

Marriage on the Rock 01

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Marriage on the Rock. Here's Marv Wiseman.

The Solid Foundation Hearing the sayings of Jesus Christ and heeding them is both a challenge and guarantee made by the Savior Himself in the final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 7.

Each of us has to determine for himself whether what Christ said is valid. Christians believe it is not only valid, but the highest degree of validity that exists, none other than that of God Himself incarnated in human flesh.

Who wouldn't eagerly embrace the wisdom of Jesus Christ Himself and whatever advice or directive He set forth? And here it is found in Matthew 7 when He delivered the discourse to thousands in the famous Sermon on the Mount.

Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

[1 : 15] Having and living a life upon a rock-solid foundation provides the best possible scenario for success. Successful living, the kind that is rich in enjoyment and fulfillment, that really makes life not only worth living but abundantly so, seems to be more and more elusive for today's generation.

Very often, the spoiler lies in the faulty foundation under their life. So, as the foundation goes, so goes the edifice built upon it.

If the edifice of which we speak is a marriage, it can be in peril. In fact, almost certainly at risk. But don't despair because a corrective is available.

We all know there is no way a new foundation can be placed under a building already constructed. The superstructure must be demolished before the old faulty foundation can be replaced with the new and solid foundation.

Then, a new upper structure can be rebuilt upon the new foundation. The cost is enormous, but that's the only way to do it. Thankfully, it need not be that way in building a life or a marriage.

[2 : 33] If a marriage is suffering because the foundation is weak and crumbling, threatening the superstructure of the marriage itself, wonder of wonders, a new solid foundation can actually be inserted under the deficient marital superstructure without ending the marriage.

That is so amazing, only God could do it. It begins when the couple dedicates themselves and their marriage to Jesus Christ and His foundation, which only He can provide.

He will come in and under their crumbling marriage to be their new foundation. Then, the above-ground structure of their marriage can enter the rehab phase, leading to a marital upgrade that is nothing short of miraculous.

But it takes both, husband and wife's involvement to make it happen. Whoever heard of rebuilding or upgrading half a house? Christ stands at the ready to be the rock-solid foundation for any marriage anywhere.

The new beginning with a new foundation can lead to a marriage on the rock. Trapped She left no doubt about it.

[3 : 50] Her tone of voice made it very evident. She felt trapped. No way out. And you could read it in the pained expression on her face when she sighed and uttered those sad words.

I guess we were just young and foolish. We ended up getting married for all the wrong reasons. But we were so immature and unrealistic. We didn't even know there were wrong reasons for getting married.

But we managed to find them. Now, here I am. Three babies later, and a husband that doesn't like this marriage any more than I do. Yep.

Trapped. I guess that's the only word that fits. And I know he feels the same way, too. At least that's the way I read him. Don't get me wrong.

I love my kids. And in a way I can't explain, I love my husband, too. At least sometimes. But not at all in the way I think I should.

[4 : 50] Trapped. Stuck. No way out. But actually, I don't think I even want out. Not really. I just want it to be different.

But there doesn't seem to be any way to make it different. Not really. And it depresses me to think about it going on year after year like this with nothing to really look forward to, but more of the same.

I don't know if I can take it. But I have no choice. The kids, you know, and divorce. I don't want that either. I don't know what I want, except I do want it to be different.

Better different. Well, one wonders how often this sad account is repeated across the nation, or the world for that matter. To be sure, life is too valuable, too short, and has too much to offer to be lived like that, or perhaps endured would be a better word.

That's all this young forlorn homemaker is doing, just enduring life and enduring her marriage. And her suspicion about her husband is probably right.

[6 : 01] He, too, is likely an endurer, not an enjoyer. Where did they go wrong? Or were they ever right so they could go wrong? One of two things would appear to be behind their joint unhappiness.

One, they never did have the proper foundation for their marriage, so they started out with a shaky foundation. Or two, they started well by both of them knowing Christ and his salvation, but somehow they never put their personal salvation and its positive potential into practice.

They were two Christians who were married, but they never had a Christian marriage. And they are not the same. Some naive Christians think that both mates being Christian, a blissful marriage is guaranteed.

No, it isn't. Two Christians getting married have enormous potential, wonderful potential for a blissful marriage, but it is far from automatic.

The potential for a blissful marriage and the actualization of a blissful marriage are two different things. For Christians, the difference is between a marriage to be endured versus a marriage to be enjoyed in a maximum way, as in a marriage on the rock.

[7 : 22] Fleshly or Spiritual The Christian life is described as filled with love, joy, peace, patience and kindness, overflowing with goodness, possessing a faithful and gentle disposition, and capped off with a display of measured self-control.

Yes, that's the description of the Christian life. It's also called the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5. But these are not to be rare qualities found in the life of a believer.

They are intended to be the norm, the standard. Since every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, as made clear by Romans 8, 9, that says, If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

So, what can account for multitudes of people who profess to belong to Christ, thus possessing the Spirit of Christ, but yet by their own admission they do not match the description given of what the Christian is to project as the fruit of the Spirit, and the positive attitudes and attributes just described?

And is there any place where the presence or absence of these godly attributes have so much opportunity for playing out on a daily basis as in marriage?

