

## 11-18-14 Class #9—Marriage: Putting the Spark Back In Your Marriage

Whenever I do have men in a marriage class I have to remind them that you don't get to poke each other. You don't get to elbow them when we discuss something. "Did you get that?!" You need to listen today for yourself. Only for yourself and see what you can do to help you. That will be really hard for some of you. Some of you brought your spouse so I could change them.

Story:

A new Perfect Husband Shopping Center opened where a woman could go to choose from among many men to find the perfect husband. It was laid out on five floors, with the men increasing in positive attributes as you ascended the floors. The only rule was that once you open the door to any floor, you must choose a man from that floor, and if you go up a floor, you can't go back down except to leave the store.

So, a couple of girlfriends go to the store to find a man to marry. The first-floor sign reads: "These men have high-paying jobs and love kids." The women read the sign and say, "Well, that's wonderful, but..." and wonder what's on the next floor.

The second-floor sign reads: "These men have high-paying jobs, love kids, and are extremely good looking."

"Hmmm," say the girls. "Wonder what's further up?"

The third-floor sign reads: "These men have high-paying jobs, love kids, are extremely good looking, and will help with the housework."

"Wow!!!" say the women. "Very tempting.... but there's more further up!!!"

The fourth-floor sign reads: "These men have high-paying jobs, love kids, are extremely good looking, will help with the housework, and are great in bed."

"Oh mercy me. But just think!!! What must be awaiting us further up?!" say the women. So up to the fifth floor they go.

The fifth-floor sign reads: "This floor is just to prove that women are impossible to please."

I love that because there is a little bit of truth in it. Sometimes I wonder will we ever really be happy. The truth is that it all depends on what our focus is.

In the beginning when you got engaged...you remember that you had been dating a lot of people and you met "the one". You would call all the time. A lot of you were in college and were on campus. You would meet in the library to 'study'. If you knew where their books were you would put a note in their books. After school you had part time jobs. You met and talked and talked and talked. You went home to meet dorm hours. You called again to say "good night". You never run out of energy. Your bishop didn't call you in and say "think more about that person." You stop thinking about other parts of life. You do not talk about children and you never talk about money. What did you talk about?

Now you get together and you have nothing to say to each other. One of my favorite things to do is to sit in a restaurant you can tell who has been married for awhile. They just sort of sit there, read the menu, place and order. When people are on dates he is very polite, they can't hardly stop talking to make their order. They never stop talking. When we get married we run out of something to say to each other.

About 5 years of marriage you have one or two kids, Dad has graduated and started to get a job, get into a home. Mom has 2 little people to take care of and might be pregnant for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, maybe working, pressure is coming, getting more responsible church callings. Mom is very focused on her responsibilities and Dad is focused on his. 5 years is the first hiccup in marriages. That is the time when you first look at marriage and say, "This isn't what I thought marriage was."

Most were taught to go on missions, stay morally clean, get married in the temple then Mom feels like you have 'made it.' You look at your parents and you may or may not want that kind of marriage. Either way that is the only training we get for marriage. You have 2 people coming together with different experiences of what marriage looks like. Most girls think it is a prolonged date, Hallmark movies, happily-ever-after.

Hallmark—no one goes to work, is up with sick kids, cleans the toilet...it's just a 'happily-ever-after'.

If it isn't like that then you think, "What is wrong with this guy I married? He is supposed to make it wonderful. He made me the happiest person in the world. He never talks to me."

Men think different. They don't do 'Hallmark'. They do the High Adventure things. They don't have the same expectations that women do. I had some 'ah-ha' moments when my 5 boys got married. They are very concerned about taking care of a family. They keep it inside. That is really important to them. That is a pressure on them.

Men live in boxes. It's like going into your closet and pulling down a shoebox. He focuses on what is in that box and then puts that back away. Men feel like you supported me in everything I did before we got married. Why don't you understand me now? They get discouraged too! The relationship isn't what it was when we got married. They thought it would stay that way forever. Women knew it would change, but didn't know how it would change. We both get disillusioned.

The next hiccup is year 10. It's kind of the same thing. Men say I have been working hard we should be further along than we are. Women have a 10 year old and more activities and more kids.

Year 5 marriage becomes "Parallel". You love each other, but lives are going parallel.

