

INTRODUCTION

Keeping Your Bond Durable . . .

...because we all know that practice strengthens.

In joining *The Chemistry of Marriage*, you are taking a bold, countercultural step; you are making your marriage a priority. You want the “chemistry” that attracted you to your spouse to continue. We pray that this program, designed to be accomplished over 18 months, will do just that.

Open the brochure and make the selections for your personal periodic table of bonding enhancement from:

ACTIVITIES | Suggestions for spending time together in a relaxed way

LESSONS | Suggestions for together time that focuses on marriage

LABS | Retreats and classes about marriage

Every 3 months you will check in via phone or email with a Lab Partner, a seasoned couple who will keep track of your progress.

To join, sign up at www.parkstreet.org/chemistry or call Chris May at 617.523.3383 x 237.

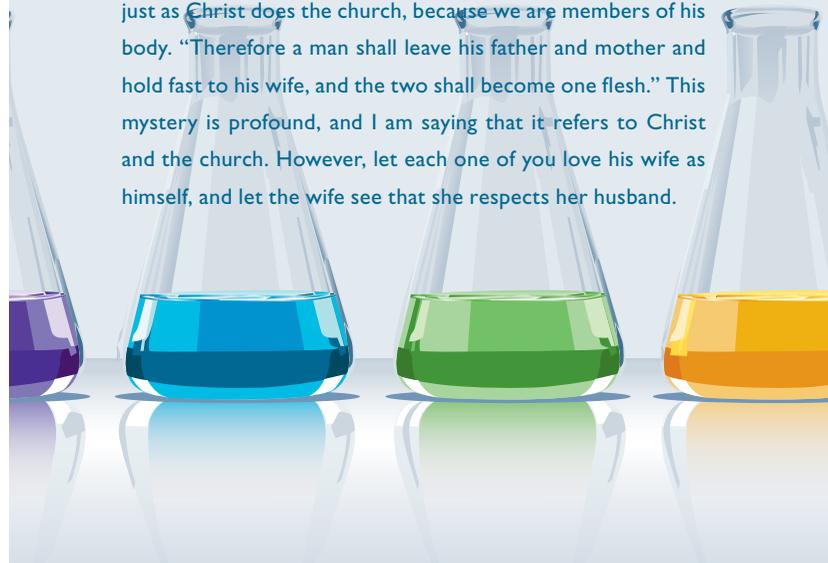


EPHESIANS 5:15–33

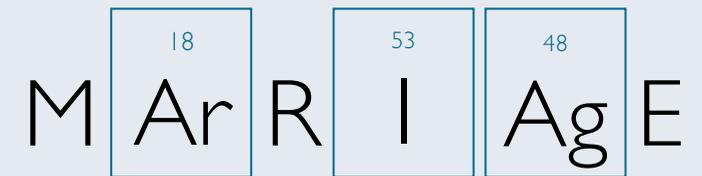
Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.



THE CHEMISTRY OF



THE ELEMENTS, PART 1 [Activities]

Commit to doing 2 a month. Substitutions allowed. Variety encouraged.

- Watch a movie while cuddling. Take turns picking which one.
- Play a game you both like. It can be board, word, card, strategy or even video.
- Cook something you don't usually cook and do it together.
- Go together to a different PSC service from the one you usually attend.
- Have a meal together before or after the PSC service you usually attend, either by yourselves or with others.
- Pick a Friday night activity you have never done. Check the papers and/or online for free activities. Utilize Family Night for babysitting.
- Pick a Saturday/Sunday activity you have never done together.
- Surprise your spouse by meeting them for lunch at work.
- Surprise your spouse by meeting them after work and going home together.
- Visit a museum together. Many libraries give free passes if you sign up ahead of time.
- Go out for breakfast.
- Do a 1 or 2 hour outdoor activity you both enjoy.
- Read a book out loud together or listen to one electronically.
- Have a picnic in a pretty place; that could include your back yard.
- Watch the stars together some clear night. Use an astronomy app to identify them.
- Read a love poem out loud to each other.
- Go to a free concert on the Esplanade. Pack a picnic.
- Vary your love making routine in some way that is mutually agreeable.
- Buy an unexpected small gift for your spouse. If they don't enjoy presents, do an unexpected act of kindness.
- Go for a drive in the country.
- Take a walk around Beacon Hill before or after church.
- If you make lunches, stick a note in your spouse's lunch 4 times in a month.
- If one of you likes sports, watch their favorite sport together on TV, even if the other isn't naturally interested.
- Take an adult education class together.
- Go for a hike together.
- Take a walk around your neighborhood and pray for your neighbors.
- Go for a bike ride together.
- Watch some episodes of an old TV show one of you liked as a kid.
- Text or email your spouse a love note.
- Surprise your spouse by doing a chore they usually do.
- Have an indoor picnic at home, somewhere other than where you usually eat.
- Check out listings of concerts/plays at one of the many universities in the Boston area, and attend. These are usually high quality performances and much cheaper than "Broadway" Boston. Even high school performances can be quite enjoyable.
- Watch the Head of the Charles crew races, which occur in October.
- Blow bubbles in your back yard.
- Rent an old funny move like The 3 Stooges, Charlie Chaplin, or Laurel and Hardy.
- Rent an old romantic comedy like those starring Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracey, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Jimmy Stewart, Grace Kelly, Cary Grant, etc. Keep the romantic feeling going by making love afterward.
- Fly a kite together.
- If you've never volunteered for anything at Park Street Church, pick something to do together. It doesn't have to involve a long-term commitment.
- Put a note on your spouse's pillow telling them 3 things you find pleasing during sexual intimacy.

