

The Meaning of Marriage
Tim & Kathy Keller
Unofficial Study Guide

[Buy The Meaning of Marriage at Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/meaning-marriage-book/dp/0316224657)

Page numbers are for the Kindle version. I think they should correspond with the paper version.

Introduction

1. Give four reasons why God devised marriage? [7]

Chapter One: The Secret of Marriage

1. What are some of your thoughts on the marriage statistics? What surprised you, worried you, encouraged you...? [13-18]

2. What's similar and what's different about the Catholic and Protestant perspectives on marriage? [19]

3. How did the Enlightenment change the view of marriage? [19]

4. What are the results of viewing "The Happy Marriage as the Me-Marriage?" [20-21]

5. What two factors are many young adults thinking of when they speak of "a compatible soul mate"? [22]

6. What do most men mean when they talk about "compatibility"? [22]

7. What's needed to conduct a "Me-Marriage"? [25]

8. What two reasons does Hauerwas give for why no two people are perfectly compatible? [32]

9. Comment: "If our views of marriage are too romantic and idealistic, we underestimate the influence of sin on human life. If they are too pessimistic and cynical, we misunderstand marriage's divine origin." [36]

10. What's the secret of marriage? [37]

11. Memorize: "If God had the gospel of Jesus's salvation in mind when he established marriage, then marriage only "works" to the degree that approximates the pattern of God's self-giving love in Christ. [38]

12. Print and post in prominent place: "The Christian teaching does not offer a choice between fulfillment and sacrifice but rather mutual fulfillment through mutual sacrifice." [39]

13. What do you need to make marriage work? [39]

Chapter Two: The Power for Marriage

1. What's the word in Ephesians 5:21 that Western readers "bristle" at? [41]
2. What's the fuel of marriage? [44]
3. What's the hardest yet single most important function of being a husband or a wife?
4. What are the three possibilities when spending a day together? [46]
5. What's the havoc-wreaking problem in every marriage? [48]
6. Explain "love economics." [49]
7. What's the way to happiness in marriage? [50]
8. Discuss what possible "wounds" you bring to marriage. [52]
9. What three things often happen early in a marriage? [55]

10. Write out what each spouse has to say to the other to enhance the prospects of a truly great marriage. [56]

11. What is the “fear of the Lord”? [59] How should it impact your marriage? [64]

Chapter 3: The Essence of Marriage

1. How does the Bible measure love? [70]

2. Describe some of the differences between consumer and covenant models of marriage. [71-77]

3. List some of the benefits of marriage vows? [78-89]

4. What happens when you do good things for someone you don't like very much? [91-97]

5. Read the short section "He Stayed," and suggest some ways that can be put into practice in marriage. [100]

Chapter 4: The Mission of Marriage

1. What is marriage? [101]

2. What are the three features of real friendship? [103-104]

3. What is marriage for? [112]

4. What are the practical implications of this quotation:

“Within this Christian vision for marriage, here’s what it means to fall in love. It is to look at another person and get a glimpse of the person God is creating, and to say, “I see who God is making you, and it excites me! I want to be part of that. I want to partner with you and God in the journey you are taking to his throne. And when we get there, I will look at your magnificence and say, ‘I always knew you could be like this. I got glimpses of it on earth, but now look at you!’” [112-113]

5. When you look at your spouse/future spouse do you see a finished statue or a wonderful block of marble? [113]

6. What are your duties to one another in light of the day of judgment? [114]

7. “Paul is urging spouses to help their mates love Jesus more than them.” [116] Are you happy with that?

8. "No other human being should get more of your love, energy, industry, and commitment than your spouse." [119] Name the relationships that this statement will impact in your life.

9. What was the cause of most marriage difficulties that the Kellers came across in ministry? [119]

10. What two areas of over-commitment are the most common problems in marriage? [120]

11. What do you think are the greatest potential threats to your marriage, and how do you propose to manage that? [122]

Chapter 5: Loving the Stranger

1. What do you expect to change you and your partner over the next 10 years? [125]
2. How much do you identify with the “in-love” experience? [126]
3. What kind of seasons should you expect in marriage? [127]
4. What are the three powers inherent in marriage? Give a one-sentence definition of each. [128]
5. Describe the differences between a child-parent relationship and a marriage relationship. [129]
6. What are the flaws you think marriage will reveal to your partner? Have you asked you parents and friends what your partner should know about you? Have you asked your partner what flaws he/she has detected in you? [131]
7. What’s the best way to view the flaws in your partner? [135]
8. Who is the “someone better”? [136]
9. What is there in your parents’ marriage that you think will affect your own marriage? [142]

10. What are the four forms of love in Greek thought? [145]

11. Give some examples of love-languages. [149]

12. What are the two most important skills in marriage? [155]

13. Agree or disagree: "I don't know of anything more necessary in marriage than the ability to forgive fully, freely, unpunishingly, from the heart." [160]

Chapter 6: Embracing the Other

Comment: *I'm not sure why Kathy Keller chose to use and emphasize the "dance" metaphor in this chapter. Whatever its usefulness in describing human relationships, I do not think it appropriate to apply to the Trinity. I would suggest simply substituting "relationship."*

Study this chapter together and write out a 15-20 "bullet-point" summary of the Bible's teaching on gender roles.

Chapter 8: Sex and Marriage

Comment: *I didn't prepare questions for chapter 7 on "Singleness and Marriage" as this questionnaire is for use with couples preparing for marriage. I still think chapter 7 is a very valuable chapter for couples to read in order to build understanding and respect of those called to singleness.*

1. What are the three most popular views of sex today? [211]

2. Complete this sentence: "The Bible says don't unite with someone physically unless you are..... [215]

3. Complete this sentence: "Sex is God's appointed way for two people to reciprocally say to one another..." [215]

4. Discuss the role of covenant and sex. [215]

5. What can help you stay chaste until marriage? [218-223]

6. What is the greatest sexual pleasure? [224]

7. A lack of "sexual compatibility" might mean what? [226]

8. What makes sex glorious? [227]

Appendix: Decision Making and Gender Roles

Write out the five guidelines that Tim and Kathy Keller have used to guide them in their everyday decisions.