

# **AS INTENDED**

Follow His Rules

Kelicha Ochonogor

AS INTENDED - Follow His Rules

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## INTRODUCTION

Have you wondered why marriages fail in this generation? From separation, divorce to broken homes that you can't count across the globe. When you ask marriage counsellors and experts why marriages fail, they tell you several reasons and often these are personal experiences and observations. As a marriage counsellor, speaker and author, I can tell you that the major reason why marriages fail is because they are not Godly marriages. I know that look on your face right now, Mrs Kelicha, are you saying that marriages that are not Godly are not successful? What about godly marriages that ended up in divorce? What will you say about that? I understand your concerns and questions which is why I wrote this book to answer all your questions and also clear your doubts.

There are different exciting highlights in this book but one of them for me is the fact that a godly marriage is scarce in our generation and there are many misconceptions about what a Godly marriage is all about. This is what I extensively talked about in chapter one. We have so many disguised marriages with the Godly tag but in reality they are either pretending or not fully functioning as a Godly marriage. Yes it is possible to start well with a Godly marriage but in the long run you lose track of where you started from. When I said marriages fail because they are not Godly, I didn't say that to mean the absence of Christian marriages in the society. We have so many Christian named marriages but the elements of a Godly marriage are absent. Yes they went to a church to get married but having a church wedding is not a replacement for a Godly marriage.

You can be anointed by the bishop on your wedding day and fall under the anointing but still have a failed marriage because you didn't get proper knowledge on how marriages succeed. Marriages don't succeed alone by the expression of emotions, sexual intimacy and other things you are aware of. This is why a man can be the best loving husband and tomorrow end up the worst loving husband and father. The question you will be asking is, what happened to the one time loving husband? Why did he change? The answers

have been well scripted in this book so you don't fall prey to the decadence happening to marriages in our society today.

If you don't want to have a failed marriage just like the failed marriages in our society today then every sentence and paragraph in this book should be taken seriously. See this book as that guide to help you escape the pitfalls failed marriages fall into. Whether you are married or not, you need every piece of information scattered across this wonderful edifice. Just like the bible says in Hosea 4vs6, my people perish for lack of knowledge. I liken this to mean marriages fail or perish for lack of knowledge. What you will be getting in each chapter of this book are biblical principles that will empower you with relevant knowledge in making your marriage last. I anticipate hearing from you and seeing the feedbacks of how this book has impacted your life and marriage.

Shalom

## *Chapter One*

### **MISCONCEPTIONS OF A GODLY MARRIAGE**

Marriage in this day and age feels very subtle. Today you see a couple happy and all over social media holding hands together and going to church to pray but in a short while the same couple come on social media letting the world know they are not interested in staying together as husband and wife. Sometimes it looks like a joke but it's happening in our society on a frequent basis. In a generation where the wrong ideologies on marriage is well accepted and the right teachings are thrown into thin air. For over a decade now, I have discovered that marriages ending crashed are termed to be Godly marriages. The question you may ask just like I do ask is, why will a Godly marriage fail?

This was a question I kept asking myself until I realize that the question wasn't correct. How come we attached Godly to failure? How did we arrive at a conclusion to mean a husband and wife going to church and lifting up holy hands meant they automatically had a Godly marriage? When there are misconceptions of what a Godly marriage actually means, the outcome will be failed marriages. God never designed Godly marriages to fail and until the wrong ideologies of Godly marriages are done away with, the so called godly marriages will keep crashing.

In my study and experience as a marriage counsellor, I have discovered that there are three major misconceptions about what a godly marriage is all about and these are the beliefs controlling many marriages today. When such beliefs are not eliminated, building a Godly marriage becomes difficult. What many couples call a Godly marriage are only wrong ideologies and not the true definitions. Let's look at these wrong ideologies of a Godly marriage.

#### **1. ACTIVENESS IN CHURCH**

There are marriages that started on the basis of that brother or sister is very active in church and I will want to be married to him or her. This is seen as a very positive element by most people and when they get married, the union is

called a Godly marriage whereas being active in church is not a sign that you know what a godly marriage is all about. You can be the most active person in church and still fail in your marriage because activeness in church doesn't replace the actual work required to build a Godly marriage. This is why some marriages by bishops, pastors, gospel artistes and popular names in the Christian community ended. They thought marriage that is Godly is the one where the man is anointed to sing and never miss church activities.

Don't be deceived by this wrong ideology, it takes more than attending church everyday to understand what it means for a marriage to be Godly. Now don't get me wrong, yes attending church is important and necessary for your spiritual growth and wellbeing as a Christian but when you are attending church daily and your marriage is suffering from lack of communication and other issues then it is basically because you have not understood the true meaning of a Godly marriage.

There are young ladies who got married to a pastor instead of a husband. There are men who got married to a chorister in church instead of a wife. They thought a chorister meant being a good wife or a pastor equalled being a good husband. It takes more than preaching a sermon to build a Godly marriage. It takes more than singing in the choir to build a Godly marriage. If you don't know this then you may fall prey to the decadence happening to marriages where young adults are following activeness in church as a criteria for getting married.

I am not saying you should get married to anyone on the street rather I am making you understand that even the demon you are running away from the street can be in church as a pastor. Don't think a church is a place where the devil doesn't have his cohorts. In fact that is where he operates more because he knows people are easily moved by the charisma in church.

Until you look beyond the active roles people play in church, you may not know what they are capable of doing. There are pastors that beat their wives and there young ladies who cheat on their husbands. These are people who

attended church and were very active. Will you say something changed? No wonder people disguise themselves into Christians just so they can marry an innocent lady or young man. Open your eyes and do not be carried away by physical activeness in church. A Godly marriage is not known alone by being active in church. You can be active in church and still be a weak leader in your marriage.

You can be active in church and still fail to be financially responsible in your marriage. Marriages fail because they rely on the fact that since Mr A or Miss B is in choir then marriage can never fail but when they see the opposite, it surprises them. Eliminate this mentality if you want to build a Godly marriage that lasts.

## **2. PRAYERS SIGNIFIES A GODLY MARRIAGE**

Prayer is very important and essential in building a Godly marriage but here is the problem in my generation, you take prayer to be the only thing needed to make a marriage godly and succeed. If prayer was the only thing needed then marriages failing especially among people in church won't have ended badly. There are prayer warriors whose marriages failed and one common thing they will say is I have prayed but nothing seems to change. Does prayer make marriages to succeed? Let me ask you this question, when cooking fried rice, do you use just one ingredient to make everything prepared as fried rice? Of course no, you combine different ingredients to give you your desired outcome.

This is what many couples don't understand, prayer is just one ingredient and can't sustain a Godly marriage until other ingredients are combined together. Don't allow the mindset of being prayerful rob you off from seeing the need for other ingredients to make your marriage godly and succeed. It takes more than prayer to make your marriage godly and thrive.

## **3. HAVING CHRISTIAN NAMES.**

The presence of a Christian name is not the presence of a Godly marriage. The fact that you married a man or woman who was brought up in a Christian

home doesn't automatically mean you will build a Godly marriage. Many couples especially those who grew up in a family where you must go to church as a tradition and not as a way of growing your relationship with God assumed that since this was a routine for them then getting married will automatically make their home a godly marriage but the opposite is what they always experience. And this is why when you hear about Christian marriages failing, you shouldn't conclude yet until proven otherwise. Some of them were bearing Christian names only and nothing solid as a foundation for an effective Christian life.

What you don't have originally can't be sustained. When you are only bearing a Christian name and assume your upbringing in a Christian home is enough to help you set the foundation for building a godly marriage, the experiences you will have may be shocking and worth thinking about. There are couples who filed for divorce even when they had pastors as their parents. This is because being a pastor's child doesn't automatically mean you know how to build a godly marriage. A godly marriage takes more than having the Christian language and charisma to build a godly marriage. True Christianity is first about an active relationship with God and when you lack that relationship, a godly marriage becomes difficult to build.

### **WHAT IS A GODLY MARRIAGE**

Marriages that are godly portrays the right ideologies which stands on the foundation of God's word. Without this foundation, you can't talk about a godly marriage with the right interpretations. God is the creator and founding Father of the institution called marriage and without Him you can't accurately define what a godly marriage is all about. The way the society defines a godly marriage is different from how God defines a godly marriage, this is why God made emphasis on the fact that a man's perspective is different from His perspective.