THE ELEMENTS, PART 2 [Lessons]

Choose 2

1 ⁷⁵ **Re**ad together one of the following marriage books and discuss the questions in those books, or if there are no questions, discuss your favorite and least favorite parts. This project should be completed over a 4 month period so you won't forget what you've read!

6 **C**hristian

Intimate Allies
by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman

The Five Love Languages
by Gary Chapman

The Marriage Book
by Nicky and Sila Lee

The Mystery of Marriage
by Mike Mason

Marriage Takes More Than Love
by Carole and Jack Mayhall

When Two Become One; Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage
by Christopher and Rachel McCluskey

A Celebration of Sex
by Douglas Rosenau

Marriage Spirituality
by Paul Stevens

Married for Good
by Paul Stevens

Sacred Marriage
by Gary Thomas

To Understand Each Other
by Paul Tournier

As for Me and My House
by Walter Wangerin

34 **Se**cular

A Couple's Guide to Communication
by John Gottman et al.

The 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work
by John Gottman

2 Read together one of the following novels or memoirs (or make your own choice) that speak appealingly of marriage; if you can read out loud to each other, all the better.

Hannah Coulter
by Wendell Berry

Marriage is So Much More, Lord (poetry)
by Ruth Harms Calkin

Secrets of a Very Good Marriage; Lessons from the Sea
by Sherry Suib Cohen

Two Part Invention: The Story of a Marriage
by Madeleine L'Engle

Eat Cake
by Jeanne Ray

(Or choose something equivalent and let your Lab Partner know what it will be.)

3 ⁷⁴ **W**atch together two of the following movies that present marriage in a favorable yet realistic light. You could ask another couple or two who are participating in the program to join you. Share your thoughts afterwards.

Enchanted April
Julie & Julia

On Golden Pond
I Do, I Do

Fireproof

THE ELEMENTS, PART 3 [Labs]

Choose 1

1 ¹⁵ **P**lan your own marriage weekend, using one of the books listed in Part 2. Let your Lab Partner know ahead of time, via phone or email, what you plan to do.

2 ⁸⁵ **At**tend a weekend Park Street Church Marriage Retreat, usually held the last weekend in April or first weekend in May.

3 ⁸⁵ **At**tend a different weekend Christian marriage retreat.

4 ⁹¹ **Pa**rticipate in the 7 session Alpha Marriage Course which will be offered through Park Street Church at least twice during the year.

5 ⁸⁵ **At**tend a marriage class at Park Street Church.

6 For 60 days, commit to doing the following marital spiritual discipline with your spouse. There is a morning and evening version, for early birds and night owls; pick one.

Morning Version _____

Evening Version _____

- Before you get out of bed, hold hands and say The Lord's Prayer out loud together
- After saying The Lord's prayer, each complete this sentence: I love you because _____. You may sometimes say "I love you because you are loved by God," but in general you should be more specific.
- While brushing your teeth, pray about one aspect of your spouse's day
- While brushing your teeth pray about one aspect of your spouse's tomorrow.
- Before you go to sleep, hold hands and say The Lord's Prayer out loud together.
- After saying The Lord's prayer, each complete this sentence: I love you because _____. You may sometimes say "I love you because you are loved by God," but in general you should be more specific.