A FREE GIFT FROM SUMMER HARVEST



Holy Matrimony

How to Stay Connected When the World Is Pulling You Apart

THE INTRODUCTION

Summer Harvest

Read it slowly, with a pen nearby.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Introduction

Early one morning, you wake up and glance over at your spouse. For a moment, you pause.

Something's different.



The ageing process has quietly begun to show itself. A thinning hairline catches your attention. A few gray strands seem to have appeared overnight, ones that weren't there yesterday. The face you have looked at for years now carries wrinkles you don't quite remember seeing before.

Once-firm skin has softened. A small bulge appears around the waist. You stare a little longer than usual.

Not because you love your spouse any less, but because something deeper is happening. Time has been moving forward, slowly leaving its fingerprints on *both* of you.

And suddenly, a question surfaces in your mind:

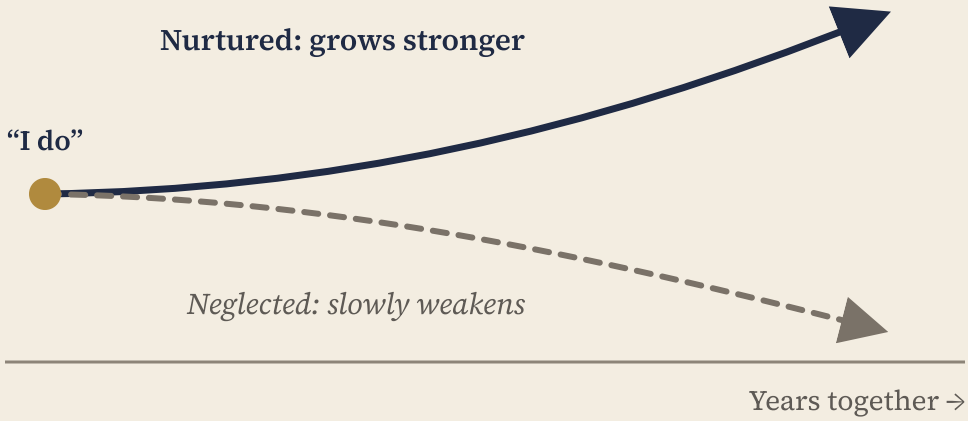
Is this the same person I married?

But perhaps the real question isn't about the changes you see in your spouse.

The real question is this:

Has your marriage changed, too?

Because marriage, like the human body, does not stay the same. It either grows stronger with time or slowly weakens if it is not nurtured.



A marriage moves one way or the other over the years. Neither line stays flat.

Many couples wake up one day and realize that time has not only aged their faces but has quietly aged their marriage as well.

After years of marriage, you realize the person you wake up to each morning has changed seemingly right before your eyes. Yet their heart and their attitude toward God, and toward you, remain the same. They love you *more* now than they did years ago.

And still you are not satisfied. You think, *why can't things stay as they were?* I want that head full of hair with no gray strands, that soft, smooth to the touch skin, and that perfect weight.

Some may think: We haven't changed physically. We look the same as the day we walked down the aisle.

However, an emotional shift has taken place, so subtle at first that you may not have noticed it happening. Somewhere along the way, something changed. Conversations that once lasted for hours have become brief and routine. Laughter that once filled the room has grown quiet. The affection

that once came naturally now feels forced, and the closeness you once treasured seems to have gradually slipped through your fingers.

You look across the room at the person you once could not imagine living without, and somehow, you feel *miles apart*. You wonder when the two of you stopped being deeply connected and started simply existing beside one another.



Sometimes the marriage you are grieving is not gone. It is merely waiting to be restored. If you feel disconnected from your spouse, or if the marriage has grown stale, your relationship is crying out for a spiritual boost. One powerful place to start is by creating godly boundaries. This can help move your marriage in the right direction.

But here's the deeper truth: how one ages physically, or how one's emotions have changed, matters far less than *the condition of the heart*. A heart full of love is the greatest gift your spouse can ever give you. Whether you've been married for a day, weeks, months, or years, the heart is the innermost part that pumps love throughout the marriage.

We must stop focusing on outer appearance or emotional states of mind, and instead look at the heart, because our eyes can deceive us. This is exactly what the Word teaches.