1Sam.16.7 - But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth

not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

My experiences as a marriage counsellor has taught me to maintain focus on scriptural interpretations of a godly marriage and not take opinions of men that violates the standard of scriptures. God doesn't think like a man and this is why you must also align with the thought pattern of the creator of the institution called marriage so you properly understand how to build a godly marriage. The following are the right interpretations of what God calls a godly marriage.

### **Godly Marriages are Not a Perfect Marriage**

When people hear the word godly marriage they quickly think it is a marriage the husband and wife are perfect, no flaws or weaknesses. God did not create the marriage institution for perfect people and until this sinks into your understanding, you may struggle to properly define what a godly marriage is and build one as a married couple or aspiring husband and wife. The first marriage in Genesis 2 was not a perfect marriage, God went further to make us understand this when man fell. He took the skin of an animal to cover their nakedness despite falling into sin. What this teaches me and you is, marriages that are godly don't aim for perfection.

There are marriages that failed not because anything was wrong with the man or woman sexually, financially or morally, what made those marriages fail was simply because the couples were looking for a perfect husband or wife. The last time I checked, God doesn't store perfect husbands and wives in heaven. So if you are looking for one right now then you may keep searching and never find. God doesn't create perfect husbands and wives but He makes provisions for married couples to improve and become better. This is why He gave everyone the ability to make choices either to remain a nuisance or a better version of yourself.

Building a godly marriage is not about perfection rather it is about getting better and improving yourself for the sake of having a better marriage. When

you get better, your marriage gets better and stays godly. Your inability to chase after becoming a better version of yourself tramples on the success of your marriage. The way you were before you got married should not be your final bus stop, there should be daily improvements and adjustments. This is what makes your marriage godly. Be intentional about becoming better and not perfect.

Perfection is only a stumbling block to a godly marriage, becoming better and improving yourself is a strong pillar for building a godly marriage.

### **Godly Marriages Are Done God's Way**

When you hear the word godly marriage what comes to your mind? A marriage that is done God's way right? This is the true definition of a godly marriage and the secret to a long lasting marriage. From my years of experience in marriage and also as a marriage counsellor, I know what it means to follow your own way and following God's way in marriage. Every time I have the opportunity to speak with married couples who are at the verge of giving up on their marriage, I always ask them this question, have you been doing it your way or God's way?

This is a very important question that most married couples don't ask themselves and when issues arise, they attribute it to the devil. Now don't get me wrong, yes there are issues in marriage that are 100% the operations of darkness and what needs to be done immediately is the application of spiritual reinforcements but not all issues in marriage is caused by the devil, some are a product of doing it your way instead of God's way. Doing it your way means the following;

#### **1. You take decisions without consulting God**

This simply means you don't make God priority in your marriage and especially when you see yourself as the head of the home whom don't have a head to submit to. As the husband you are submitting to Jesus Christ as your head.

Taking decisions without asking the head you submit to means you are doing things on your own accord.

When you do things on your own then you don't need God for anything in your marriage. Waiting for crisis to happen in your marriage before taking God as the first priority is a terrible mistake you must bluntly avoid. Don't go alone in your decision making, do it God's way.

Allow God be the pilot in your decision making for your marriage as husband and wife.

## 2. Disobeying The Word of God and Following Your Pattern of Thinking

When you do marriage your way then you are actually saying that you want to dump the manual for marriage which is the word of God and follow what is befits your way of thinking. This is why some marriages experience domestic violence because the word of God is not their manual for marriage. Some men cheat on their wives because they don't place value on the word of God as the tool for marriage success. Without mining words, marriages fail 100% because of the couples don't obey the word of God. The bible says wives submit and husbands love your wife, when you go contrary to this instruction then the consequences follows.

Marriage is an institution you don't come to do what you think will make it work according to your way, there are laid down principles according to the ways of God, if you don't follow them then you are not building a godly marriage that will stand the test of time. Any marriage that must stand the test of time is one which already made that decision to follow God's way and dump whatever they know about marriage.

Every time I read about Zachariahs and Elizabeth in the bible, I always wondered what would have happened if they were in our generation today?

Luke.1.6 - And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Luke.1.7 - And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

These were married couple who understand doing marriage God's way. After how many years of marriage without a child, the normal thing is for Zechariah to find another wife right? But he didn't because doing marriage God's way meant staying with one wife and living with her till death do you both apart. Will you say that for many people in this generation today?

The society has defined what marriage is and how it should be done but that is not God's way of doing marriage. One wife and one husband only. No domestic violence according to the scriptures but what we have today is opposite and this is why many marriages will continue to experience issues until they realize that marriage can only work when done God's way.

### **Godly Marriages are Purpose Driven**

The excitement of getting married amongst the younger generation is a great sight to behold but the question most people who want to get married don't ask is this, what kind of marriage do we want to build? When this question is not properly answered, the following things will happen;

The couple ends up with a marriage that is not godly. Building a godly marriage is first about having a strong awareness that this is what I want to build. A godly marriage is not given to you from heaven as a gift, you first sit down with your spouse and make a firm decision to build a godly marriage. Secondly, when a couple don't get the right answers to the above question, they tend to have a failed marriage. Do you know why? You can't build a successful marriage without intentionally making it a purpose driven marriage.

A purpose driven marriage is a godly marriage and until you have taken time to ask yourself either as a single or married couple what kind of marriage you want to build, you may just end up with a marriage that is not God's design. The way God designed marriage is for it to be purpose driven and not empty of purpose. Purpose simply means having a reason for something. Why are you

getting married? What will you be doing in marriage besides the other byproduct of marriage which amongst them is bearing children? If you don't know then you will become a prey to failed marriages.

Marriages don't just crash, one of the elements of a failed marriage is the lack of purpose and this is a major pillar of thriving marriages we admire. Any marriage you see truly working is a purpose driven marriage. If you can start making your marriage purpose driven then you have started building a godly marriage because you can't get your marriage to become godly without first making it purpose driven. As a husband you must be purpose driven, as a wife you must be purpose driven and same thing with your children. This is what it means to have a godly marriage.

## *Chapter Two*

### **WHY BUILD A GODLY MARRIAGE**

As a marriage counsellor, one of the things I keep hearing from married couples especially women is, I wished I married a godly man. The question now is, why did they wait till they got married before knowing the importance of marrying a godly man? It simply because the WHY for building a godly marriage wasn't something they paid close attention to. As a single or married couple, you must place serious attention on the importance of building a godly marriage because this is where marriages either end up successful or failures. Yes I have seen beautiful women and handsome men who had all the degrees and wealth but never paid rapt attention to what I am about to share with you and today their marriage is nothing to write about.

Marriage is an institution of learning and for you to succeed in your marriage, you must come into the institution with a heart of a student. Be like a child who knows nothing about marriage and sit down to learn. Lay aside your achievements and experiences and make ready your heart to learn especially the importance of building a godly marriage. Let me share with you a story that will make you see reasons why building a godly marriage is very critical to the success of your marriage.

Many years ago, a young man wanted to get married to a damsel and all plans were on top gear until a faithful day when the young man walked into the lady's house and discovered that she was having an affair with another man. She apologized and they got married. After 6 months, this young lady went back to her old lifestyle and didn't turn back. The young man tried all he could but all efforts failed him to bring back his wife to order. While he was going through counselling, a question was asked, did you and your wife sit down to address what kind of marriage you want to build before getting married?

The young man replied no and that was the answer to his confusion and months of frustration. He wished that was settled early enough because the

wife wasn't ready to build a Godly marriage with him. It's possible to be ready to build a Godly marriage but your partner is not ready. This is why you must be on the same page with your partner. Before you start learning why you need to build a Godly marriage, ensure you are on the same page with your partner so you both can sit down and implement together. Without agreement, marriage will become a ground filled with frustration and confusion. Yes you can't build a Godly marriage with a partner who is not in agreement with you. When you both are in agreement, it becomes easy to start seeing the need to build a Godly marriage.

Once you are in agreement then you can start talking about why you both need to build a Godly marriage which I will discuss below;

## **1. THE EASY OBEDIENCE OF GOD'S WORD**

Imagine getting married to a man/woman who believes in marrying more than one spouse and always drinking, smoking and abusive in marriage, what do you think will happen to you as a woman or man? You will find it difficult to obey the word of God because you are married to someone who makes it difficult for you. This is what happens in many homes today, the woman goes to church but the man is beating her at home and also bringing women home without any remorse. Why won't such happen in the home? Yes it will because you are married to someone who doesn't place value on the word of God. So it will be difficult for him to obey the word of God.

