



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Strengthening Marriages	SPEAKER	Ps Jerry Chia
THEME	Strengthen the Family	DATE	7 May 2018

MESSAGE SUMMARY

THE REASONS FOR MARRIAGE

This week, Ps Jerry brings us back to basics, remembering God's intention and purpose for marriage.

- The **first reason** for marriage: for the increase of mankind and that children may be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise His Holy Name.
- **Secondly**: so that the natural instincts and affections implanted by God should be hallowed and directed aright and in pureness of living.
- **The third reason**: for the mutual society, help and comfort and love, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

We take a closer look at the last reason in this week's sermon.

BUILDING A STRONG MARRIAGE

The third reason states that the purpose of marriage is for the sake of **mutual society**, to **help, comfort and love** both in prosperity and adversity. Ps Jerry expounds on this, breaking it down into *how* this can translate into strong marriages. He sums it up with a simple acronym – "C-U-P".

1. COMMUNITY

The union of husband and wife with Christ in the centre – while small – is seen as a *community*. And for that community to thrive, it demands its members to uphold their delegated roles and responsibilities.

For Husbands [Eph 5:23, 25-26]

²³For the husband is the **head** of the wife as Christ is head of the church, his body, of which he is Saviour ... ²⁵Husbands, **love your wives** as Christ loved the church and **gave himself up for her** to ²⁶**make her holy, cleansing her** by the washing with water through the word.

For Wives [Gen 2:18; Eph 5:22-24]

¹⁸The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a **helper** suitable for him."

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the **head** of the wife as Christ is head of the church, his body, of which he is Saviour. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should **submit to their husbands in everything**.

While it is worth noting that we have different roles, at the end of the day, we are all **accountable to God**.

But apart from roles and responsibilities, we must recognise that we are made up differently as well. Biologically, men and women are simply different; men tend to be rational beings, while women are

more driven by their emotions. Men are logical, women are intuitive – we could go on and on! Unless we understand how our spouses are wired, our marriages may suffer.

How then should we function in this *community*?

1. **Accept our spouses for who they are**

Embrace the fact that we have our respective mental makeups and value systems. Placing expectations on our spouses to change may cause conflicts and tension. Furthermore, if we really were to succeed in making our spouses like ourselves (or vice versa), we'd merely be *duplicating* ourselves. The bible teaches us that 2 must become 1, and not 1 become 2!

When we stop *expecting* and start *accepting*, we can meet our spouses in the middle. As a result, we'll be able to **retain** parts of ourselves and **receive** parts of our spouses.

2. **Commit to the *community***

A community can only survive when there is commitment. All the more in marriage, where the commitment is covenantal, not contractual – our obligation is to the Lord, regardless of whether or not our spouses reciprocates.

Where there is commitment, there is **permanence**.

3. **Build trust**

Community without trust leads to self-preservation, disharmony, competition instead of complementation. A strong marriage hinges on trust i.e. having complete transparency and open communication. While trust takes time to build, rebuilding trust takes an even longer time.

2. UNITY

As tripartite beings, we understand unity to be three-fold – in spirit, soul and body. If any couple aspires towards a strong marriage, they must strive for unity between themselves and with God.

1. **Unity in Spirit**

Our unity must first be with the Lord – both husband's and wife's spiritual being must be in tandem to His being. After all, God intended to be part of every marriage. To achieve this, Ps Jerry encourages all married couples to seek out spiritual oneness i.e. to serve together, attend cell and church together, and release one another to God's purpose.

2. **Unity in Soul/Mind**

As individuals, we come into the marriage with different mindsets and value systems. Therefore, understanding how our spouses think is of the utmost importance. When we can empathise, that minimises room for **judgement** and avails ourselves to **forgiveness**.

3. **Unity in Body**

Communication is not enough; it must be *effective*. While some degree of personal space can be healthy, prolonged or excessive separation can lead to individualisation and disconnect. Ps Jerry encourages us to learn to **appreciate** and **affirm** one another, to strive to build up each other's emotional tank. He also encourages married couples to find themselves mentors, people whom they can journey with and share common experiences.

Finally, sexual intimacy is key to a strong marriage. After all, our bodies belong to our spouse. [1 Cor 7:4]

3. PURITY

The Bible states that God intended for marriage to be *pure* i.e. for it to be kept within husband and wife [*Heb 13:4*], one man and one woman [*Matt 19:4-6*]. No one should take their intimacy outside of marriage. Instead, we need to be vigilant about temptation; it lurks around us and its allure cannot be denied. As such, we must guard ourselves against it:

1. Be wise

Build up purity with wisdom. Stresses within marriage must be dealt with internally otherwise external relief may present themselves as solutions instead.

2. Build boundaries

The hedge of protection starts in the mind, which then forms an attitude and then manifests as a behaviour. Ps Jerry cautions against working closely with people of the opposite gender in work or ministry. "Keep a disconnect," he reminds, "both emotionally and in the mind."

3. Fear God

Daily, invite God into your presence. Let Him be your fear, let Him be your dread. Without the fear of God, we will never truly know God's plan for us.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Through the acceptance, commitment and trust of each other, coupled with our three-fold unity and our purity in marriage, we can look forward to a marriage the way God intended it to be.

Finally, Ps Jerry leaves us with this reminder – that whatever the state of our marriages, **God must be in the centre of it.**

QUESTIONS

Share about a godly married couple that inspires or encourages you. What have you liked or admired about this marriage?

What are the roles of the husband and wife in a marriage? Ps Jerry mentioned three important factors in a marriage: Community, Unity and Purity. How do they play a part in strengthening a marriage?

Regardless of our marital status, there are lessons to be gleaned from this message.
a. To those married, what steps are you next going to take to strengthen your marriage?
b. To those single, how has/will this changed your view of marriage OR attitude/behaviour towards your loved ones who are married?