> The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

God knew, when He created flesh and bones, that over time changes would accumulate in every person. Gravity would take its toll. We cannot hide the gray strands that appear in our hair or on our faces without the help of dyes. Unfortunately, we cannot erase wrinkles from our bodies without expensive beauty products or cosmetic surgery.

I look at my husband, David, and see that he is ageing. He is not the same man I married many years ago. He is an older man, a better husband, and a stronger man of God. Surprisingly, he loves God *more* today than he did when we said, "I do." His love for me is more obvious now than it was the day we sealed our vows with a kiss.



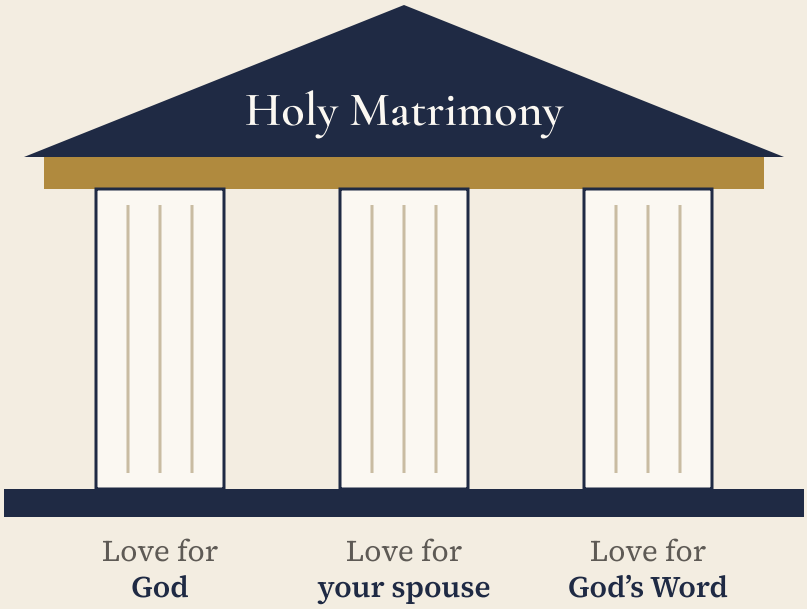
You can strengthen your relationship with your spouse, no matter how much your spouse's outward circumstances or appearance change. When the changes of time unsettle you, it is wise to seek God's perspective by reading His Word and praying. This means becoming familiar with Scripture and understanding God's original intentions for marriage.

One thing God has guaranteed is that your heart can remain unchanged. **Each day, you can love your spouse more deeply than the day before.** Remember: God wants you to love your spouse and keep your heart pure. Your love should be so overflowing and powerful that you could not contain it even if you tried.

I am convinced that many marriages become disconnected because, somewhere along the way, love has been replaced with resentment, pain, boredom, or a sense of lost fulfillment.

So, the question becomes: what has happened to these marriages that they are no longer connected, and can they reconnect? Absolutely, *yes!*

There are three spiritual pillars essential to building a strong, connected marriage: **love for God, love for your spouse, and love for God's Word.** Take one away, and the whole structure begins to lean. When these three are firmly in place and working together, it becomes nearly impossible for the marriage to drift apart, no matter what hardships arise.



Take away one of the three pillars and the structure starts to lean.

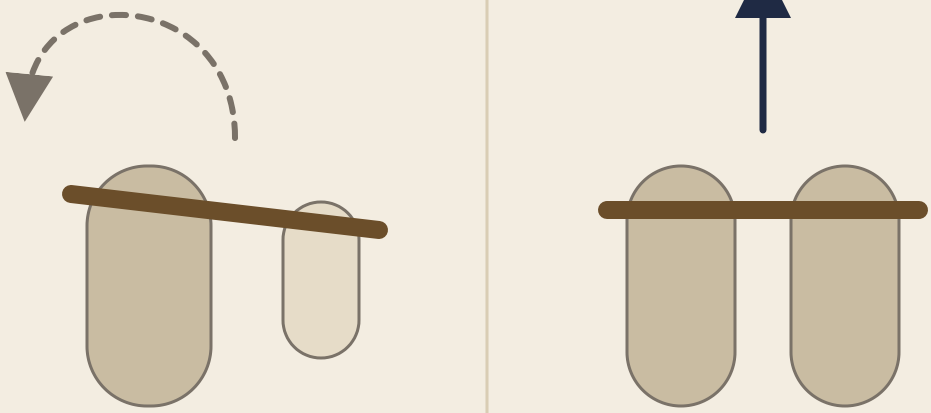
I know I have changed physically. When I look in the mirror, I see a different version of myself: a little gray here and there, a few more lines on my face, and extra pounds around my waist. My husband has changed emotionally and mentally as well. Yet *spiritually*, our hearts are still filled with love.