[8 : 50] Marriage will test your mettle as to what you're really made of. And after 50 years of marriage and marriage counseling, the only conclusion to be reached for the great disparity between what Christians are supposed to be, as opposed to what they often actually are, is the subjects involved either have not truly believed on Christ as their Lord and Savior, or they have believed unto salvation, but they simply do not take their Christianity seriously.

We don't know of any other possible explanation. In the case of the former, they need to heed the Apostle Paul's advice to examine themselves and see whether they be in the faith.

Their need may be for salvation itself. And in the case of the latter, who really do have Christ, they need to know that while salvation is the end of the gospel, it's the front end.

They may have received Christ and have new life in him, but they suffer from stunted spiritual growth and are undeveloped in their Christian life. It's the same condition Paul described again to those Corinthians when, in his first letter, he told them in chapter 3 that they were operating from

their fleshly appetites rather than from their spiritual resources.

If Christians who are married don't really take their Christianity seriously, where it not only determines their eternal destiny, but as well their day-to-day living, then their marriage will be one of the first places misery will make itself a steady visitor.

[10 : 30] The key to all relationships, especially the marriage relationship, is found in a robust Christ-centered agenda for all of life, not just for salvation unto eternal life.

And there is no other possible way for a marriage to be a marriage on the rock apart from that. The Cost of a Marriage on the Rock Is there a cost connected for a Christian husband and wife to have a marriage on the rock?

Of course. Isn't there a cost for everything that's worthwhile? Even eternal salvation has a cost connected to it. And even though it costs the believer nothing, Christ paid that cost.

Somebody always has to pay. And there is a cost involved for married Christians to enjoy a marriage on the rock. Christ paid that cost also.

It was all included in what he purchased in his death, burial, and resurrection. Even though Christ paid for everyone's salvation, in that he died for the sins of the entire world, yet only those who personally appropriate what Christ did derive the benefits from it of eternal life.

[11 : 48] So it is with all else Christ provided in that supreme payment he made. Yes, it includes the blissfulness of man and woman joined in marriage.

So, if Christ provided the basis for that bliss in marriage for all married Christians, why are there any unhappy, unfulfilled Christian marriages?

Good question. And the answer is the same as that of salvation. If Christ died for the sins of the entire world, why aren't all people everywhere saved? It's a lack of appropriating that which has been provided.

There is a personal volitional response called the exercising of the will that places one's faith in the person of Jesus Christ that saves the soul.

In marriages of Christians, salvation has already been realized. But that is also just a part of what Christ paid for, only a part of the entire package.

[12 : 50] As he told us in John 10, he came not only to provide life, but more abundant life. Would that possibly include an abundant married life?

Of course it does. After all, isn't marriage, family, and friendship largely what life in this world is all about? How could we possibly think these high-value items could not be a significant part of the total package for which Christ paid the cost?

So then, why is this positive abundance so sorely lacking in many Christian marriages and friendships? The answer is the same. Same as why so many people for whom Christ died are not saved.

It's a lack of appropriating those benefits. Many unsaved people who have already heard that Christ died for them don't take it all that seriously. Certainly not so seriously as to actually do something about it in response, like believing on him to eternal life.

So too it is even with many who have believed. They took it seriously to that point, to the point of the salvation of their souls. But many times that's where their seriousness stopped, and that should have been where their seriousness began.

[14 : 09] Christ did not save us merely to take us to heaven, but to equip us for the living of that abundant life while still here on the earth, and while still married to your present spouse.

It's tied to our appropriating the assets provided or doing without. Only by appropriation is the marriage on the rock possible. What's the problem is not the problem.

In discussing the reason for so many relationships among Christians often being substandard, and that's putting it mildly, we're looking for reasons why this is so, particularly marriage relationships involving professing Christians.

And if you doubt things are that bad, you need only consult the embarrassing failed marriage statistics in the Christian community. So, what's the problem? How has the potential bliss some deem almost automatic, simply because two people are both Christians, how has it eluded them?

Well, one very powerful principle has already been put forth, and it was called, Failure to Appropriate the Assets Provided. When we don't appropriate the assets Christ provided, we do not gain what those assets are designed to give us, the abundant life of which he spoke in John 10.10.

[15 : 30] So, why don't we appropriate them? Isn't it in our best interests and that of our mate to do that? Yes. And isn't it well-pleasing to the Lord to do so?

Yes. And doesn't everyone else in our sphere of influence, especially our children, benefit from our doing that? Oh, yes. Most definitely. Then again, the question comes, And what's the problem? The problem is not a what, but a who. Who is the problem? That's the question. And the answer is, you are. I am.

We are. But that shouldn't surprise us. We are always the problem. But, bless the Lord, we are also the solution.

Those with sufficient ears on them may recall the cute little cartoon character named Pogo. Pogo was a possum living in the swamplands in the south. And one of his most memorable sayings just dripped with embarrassing honesty.

[16 : 37] We have met the enemy, and they is us. A pearl of wisdom, if ever there was one uttered. Most of the grief that visits us was invited in by our own actions and attitudes.

We are all our own worst enemy. The Bible refers to this as our flesh. It's not our physical flesh of tissue and organs, but our inner self-will, our old man, our fallen Adamic nature, our ego, that inflicts us all with a terminal disease called death.