*There are many people who do not find divorce attorneys and who do not end their marriages, but who have permitted their marriage to grow stale and weak and cheap. There are spouses who . . . are in the low state of mere joint occupancy of the home. [In Marriage (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 44–46; adapted from Kimball, "Marriage and Divorce," BYU devotional address, 7 September 1976]*

How do you get your marriage back? Some women are very lonely in their marriage. If we talked to the husband he would say it is great we are good. Then bring the wife in and if she answered honestly she would say it's a little bit lonely. We are just talking about needs that are being met or not being met. She has needs that are not being met. He may feel fine. We have to make marriage a priority between us like it was in the beginning.

President Hinckley... *"There seems to be a superstition among many thousands of our young who hold hands and smooch in the drive-ins that marriage is a cottage surrounded by perpetual hollyhocks, to which a perpetually young and handsome husband comes home to a perpetually young and ravishing wife. When the hollyhocks wither and boredom and bills appear, the divorce courts are jammed."*

*Anyone who imagines that bliss is normal is going to waste a lot of time running around shouting that he's been robbed. The fact is that most putts don't drop. Most beef is tough. Most children grow up to be just ordinary people. Most successful marriages require a high degree of mutual toleration. Most jobs are more often dull than otherwise. . . .*

*Life is like an old-time rail journey—delays, sidetracks, smoke, dust, cinders, and jolts, interspersed only occasionally by beautiful vistas and thrilling bursts of speed. The trick is to thank the Lord for letting you have the ride.”*

Get a realistic expectation of what marriage is. In the beginning the first few years is called ‘infatuation’. Do you know how exhausted you would be if you lived like that all your life? That is the period where it doesn’t require any effort to think of doing loving things.

After that 5 year period do we say we were ‘falling out of love’. That is the Lord’s way marriage is supposed to start, but that is not the duration. Marriage gets better, deeper, more sacred as it goes along. This is where ‘True Love’ is developed. “Love” isn’t that high.

True Love is a commitment to doing loving things!

Love has high energy, but true love is a commitment to doing loving things. In that definition there is no score keeping.

As you knelt across the altar, I have never once heard them say, “Do you give yourself freely if...he never yells at you, brings home enough money, etc” The answer is “Yes, I will do it.” Why when life gets tough do we start to put conditions on it.

When you are dating...everyone knew that this person knew this person was not perfect. It may be that your spouse has allergies. They sniffed all the time. You knew they had allergies. Can I get you something? You know there is 80% you adore and there is 20% that is ‘just ok’. After a few years we focus on the 20% and take for granted the 80%. We think we want them to just ‘be a better person’. I want you to be better. I will start parenting you so I will help you be a better person. There is not one person alive who needs to be parented by his person.

It might be the guy is a real runner and you are not. After 4 babies you don’t look so great. You are looking a little more fluffy. He is saying sweetheart I just want to help you feel better. “I just want you to get your body back.” Don’t ever say that. He is saying I really want to help you. You think “You are not helping.”

I have 10 children. I only gained 5# per child, but now I’m 50# heavier than I was. I know that when I look in the mirror. When I’m ready I’ll do it. My husband has never said a word, which is very nice because your physical appearance is important to your husband. He doesn’t deserve to come home from work at night in sweats and no makeup and look just like you got out of bed. He deserves to have you look beautiful. It

is respect for him. He better not say anything about what the scale says, but you need to do your best to put your best foot forward. You need to set a goal for yourself to look your best for them.

Love is doing loving things...not changing the person.

[Alma 32](#)----This is doctrine!

Sometimes we say, "Yes, I believe that, but in my case...(excuses)"

Alma 32:37

"And behold, as the tree (marriage) beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit."

Didn't you feel like yours would be the best marriage there ever was. We are just going to have the best marriage in the whole world. You better all have gone into marriage that way. Why did you do it?

Bruce Satterfield...Education Week...."As kids came in engaged he would say, 'Why are you getting married'...because I just love him, because they make me happy. I just want to be with them forever. He stood there in that class and say, "That's the wrong answer." He said, "Whose temperature am I taking?" Whose happiness am I thinking about. He makes me happy. He makes me spiritual. That is a very self-focused reason for being married. The right answer is, "Because I want to make him/her happy and raise a righteous family". The arrows are all out...what can I give not what can I get.

