

"Invest In Your Marriage" - Oct. 2024

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for October 2024

Greetings again on a rather wet and miserable Saturday morning, from your Marriage Ministries Team at LWCC.

This month I wanted to follow on from last month's email entitled 'Flying by the Seat of your Pants', but a number of people have made comment to me about the recent messages in The Word For Today, one which I feel worthy of follow-up. So, this month I'd like to make some comments around the content of the first of those messages titled 'Invest in Your Marriage'. Let me just also say at this juncture, I hear the concern some have expressed about the approach and tone taken in the other 4 articles which appeared a week later from the 4th to the 7th October. Our prayer is that they touched a chord of challenge and encouragement for some with the topics covered, but for this month's email, I just want to draw some things from that first article, which, if you didn't get to see it, follows below:

Word for Today: THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER: INVEST IN YOUR MARRIAGE

'Enjoy life with the wife you love.' Ecclesiastes 9:9 NCV

"It's amazing how many are willing to invest time and effort into their education, career and financial future, but not their marriage.

One of the leading causes of divorce is boredom. One minister explains: 'Partners lose their focus, stray into affairs, get addicted to porn, or exhibit other destructive behaviour...The secret to a strong marriage is to continue to find ways to improve yourself and to share. It can be as simple as reading a book or article and sharing something interesting about what you read, or taking a course and using what you learned at home...It can be learning about your partner's career field and taking an interest in what they do all day, showing you are engaged with who they are...Partners who want to keep growing as a couple also need to have lives of their own away from the marriage as well. Pursuing hobbies, interests and appropriate friendships outside the marriage makes each partner more interesting and stimulating when they come back home. How wonderful to sit together at the dinner table and share exciting things you each discovered during the day. There is a balancing act in developing your own life without ignoring the life you have together. The person you marry will be around for a very long time if you do things right. Long after physical attraction and the intensity of sexual chemistry have faded, and the kids are grown and living on their own, you and your partner will want strong connections so you can continue to grow and enjoy life together.'

The first thing I want to draw attention to, is the very first word of the scripture at the beginning of this article; **"Enjoy"**

Stop and think about that for a moment! First of all, how would you define 'Enjoy' or 'Enjoyment'; and how would you relate that to your marriage???? How about right here you STOP and have a chat together. Ask yourselves: Are we enjoying our married life right now? We're all only too well aware of how pressured life is these days, and especially couples not only coping with children, family or sport activities, but the demands of work schedules and responsibilities, along financial pressures, and on top of that church life. Then there is the fact that marriage is an ever-evolving environment. It's constantly changing. So, how about asking each other, 'How well have we adjusted and adapted to

the life changes we've experienced in say the last 5 years or so, and what affect has that had on our Enjoyment of married life? Can we say, Yes, we are enjoying married life right now. If you realise that you have not been on top of your game, then have a discussion around what you could do individually and collectively, to change that environment!!! Be honest with one another. Don't tread on egg-shells - (yes, a reference back to our email of 2 and 3 months ago).

The next key word in the Word for Today article I'd like to touch on is **Boredom**. Boredom usually only occurs when we have lost control of, or abdicated our responsibilities, in managing the issues and pressures of married life, and Enjoyment has therefore long gone. One of the keys to sorting this is found in the next statement: **"The secret to a strong marriage is to continue to find ways to improve....."** Sometimes we simply have to admit we've lost our way, and we simply need to begin to have the hard conversations, and make some decisions to change.

Number one on the Check-list for Change: **How long since we had regular Date Time** - I know, Stan's number one Hobby Horse!!! But folks, this one thing, done regularly, makes such a difference. I saw a statistic recently from an organisation that yearly sees large volumes of couples in need of help. They said that 82% of the couples they see were not in the habit of having regular date time. We've covered this off a number of times over the past couple of years, with lots of ideas. If you want to re-look at those emails for fresh ideas, let us know, and we'll send them out to you again.

The article above makes another great suggestion. If you haven't tried it, give it a go. **Take a marriage book and read it together** - out loud. One person read a page or two, then the other do the same. Then, every so often, stop and talk about what you've just read. Ask yourselves questions like; How does that relate to us; how well do we do that; would that work for us; what do you think about that idea, or comment???? There's heaps of marriage books out there. A couple we'd recommend - The Marriage Book by Nikki and Sila Lee, or Sheet Music by Darren Leihman. This exercise can be a really good one for reinvigorating a marriage relationship that's got a bit stuck.

Most of all - DON'T stay Bored, or in a rut. **Have the conversations**, put it out there, and start by having a conversation around ".....ways to improve."

Let's face it, the article's opening statement, unfortunately, is so true: **"It's amazing how many are willing to invest time and effort into their education, career and financial future, but not their marriage"**. It's an 'In Your Face' kind of statement, and is one reason we have been sending out these monthly emails. They hopefully give you material you can use to regularly sow some quality time into your relationship together. At LWCC we have a couple of other great options for you to invest into your relationship:

- **The Alpha Marriage Course.** Our next course is planned for early next year. It's an amazing course that covers so many aspects of married life in such a practical way. There are 7 sessions, and in each session, whilst watching a video presentation from Nikki and Sila Lee, you stop 4 or 5 times during each evening to share an exercise, or answer a question or two together on the topic at hand. We limit these courses each year to 10 couples, so if you would like to book in early and secure your spot, please speak to John or Karen, Ronnie or myself and we'll get you registered. The course costs \$60.00 per couple, and runs from 7pm to 9.30pm on a Monday evening.
- **The Prepare/Enrich Assessment.** The first part of this assessment is done online answering approximately 260 questions. Once completed, one of our LWCC Facilitators will contact you for part 2, which is to meet with the husband and wife Facilitators who will go through the report that is generated from your completed online session. From those 260 questions, an

incredibly accurate picture, covering over 30 aspects of your relationship, is gained, showing areas of strength, and areas needing some growth. The Facilitators will then work with you over 2 - 6 months helping you to work on those growth areas together. The cost of this is only \$50.00, and you get a copy of the report and a workbook that you can use as a great resource specifically targeted to your relationship.

We have a number of other materials available, as well as ministry opportunities that can help people be set free from the impact of trauma, broken relationships, and the baggage we can accumulate when doing life together, or ***"loosing our focus..."*** or experiencing various ***"....forms of bad or destructive behaviour"***.

I must admit, in closing, that I was a little disappointed to see the following comment towards the end of the Word For Today article: ***"Long after physical attraction and the intensity of sexual chemistry have faded,....."*** We know a lot of couples 30 to 40 to 50, and yes into their 60 plus years married, who have very intense sexual chemistry, and whose physical attraction is still very much alive. It might have, like other aspects of our relationship mentioned earlier, changed significantly over the years, but it is never-the-less a very active and vibrant part of their relationship. So, just to wet your appetite, our topic for next month is: ***Improving Lovemaking Regardless of What Stage our Relationship is at.***

As always, we trust this month's contribution has stimulated some discussion and food for thought, and should it have brought up anything that needs follow-up, or assistance, please remember we are always only a call or an email away.

Blessings from the Marriage Ministries Team: John and Karen Walker, Stan and Ronnie Beale

(Content formed From Word for Today article)