**Ideas to Improve your Marriage (part 4)**

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.” Proverbs 18:22 (NIV)

I have heard many young people say the following. “I don’t want to get married. I don’t want to have the bad life that my parents had and to end up in divorce.” The high rate of broken marriages has weakened the image of marriage and family which were born in the heart of God.

Crises within marriages are leading many of them to fail, in many cases with much pain and sadness affecting the children who are the silent victims of divorce. These children grow in an environment of pain and sadness and develop a resistance to reliving those experiences. Although the fall in love and want to be together with a partner many end up living together without getting married to free themselves from the commitment of marriage because the idea of marriage has a bad connotation.

From the Christian perspective, living together outside of marriage hinders God’s blessing for marriage and family. Following are some ideas to grow and improve the marriage relationship:

1. **Maintain personal / individual space.** This means that although you are married, you can continue with your own hobbies and your own friendships as before marriage and new ones as your friendship circles will grow as a couple. You can continue to express your personalities without fear or trying to hide them.

Some people think that getting married means losing their individuality, that they must do everything as a couple to be more united. Therefore, they live this way in every aspect of the marriage. They think they should change when they get married, but while it is important to make some changes, it is important to keep in mind that the marriage relationship should not suppress either partner. In a marriage, it is crucial to grow and develop as a person and maintaining individual space is a part of that.

An equilibrium between the spheres of marriage and individuality should be maintained. When this is achieved, trust in the partnership grows, allowing the movement from the “I” to the “we.” This is personal and matrimonial maturity. The relationship is strengthened to the place where there will be an increase in happiness and security.

1. **Develop new expectations for the marriage.** Everyone has expectations for the marriage relationship when they get married. But when these expectations collide with the reality, difficulties and frustrations arise. Therefore, it is important to know that those expectations were created in the mind of each one in the partnership without considering the expectations, character, and personality of their spouse.

“I thought you were my friend who would tell me everything,” say some. But the reality is that the spouse has problems expressing themselves and talking. This example and many others show us that many expectations brought into the marriage cannot be fulfilled and that it will be necessary to face and resolve the differences in expectations in a logical, healthy way.

Both persons in the marriage should take their expectations to Christ, and He will help resolve the differences in a way that can lead to growth as spouses and parents. By allowing Christ to work in the marriage, everyone in the family to be happy.

May God help you in all you undertake today.

Doctor Miguel e Irene Garita  
Pastors of Family Care

Church of the Nazarene Mesoamerica Region