That is the key to a happy marriage. Whenever you are discouraged about your relationship are you thinking "in" or "out". Are you thinking about what you are not getting or what you can give.

"If ye nourish it with much care, it will get root and grow up."

I will nourish it with 'much care'. That is work! I said something nice, but if you nourish with much care there is action involved. When you say, "I'm sorry...you are doing it, but it's not enough.

“neglect”—it doesn’t mean you are sabotaging it. It means you aren’t doing anything. You just ignore it. You don’t do anything. It doesn’t die the next day or the next...but after a time it does.

Alma 32:38 “But if ye neglect the ~~tree~~-(marriage) and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.”

The sun...children, in-laws, job loss, sickness, work-a-holics, electronics, pinterest, it’s ‘whatever’ causes you to neglect.

Most of you in here will not go for divorce. You don’t throw it away and try something else. You live with that withered relationship. They are parallel lives. In your own misery you welcome neglect.

Women being emotional basketcases that they are they say, “If you would just do something for me I would give back to you.” They wait and wait and wait. Women...you are wrong! That’s wrong! You are neglecting. What is your commitment...to do loving things...it’s not keeping score. If you don’t like the way you are feeling in your marriage do something about it.

Men you don’t often feel it so much because you pull down a different box and feel content in there. Dinner’s on the table, kids are doing good. Go watch TV and play my electronics. It’s a good life. It’s because you don’t pull down the box with marriage on it. You need to pull that down every day.

What do you do everyday to nourish the marriage?

Vs 39 “Now, this is not because the ~~seed~~-(marriage) was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the ~~tree~~ (marriage), therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

“This is not because the marriage is not good.”---It doesn’t mean you married the wrong person or that person is at fault.

“Neither is it because the love is not desirable”---We didn’t ruin this and we can’t get it back.

“It is because your heart is barren....therefore you can’t have the fruit there of.”---It doesn’t matter what the reason is. If you don’t nourish it you won’t get the fruit.

Women you say...“How come I’m the only one that nourishes it?” Women...that is part of your role. The Lord has given you the capacity to do it. Men...what a woman needs more than anything else is to feel cherished. That doesn’t mean to be cherished. If she doesn’t feel it, it doesn’t count.

Men if you cherish your wife what is your responsibility...Ask her if she feels that way?  
Women if your husband is courageous enough to ask that question be gentle on him.

Women the one thing a man needs to feel is admired. He needs to feel like he presides and is important. It is that you admire him and respect him. Part of that is being needed. You have to make them feel they are doing those things.

What happens with women is in trying to support our spouse we become very self-sufficient. We have bought into the world’s view of women. The world says they should take care of things on our own.

There was a professor at BYU---He was a Stake President—He had a wife of equal caliber. He was teaching a class at BYU Provo. He said sometimes when I go home at the end of the day my wife has things running so smoothly and so well I feel like I am not needed.

Do you see the problem in this?

He comes home to his castle and feels like there is no place for him. Part of your responsibility is to need him, greet him, make it an event when Dad comes home. He needs to feel that. Women you need to feel cherished.

How do we meet these needs in each other?

Story: [Here are 10 lessons dogs have taught me about making marriage—or any kind of committed relationship—work.](#)

**1. Forgive mistakes.** No matter what we humans do—scoot our dogs from comfortable seats in front of the television or go on walks or jogs without them when the weather is too hot or cold—dogs never hold a grudge. They forgive us our failings and don't dwell on our wrongs.

**2. Celebrate time together.** How wonderful is it to come home to someone who’s always thrilled to see you? Whether we left the house five hours ago or five minutes ago, canine companions are over-the-moon thrilled to be reunited

with us. In today's world of constant “busy-ness,” pausing to celebrate the entrance of a loved one doesn’t always happen. That common complacency makes the act even more powerful.

**3. Prioritize exercise.** We live in a stressful world. Exercise is a great way to fight back against tension in our lives and also to have meaningful time with loved ones away from computers, phones and other distractions. I think most dogs would agree that we would all be better off if we spent more time together on walks.