It takes a man or woman who is a born again believer who serves God genuinely for him or her to obey God with you in marriage. This is why you should build a Godly marriage so you don't find yourself wanting in the place of disobedience. There will be issues in marriage that will require you to choose between disobeying or obeying God. If you are married to someone who doesn't place value on the word of God then be sure you will be persuaded to say no to the word of God. Marriage can be hell when you are with someone who has no value or reverence for God. He or she will do whatever they like no

thinking about the consequences. If you are married to someone like that then you need to pray for God's intervention and mercy. If you are single then pay attention more because this is a serious issue many have ignored at their own peril.

Marriage will present you different scenarios and opportunities to sin against the word of God and it will take a heart that is chasing after God to reject sin and embrace the word of God. The question right now is not how do I build a Godly marriage rather you need to be honest with yourself, are you getting married for the purpose of obeying God or your desires? There are times where you will be presented with opportunities to fulfill your desires against the word of God, what will you do? A lady will offer herself for free just to sleep with her, and you are married, what will be your response? You maybe single and a lady offers you her body for free, what will be your response? Maybe a guy gives you an iPhone for free and ask for your body in exchange, what will be your response?

Your response is a proof of your believe in value for God's word or disdain for the word of God. And if you marry on the foundation of disdain for the word of God then you can't build a Godly marriage that will last the test time. So you see that marriage is not just about the love, care and sexual intimacy but also about the seasons of temptations and opportunities to fulfill your desires against the word of God. Seasons where you will have all money can buy and will be tempted to hide in one corner with a commercial sex worker to fulfill your sexual desires. And guess what? All these starts from when you are single as a lady or guy. What are you doing now to make the word of God easy for you to obey?

Are you carrying what the things you love and forgetting the place of God's will in your journey in life? All these things sums up your ability to either obey God or disobey Him when you are married and have opportunities to fulfill your desires against the word of God.

You want to build a Godly marriage yes but the first reason is because God's word is at stake and you can't obey His word when you are yet to focus on yourself. Are you putting love above what God's word teaches about marriage? Are you seeing pre marital sex, sleeping with someone who is not your wife or husband as normal? These are very important questions you need to sit down and answer. A real man or woman is someone who has made up his or her mind to not just get married but also obey the word of God in marriage and not allow marriage be a distraction to obey God. This is why you should marry a man or woman who puts God's word first before anything else in life.

## **2. GODLY SEEDS**

Mal.2.15 - And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

When the younger generation hear about marriage, one of the things that comes to their mind is enjoying sex with the husband or wife and giving birth to children which is a good thing but here is the problem, giving birth to children is not enough reason for getting married. What God wants you to understand is this, He is looking for a man or woman who will surrender their desire to have children to Him and embrace God's agenda for using their marriage as a vessel to raise godly children.

We are in a world today where the youths are living their lives without any consciousness of God, they don't even care if God exists and won't pay attention to anything that relates to serving God. Do you know why this is prevalent in the society today? Because the parents of these youths didn't pay attention to the purpose of building a godly marriage and the outcome became youths who don't reverence God or have a relationship with Him.

This is what the devil understands and takes advantage of the young ones and use them for his wicked agenda on the earth. Check the movies we watch, the

songs we listen to and the dresses we allow the youths put on and you will see the hand of ungodliness all wrapped in them. The solution to this rampant spread of ungodliness in our world today is the marriage you and I will build which is focused on raising godly children for God.

So the question to you now is this, will you get married or remain married just for the sake of giving birth to children or you will be intentional about giving birth and raising godly children for God? Of course you have to choose raising godly children because if you don't then expect the following to keep happening;

Young girls and boys will involve in immoral acts and never feel remorse, they will chase after anything for money even if it means killing to get the money and so many atrocities because ungodliness has taken over the society through the negligence of parents who got married without understanding that the purpose of that marriage is to raise godly children for God and not for selfish ambitions or desires.

This was exactly what God was teaching Hannah when she came asking God for a child year in year out until she realized that her desire for a child is not as important as the purpose of God which is raising godly children. Imagine if God answered Hannah's prayer immediately? She won't have raised a prophet who will represent the purposes of God in Israel. Do you see why sometimes your prayers for getting married or having a child is not immediately answered because God wants you to have this understanding crystalized in your heart first.

If you get married without this understanding crystalized in your heart, guess what happens? You will end up just like the rest of the world filled with marriages that don't raise godly children who will help in the fulfilling of God's purpose on earth. I believe that it is not every barren woman that is manipulated by the devil or village witches and wizards, sometimes God withholds prayers for children from being answered so the woman and man

can come into that place of proper understanding for the purpose of having children.

The world is sick from the abundance of ungodly children who are causing havoc in the different spheres of influence around the world today. One godly seed from you and your husband will bring down the wickedness of the devil in politics, entertainment, education, religion, sports and so on.

Be determined that your goal as a husband and wife is not to be a vessel for the devil to use and cause terrible havoc in places around the world through the children you will give birth to. The young man or woman who goes out to kidnap people for a living, steal from people and sleep around with individuals for commercial purposes were born by parents. So the question is this, do you want to give birth to children who will bring hurt and pain to others or children who will cause others to be at peace and rest for the sake of their existence? The choice is yours today.

### **3. SHIELD YOU FROM EXTRA MARITAL AFFAIRS**

It is estimated that approximately 46% of men and 25% of women will engage in an extra marital affair during the lifetime of their marriage. Extra marital affairs are outcomes of a marriage that didn't sign up for a godly marriage. Now before you are in a hurry to start crucifying me that there are Christian marriages found in extra marital affairs, I need to to remember what I shared earlier about the true definition of a godly marriage. If you don't remember then you need to go through chapter one again.

Extra marital affairs are products of; marriages that never took building a godly marriage serious and marriages that abandoned the building process of a godly marriage. As we progress in this book, you will understand what I mean but for now just be aware that extra marital affairs occurs in the midst of a marriage that neglects the building of a godly marriage.

Building a godly marriage is like a shield that prevents you from extra marital affairs. A man or woman who places value on a godly marriage won't wake up all of a sudden and start cheating on his wife or husband. Yes it looks like it is impossible but the practicality of a godly marriage always looks impossible to those who don't believe. Does this mean there won't be temptations, pressures from all corners? Of course there will be and in fact there are times you will feel like leaving to a hiding place but here is the difference between a godly marriage and one that is not;

A godly marriage, the man or woman will always set around themselves accountability systems so they don't go astray. For instance, a man who is getting advances from his secretary will quickly tell his wife about it and not keep it to himself because he understands that extra marital affairs thrives in secrecy. When you keep quiet, the fire keeps burning until you cheat on your partner.

This is why from inception, as a young lady or man, ensure you are getting married to a godly man or woman and not just someone who attends church. There are church goers who ended up in the beds of another woman or man whereas they had wives and husbands. It is beyond going to church and temptations don't respect your titles or positions in church or outside church, embrace building a godly marriage and you will shield your marriage from extra marital affairs.

Building a godly marriage will make you pay attention to the danger signs of extra marital affairs so you can avoid them every time you see them. Negligence to the building of a godly marriage will put you into trouble without you knowing sometimes. Let me give you this example so you get the full picture;

A married man who always go to a drinking bar and prostitutes are always hanging around there. When he drinks over time on a consistent basis, he will get notified in his heart that the ladies here can satisfy his cravings. What he

didn't know is this, you are going to the bar and prostitutes are always hanging around there, two danger signs for extra marital affairs.

A godly man will not even consider going to a bar for drinking because he knows that will be a danger spot for him. Same thing goes for the woman. Always going to a place where you are encouraged to have a young boy to keep you happy while your husband won't know anything about it because you will hide it from him. All these are danger signs which you must avoid in a hurry to shield your marriage from extra marital affairs.

Without building a godly marriage, extra marital affairs will be the norm in marriages. And yes you don't need to go out to sleep with another person, things like pornography is now right on the internet and if you are not careful, you will be cheating on your partner with pornography. So don't limit extra marital affairs to just having sex with another person physically, it can be having emotional entanglements with a lady or man and in no time it will manifest into full blown extra marital affair. Be watchful of these dangers and your marriage will be shielded.

When you find yourself sharing deep thoughts and feelings with the opposite sex, quickly share with your partner because you are about to fall into the trap called extra marital affairs. When you find someone more sexually attracted to you than your spouse, don't take it jokingly rather pay attention and kill that feeling fast. This is the mentality of a man or woman who is intentional about building a godly marriage to shield the marriage from extra marital affairs. Be honest with your spouse and don't ignore the danger signs.