When God saved you, assuming you are saved, God gave you a new life in Christ. But he didn't remove your volition. He didn't remove your power to make choices based upon your own desires. Yes, even your ability to do wrong, foolish things. Galatians 5 addresses this issue. We simply want to pursue our own will, our own choices, our own desires and wants to the exclusion of what God or anyone else may want.

And those who have not recognized this as their problem, or perhaps are even denying it, are walking in the flesh. Those who have admitted it and have gotten beyond it are walking in the spirit.

[17 : 58] And this is where the solution comes in. This leads to a marriage on the rock. Christians without a Christian marriage.

A marriage well done is as blissful and fulfilling as any human relationship on earth can experience. We know that because there are many who have proved it by enjoying that kind of marriage day by day.

We also know that a marriage poorly done is a source of immeasurable heartache, dissatisfaction and frustration. And we know that because there are also many who have proved it by enduring that kind of marriage day by day.

If we were speaking only of non-Christians in this latter case, one could well respond with, well, I guess non-Christians just don't have the spiritual assets to work with that Christians do.

I wouldn't expect very many non-Christians to enjoy a truly great marriage. But the problem is, we are not speaking of non-Christians. We speak of those who profess Christ as their Savior.

[19 : 05] And yet, their marriages often fare no better than those who have no interest in Christ and spiritual issues at all. And we know that because we merely cite the public records of divorce proceedings.

They are and should be an embarrassment to the entire Christian community. How can we possibly explain or account for this? We stated earlier what we believe the answer to be.

It is simply the failure or refusal of the professing Christian couple to implement or appropriate powerful spiritual dynamics God has provided for all believers.

Dynamics in any area will not produce desired results if not applied. Some would object to our diagnosis as being too simplistic. They would say that marital relations and their smooth operation is much more complex than that.

To that we say, nonsense. God has not provided us with difficult, complicated action plans for a wonderfully fulfilling marriage.

[20 : 12] Human relation problems, including marriage, are often regarded as insoluble and thrown under the rug as just too complex to be resolved, even for Christians.

More nonsense. There's nothing complex about taking responsibility for our actions. Nothing complex about owning and admitting bad behavior.

Nothing complex about repenting of one's sinful behavior. Nothing complex about a heartfelt apology. Nothing complex about seeking forgiveness and nothing complex about granting forgiveness.

These all depend upon one's own will to implement these divinely provided dynamics. We don't fail to do these things because they are too complex.

We fail to do so because we are stubbornly egocentric. And the stubbornness often involves both husband and wife. Sometimes it's much more one than the other, but make no mistake about it, this stubbornness, when perpetuated, only widens the distance between them.

[21 : 27] And before God, there is absolutely no justifiable excuse for carrying on this kind of mockery passed off as marriage. God has every right to expect far better.

For God's sake, Christians without a Christian marriage, part two. From the outset of these brief segments of Marriage on the Rock, we have made a distinction between a man and a woman being Christians and married, as opposed to a Christian marriage.

There are lots of married Christians who do not have a Christian marriage, and these do not and cannot have a marriage on the rock, even though both are Christians insofar as their individual and personal salvation through Christ alone is concerned.

But for these to have a truly Christian marriage, they must know and apply the dynamic, God-given biblical principles that were provided for that marriage to be all they want it to be, and all that God designed it to be.

Some, no doubt, would be skeptical of this definition of a Christian marriage, and some, no doubt, would likely be offended that we could label them as not having a Christian marriage at all.

[22 : 41] They would perhaps counter with, well, after all, I am a Christian, and my spouse is a Christian. We were married in a Christian ceremony in a Christian church by a Christian minister.

How Christian is that? How much more Christian can you be? Well, those things are all good. They're commendable and recommended, but a Christian marriage they do not make.

A Christian marriage is one that operates upon the spiritual biblical principles God has set forth in the Christian marriage handbook, the Bible. One would venture to say that many Christians who would adamantly insist they have a Christian marriage could not even name or find in the scriptures those principles of which we speak.

At least, we can say that has been the case we have experienced in 50 years of marriage counseling. And our experience has also taught us that those who come in for counseling are inevitably dealing with issues resulting from not knowing or not implementing one or more of those biblical principles.

Always, always, always. Never have found an exception yet. Can you now name some of these? One might well ask, if these spiritual principles are so all-fired important, why don't we know about them?

[24 : 01] Why aren't more people doing them? It's a good question. And the answer appears to be, again, garnered after many decades of marriage counseling, people would rather do marriage their way.

Why? Well, because we all possess an Adamic fallen nature that is thoroughly self-centered, self-willed, and self-serving.

That's not a pretty picture of humanity, but it is an accurate one, adequately demonstrated over the past several thousand years, generation after generation.

In our fallenness, we tend to make ourselves and our powers of reason and logic the abiding authority for our decisions and actions.

And right here is where we go astray. The only question remaining is how far we go astray. And in our marriage, the going astray can even lead to the divorce court.

[25 : 00] We admit there are complex issues involved, but they all begin with simple violations of these spiritual principles. We will examine each of them, along with their benefits and blessings that will lead to a marriage on the rock.

Only two requirements for a marriage on the rock. We have emphasized the biblical truth that God has provided wonderful spiritual assets to all believers to be implemented in all our relationships, particularly that of marriage.

They boil down to nothing more than the kindness and consideration with which we are to treat one another, especially toward the one whom we have promised to love and cherish till death us do part.