**4. Embrace the power of silence.** Listening is hard work. Many of us (myself included) spend more time waiting for a turn to speak than paying attention to what our partners are telling us. Our dogs are never waiting to talk. They simply nod their heads and try their best to understand our message.

**5. Show love in big and small ways.** From laying their heads on our laps while we watch a movie to barking wildly and running in circles when we take them to the park, dogs let us know we are loved every single day.

**6. Be yourself.** Dogs have no interest in being anyone but themselves. I think this is why they can show affection so easily. They don’t want to impress. They just want to love.

**7. Don’t forget to have fun.** I have never met a dog who was too busy to have fun, but I have met plenty of people who are. (And at times, I’ve been one.) Life is too short not to play and feel good with those we care about.

**8. Be loyal.** Dogs don’t complain to their friends when we leave dirty dishes in the sink, gain a few pounds or show up late for an evening walk. I’ve never seen a dog make someone look bad.

**9. Treat your loved ones even better than they deserve.** We should all aspire to be the types of people our dogs think we are. The boost I get from my dog’s adoration reminds me to give that gift to others.

**10. Give each other some space.** My dog doesn’t understand some of my hobbies, like Facebook or reading. I don’t grasp the joy he gets from chasing birds or rolling in mud. Still, we get along splendidly. In fact, having time for each of us to pursue our individual hobbies keeps us happy and well balanced. After all, everyone needs some personal space from time to time.



A little extra work and attention goes a long way toward making a relationship stronger. So thanks to all the dogs out there for setting a great example and helping us humans be better partners!

### [The Grapefruit Syndrome—1993](#)

I want to help you find things to do to nourish your marriage. What you want to do may not be on this list. You may receive inspiration for something else.

Class member: We have a hard time being on the same page with our love languages.

1. Learn your spouses love language.
  - a. Your wife won't feel cherished if you don't speak there language. If you don't feel cherished or love it is your responsibility to teach your spouse that you feel loved.
  - b. There are lots of different love languages...Acts of Service-taking the garbage out without being asked. Time, Physical Touch, Written Words, Gifts. Can I hold my husband accountable for not feeling loved if I don't tell him what makes me feel that way.
  - c. Example...Mike's love language is physical touch. He would like me to give him a back rub. You could just feel the tension going out of him. Likewise he wanted me to sit next to him in church. He didn't want 5 kids in between us. He wanted to have his arm around me. He wants touch. I need to know that. I would just sit and chat while we were doing that. Ok Carleen now you lay down and I'll give you one. I have had kids crawling all over me all day and I don't want one more person touching me. That is not my love language. My love language is verbal affirmations. I want to be told verbally what I am doing well. I need a little more effort than "I love you" Mike grew up in a family of 14 kids...only 3 kids were girls. He is all 'boy'. He has no clue what I am talking about. I made a deck of 3x5 cards. I wrote the silliest things I could think of...."I would walk over the desert barefoot to be with you." It takes all of the criticism out of it. When I was in a good mood I made you a deck of "Sweet-nothings". He started reading through them and said, "Are you kidding me?" I want you to put them in your dresser because you will need them. I'm in tears stirring the mac and cheese. He walks in and wants to walk back out. Don't ask "How is your day?" I said, "I need a 3x5. He came out and handed them to me. No I need you to tell me 3x5 and hold me. He starts reading them. We both just started laughing. It became when I would say, "I really need a 3x5." He would quote one in the beginning, but then he would start

thinking about his own thing to say. I was teaching a class and he sneaks up and holds up this huge poster that he made that should only be seen between husband and wife. I was so embarrassed, but he finally got it.