#### **4. PROTECT YOUR MARRIAGE FROM EVIL ATTACKS**

Satan hates marriages. He hates anything that will be created by God and would want to fight against his plans and agenda. Marriage was created by God and designed to succeed but Satan is ready to fight marriages so they don't end up thriving the way God designed it. This is why you must build a godly marriage

to protect your home from the fiery darts of the wicked ones. No one wakes up to just tell Satan to let them be and allow their home to be at peace, there is a weapon you use against the evil attacks of the wicked and that is weapon is called a godly marriage.

I understand that there marriage books that teaches you different secrets to building a successful marriage and I love those secrets also because they are important but if you follow those secrets and you don't implement those secrets on a godly marriage foundation, the way Satan will come after your marriage, you will wonder why the book you read is not working wonders in your marriage.

The first marriage on earth in Genesis 3 was attacked and you think your marriage is safe the way it is? John 10vs10 says the devil steals, kills and destroys I.e he will come to steal your marriage joy, peace, health, finance and so on. Satan will want to destroy your marriage happiness and ensure you divorce. Over time, the devil keeps attacking marriages even to the most influential people around the world. This is a sign telling you that Satan can go any length to attack marriages regardless of who the people are.

And these are some of the things he does just to attack marriages;

**A. Neglect:** The same couple who loved spending time together overtime start growing apart and become too busy to spend time with each other. The neglect is usually deceptive in a way that the couple won't even trace it to an attack. It becomes normal and they keep living that way until a day comes when one of them says I want a divorce. The devil can wait for 20 years to launch an attack because he is very patient.

Do you see why building a godly marriage is very important? You can't be building a godly marriage and not spend time with your spouse as often as possible. In fact anything that will be an obstacle to spending time with your family, you have to make a decision for it to be displaced or a balance is created.

- B. Blame:** That's what Adam did in Genesis 3 when God asked him who told you that you are naked and Adam responded with the woman you gave me. When it's not your fault then you blame your spouse and even when it is your fault, you still shift blame to your spouse. The devil has used this to pull marriages that were happy down into obscurity and sorrow.
- C. Selfishness:** When the devil wants to attack marriages, one of the things he does is to stir the man or woman to become self centered. So you see the man using money for his own needs and forget about the woman, same thing with the woman. It takes a selfish husband or wife for Satan to destroy your marriage.
- D. Prayerlessness:** A couple that don't pray together constantly will open the door for the devil to unleash an attack on their marriage. Before the devil attacks a marriage, he ensures that the prayer altar of that marriage is weak and lifeless so he can launch his attack and succeed. When you don't take your prayer altar serious, you are saying you don't need God's help in your marriage and you both are capable of handling whatever comes your way.
- E. Anger:** Many marriages have ended because of anger and more are on their way to end for the same reason. What the devil always do is to leverage on what already exists for him to thrive on. So let's say you have anger issues and the first day you slapped your wife or husband, the next time it may be a fight between you both. Anger is an enemy of marriage success and Satan will do everything possible to make couples get angry at each other for their marriage to suffer attack.
- F. Financial Issues:** It is said that one of the reasons marriages end is because of money issues. Maybe the man doesn't have a job or the wife is paid more than the man. All these are areas Satan takes advantage of and attack marriages. It takes building a godly marriage to discern when the devil wants to attack through the finance of a marriage. You must understand that money is a big tool that can bring a marriage down or up depending on the couples understanding.

With all these being said, you must start taking building a godly marriage serious and intentional. Cover all the areas Satan uses to attack marriages and

quickly fix them before they become the strength of the enemy against your marriage. If it is anger issues then go for coaching and training on anger management. Do your best to make your marriage a danger zone for the enemy and not a welcome zone.

## *Chapter Three*

### **THE FIVE PILLARS OF A GODLY MARRIAGE**

Imagine you are before a marriage reflection mirror where you can see the weaknesses and strength of your marriage, what will be the verdict? Will your marriage pass the test of being a strong marriage or weak? The fact is, your marriage can't survive the issues and tribulations of life successfully without support and not just support but lasting support. I am sure you didn't make up your mind to get into marriage and suddenly end it in shame? You want your marriage to last long and that is why you need support that lasts.

Support that won't be moved by the stress and burdens that life throws at you in marriage. I have always taught over and over again that marriage success takes more than emotions to build it into success. Your marriage needs more than good thoughts or crossed fingers, to keep it strong and lasting, it needs pillars.

Any marriage you see today that is filled with the fear of God and everything godly didn't happen overnight. There are pillars that makes for a godly marriage. Without these pillars, the outcome will always be catastrophic. Marriage is like a house that is in danger because of the absence of pillars. Any marriage built without the pillars I will be sharing in this chapter is bound to fail.

Failure in marriage most times is not caused by the witches and wizards in your hometown but the absence of pillars that keeps marriages infallible. It is said that on an average 2.3 million couples wed every year in the united states and daily about 6,200 weddings. Out of these number of couples who get married, 50% of them are said to always end in divorce or separation. When you see such statistics you feel sorry but majority of these couples lack the pillars that makes a marriage godly and successful.

For your marriage not to end up like the ones mentioned in the above statistics, you must ensure the following pillars are part of the building blocks of your

marriage because they will determine whether it will survive during the times of crisis or will crash.

## **PILLAR ONE**

### **TRUST**

Marriage without trust is like a car without fuel, all efforts to make it move will be futile. If you want to build a marriage that will stand the test of time then trust is non negotiable. You can't ignore the role trust plays in a thriving marriage. Look at the marriages you admire around the world today, these are marriages that have embodied trust as a major pillar in their home. Wherever you see a man who doesn't cheat on his wife or a woman who always submit to her husband, you will always find trust there. When you take away trust from a marriage, it's like taking trying to cook food on a gas cooker empty of gas.

The moment you start envisioning the lack of trust in your marriage, that marriage is heading towards a crash sooner or later. This is why you must come into an agreement with your spouse and be intentional about building trust in your marriage and preserving trust. It is possible to be aware of trust as a pillar for building a godly marriage but along the way you became careless and forgot about the role of preserving trust. I will make this illustration so you get more understanding about the importance of building and preserving trust.

A couple got married enjoying the beautiful memories of their new home and all it embodies for them especially with the fact that they married as virgins. They explored different areas within the boundaries of scripture guidance. Love for each other kept growing and also trust. One faithful day, Kinsley ( not his real name) got a call from a man who kept warning him about his wife and threatened to expose the wife about her sexual involvement with him.

At that moment Kingsley laughed out so loud that it attracted the attention of his wife. The man was still confident and putting more pressure, when he heard the wife's voice at the background, he gave up and never called again. The couple already discussed about their past and agreed to be open no matter what arises. This is what it means to build and preserve trust in marriage. Trust in marriage is what you carefully guard so your marriage don't end up falling in the ditch of divorce or separation. Wise husbands and wives are those who not only build trust but also preserve trust in their home because the stronger the trust in your marriage the stronger the home. You must be alert at all times because trust won't automatically become a pillar in your marriage, you both must be intentional about putting in the work for trust to be evident in your marriage. It won't happen overnight, patience is required while working at it. Sometimes you may have doubts, fear and unbelief which can spread like wildfire if not resolved.

Don't get to that point where you start suspecting your spouse without having to speak with your spouse. Whatever you perceive as danger or little foxes arising to pull down your marriage, speak to your partner about it and don't be quiet. Silence is a killer of trust in marriage and you don't want to be a victim. Being open and honest with your partner makes trust increase and grow consistently in your marriage. The moment you become dishonest and no longer open to your partner, trust starts to decline bit by bit. When you can no longer be vulnerable with each other you begin to lose trust in your marriage.

Spend time everyday checking on each other. If there are issues in your relationship, don't let them build up, bring them into the light. Speak up and address them so you can preserve trust in your marriage. You both must take personal responsibility to ensure trust in your marriage is not only built but preserved so your marriage can stand the test of time as a godly marriage.

Trust is difficult to gain and simple to lose. It must be revered. Nobody is perfect and we will make mistakes, but trust must never be broken in your marriage if you want it to be successful.

## **PILLAR TWO**

### **TEAMWORK**

When a couple marries, it is said several times during the ceremony, and even in their vows on occasion – two shall become one. We are supposed to live one life... together as husband and wife. The issue for many couples is that as our lives become more hectic with jobs, children, and life's many responsibilities, we begin to live two separate lives alongside each other.