This is what holy matrimony looks like: real love on the inside that endures and carries you through every physical change life brings, the

changing body, the ageing face, none of it able to touch what truly holds a marriage together.

First and foremost, to achieve holy matrimony, **the couple must be equally yoked** (2 Corinthians 6:14).

A yoke is a wooden bar that joins two mules together to pull a load. An unequally yoked team, with one mule larger or stronger than the other, creates problems: the smaller or weaker mule walks slower, causing the load to veer in circles and making the task much harder to complete. Instead of working together, the mules work *against* each other. When two mules are equally yoked, however, they move in sync, reducing stress on each other and ensuring the task is completed efficiently.



Unequally yoked
The load veers in circles

Equally yoked
Moving in sync

A yoke works only when both sides pull at the same pace (2 Corinthians 6:14).

But the good news is this: you can have both deep love for your spouse and unwavering devotion to God when you are equally yoked in faith.

Now, let's apply this to marriage. God's plan is for a couple to become *one flesh*, a relationship so intimate that they literally and figuratively become part of each other. Yoking a believer with an unbeliever unites opposites and can make for a very strenuous and difficult relationship.

Is it fair to say that if one spouse believes in something other than God, their marriage cannot survive? Maybe. There are always exceptions to the rule. However, if your goal is to marry, grow old together, and face life's challenges as a united team, your marriage has a far greater chance of thriving and enduring when *both* spouses believe in and serve God.

Consider the case of King Solomon. His greatest downfall came when he took many foreign wives who did not believe in God. He built shrines for them and permitted his wives to worship, burn incense, and sacrifice to their gods (1 Kings 11:7–8). This caused him to become disconnected from God and connected instead to his wives' gods. The spiritual pillar was broken, making it difficult for him to stay focused. In the end, this led him to separate himself from God.



One of the biggest reasons marriages follow the world's system is a lack of intimacy with God, or no intimate relationship with Him at all.

As believers, we must understand that the world's systems are designed to destroy or fracture marriages. They tell women they are not pretty enough, not thin enough, or not smart enough. They tell men they are not strong enough to protect their families, do not earn enough money to provide for them, or are not committed enough to remain faithful. These are all deceptions, and the enemy has fooled countless marriages into failure.

How do you stay connected when the world is constantly pulling you apart? Simply this: do not feed into the world's systems. **What you feed will grow.**

Follow God's holy standards instead, and you will avoid the failures the world promotes.

In John 8:23, Jesus tells the Pharisees, "You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world." We live in this world, but Jesus does not, and He calls us to follow Him rather than the systems of this world. God teaches us not to conform to it, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

The enemy has been plotting for years to separate marriages and, through them, the church. If he can destroy marriage, his next target is the church itself. We must stand firm against all principalities that oppose God's creation. Stop looking to the world's systems to fix your marriage. Instead, focus on *God's* system.

Build a faithful relationship with Him, and you will see that He operates completely differently from man. Once you recognize that two separate systems, man's and God's, are at work in different realms, you can choose to feed into the Kingdom of God, and watch it grow and flourish in your holy matrimony.

We are living in a world that increasingly resists God's standards. Every time a holy matrimony is displayed in our neighborhoods, communities, and wherever God places us, we have an opportunity to reflect His glory. That is why it is so important for the world to *see* what a holy matrimony looks like.

Too many believers have succumbed to the world's system, taken a backseat, and folded their arms in pious dismay, watching as the enemy wreaks havoc on the institution of marriage. This passive attitude has become detrimental to the sanctity of holy matrimony. It is time we *unfold our arms, clasp our hands*, and return to earnest prayer.

We must challenge false teachings and false doctrines because the biblical principles established by God concerning marriage must not be

compromised simply to gain acceptance or avoid opposition. When the fear of being attacked becomes greater than our love for God and commitment to His Word, we place the church in a critical condition.

