

Matt 18:19-20 NIV

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

"Our lives are actually composed not of several major events but of hundreds of small and apparently insignificant day to day decisions." Dr. Paul David Tripp

Ground Rule Areas for Newlyweds

It has been our observation that those married couples who either intentionally establish or accidentally stumble upon some *ground rules* in the early years of marriage, generally navigate life together more happily and successfully than those who don't. The following areas seem to be the ones that are most often the subject of some guide lines (sample ground rules are found on the following pages):

1. How to make day to day decisions especially those where the husband and wife differ in their opinions.
2. How to address their finances in regard to earning, saving, spending, and giving.
3. How to address key issues with the children especially related to their discipline and their activities.
4. How to balance work, family, friends, and recreation.
5. How best to communicate with one another --- the key here is *knowing and expressing clearly what one really wants*.
6. How to address sexual intimacy.
7. How to moderate the electronic mediums that can so readily control our lives (ie television, cell phones, computers, I Pads, email, face book).

It is our opinion that if a couple remembers the following 6 truths as they establish these ground rules, they have the greatest likelihood of developing a system that works.

*Most women want from their husbands: *attentiveness and kindness*. A woman is most motivated by *deep relationship* with others and especially her husband.

*Most men want from their wives: *respect and flirtation*. A man is most motivated by *frequent successes*.

Col 3:12-14 NIV

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 Peter 3:8-9 NIV

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Deciding How to Decide

(Go slow if you can!)

Over the years I have found that most married couples will benefit from coming to a firm conviction on how they will make future decisions on issues over which they disagree. The following steps have proven useful to Christian couples in helping them develop a consistent approach that fits with their understanding of the Scripture and their personalities.

Step #1 – Forgive each other for past hurts in this area --- *blame, bitterness, and regret* are the enemies of future progress.

Step #2 - Determine your understanding of Ephesians 5. The questions you are trying to answer are: “What is the primary role of the woman?” “What is the primary role of the man?” Your goal is to determine in advance who will “pull the trigger” when a final decision needs to be made.

Step #3 – When a decision needs to be made, the first party to know that fact must communicate it to their spouse. Both kindness and timeliness with this are helpful.

Step #4 – Do your best to help one another gather and understand the “material facts.” Who, what, where, when, why, and how are often great questions to answer.

Step #5 – Both parties need to state their opinions on the decision. Whoever *pulls the trigger* needs to make sure they have heard and understood the other party.

Step #6 – Either the husband or the wife has to make the final decision or they must determine to yield this decision to a third party. Whoever yields should give their submission with a cheerful heart and do their best with Christ’s help to support the final decision.

James 1:19-20 NIV

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

"For three things the world is sustained: For the study of scriptures (torah), for worshipping and serving God (avodah), and for deeds of loving kindness (gemilut hesed)." the Mishnah

So What May we Conclude in the Matter of Money?

(Balance, balance, balance!)

- 1. Don't worry about money - *it is not yours***
- 2. Work hard at everything you do - *it honors your Lord***
- 3. Plan well --- *just don't place your trust in your plan***
- 4. Don't waste**
- 5. Avoid debt like the plague**
- 6. Be honest with God and man**
- 7. Give generously - *God loves cheerful givers and honors their faith***
- 8. Live simply but have some fun to recharge your emotional battery**
- 9. Invest some money for the future support of you and your family**
- 10. Be content with what you have at the moment**
- 11. Trust God for both guidance and your necessities - *"for without faith it is impossible to please Him" Heb 11:6***

****Before making a purchase ask yourself, "Will this item or investment become a tool or an idol?"***

Luke 12:32-34 NIV

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

10 Key Kid Raising Principles

1. Enjoy your kids (at age 8 one half of your child's life with you is over).
2. Pick your battles, but always win the ones you pick (save your "no's for the big stuff).
3. Know your 3 A's and be: *authoritarian* from ages 0-12; *authoritative* from 12-18; and *advisorial* from 18-60). Be slow and thoughtful in dispensing discipline.
4. Become significant to your kids with *kind words* and *shared experiences* (Write them frequent letters of encouragement - Heb 3:13).
5. Teach them to *love God*, to *work* and to *express gratitude*.
6. Dad should be the primary disciplinarian (he must protect his wife from his kids). Determine not to make important decisions regarding the kids without consulting with the other!)
7. Don't own your kids' sin (They are likely "Christ likers" while under your roof).
8. Don't overemphasize activities like *sports* and *music*.
9. Ask your kids for forgiveness when you sin against them.
10. Love God and love your spouse.