Perhaps the wife handles the housework and children while the husband works and pays the bills, or vice versa. Each spouse is responsible for their responsibilities, but they are not working together toward a common goal – a happy, healthy marriage. Something is missing, and that "something" is teamwork!

It's something I hear all the time. My friends will complain that their husbands have no idea how hard they work every day caring for the children, and then he comes home and expects her to do the same all evening. Or a husband will receive a bill in the mail and worry about how to pay it for another week, without considering that his wife may know how to stretch the budget and make it work. We are frequently pushed to the limit by a mile-long "to-do" list. We're preoccupied with crossing the next item off our list and feeling overwhelmed by the next hundred.

Our spouses are willing to assist us, but we rarely ask. We struggle to do everything on our own.

Teamwork skills are essential in a marriage, whether it's raising children or paying bills. It fosters bonding and trust between a husband and wife, and later, between a family. However, teamwork does not just happen. It's not a natural reaction. We are taught to be self-sufficient from a young age. Teamwork skills

necessitate effort! Making an effort to communicate with one another and asking for help when needed is critical. Asking for assistance requires some vulnerability and humility. When asking for assistance, remember to be specific. And, as we teach our children, using manners makes a significant difference.

Work together to care for the yard; don't expect your husband to be solely responsible for that area of your home.

Husbands, If you have small children, taking a few midnight feedings or changing a few dirty diapers without being asked can do wonders for your marriage. Teamwork is often found in the simplest of tasks, and offering assistance to your spouse encourages them and shows them that they are valuable to you.

Don't play the blame game. Blaming each other instead of working together to solve a problem only worsens the situation and isolates your spouse. Teamwork necessitates being selfless and attentive to your spouse's needs. True teamwork can result in a fruitful marriage. It allows you to grow as an individual and as a couple. Before you know it, you're running like a well-oiled machine, with everyone feeling appreciated and fulfilled!

The details are what make a strong marriage beautiful. If you look closely, you'll notice that the most successful marriage relationships have one major thing in common: the happiest, healthiest couples do life together as a team, in both big adventures and the day-to-day grind.

We love this quote about how the best marriages are built on teamwork:

"The best marriages are built on collaboration." Mutual respect, a healthy dose of admiration, and an endless supply of love and grace." Weaver, Fawn

Let's look at the three major components of teamwork mentioned in the quote above respect, admiration, and grace. These are all essential components of a winning team, so let's break them down!

## **1. RESPECT**

Respect is essential to the success of any team, whether on the sports field or in a marriage. Respect is defined as "an act of giving particular attention; a high or special regard" by Merriam-Webster Online.

When members of a team respect one another, they:

Respect one another

Help one another

Encourage one another

Respectful of one another

Be patient and kind to one another.

Because they are not tearing each other down, a team built on respect has a much better chance of winning the game. Instead, each member recognizes his or her teammates' strengths and encourages them when they are weak.

Team members have a common goal: win and keep winning until the end.

It is critical in marriage to collaborate toward a common goal. Support your spouse. Help them when they are down. Assist them in continuing to run the race until you reach the finish line together. It's a long journey, but it's one worth taking if you stick together.

## **2. ADMIRATION**

Admiration builds on respect and elevates it to new heights. According to Merriam-Webster, admiration is "a feeling of respect and approval; an object of esteem." In other words, admiration cannot exist in the absence of respect.

To admire someone means to hold them in high regard or to find them compelling, fascinating, or incredible. The best teams are made up of players who are constantly "wowed" by the abilities of their teammates, rather than players who compete with one another or strive to be the team's star.

The concept is the same in marriage. Husbands and wives should cultivate the same "wow" factor in their relationships. To take it a step further, be vocal with each other—and with the rest of the world—about the qualities and talents you admire. Tell your spouse what it is about him or her that interests you.

### **3. GRACE**

When teammates have a healthy dose of grace for one another, the team as a whole can keep moving forward with little difficulty. However, if a team falls apart due to a player's error, a bad play, or a lost game, it will be much more difficult to pick up the pieces and continue moving forward as a unit. Feelings will be hurt, respect and admiration may suffer, and morale will suffer.

Every great team understands that things do not always go as planned. You will occasionally lose a game. One of you may make a mistake or experience failure. This has an immediate impact on the team, but it does not have to destroy what you've built together.

Similarly, husbands and wives must have a lot of grace for one another. Failures, disappointments, missteps, tragic events, illness, and other calamities will occur in your life. Some of these things may be the direct result of actions taken by either you or your spouse. And when that happens, it's critical to keep a healthy dose of grace on hand.

Putting yourself in your spouse's shoes is an effective way to cultivate grace.

Developing empathy within yourself will assist you in extending grace to your spouse when it is due. And if you're willing to do that for your spouse, they'll be more likely to reciprocate.

Continue to play! Whatever happens, remember that you're all on the same team.

## **PILLAR THREE**

### **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**

Have you ever been irritated with your spouse – not liking him or her much – even though you know you love him or her? We've all had those days! It's completely normal. No two people can coexist for an extended period without occasionally rubbing each other the wrong way.

What matters is how you handle these situations. If you allow hurt or disappointment to take over, your marriage will suffer. Your relationship will suffer as a result of your actions. So you must make a decision. You must decide to love. You may not feel loving right now, but if you decide to love, the feelings will come.

#### **Unconditional Love and Conditional Love**

You must learn to show your spouse unconditional love. A strong marriage requires unconditional love. In your marriage, do you practice unconditional love?

Here are some questions to think about:

Have you accepted your spouse's flaws or shortcomings?

Do you support your spouse, or do you see his or her flaws as projects to be completed?

Are you afraid to be honest for fear that your spouse will reject you?

There is a significant distinction between unconditional and conditional love. Conditional love blames someone, expects something in return, and demands more.

Unconditional love accepts the person without expecting anything in return and is willing to make sacrifices.

"I will love you only if..." says, conditional love.

"I'm not sure I'll be able to handle the difficulties. If things get too bad, I'm leaving."

"If you tell me...", "I might not be able to forgive you."

Unconditional love declares:

"I'll love you even if..."

"I will always be there for you. Even when things are difficult, I will always love you."

"I'm sure I'll still love you if you tell me..."

Putting love through its paces

Your spouse isn't perfect, and you're the only one who notices all of his or her flaws and fears. What do you do with the information you have about your spouse?

Do you use hurtful words to tease your spouse?

Worse, do you tease your spouse in public with hurtful words?

Do you belittle your spouse?

Do you withhold your love until your spouse makes certain corrections?

If you answered yes to the majority of these questions, you are loving conditionally and creating a huge fault line between you that could open up at any time and become a large chasm.

Conditional love creates a marriage in which each spouse is more concerned with getting his or her way than with showing grace and love to their spouse.

Your reaction to and connection with your spouse is critical to the health of your marriage and family.

Your expression of unconditional love and acceptance will be the force that holds you together during the difficult times in your marriage.

One of the most important aspects of a great marriage is your ability to stand by each other in both good and bad times.

Healthy, mature love

Your marriage will suffer if you do not learn to show your spouse unconditional love. If you and your spouse only love each other on condition bases, you'll end up living like two immature children, each trying to get their way and resenting the other when you don't. You can still be married, but you won't have the joy of a great marriage. Also, husbands and wives who do not receive unconditional love in their marriage may seek it elsewhere. And while they're looking for that unconditional love, they're drifting away from their partner.

That is why you and your spouse must learn to love each other unconditionally, which is not an easy task. Giving your spouse the security of your undying love necessitates grace, patience, affirmation of the positive, encouragement, respect, and time. Even if you don't feel like it, show love anyway. It is necessary for you, your spouse, and your marriage.

### **How to Love Without Conditions**

Here are some ideas for keeping your dream marriage alive.

Discuss the problems. Allow each other to communicate freely and keep no inappropriate secrets.

Love each other unconditionally. When you are wronged, forgive your spouse and seek forgiveness when you offend.

Begin each day with the question, "What can I do for you?" Seek out and meet each other's needs with zeal.

Keep your cool. Continue to pray. Instead of avoiding difficult situations, confront and overcome them.

Concentrate on Christ while loving your spouse. Keep an eye out for threats and temptations that could tear your marriage apart.

Every day, pray together. Keep your distance. Maintain emotional, physical, and spiritual intimacy.

Maintain the chemistry you have with your spouse. Commit to keeping your relationship alive.

It's not always easy to keep your marriage strong, vibrant, and alive. However, if you put in the time and effort, you'll discover just how amazing your marriage can be.