- d. A lot of you will say, I don't know what makes you feel happy, but I don't know what it is that I need. Start becoming conscience of when they do something that makes you feel good. Let them know. You have to learn your love language and help them know what to give you.
2. Go back to the 80%. You need to validate the other one.
    - a. Focus on the things you love and comment on them.
    - b. President Benson, "When marriage ceases to be an irritant, and becomes a quest in that moment there is great power."
    - c. It ceases to become an irritant in your head in your thoughts. That is agency! You decide. The Holy Ghost does not function in negatives. You can't say, "I won't focus on negatives." Until you make it a positive...my marriage will be a quest...then it is a positive. Then the Holy Ghost can help you.
    - d. Your goal is 10...start on 3. Say 3 positives about them to them everyday. They have to be encouraging comments not praise. If you choose that, that you get a white board. Hang it in your own private space. Every day write something you appreciate about your spouse and you don't erase it. Don't repeat. It get's interesting after awhile. I did that and wrote on it every single day. He said, "She never did." So? So what? She is supposed to write it back to me. If you are writing on that board it is a gift to her. You don't get to expect anything back. If she gives something back that's great. Are you doing it to get something back or because this is how you feel?
3. Plan and do something unexpected!
    - a. When you make it a quest you will be doing something.
    - b. Example: Tracy...her husband was just called to be bishop. She said, "I decided to put a joke in his lunch everyday." Mom...do you know how hard it is to read a clean joke on the internet?
    - c. You take the initiative and you do it. You plan and you do something out of the ordinary. Do something fun. You need to laugh together more.
    - d. Example: One of the things we like to do if you go to a truck stop and read the greeting cards. They are so funny. We will just read cards and laugh. It's just fun.
    - e. Along with laughing and having fun together...rekindle happy talk. It doesn't have to do with kids, finances, church callings. Be friends. What

do you do to everyone that is there. You have a friendly time. You quit talking when you get back to the car. You put the energy into the party instead of your relationship.

Class member: I think I still do the happy talk with my husband. But when my husband gets home he has met his quota for the day. What do I do?

Obviously...he has had it. If you want to make it a quest and you are serving him, who does that serve most? It serves her. She is unloading and venting and letting go. If he needs unwind time what comes first. Unwind time. Then later on you can talk. I would never hit a husband first thing when they walk in the door. Vent later. When they walk in help make them feel wonderful for when they walk in.

Class member: He can usually be home by 6. We decided to let Dad go and take a few minutes. We decided that he can take his time coming home at 6:30. He will sit outside in the parking lot at work and unwind because he came home. That was our solution. By the time he comes home he is ready to help.

You worked it out together.

Men...if you really want to help your wife feel cherished...learn to listen. Men think logical. They take things apart and put them together. They are problem solvers. They listen a little and then interrupt and fix. That is not what a woman needs. She just needs you to just listen. Men...learn the 3 question rule. As she says something before you can jump in and fix it, you have to ask 3 questions about it. Men have a tendency to fix it or jump in and give their experience in it. You need to tell her that you are interested enough in what she is saying that you will ask a question. That will be harder for you than anything you can do.

4. Play the "Remember when..." game.
  - a. Recall and relive happy moments. Recall how you met, your wedding day, keep your anniversary alive. Plan something, do something, celebrate the years together. Make it special.
5. Set a goal and work together to achieve it.
  - a. We do things like go to the kids soccer game together, but we don't really do things together just for us.
  - b. Read a book outloud together.
  - c. Take a class together.
  - d. Work out together.

- e. Learn a new hobby together.
- f. It has to be just the 2 of you. You will have to talk together and decide what it is.

You do it because it's the right thing to do.

- 6. To have couple prayer every night.
  - a. Elder Ballard "When Thou Art Converted"... "One of the first questions I ask is do you kneel together and hold hands and say your prayers. Not once has the answer been 'yes'. Will you please go home and do that for 30 days. The couples come back and share with me the sweet feelings that have returned to your marriage.
  - b. That is your action that invites the Holy Ghost to testify of the sanctity of your marriage. You have to make the initiation first. You will have remarkable experiences. They are amazing.

Story:

A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule. A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk. A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston and the seats average \$100.

This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of an social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing?

You are living with a Joshua Bell.

Brigham Young said, "If we could see our spouse and Heavenly Father sees them we would stand all amazed." Don't be like the people in the subway hurrying to get somewhere to do something that you miss the glory and value and worth of the soul next to you in life. Satan wants to keep you so distracted that you rush past and don't realize the value of what you have. Heavenly Father will testify to you what you can do. It requires you do work. You carefully nourish. That is my testimony.

Homework: Read "[Agency and Love in Marriage](#)" Lynn Robbins. October 2000 Ensign. Copy it and keep it in your syllabus or in your file on marriage. It is profound! It has in it a chart...attributes given on charity. You evaluate where you are in your marriage.