Again, nothing complicated about that. We don't really have a problem in understanding this. We have a problem with a lack of will to do it. We often disguise this lack by declaring our inability to do

so.

After all, if we're just not able to do that, God won't hold us accountable for that, will He? Yes, He will. The result is the unhappy marriage plods on, building more resentment one toward the other and often ruining the day they were married.

[26 : 18] Does anyone enjoy this kind of marital fiasco? How could they? Why not turn this thing around? Someone is saying, we wish we could, but it's just not that simple.

It is too. It is. Provided. Ah, yes, here comes the catch. The pesky provisos, conditions, requirements.

They are not many, only two, but they are, oh, so critical. So critical, no one can have a marriage on the rock without them. And here they are.

Requirement number one is a renewed commitment to your mate and your marriage. You know, the kind of commitment you both had and made when you got married.

You did have that kind of sincere, heartfelt, well-intentioned commitment when you married, didn't you? The assumption is you did, and if not, why in the world did you marry that person?

[27 : 17] And secondly, requirement number two, a commitment to do what God tells all Christian marriage to do as he has clearly revealed it in his word. There they are, the big two, and these two commitments are so big, they will produce a marriage on the rock when a Christian couple implements them.

And a marriage on the rock will not be realized if they don't. Do we mean to say the only thing that prevents a Christian marriage moving from misery and disappointment to a deliriously loving and fulfilled marriage is they're implementing these two commitments?

Yes, precisely, that is exactly what we are saying. Well, if that's such a wonderful healer for a wounded marriage, an antidote for a poison relationship, why doesn't every Christian couple make those commitments?

We already answered that, remember? Remember the identified obstacle, the egocentric will, the volition we all possess, the stubborn refusal to submit our will to anyone or anything other than what we want.

Remember that? Where that problem remains, there is no turnaround, no healing, no bliss, no fulfilled expectations, and no marriage on a rock.

[28 : 53] Requirement number one for a marriage on the rock part one. Only two requirements need to be met in order for any Christian married couple to enjoy a marriage on the rock, and we are totally confident whereof we speak.

Requirement number one, both husband and wife need to make a renewed commitment to their marriage, the preservation of it, and the blessedness of it, you know, the kind of commitment you both had when you first married.

Now, if you find yourself unwilling to do that, either you or your mate, then you're stuck, right there. Maritally speaking, you aren't going anywhere, precisely because you are married and are supposed to be one.

But one wants to go one way and the other another way. Progress is impossible. Marriage means you have to do it together or it just can't work.

If either is unwilling, the one who is willing is locked on hold and isn't going anywhere. Husband and wife must pull together for their marriage or they can never achieve any kind of relationship that will make them glad and delighted they are married to each other.

[30 : 06] Picture this absurd scene, if you will. Simple as it is, it's the same principle and problem that exists in a marriage with only one partner committed. Alright, here you are.

You're standing in your living room wanting to walk forward. Your left leg is working and takes that first step, but your right leg says, nothing doing, I'm not going anywhere, I am not coming along. Well, no matter how willing and eager the left leg is to walk, it is held hostage to the right leg and it effectively negates or cancels the willingness of the other leg. There are marriages aplenty that match this scene.

The only way it could be worse is for both partners to suffer that kind of paralysis. Sure, the willing partner, the left leg, can go ahead on its own and take that first step, but the first is all you can take without the right leg following.

The left leg can continue to inch forward all by itself while the right adamantly refuses to budge. And when your left leg just can't go any further, no matter how willing it is, what do you have?

[31 : 15] Gymnasts call that a split. Is that where many of today's marriages are? The sad statistics tell us it is. Very painful splits can torment a marriage to the breaking point.

We can only imagine the incredible, oh so welcome relief if the other leg would only come along and the two could be together. Then, wonderful relief could be followed by real progress, all because the two are no longer as two, but one.

Isn't life too short? To live it any other way? So, what prevents one or both Christian marriage partners from making that kind of commitment? The answer is simple.

They don't want to. They are simply unwilling to even consider it. And if asked why they don't want to, they might even ask, how much time do you have?

Can that marriage be salvaged? Of course. But we have to talk about motivation. Without it, you stay unstuck. Motivation.

[32 : 20] It's upcoming on the next Marriage on the Rock. Requirement number one for a Marriage on the Rock part two.

Only two requirements need to be met for any Christian couple to enjoy a Marriage on the Rock. And by a Marriage on the Rock, we mean a marital relationship that meets or exceeds every expectation of bliss that each partner had when they entered the marriage.

A Marriage on the Rock is one that enjoys the favor, the joy, and the blessing of God that day by day enraptures the heart of husband and wife and grows deeper and fuller year by year.

That's a Marriage on the Rock. And those who have one know whereof I speak. Those who do not, at least not yet, are the larger number and the larger reason for the existence of this program, Marriage on the Rock.

The first requirement that must be met in order for the believing husband and wife to have that is their need to recommit to each other as when they first married. Recommit, no matter how recently they were married or how long ago.

[33 : 31] Recommit to the traditional way it's stated in most marriage vows. Those aren't just words, you know, only a mere tradition that we include in our weddings. They are vows, promises that each makes linked to their sacred honor and personal integrity.

And by the way, if everyone making them kept them, there would be no unhappy marriages, and certainly no divorces among Christians. But that's for another time.

