love Your Lover Affirming your wife through even just three or four of these ideas will do wonders for your romance. (by Dennis Rainey, FamilyLife) <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/staying-married/romance-and-sex/30-ways-to-love-your-lover#.UP3XggyQSEU>

Tips for Writing a Notable Love Letter If you need inspiration, think of the way the writers of Song of Solomon felt as they read of their lovers' appreciation on paper. Is it getting warm in here? (by Janel Breitenstein, FamilyLife) http://www.familylife.com/contact-us/resources-support/~media/Files/FamilyLife/Products/simpleRomantic_love_letter_tips.pdf

THE STATE OF OUR UNIONS

The State of Our Unions monitors the current health of marriage and family life in America. Produced annually, it is a joint publication of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia and the Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values.

Included are the reports: The President's Marriage Agenda for the Forgotten Sixty Percent. Marriage and Relationship Education: A Promising Strategy for Strengthening Low-Incom, Vulnerable Families. Social Indicators of Marital Health and Well-Being.

Article discussing the STATE OF OUR UNIONS report:

['The President's Marriage Agenda': How to Reduce Suffering for Children and Strengthen Families \(by Lois M. Collins, Deseret News\)](#)

Article discussing the STATE OF OUR UNIONS report:

[Marriage Culture Called Key to Stable Middle Class \(by Cheryl Wetzstein, Washington Times\)](#)