

# World Marriage Day

February 12, 2006



## Couples' Prayer

Dear God,  
Help me treasure my spouse  
as the most special  
and valuable gift  
you have given me.

Remind me that we are friends,  
and teach me  
how I might be a true friend  
in good times and in bad.

Remind me that we are partners,  
and open my eyes daily  
to opportunities  
to encourage my spouse.

Remind me that we are lovers,  
and guide me  
to an unconditional love.

Push me beyond selfishness  
toward a commitment that is total  
and timeless.

Help us cherish each other  
and reflect your love  
in our love for one another.

Amen.

Christopher News Notes #477 (Adapted)

### Success

depends largely  
on the kind of relationship  
you build together  
and  
how you handle differences

## What *Marriage* Means... Why *Marriage* Matters

Marriage. This union between a man and a woman is one of the most talked about, written about, and discussed topics in human history. This coming together—with all its love and its difficulties—means sharing, caring, committing; being loyal, combining strengths, building up, and above all, staying centered on God.

Today, despite an increase in cohabitation, divorce, and unmarried childbearing—marriage still does matter. It matters despite attempts to redefine it or change its essential meaning. **What marriage means is really why it matters: It provides an opportunity for two people, working together, to become the people that God created them to be.**

Marriage is all about growth and change. Unconditional acceptance—in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, despite a world of differences and the ups-and-downs of daily life—nurtures love: for oneself and for one's spouse. Just as two heads are better than one in dealing with challenges, two hearts are certainly better at loving together through whatever problems life has in store.

Your spouse's interests can help expand your own. The benefit of husband and wife time cannot be overrated—especially when a couple becomes a family. There's nothing surprising about the benefits to a marriage of shared fun, or the positive impact a happy home has on children.

Marriage is a celebration of your love. This is true in your love for one another, your love for family and friends, and your love for the wider community. **Marriage means the most when it reflects God's love.**

"What Marriage Means/Why Marriage Matters," Christopher News Notes (Adapted)



## What "To Do" After "I Do"

**Communicate.** Tell each other how you feel—honestly. Never presume the other understands what has been unstated.

**Get away from "you" and "me."** Work on creating "us." This requires balancing your needs and desires with your spouse's.

**Say "I'm sorry."** Deal promptly and respectfully with conflict, avoiding things that damage marriage: criticism, contempt expressed in sarcasm and cynicism, defensiveness reflected in blaming, and stonewalling with the silent treatment.

**Take a team approach.** Seek support from each other and a community of couples that shares your values.

**Pay attention to issues of sexuality.** Physical intimacy is crucially important to a marriage. It's not to be neglected.

**Don't forget God.** Recognize God's great love for you—no matter what—and mirror that in your marriage. Pray together.



**Why not make your Valentine's Day celebration a family affair?** Of course, you can still have a romantic evening for two, but also have a special dinner at home with the kids. Take out your wedding invitation, program from the ceremony, and other mementos and arrange them on the dinner table. Then exchange Valentine cards with your spouse and reminisce about your wedding day—a day some people celebrate as the birthday of their family.

From Family Minute with Mark Merrill at [www.familyfirst.net](http://www.familyfirst.net)

Made plans yet for Valentine's Day? Renew your wedding vows. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Surprise your children—just tell them you have something planned. When the time comes, repeat the vows you made on your wedding day, or use your own words. The point is to show each other and your kids how committed you are to your marriage. Finish up the evening by watching your wedding video or leafing through the photo album. Make renewing your vows a family affair.



From Family Minute with Mark Merrill at [www.familyfirst.net](http://www.familyfirst.net)

*Here are some ways to nurture your marriage:*

- ♥ Schedule priority time together. Pull out your calendars and set a date night every week or two—just to spend time together and talk.
- ♥ Laugh together. When was the last time you shared a funny story and chuckled with each other? Loosen up and laugh freely.
- ♥ Play together. Find a hobby or activity you both enjoy—fishing, bowling, tennis, hiking, or biking.
- ♥ Be romantic together. Send your spouse a note of encouragement in the mail every once in a while just to say "I love you." Spend one or two weekends away each year.



*Valentine's Day is a great time to put a spark back into your relationship, but the best way to fan the flame is to nurture it every day.*

[www.familyminute.net](http://www.familyminute.net) (Adapted)

**The Story behind Valentine's Day**

This Valentine's Day you will probably either send or receive a Valentine from someone. More than a billion are expected to be given away in the U.S. alone. Sales figures say that 3 percent of pet owners even give a Valentine gift to their pets.

There is a true life story behind Valentine's Day, and it has a lot to teach us about the meaning of love, sacrifice and commitment.

In the third century, the Roman Empire was ruled by Emperor Claudius II Gothicus, who got into so many wars that he was having a difficult time recruiting enough soldiers. Claudius believed that recruitment was down because Roman men did not want to leave their wives or families, so he canceled all marriages in Rome. No one seemed interested in standing up to the tyrant, except for a Christian priest named Valentine. He began to secretly marry soldiers before they went off to war, despite the emperor's orders. When Emperor Claudius found out about the secret ceremonies he had Valentine imprisoned and ordered to death.

Valentine gave his life so that young couples could be bonded together in holy matrimony. Centuries after his death, the story of Valentine's self-sacrificing commitment to love was legendary, and eventually he was named a saint.

On This Valentine's Day, what are you doing to keep the love in your marriage burning? While giving a gift and card, having a candlelight dinner, and sharing special words of love are all important, the true spirit of Valentine's Day needs to last throughout the year.

[www.familyminute.net](http://www.familyminute.net) (Adapted)

Give some thought to what makes your loved one so special—fill out this note, cut it off, and tuck it where they can find it!

*What I Love About You...*