At hand, we are presenting the need to recommit to that person to whom you made those vows and they to you. However, or why ever that commitment was not followed through, God is the God of beginning anew.

God is always ready, willing, and eager for a do-over when we are willing to admit the terms. In this case, a recommitment is required from both parties.

But let's be realistic. If both parties were willing to make that recommitment, it's likely they would have been done by now. And it's also likely one or both simply didn't want to, refused to, probably for a whole litany of reasons that they could cite.

[34 : 41] Your problem for not doing it earlier or being unwilling to do it now is one of motivation. You just don't want to, and you are convinced you are satisfied and justified in your position.

Maybe your mate feels the same way. You both may need motivation. One thing is certain, the recommitment is essential on the part of both or your marriage goes nowhere but stays on stuck. And what about the motivation? What would it take for you or your mate to make that necessary recommitment to each other? Are you ready for this? It's the most powerful and compelling motivated factor in the universe.

It is sanctioned by God himself and is even tied to one of his attributes. Christian husbands and wives whose marriage has fallen into disrepair should be willing to begin anew with their recommitment to each other because it's the right thing to do.

It's the only right thing to do and it's the first requirement to be met while on the way to building a marriage on the rock. If one or both has strayed from those original vows you took, the right thing is to get back to them and soon.

[35 : 52] The wrong thing is to refuse to do the right thing. Get with it and a marriage on the rock awaits you. Requirement number two for a marriage on the rock.

We've already briefly addressed the first of two requirements that must be met by any Christian couple who want to enjoy the utter blessedness of a marriage on the rock. It was a willingness to recommit yourselves to each other as you did when you took those vows at your wedding.

Remember? Love, Honor, Cherish, and keep yourself only unto the other until death you depart. And remember how willingly you made those promises?

If they have lapsed, they need to be renewed, even if you don't feel like it and you don't want to. Why? Because it's the right thing to do. Perhaps they don't need renewal, if they have been kept and are still an ongoing part of your marriage.

If so, just keep on doing them. But if they have lapsed, as is the case when a fulfilling marriage is not being realized, then they do need a renewal on the part of both individuals.

[37 : 06] The motivation for doing this is the greatest in the universe. You should do it because it's the right thing to do. Period. If you, in your integrity, are committed to doing the right thing, whatever, whenever, then you have no honorable way out because this is the right thing to do.

It's always right to do the right thing. And that's requirement number one for establishing a marriage on the rock. Here's requirement number two.

And there are only two. Remember? Here it is. Commit yourself to doing what the Word of God says in all your relationships, including marriage. There they are.

Simple, uncomplicated, but oh, so strategic, so very necessary for all married believers. Motivation for this commitment to God and His Word is the very same motivation for you recommitting to your mate and your mate to you.

Remember? It's the right thing to do. Think of it. Is there any possible way one can go wrong by doing the right thing? Sometimes things go wrong because we did the right thing, but the one who did the right thing did not and cannot go wrong.

[38 : 29] So, can you not also see how doing the right thing is always in the best interest of the ones doing it? That's because God set it up that way. The only obstacle in the way of our making these commitments is the will of the husband and wife.

Both must make those commitments to each other and to God. Why one can't do it alone is obvious. It's a marriage, remember? The one who is willing has no recourse but to live and treat the unwilling mate in such a way that their cooperation may be gained so they can do it together. prayer for guidance and the counsel of the Lord will be a priority. And as simple and as right as are these two requirements of commitment to each other and to God himself, they are often met with a stubborn resistance against doing the right things.

Don't allow yourself to do that. It will rob you of a marriage on the rock. Requirement number two for a marriage on the rock, part two.

We have earlier stated the first requirement a Christian couple must meet if they are to create and enjoy a marriage on the rock. It is their necessity of making a serious recommitment of themselves to each other for the saving, preservation, and enriching of their marriage.

[40 : 02] This commitment must be made by both mates. One cannot make it without the other, and one cannot make it for the other. A marriage on the rock is an impossibility with only one of the marriages making that recommitment.

And the reason is obvious. It's because of the very nature of marriage, which more than anything else is defined by the word together. Together, that commitment must be made.

And when it is, the potential in that mutual commitment is unbelievable. nothing short of a dramatic turnaround that neither mate thought possible.

But that's only requirement number one, and only the beginning. Requirement number two is the same kind of commitment, again, by both parties, to commit themselves to doing what the word of God says in all your relationships, including your marriage.

Doing this, making these two very strategic commitments, actually pulls into your marriage the very power and wisdom of God himself. Without these recommitments, even Christians who are married are simply left to flounder in their relationship.

[41 : 20] These are critically foundational. Remember our Lord's reference to being founded on the rock? We began with that dynamic principle Christ gave in Matthew 7, and it was the very first track on this CD.

You may want to review it. When this requirement number two, of both committing yourselves to doing what the word of God says, you are recognizing that the one who created humanity and instituted the very concept of marriage has a workable action plan for the conducting of a marriage, and wonder of wonders, when implemented by the believing couple, actually produces the kind and quality of marriage blessed by the creator, and enjoyed greatly by the couple.

Should not that in itself constitute a powerful motivation for making those twin commitments to each other, and to God and his word? That, coupled with the motivation of being the right thing to do, what other motivation, what other incentive, what other equation can possibly compete with this? None we know of. And what other equation can possibly produce this coveted, yearn-for marriage on the rock? None we know of.