## **PILLAR FOUR**

### **PRAYER**

When I counsel couples about their marriages, I frequently try to assess the depth of their spiritual relationship first. To accomplish this, I will ask an important question, such as, "How frequently do you pray with your spouse?" The response is illuminating because most couples, except at mealtime, tell me that they rarely pray together. Some have told me that prayer is unimportant in their relationship. Others admit that prayer is very important to them, but they fail to practice it regularly.

Which do you think is correct? Is prayer an important part of your relationship, or is it just something you do at mealtime? Do you believe that prayer has any real impact on the depth of your marriage's companionship? In reality, whatever you are doing right now in your home is the clearest manifestation of what you truly believe about prayer.

If you are unsure about the benefits of praying with your partner, consider how it can strengthen your marriage;

1. Prayer spiritually unites you before God. Jesus stated one of the most important reasons God wants couples to pray together when He said, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them..."(Matthew 18:19) As you hold your petitions before the Lord, prayer naturally brings you into an agreement with one another.

You can't pray wholeheartedly and unified unless everyone agrees. Coming before God naturally unites your hearts for one common goal. The early church's unity was the result of collective prayer. When the apostles were persecuted, the believers banded together and "raised their voice to God in unison..."(See Acts 4:24.)

According to Scripture, when this group finished praying together, they were "one heart and one soul"(Acts 4:32).

Is there anything more important for a couple than to have the same heart and soul? This attitude contrasts sharply with the independence that many couples enjoy. The agreement described in these passages, on the other hand, describes a depth of relationship that is truly satisfying. If you want to achieve this level of spiritual unity in your marriage, start praying together and watch your unity grow. This is how God intends for you to pray in your marriage.

2. Prayer fosters humility and candor.

It takes effort to feel heart-to-heart with your partner. It necessitates a unique attitude on the part of both partners. When He told the story of the two men who came to the temple to pray, Jesus taught that an honest and humble heart was necessary for effective prayer. One man was so self-righteous that he ended up praying only to himself because God would not hear him.

The other man bowed his head and cried out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"(See Luke 18:9-14.) Only the second man was accepted and justified before God because he admitted his need honestly and humbly.

Similarly, if you want to grow in your prayer life together, you must be honest with your mate as well as with God. You are sending a special message to your mate as you humble yourself and acknowledge your personal needs before God. You are declaring that you are open, vulnerable, and sincere. Remember, God gives grace to the humble. All marriages could benefit from God's grace to smooth out the rough edges.

As a marriage counselor, one of the most common issues I see is pride and a refusal to acknowledge one another's a weakness or needs. However, praying together is an excellent way to address this issue. It's critical to remember that your spouse knows you and your problems better than anyone else in the world. Refusing to pray or whitewashing your problems in prayer only distances you from each other and the depth of relationship you seek. As a result, when you pray together, be honest and humble before God. Allow your spouse to hear you openly confess your needs. As a result, you can't help but be drawn closer together.

### 3. Prayer improves and deepens communication.

A fundamental key to true companionship is good communication, and prayer is the hand that turns the key to open this door. What role does prayer play in your communication?

First, read some of the Bible's recorded prayers and observe what happens. Don't you gain a deeper understanding of the person's praying heart because this person is communicating something truly from the heart? One such instance is Solomon's prayer to the Lord at the temple's dedication.

Many people heard him that day and were drawn to heart agreement as they heard his communication with God. According to the Bible, when he finished praying, the people "bowed their faces to the ground...and worshiped and praised the Lord"(2 Chron. 7:3). We are also blessed and encouraged because this prayer is recorded in Scripture for us. Our hearts are moved because Solomon openly shared the depths of his soul with God. He expressed his humble praise, faith in God's great power, and commitment to giving God his entire heart. When we read this prayer today,

it still conveys a powerful message. Solomon's heart was revealed to us through prayer.

The wonderful thing about prayer is that you can say things to the Lord that you would never say in casual conversation. When a woman hears her husband praying earnestly about his work situation, she may think to herself, Wow, I had no idea this was such a difficult issue for him. Similarly, when you describe your commitment to obey and follow Christ in prayer, you are communicating to your spouse that he or she can trust you to fulfill all of your responsibilities in your marriage as well. What a sweet fruit of intimacy and trust this will bear.

4. Prayer fosters deeper companionship.

Consider this for a moment. What are the major issues impeding genuine companionship with your partner? Aren't they self-sufficiency, pride, and a lack of communication? As you can see, my first three points naturally address these issues. As you pray humbly with one another, communicating your needs to God, you will naturally grow in spiritual unity, resulting in a deeper companionship. Remember that the most important reason you are married is for companionship. Malachi made this clear when he referred to your marriage partner as a "companion"(Mal. 2:14). If your marriage lacks companionship, prayer is an important way to strengthen it.

If you refuse to unite in prayer with your companion, your companionship will always be lacking in depth. Remember that the closer we are to God, the closer we are to one another.

5. Your marriage will be strengthened because you will be strengthened. Giving yourself to pray with your spouse will never make you a loser. Scripture clearly states that when a believer prays, he or she will be built up. "Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,"Jude said (Jude 1:20). He will strengthen you as you pray and spend time petitioning and communing with the Father. Because of prayer, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to fill your heart: "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"(See Luke 11:13.)

If you and your spouse are filled with the Spirit, the fruit of His Spirit will be evident in your lives (Gal. 5:22, 23). Isn't it true that every marriage requires His love, patience, and self-control? As you develop these qualities personally, your marriage will flourish, and your home will be wonderfully strengthened.

Don't miss out on what God wants to do in this area of your marriage because of your independence, pride, or fear, Beloved. Open your heart to the Father and ask Him to work in you to will and do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). You will not be sorry!

## *Chapter Four*

### **FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY WIFE/HUSBAND**

Did you know that there is a distinction between a good woman/man and a godly woman/man?

So, what is the distinction?

A good woman/man, on the other hand, makes sound decisions, is pleasant, and loves you by worldly standards. A godly woman/man makes wise decisions, is kind, and loves you by biblical principles.

The key phrase here is "by godly standards or principles." You don't want to marry a godless woman or man because your marriage will be an exact expression of what your spouse is connected to as a source, i.e. everything he or she does will be based on their convictions, whether they come from a godly standard or not.

A godly wife/husband is required for you to have a successful godly marriage. There can be no godly marriage without a godly spouse.

While it is wonderful to desire a godly marriage, ask yourself, "Do I have the characteristics of a godly wife/husband?" And you can only answer this question if you know what these characteristics are. Ignorance can cause you to end your marriage. Knowledge is a significant factor in determining the success of your marriage. This is why I am glad you purchased this book so you can gain knowledge and identify the characteristics of a godly wife/husband and then you can begin to imbibe the missing ones in your life.

But, before we begin, let us define what it means to be a "godly wife/husband":

According to the Collins dictionary, "a godly person is someone who is deeply religious and follows the rules of their religion."

We all know that being godly or seeking God entails much more than that. This is about his or her character, morals, and values, as well as whether or not he or she seeks God's purpose and presence in his\her daily life.

Being a godly wife/husband means striving to become more like Christ every day.

But, according to the Bible, how can you tell who is a godly spouse?

Well, I certainly don't have all the answers, but I did discover a few character traits that the Bible repeatedly mentions as godly. You have found a godly spouse once you identify these characteristics.

## **FAITHFULNESS**

Why does temptation linger when you're in a relationship? It's like putting a couple's definition of faithfulness to the test. Nowadays, more and more married couples are divorcing due to issues, and one of the most common issues is faithfulness.

It's not like we intend to be unfaithful to our spouses; no one plans this ahead of time, so it comes as a surprise when it does, but can it truly be called an accident? Is meeting someone else fate or the result of poor choices and a failure to keep your vows? Do you know that there are numerous definitions of fidelity, as well as methods for strengthening it?

We may recognize the term and have even used it, but what does it mean to be faithful to your spouse? We most commonly use this term to refer to a spouse or partner who will not commit adultery, but did you know there is so much more to this term?

Most of the time, we use this term to refer to a spouse or partner who will not commit adultery, but did you know In marriage, faithfulness is defined as not committing adultery alone?

We can divide the true meaning of faithfulness into three categories.

Let's look at the various ways you can be faithful to your spouse –

### **1. Definition of faithfulness (Duties as a Spouse)**

A faithful spouse will do everything in his or her power to fulfill his or her spouse's duties and obligations.