Deut 6:4-9 (The Shema)

4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. 8 Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. NLT

**“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
Matt. 6:33**

God’s Hierarchy of Relationships

****Most people who find themselves in emotional distress are there because they have prioritized their lives differently than the way their Heavenly Father intended.***

God

(Your personal relationship with Him)

Josh. 22:5
2 Cor. 5:9-10

Your Spouse

Eph. 5:22-33
Col. 3:18-19

Your Kids

Deut. 6:4-9
Eph. 6:4

Your Parents & Siblings

Exodus 20:12
1 Timothy 5:8

Your Ministry

John 13:15
Gal. 6:2

Work Recreation Ext. Family Friends Activities

***Most men make Work #1 & Recreation #2; most women make Hubby #1 & The Kids #2.
The Result: emotional bombs are being constructed in the homes of millions of families.**

“The quality of your life will ultimately be measured by the quality of your personal relationships.” Ken Finney, Missionary

Keys to Effective Communication

Eph 4:25-27 NASB

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

James 1:19-20 NASB

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Precision - Over-inform the important people in your life (accurately supply them with all the pertinent info and with plenty of time for them to respond – don't assume you know what they think about a certain decision – even if you are correct, they will feel disrespected).

Exoneration - Forgive quickly and completely (resolve issues thoroughly and don't bring them up again -- start each day with a clean slate by honoring the magnificent forgiveness Jesus has given to you).

Affection – Always be kind, loving, self-less, and respectful with others – assume the best about their character and intentions (the devil loves it when you cut your own lines of communication by a mean-spirited phrase, gesture, or facial expression. Be careful not to place too much importance on the other person's first response to you. We all process our thoughts at different speeds).

Candor – Be honest, clear, and specific in your requests (tell the appropriate people what you want and when you want it).

Excellence – Be interested only in *great solutions* that honor God and not in obtaining *personal victories* (a complaint with a request is *hopeful* – a complaint without a request is *hopeless*).

**Remember, dialogues are usually more effective than monologues. If you have talked for 60 seconds, take a breath and let the other person get in a word or two.*

Pride is the enemy of good communication.

Follow Some Common Sense Principles Regarding God's Gift of Sex

1. Get plenty of rest
2. Put a "lock" on your bedroom door
3. Be pure and chaste with everyone but your spouse
4. Communicate (tell your sweetie what feels good)
5. Experiment (God is a God of infinite variety)
6. Look and smell your best
7. Be *kind* to one another *all* the time!
8. Don't withhold sexual intimacy from one another (and both parties should initiate sex regularly!)

1 Cor 7:1-6

Now about the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life. 2 But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. 3 The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. 4 The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. 5 So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control. NLT

9. Remember that women differ from men in 4 important areas:

Men want:

- a. visual stimulation
- b. control
- c. to be needed
- d. a snack after the festivities

Women want:

- a. touch
- b. safety
- c. to be wanted
- d. to be held

10. Enjoy Together a Good Book or Tape on Sex (I like Dr. Ed Wheat's book Intended for Pleasure and Sheet Music by Dr. Kevin Leman)

Song 4:10

*How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much more pleasing is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice! NIV*

Resource Management in God's Economy

Every follower of Jesus has three basic resources with which to serve His Lord and Savior:

our *time*, our material *wealth*, and our *talents*.

1 Cor 3:10-15 NASU 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

"Too Busy to Pray" from Destined for the Throne by Paul E. Billheimer

No angel was ever invited to share this high privilege. No archangel was ever invited into the throne room of the universe. Only redeemed humanity. And many of us are too busy—watching television, following sports, hunting and fishing, bathing and boating, engaging in farming or business, moonlighting, etc., etc. We are so busy with the cares and pleasures of this life, trying to keep up with the trend in new cars, new homes, new appliances, and new furniture that we do not have time to pray.

Someone has described a modern American as “a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway on credit card gas to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his Savings and Loan financed home with installment-purchased furniture.” May this not also be the description of many modern professed Christians? And may this not be one reason why modern Christians have so little time to pray?

Perhaps some may be thinking: Are we to have nothing at all for ourselves? The answer is NO. Christ is to be ALL and in all. You are bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20). “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31). If you can buy the new car, the new home, the new furniture, the new gadgets, and hold down two jobs, for the glory of God—well and good. But if we did not have to have such a high standard of living, would we not have more time to pray? If we were not so enamored of sports and entertainment, *television, internet, e-mailing, texting, and Face Book* would we not have more time to pray? We have more leisure than ever before—but less time to pray? We are not only cheating God and the world but we are cheating ourselves. By our failure to pray we are frustrating God's high purpose in the ages. We are robbing the world of God's best plan for it and we are limiting our rank in eternity.

Ezek 22:30 NIV "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."