And what formula other than this has God put forward to achieve the result of a marriage on the rock? None we know of. Even if your marriage is not in jeopardy, you certainly want it to be all it can be.

[42 : 56] And if it is struggling with disappointments, ill feelings, dissatisfaction, likely on the part of both partners, these dual commitments are the first step toward turning all that into a marriage on the rock.

Revisiting the right thing to do Before pursuing these segments of marriage on the rock further, care should be given lest we be guilty of making a wrong assumption. And that assumption is the taking for granted that those listening are all definitely Christians.

Christians. Some may be listening merely out of curiosity, or perhaps even out of desperation because they are terribly unhappy in their marriage. So, again, one may seriously consider themselves to be a believer when in actuality they may not be at all.

And some may naively think themselves to be Christian because their parents were, or they attend a church, or they believe in God, or have been baptized, or have always tried to be a good person, and on and on.

They should be aware that the biblical picture of a marriage on the rock is available only to those who truly possess a personal relationship with Jesus Christ himself. Non-Christians can enjoy a relatively good marriage, and many do.

[44 : 14] But a non-Christian can never experience the kind of marriage God has available for those who have committed their life to Jesus Christ, have received his salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

Part of the total redemptive package that Christ provides through his death and resurrection is the abundant life of which he spoke in John 10.10. It, as well as other innumerable benefits, are provided for all believers, no exceptions.

Yet, it does not follow that one should become a believer in Christ so a marriage on the rock can be realized. As admirable and desirable as that is, it's not an adequate motivation for coming to Christ. Well, what then is the proper motivation? The proper motivation for placing one's faith in Jesus Christ is because it's the right thing to do. We have already described that as the most compelling and powerful motivation of all.

It's the right thing to do. Consider the dire consequences in which all find themselves as being sinful and alienated from God. Consider the extreme links to which God has gone in sending his only begotten Son to provide a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

[45 : 32] Consider the offer to forgiving all our sins, thus reconciling us to himself merely on the basis of our believing him. Well, it's the right thing to do.

How can it not be? By believing in, trusting in, the finished work of Christ on our behalf, we are then placed into the spiritual body of Christ by the Holy Spirit as 1 Corinthians 12.13 states.

In passing from spiritual death to spiritual life, we then become automatic recipients of all the spiritual benefits and blessings God has provided because Christ purchased them for us.

It's all tied to God's grace, despite our undeservedness. This is why believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the right thing to do.

Not only is it the right thing to do, but it is far and away in your best interest to do so, for now and eternity. A marriage on the rock is merely one of the many benefits and blessings produced from that relationship with Christ.

[46 : 41] Now, are you a Christian in that sense? The why of no marriage on the rock.

Marriage on the rock has been presented as the kind of marital relationship that is provided for and available to only those husbands and wives who are believers in the finished work of Jesus Christ. This is because the rock upon which one's life, not just one's marriage, but one's life, the rock is the very person of Christ himself. Only those who are in Christ have a life that is built upon Christ. This is why a marriage on the rock is even possible. By being built upon Christ, Christians who are married have spiritual resources available to them that non-Christians simply do not have.

This does not mean non-Christians cannot have a good marriage, at least good in a relative sense. In fact, some non-Christians have a more enjoyable and harmonious marriage than some who are Christians.

[47 : 46] They simply employ important relational skills in their treatment of one another, and they get a positive, predictable result. But that being true, non-Christians simply cannot achieve the ultimate kind of marriage made available to those who are in Christ.

But if that be true, then why isn't every marriage entered into by two Christians enjoying that ultimate kind of marriage called a marriage on the rock?

If all the wonderful benefits we speak of are automatically provided for all believing couples, why are not all believing couples experiencing that? An excellent question.

And I am sorry to say the answer is embarrassing, and it is a two-fold answer. First, many Christian married couples simply have no idea of what Christ has already accomplished and provided for them in their marriage simply because they belong to Him.

They are sadly ignorant about how rich they truly are just by belonging to Christ. This ignorance, sad to say, persists over the entire spectrum of Christianity.

[48 : 57] That is, for some Christian newlyweds as well as for many much older Christians. They simply are unaware, never been taught, never heard it, and they may even have been in church for many years.

Their position is not so much as unwilling but unknowing. You just can't apply what you do not know. And this is embarrassing because it also means the church has done an inadequate job of communicating these principles to those in the pew.

And the second answer is equally embarrassing. It pertains to Christians who do know and do understand something of the provisions made for them to live a godly life and enjoy equally godly marriage on the rock.

But they are so self-centered, so flesh-driven, that a harmonious marriage cannot possibly be realized. And these are even a greater embarrassment than those who are simply unknowing. Both categories are going to be addressed in our future segments upcoming on this CD and those to follow. The key to both categories lies in their motivation or lack thereof.

[50 : 11] The content is potentially life-changing and revolutionizing, and if applied, will surely lead to a marriage on the rock. The Why of No Marriage on the Rock, Part 2 The previous session attributed substandard marriages of Christians to two different causes.

Number one was due to ignorance. These Christians are simply unaware of the resources Christ made available to them when they put their trust in Him. Often the church has not succeeded in communicating that to them.

