

# Strengthening & Healing Marriage Relationships



## Scripture About Marriage and Love

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

“Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (Mark 10:9)

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

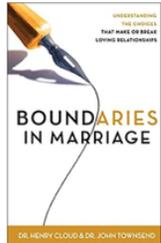
“Let marriage be held in honor among all.” (Hebrews 13:4)

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

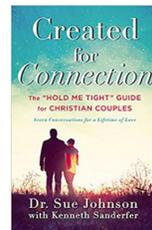
“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)

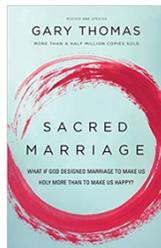
## Helpful Resources



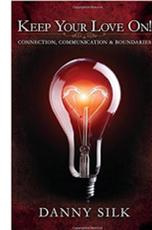
Henry Cloud & John Townsend  
*Boundaries in Marriage*



Sue Johnson & Kenneth Sanderfer  
*Created for Connection*



Gary Thomas  
*Sacred Marriage*



Danny Silk  
*Keeping Your Love On*



Gary Chapman  
*Loving Your Spouse  
When You Feel Like  
Walking Away: Positive  
Steps for Improving a  
Difficult Marriage*

**Marriage is a special relationship ordained by God in which two people make a lifelong covenant to love and care for one another.**

Most people enter marriage with a great sense of excitement and commitment. However, as time goes on, nearly all couples will acknowledge that marriage is hard work! It takes great commitment, sacrifice, patience and love to maintain a healthy relationship through the stress of life. In fact, half of all marriages dissolve and end in divorce. If your marriage is struggling, you are not alone and there are many resources to help strengthen and heal your relationship.



[www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage)



## Strengthening Marriage Relationships

**All marriage relationships need to be intentionally nurtured.** Just as a farmer cares for his crops, couples need to intentionally nurture their marriage by spending time together, learning to communicate and make decisions, enjoying physical and emotional intimacy, learning from more mature couples and seeking God together. A number of excellent books and resources offer guidance, information and practical suggestions for couples across different stages of their lives. These resources strengthen relationships and help couples grow together. The back of this handout provides information about these resources.

### *Improve Your Marriage By Learning More About Its Strengths and Weaknesses*

Marriage assessments provide opportunities for couples to answer questions and receive feedback about the strengths and challenges of their marriages.

The two most common marriage assessments are the **Focus on Marriage Assessment**, developed at Focus on the Family and based on materials originating with Dr. Greg and Erin Smalley, and the **Couple Checkup**, developed by Dr. David Olson and Dr. Peter Larson at PREPARE/ENRICH in Minnesota.

	<i>Couple Checkup</i>	<i>Focus On Marriage Assessment</i>
<i>Length</i>	<i>30 minutes to complete</i>	<i>10 minutes to complete</i>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>Dating, engaged or married couples; both partners need to participate</i>	<i>Married couples only; both partners complete assessment separately</i>
<i>Cost</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>	<i>Free</i>
<i>Relationship Areas Assessed</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Fifteen- to twenty-page report with results broken down into relational categories</i>	<i>Assessment results by category and Biblical resources that Focus on the Family has created to help husbands and wives grow in areas where their relationships need strengthening</i>
<i>Website</i>	<i><a href="http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/couple-checkup">www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/couple-checkup</a></i>	<i><a href="http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/promos/focus-on-marriage-assessment">www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/promos/focus-on-marriage-assessment</a></i>

## Healing Marriage Relationships

*“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12)*

**Sometimes a relationship needs more than just strengthening; it may also need healing.** An affair, one partner’s addiction or mental health struggle, a significant or unexpected loss, arguments that never seem to resolve or emotional distance that seems too great to overcome are types of situations that require more than just a book or resource. Often, couples need counseling and care to help them heal and shift relational patterns so they are able to begin growing closer to one another. For more significant marital struggles, it may be best to work with a professional counselor. The Charis website offers a list of professional Christian counselors in CT: [www.charisnetworkct.org](http://www.charisnetworkct.org). Pastors or other leaders at your church may also be able to offer care, support and mentoring to help when you are struggling.

## What About Domestic Violence?

**If you are in a relationship and have experienced abuse, it is very important that you seek help.** Abuse can be emotional (e.g. using mean or degrading language or manipulation), sexual (e.g. forcing you to engage in sexual acts you do not want to), physical (e.g. harming or threatening to harm you, your children or pets), or spiritual (e.g. manipulating spiritual truths to control your behavior). Abusive situations are often complex and require help from a counselor with professional training. Pastors and church leaders can also offer care, support and prayer. If you are not physically safe in your home, get to a safe place as quickly as possible. This may mean staying with a family member, friend or at a domestic violence shelter. Call the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s hotline at 888.774.2900 or the National Domestic Violence hotline at 1.800.799.SAFE for help connecting to resources or to find a domestic violence shelter.