When we married this person, one of the things we would include in our vows is how we would take care of them, to do our best so we could fulfill our duties and responsibilities as their spouse. Do you realize there is so much more to this word?

This goes beyond simply providing for our family's financial needs. It entails loving, living together, and, most importantly, respecting that person.

Marriage is about more than just providing food, paying the mortgage, and bills, and being physically present. Respecting your spouse as a person and valuing your partner's ideas, suggestions, and feelings are also our responsibilities as partners.

This is one way to demonstrate your devotion to your spouse.

### **2. Define faithfulness (Being Trustworthy)**

Our vows were made sincerely, but as the months and years pass, this is the true test of your word-faithfulness.

Everyone should be prepared to be trustworthy, from the smallest promises to the most difficult tests of fidelity.

Do you believe in white lies? Are you a committed partner to your spouse, keeping all of your words and promises? Can you be faithful not only with your actions but also with your mind and heart when no one is looking?

Most people believe that adultery is the only way to destroy faithfulness, but lies, so-called harmless flirtations, and deceptions are also enough to break one's trust in infidelity.

### **3. Define faithfulness (Being Loyal to your Spouse)**

When it comes to marriage, this is the most common definition of faithfulness.

Aside from remaining faithful to your vows, as a married person, you will no longer attempt to commit to another relationship and will resist any temptation that may arise.

When we marry, it is our legal and moral obligation to be faithful. We should not entertain any actions or words that we know will lead to flirtation or that will put us in a situation that will lead to infidelity and sin.

While some may argue that temptation is simply human nature, there are also arguments to support the idea that no matter what the situation is, we are always in control.

What we choose will result in either your spouse's faithfulness or infidelity to another.

Is it possible to put this into action? It takes a godly wife or husband to practice faithfulness. Faithfulness is difficult for anyone to consistently practice because human nature always would want to have its way and do whatever it desires, but for a godly wife or husband, it is different because you know faithfulness is a must even when you don't feel like it.

If you've never been faithful to your spouse, it is time to repent because faithfulness is a marriage strengthener. Apologize to your spouse and start practicing faithfulness.

#### **HOW TO STRENGTHEN FAITHFULNESS**

Being unfaithful is never an accident, its a choice.

So, if we can choose to succumb to temptations, we can also choose not to and instead focus on ways to strengthen our devotion to our spouse.

Here are some ideas to help you and your partner strengthen your relationship through faithfulness.

### **1. Comprehend each other**

You will know your place in your marriage if you and your spouse understand each other. Your marriage will not be perfect. There will be difficulties and miscommunications.

If you are weak and only think about getting even or that you do not deserve what is happening to you, you are more likely to be unfaithful. You'll be preoccupied with the "what ifs" of life, rather than focusing on how to repair your marriage. That is the beginning of being unfaithful.

### **2. Mutual respect**

Can you lie to your spouse if you love and respect them? Can you bear the pain you'll cause your partner if you commit adultery or begin telling lies?

Whatever justification you have, no matter how minor, a lie is a lie, and it grows.

Respect holds your marriage together even when times are tough.

### **3. Accept personal responsibility for your life.**

What should you do if you notice that your marriage isn't working? Do you find solace in the company of others? Play the finger-pointing game? Or should you ignore the need to repair your marriage and instead look for someone to provide you with what you require?

This will not work; sooner or later, you will realize how damaging these actions can be to your marriage. You must understand that marriage is for two people and that both of you must work on it – together. Don't expect your marriage to work if you don't dare to accept responsibility.

Different people have different definitions of marital faithfulness.

We may have different definitions of faithfulness in marriage and maybe go through our trials and tests to see how faithful we are. Yes, there will be temptations, and the majority of these will be the "easy way out" of marital problems or the "go-to" solutions for some.

There are numerous reasons and excuses why someone cannot be faithful, but they are all choices. Remember your vows, your dreams, and most importantly, do your best to be faithful.

## **PATIENCE**

Do you want to know how patience helps a marriage succeed? Let's see!

Working with patience

Both partners are equally important in a marriage. As a result, they must handle the ups and downs of their marriage with patience.

Furthermore, patience is needed at nearly every stage of a couple's life. For example, if your spouse is acting childishly, you must treat them with patience; if your child is constantly questioning you while you are working, you must answer them patiently; and if you are having a heated argument with your partner, patience is the key to resolving it. As a result, it is an essential part of married life.

What's more, you must have a great deal of patience within yourself when dealing with your partner's annoying habits, such as their constant frustration over trivial matters. Because you should spend your entire life with your spouse, you have no choice but to tolerate some of their bad behaviors.

If you are easily irritated or are unable to handle situations with calm and patience, you must learn how to deal with them. Every married couple must learn patience, which is the most important factor.

When you feel the urge to lash out, take a moment to breathe and let the anger pass. Try to keep your anger under control until you are calm and cool,

and avoid using foul language. Consider the consequences of your harsh words on your partner.

Getaway for a while and let the situation cool down to avoid unnecessary arguments with your spouse. Act with maturity and patience.

To make your partner feel at ease while communicating with you, you must listen to them patiently. Instead of making a hasty decision, listen to what they have to say about the situation and then act accordingly.

Spend some time alone. Allow yourself and your partner to spend some quality time together so that your stress levels are reduced. As a result, both partners will act patiently.

When confronted with a difficult situation, exercise patience and tolerance for the situation. This will result in a viable solution to the problem.

Try not to impose yourself on your spouse all of the time. Allow them to work as they wish, and if something bothers you, patiently discuss it with them.

What are the benefits of patience?

You've probably heard the expression "good things come to those who wait." It is, in fact, correct.

People who are patient with their marriage have better mental health than those who act out in frustration.

When you avoid getting involved in heated debates, you save a lot of energy that can be put to better use elsewhere in your life.

Furthermore, patience is regarded as a kind act in a relationship. Your spouse will find comfort in you and will feel better about sharing their negative characteristics with you.

Patients are also said to be more forgiving in relationships. As a result, you will find it easy to tolerate and forgive your spouse's inconsiderate behavior. This will result in a longer and more stable marriage.

With a patient personality, you will be able to better understand the criticisms of a situation and then find a solution to it. Furthermore, by viewing things from their perspective, you can better understand your partner. As a result, you and your spouse can enjoy marriage with an excellent understanding balance.

Patience fosters contentment in the family. If both partners patiently listen to each other or their children, family life is more likely to remain stable.

## **FORGIVENESS**

Every couple fights, cries, break up and then gets back together again. This pattern is common as many couples struggle to cope with their relationship. Couples end up disagreeing almost every other day due to relationship imbalances, differing opinions, and preferences.

As a result, frequent fights appear out of nowhere. Fights can be unpredictable, whether it's because they ended up going somewhere without their partner or because of other factors like lack of understanding in communication.

Fights can be unpredictable because they are so spontaneous.

Waiting for the fight to end appears to be the only option at times. Even if you don't entirely agree with what the other person is saying, you remain silent and agree.

Why? because you don't want to lose the person

Fighting is said to be good for a relationship. It only strengthens your bonds for the better. These preconceived notions may be true for some but disastrous for others. Fights are not always sweet; they can turn bitter if not handled with

care and love later on. The notion that fighting is healthy is exaggerated, as is the notion that forgiveness is the best solution left.

Many would argue that a relationship cannot survive without forgiveness. To maintain a long-term relationship, one must always be willing to compromise and forgive. Is it, however, always at the expense of your happiness?

According to research, forgiveness is the key to a happy relationship. Couples who practice forgiveness are said to have happier and healthier relationships. It is true because forgiveness allows guilty people to revitalize themselves and accept responsibility for their actions. Once spoken, words can cut very deeply and cause severe pain.

For those who are afraid to let go of the relationship, forgiveness follows immediately. It's all good until it's not.

Even forgiveness necessitates moderation.

You can't keep making the same mistake and expect your partner to forgive you every time. It takes bravery and guts to mend a broken heart that has been marred by hurtful words and actions. Nonetheless, your partner forgives you because, in the end, love triumphs overall.

If you do not reciprocate for your partner, there is an imbalance in forgiveness. Your partner may also make mistakes, and you must be willing to forgive them. If it doesn't work the other way around, resentment and bitterness enter the picture. Even if you find it difficult to forgive them for their mistakes, consider the times they sacrificed their ego to forgive you. This, however, only works if the error is minor, such as telling a few white lies or forgetting to pick them up from the office. The human heart is delicate, and your partner may feel hurt even by the smallest of errors, which is perfectly normal.