But we cannot fault the church entirely. Has it occurred to you that today we have hosts of Christian marriage counselors, marriage seminars, often attended by thousands, a plethora of books, videos, and CDs like Marriage on the Rock, television programs ad infinitum addressing all kinds of marital issues, some great and some not so great?

Yet, all these resources notwithstanding, marriages in America have never been in greater difficulty, never more dysfunctional, never more divorce-oriented than what we experience today.

What is wrong with this picture? One could logically conclude that the books are being read and the seminars are being attended in the main by marriage who care enough about their marriage to read the good stuff and attend the seminars.

[51 : 43] They are the already motivated, at least to the extent to read and attend, and we applaud them and encourage their ongoing efforts to better their marriage.

But we still have that pesky statistic about the failure rate for Christian marriages nearly matching that of the non-Christian community at large. The books they have not or will not read and the marriage seminars they have not or will not attend may be major contributors in themselves for the unhappy marriage they continue to endure year after year.

Couple that with an almost always present depression that usually accompanies an unhappy marriage and we arrive back at the problem of motivation or lack thereof.

Depression in itself can be immobilizing, paralyzing, to the point of just giving up and resigning oneself to despair, feeling like it's always going to be like this.

It doesn't matter what I do. Nothing's going to change. Well, if the needed motivation is absent, you're probably right. But with the needed motivation, it's incredible what can be accomplished

when both parties conclude they have had enough of things as they are and they want a different marriage.

[53 : 08] Is that all there is to it? They just conclude they want to radically change their marriage? Oh, no, not at all. There's a lot more to it than that. But that is the very first step and nothing will ever change if they both do not do that.

And again, why should you? Because it's the right thing to do. Jesus Christ did not die to provide a whole new life for you as Christians in order for you to endure a marriage like the one you've got. This should be all the motivation a Christian husband and wife needs. This revisits the twofold commitment mentioned earlier. Have you made that? Remember, to each other and to God and his word?

The stability of a marriage on the rock, part one. The first thing Christians who do not have a marriage on the rock should know is that you are in the majority.

Most married believers would admit their marriage is not all they would like it to be. And that's certainly not a marriage on the rock. But let's be clear. By a marriage on the rock, we are not talking about a perfect marriage.

[54 : 23] No one should be so naive as to think such a thing in this life even exists. We mere mortals, fallen as we are, and living in the fallen world we do, just aren't into perfection.

So then how do we define a marriage on the rock? Well, we took the phrase from our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, verses 24 through 27 in Matthew chapter 7. Christ distinguished between a house built upon sand as one opposed to being built upon a rock.

The difference, of course, is that when adversity came, the house upon the sand had nothing under it to sustain it, and it simply washed away. Had no staying power, no stability.

Contrast that with a house having a rock-solid foundation. It isn't that it has no adversities. It does. When the rains, the winds, and the rising tide of adversity come, and they will all come, yet this house remains intact.

It survives. Christ then goes on to conclude his sermon by saying that people's obedience to his own words provides them with a life built upon the rock.

[55 : 35] In other words, build your life upon the wisdom of Christ as revealed in the Bible, and you will have a life not shaken nor demolished like the house built upon sand.

The sand foundation constitutes a life built upon human wisdom, human logic, a human worldview, and perspective. But it's flawed through and through.

Because it is, adversity, when it comes, will do it in. This is not only true of one's individual life. It's also true of two married individuals.

Every marriage between Christians that does not survive is due to their having built their marriages on a foundation of sand. Adversities such as abusive, inconsiderate treatment of one another, infidelity of one or both, a real adversity, financial bondage, another major adversity, these all can take a devastating toll and reveal the type of foundation under the marriage.

The result is the marriage can't handle it, and it collapses. Had a marriage on the rock been in place previously, these kind of adversities would not have occurred.

[56 : 51] But where there is no marriage on the rock, these are sad and frequent occurrences that each partner can be guilty of committing. And with no foundational staying power, the easiest and quickest solution is to bail out.

The marriage disintegrates, and then a different kind of adversity is invited in. Bad behavior on the part of one or both partners may constitute an adversity the marriage relationship cannot sustain. But not all marriages fail because of bad behavior. Another real adversity that has many ending a marriage is upcoming. The stability of a marriage on the rock part 2.

Consideration was given to marriage failure being due to bad behavior on the part of one or both mates. And we are talking about believers who are married, not unbelievers.

We noted that the bad behavioral scene that took place would not have found the place to root and grow had a marriage on the rock already been in place. Yet, besides the marriages that end because of bad behavior, there are very threatening adversities that can plague married Christians that have nothing to do with behavioral issues on the part of either mate.

[58 : 11] But adversities, they certainly are. In contrast to the behavioral adversities, we would call these circumstantial adversities. And not even the best of marriages, including even a marriage on the rock, are exempt from being visited by the circumstantial adversity.

They may include, but are not limited to, a loss of employment, a loss of health, loss of wealth, a prolonged serious illness of a child, a mental or physical abnormality of a child, or perhaps even the child's death.

Any one of these adversities will impose an enormous stress factor on the average marriage, sometimes causing it to collapse under the strain. Most of us know of situations like that.

They are truly tragic and very painful to all concerned. Loved ones and close friends feel helpless to do anything but stand aside and watch as their friends' marriage slowly unravels right before their eyes.