We serve a holy God who has established holy standards. The world's system says that the standards He has established are no longer necessary, but from the beginning of creation, His standards for holy matrimony have remained the same. God did not adjust His standards then, and He will not adjust them now. His Word teaches us to *rise* to His principles, not lower them to accommodate the world.

The world may tell us it is acceptable to dilute, alter, or even discard God's holy standards and conform to its ways. God will never be confined by the world's preconceived theological systems. As believers, we are called to submit our ways, our thoughts, and our understanding to the things of God.

No matter what is happening around us or how society's values may change, God's standards should remain firmly embedded in our hearts. We are not called to reshape His truth to fit the culture; we are called to allow His truth to shape us.

Whose standards will you build your life on?
Choose today: *will it be God's or the world's?*

Holy Matrimony: How to Stay Connected When the World Is Pulling You Apart is a book based strictly on God's principles. It guides readers on how to select a mate (or keep the one you have), overcome earthly obstacles, and allow God to have full control.

We all carry baggage to some extent. Unfortunately, some are carrying entire cargo shipments. The time has come to remove some of that baggage and eliminate the extra stuff. This book will help couples build relationships on a foundation of godly philosophies, enabling them to evaluate, reduce, or sort through their baggage.

In addition, you will learn to examine your marriage as it moves through different stages of life. This book will show you how to stay connected when the world is pulling you apart. Seven godly principles, which I call the Powerful Ps, will guide your path, help you maintain a holy matrimony, and ensure that you choose the right mate for a lasting, lifelong marriage. These principles will be discussed later in the book.

Holy Matrimony also allows couples to tap into the mind of God and see through His lens, His fundamental ideology. Because here's the reality: even though you've found that person who confesses their love, provides for you, and protects you, a few years later, marriage can deteriorate. Financial difficulties arise, intimacy dries up, and communication stops; unfortunately, bitterness and anger take root.

Where will you go? Whom do you turn to?

Every marriage will face storms. There will be moments of disappointment, seasons of distance, and times when love feels fragile. In such moments, the question is not *whether* challenges will arise, but upon what foundation your marriage stands.

> As Jesus Christ declared, "On this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

The same question now rests before you: **upon what foundation will you build your holy matrimony?**



Storms reach every house. What holds is whatever lies underneath.

Will you build it upon the shifting systems of the world, where feelings change, commitment fades, and convenience replaces covenant?

Or will you build it upon the teachings of Jesus, where love is patient, forgiveness is abundant, and grace covers what human strength cannot?

THE WORLD'S WAY	GOD'S WAY
The world teaches us to walk away when things become difficult.	**Jesus teaches us to pray when things become difficult.**
The world says, "Protect yourself."	**Jesus says, "Love sacrificially."**
The world measures marriage by happiness.	**God measures marriage by faithfulness.**

A marriage built solely on emotion may not survive life's storms. But a marriage built on prayer, humility, and the wisdom of God's Word can withstand even the strongest winds.

> When confusion arises, pray.
>
> When hurt comes, forgive.
>
> When distance grows, seek God together.

The truth is simple and powerful: **a marriage that invites God in will never have to stand alone.**

So, again, the questions that remain are:

Where will you go? Whom will you turn to?

Choose wisely.

Because the foundation you choose at the beginning will determine the strength of the marriage you build tomorrow.



Where to go from here

The introduction closes with several questions. The rest of *Holy Matrimony* answers them through the seven Powerful Ps, showing you how to build on the one foundation that never fails.

Two things to do this week

1. **Take The Marriage Checkup.** Request your free copy at OurHolyMatrimony.com, and it will come straight to your inbox. Twenty-one questions, about twenty minutes. Take it alone first, and answer the way things are on an ordinary Tuesday.

2. **Start the 7-Day Reconnect.** At the back of the Marriage Checkup, you'll find a simple way to begin: one small act of love each day.

When you are ready for the whole book

Holy Matrimony: How to Stay Connected When the World Is Pulling You Apart is available for pre-order.

Pre-order at OurHolyMatrimony.com

Grace and peace to your house, Summer Harvest

Summer Harvest is the pen name of Teresa A. Swift. Excerpt from *Holy Matrimony* © 2026 Summer Harvest. All rights reserved.