Forgiveness does not imply acceptance or approval of the mistake. The best part is that forgiving does not imply anything else. For example, you may have forgiven your partner but still disapprove of the error. You saying "I forgive

you"does not necessitate any further explanations because forgiveness is wholesome in and of itself. You don't need to look left or right; just forgive.

Don't let forgiveness become toxic.

Forgiving someone takes time. However, it can be excruciatingly painful if your partner does not pay attention to penance and correcting the error. Every time they let you down, you nod your head or simply start talking to them again as a sign of forgiveness.

They may take it for granted and end up repeating the offense.

They are convinced that no matter how many mistakes I make, my loved ones will always forgive me. This thought is the beginning of a relationship that will inevitably crumble bit by bit. People mistake forgiveness for taking it for granted, which is one of the biggest mistakes they can make, making themselves unworthy of forgiveness.

Furthermore, even if your partner is willing to forgive you, beating yourself up over your guilt will not help. It is natural for your conscience to plead guilty and for you to find it difficult to forgive yourself. However, you must inform your partner as soon as possible. Researchers concluded that 'pseudo-self-forgiveness' can destroy your mind as well as your relationship. Instead of providing immediate benefits, it destroys the very foundation of a relationship.

A healthy self-forgiveness occurs when an individual accepts responsibility for their actions, recognizes their efforts, and works tirelessly to make amends for their mistakes. This can be extremely beneficial to a relationship because it not only improves self-understanding but also strengthens the fundamental values upon which the relationship was founded.

Finally, in fights, let go of competitive goals.

You may have goals that your partner does not recognize, causing you to fight over obvious differences. In times like these, collaborate to achieve a cooperative goal rather than a competitive one. If you want to win the

argument rather than reach an agreement with your partner, you are contributing to the relationship's demise.

The goal should not be to win an argument but to get back together. Otherwise, you'll win the battle but lose the war.

Relationships make us strong while also making us vulnerable. Believe in the power of forgiving small mistakes as a couple to strengthen your bond. Tormenting our conscience into forgiving a huge blunder or fault, on the other hand, can be extremely stressful and exhausting. Love is undoubtedly complicated, but if you are determined to spend your moments and life with your partner, in the long run, forgiving can make you happier. It will be the key to your happy marriage.

## **HUMILITY**

The phrase "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" appears three times in the Bible (James 4:6, Prov. 3:34; 1 Peter 5:5). When the Bible repeats itself in this way, it is very significant. One thing is certain: this truth is essential to comprehending God-human relationships.

The genius of God's design for humanity is that the foundational human relationship (marriage) is a direct assault on our foundational spiritual weakness (pride).

### Overcoming selfishness

Have you ever considered marriage in this light? If you haven't, you've probably resented your spouse for interfering with your selfishness, rather than viewing such circumstances as an opportunity to grow in humility. Instead of resenting the intrusion represented by your spouse whenever you feel your marriage has begun to "pinch your feet," consider it an invitation to become exactly what God wants you to become: a more humble man or woman.

Biblical marriage offends a man's pride by requiring him to prioritize his wife's needs over his own. According to Paul, a Christian husband should have a

martyr's attitude toward his wife (Ephesians 5:26). We, men, value our independence and dislike being "tied down" or having some of our prime time taken away. Marriage is necessary to help us become more humble.

Similarly, Biblical marriage undermines a woman's self-esteem by teaching her to love her husband (Titus 2:4). While the world says she should focus on defending her rights, the Bible emphasizes becoming a helper who supports her husband and considers his well-being.

Striving to be more like Jesus

When we become more humble, we become more like Jesus, who described Himself in this way: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Your natural self is married to be served; marriage becomes an important spiritual opportunity when we use it to learn how to serve. Let us not get rid of this "scandal" of marriage. Let us teach our children that every good marriage starts with a funeral: the death of our selfish, independent, and conceited ways.

Accepting the fact that you are not always correct and that others have something to offer is part of being humble. This is an important concept to remember in dating, marriage, and most other types of relationships.

**You exhibit humility by:**

letting go of the idea that you have to impress him (or her) by appearing perfect; admitting, at least to yourself, your flaws and strengths; and making space for the other person to express himself by listening thoughtfully.

putting your judge aside for the time being When his views or politics differ from yours, be curious rather than critical.

Humility entails accepting differences.

Couples who come to see me for therapy frequently believe their partner is wrong for wanting to do things differently. One spouse may have an

authoritarian approach to child-rearing, while the other may be more permissive. One may be more liberal, while the other is more conservative. Morning person, night owl, And so on.

When we can accept differences, our relationships thrive. So it's important to stop thinking that our way is better than the other person's and to accept that when opposing views arise, neither of us is usually right or wrong. We're just different.

### **Humility Is a Virtue**

Some people mix up humility and weakness. However, the opposite is true. It takes inner strength to admit that we don't have all the answers, to refrain from interjecting our opinions into a conversation before truly listening to what the other person has to say.

These two renowned sage teachings promote a humble mindset:

"Who among us is wise?" "He who learns from everyone."

"Who is the strongest? As it is written, "He who is slow to anger is better than a strong man, and a master of his passions is better than a conqueror of a city"(Proverbs 16:32).

### **Taking Advice from Others**

It takes courage to be willing to learn from others, especially in our independent American culture. It means that instead of behaving rigidly like an oak tree, you can choose to be more like a willow that bends with the wind. Of course, this does not mean that you should disregard your existing knowledge. It entails being able to separate yourself to learn about someone you're getting to know by listening intently when he shares his thoughts, feelings, hopes, and dreams.

Humility is an essential character trait in a successful and long-lasting marriage.

Most of us need to learn to be more humble, including in our marriages and partnerships. "Husbands, love your wives; do not be harsh with them," Paul says, requesting humility. He is reminding husbands to humble themselves, to be humble and gentle listeners. But the same is true for wives. Humility does not choose gender roles. It is a constant, steady reality that we should choose to walk in.

You have the option to live selfishly. You have the option of not putting on humility. You have the option of living in opposition to your spouse. But, given the consequences and strife, why would you choose relational destruction?

It will take some practice, but every time you get dressed in the morning, say to yourself, "Today, I am choosing to put on humility in my marriage." I choose to set aside my pride to serve my spouse. "You will encounter situations where you will begin to rise with pride and desire to have your way—and instead, you will choose humility.

Humility in marriage is the ability to see our flaws and admit when we are wrong. Asking for and granting forgiveness to our spouse is also an ongoing expression of humility.

When we choose humility, we are declaring consciously that nothing is beneath us. We have chosen to increase our spouse's worth and value.

## CONCLUSION

Are you seeking to create a godly marriage? Are you using God's wisdom in your dealings with each other? The Bible says:

By wisdom, a house is built, and by understanding, it is established; and by knowledge, the rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.(Proverbs 24:3-4)

Building a godly marriage is non-negotiable and it is a journey you need to employ wisdom in because there will be challenging times and trials, these are obstacles that may want to stop you from committing to building a godly marriage.

Yes, there are obstacles and guess the number one obstacle that can stop you from being committed to building a godly marriage? Learning without taking action.

All through the pages of this book are insights that will help you build a godly marriage but the question you need to ask yourself is this, will you take the bold steps to implement everything you have learned from this book?

There won't is a godly marriage without you and your spouse coming into an agreement to take action on all you have been taught from this book.

Action is the difference between a failed marriage and a successful marriage. Action to practice humility, patience, forgiveness, teamwork and so much more.

It takes more than saying your wedding vows and then living together to build a godly marriage. To live out your wedding vows, you must be determined and intentional to put in the work.

Make that decision today that your marriage won't fail because you and your spouse will play your part while God plays His part.

## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

Have you wondered why marriages fail in this generation? From separation, divorce to broken homes that you can't count across the globe. When you ask marriage counsellors and experts why marriages fail, they tell you several reasons and often these are personal experiences and observations. As a marriage counsellor, speaker and author, I can tell you that the major reason why marriages fail is because they are not Godly marriages. I know that look on your face right now, *“Mrs. Kelicha, are you saying that marriages that are not Godly are not successful? What about godly marriages that ended up in divorce? What will you say about that?”*

I understand your concerns and questions which is why I wrote this book to answer all your questions and also clear your doubts.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Kelicha Ochonogor is a graduate of English language (Education) from Delta State University Abraka. She also holds two Masters Degrees in English language from Covenant University Ota, Ogun State and Educational Administration and planning from National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). She has authored forty one (41) books and counting! Kelicha is a business woman and happily married with four young children.