And it is heartbreaking for everybody. No one in their right mind would ever want any of these circumstantial adversities to come calling at their home. But we all know we are not immune from them.

[59 : 25] If they come, the question then becomes, how do we handle it? Without a solid foundation under us, we have nothing else but a foundation of sinking, shifting sand.

Whatever kind of superstructure our marriage on top of it has been up until the arrival of adversities, the wind, the rains, and the flood, it's all over now.

No stability. No staying power. Down it comes. But wait. Don't Christians who are married automatically have the rock of Christ under them to provide the kind of solid foundation needed? And doesn't that guarantee a solid marriage? The answer? Yes and no. Well, what does that mean? It means every believing married couple have the guaranteed potential for a marriage on the rock, but there is nothing automatic about it.

The reason it isn't automatic is because God does not simply impose a marriage on the rock upon any marriage. His making the provision for it is automatic, but the will or volition of each couple is required in order to implement that provision.

[60 : 32] Please understand. Please understand. The potential is automatic and guaranteed, but utilizing, implementing, drawing upon what God has provided is done by each couple.

The conditions are met or not met, still at the discretion of the couple. It boils down to this. Based upon all that's needed for a marriage on the rock, each couple may or may not have one based upon their own decision.

The wherewithal is there to make it happen, but God doesn't make it happen. You do. Are you up to that? Squandering God's Gracious Provision In pursuing what many Christians lack that keeps them from enjoying a warm, wonderful, and fulfilling marriage, we have noted that every believing couple can have that, because Christ provided the basis for that along with numerous other spiritual assets.

The key for any couple in Christ to experience that kind of marriage is their mutual need for a two-fold recommitment. One, both recommitting to each other as husband and wife, and two, both recommitting to God and His Word and whatever He says in it.

The only reason we can think of as to why any Christian would not do that is they don't want to. They want to do marriage their way. Well, are you pleased with the way that's going?

[62 : 00] How can you be? Because any married Christian not enjoying a fantastic marriage on the rock is settling for a decidedly less fulfilling marriage than what God intended you to have.

What is more, Christ already paid for that. This is a very sobering concept, but we are confident it is accurate. What is meant by saying Christ paid for and provided the basis for your eternal life in Him?

It is not merely eternal life for when you die, but for a quality of life He described in John 10.10 as an abundant life, and that's why you are still living in the here and now.

A complete package of spiritual assets have been put in force for you as a result of what Christ accomplished by His death on that cross. It is not merely to take you to heaven, but to empower you here on earth to live and enjoy that abundant life and marriage.

Marriage may well be where it is most needed and enjoyed. So, what can we say to that which Christ provided, but not being utilized by those for whom it was provided?

[63 : 06] What would you call that? How about a waste? A shame? A disregard for what was provided for us at an incalculable expense? How about squandering?

Is it conceivable that anyone professing faith in the sacrificial death of Christ for their sin could actually squander what Christ provided for them? What is our attitude toward being blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1?

These are spiritual truths, realities, assets, if you will, provided by Christ as the whole package of redemption. To be sure, our eternal salvation tops the list, but it is only a part of what was provided. Also provided are the spiritual dynamics that enable us to relate to one another as we should, particularly as husbands and wives and parents and children.

But if Christ has provided them, yet we with our self-centeredness and self-will refuse to implement those wonderful spiritual blessings, pray tell me, what else can we call that but squandering what Christ provided for us?

[64 : 19] Is that any way for a believer to show gratitude? And let's add to this the motivation of making these commitments because it is the right thing to do.

Refusing to squander what Christ provided is the right thing to do also. Need we more motivation than those two? Better things await your marriage, if.

We are spending an inordinate amount of time in the area of motivation for realizing a marriage on the rock. If you already have a marriage on the rock, this is merely a good reinforcement for you. We want it to strengthen your marriage even more. But if you are a Christian husband and wife and your marriage is far short of a marriage on the rock, this motivation factor is where you must begin. And if you won't or don't, well, you're stuck. You're not going anywhere as regards progress or improvement.

[65 : 22] Get ready for more of the same because that's all you'll have. But is that all you want? I didn't think so. The first rationale we gave toward the two of you making the twin commitments, that of recommitting to your partner and recommitting to the Lord to follow what he has provided in his word, is because it's the right thing to do.

That should be all the impetus a Christian couple needs. It's the right thing to do. Nothing can keep you from acting on that right thing to do, but human stubbornness, self-will, and a self-centered fleshly appetite that wants one's own way.

If you're serious about Jesus Christ and what he did for you, that obstacle of stubbornness is one you will be willing to lay aside. You think you can't? Oh, you can.

Read Ephesians 4, Philippians 2, and Colossians 3, and then try to tell God you can't do it. And if God agrees, then you're home free.

If you can't do it, then God obviously has shortchanged you and what he has provided for every other member in the body of Christ but you. Somehow you got left out.

[66 : 37] Everybody else got what they needed to overcome their own selfish agenda, but you didn't. Well, shame on God. But you don't believe that. You know you don't.

God did not fail to equip us with what we need to build a marriage on the rock and then find fault with us for not doing it. God is not unreasonable in his demands and expectations for us.

With our Christianity, with our being in Christ, comes the complete package for the abundant life of which Christ spoke in John 10.10. And if we're not living it and enjoying it, we can guess who dropped the ball, can't we?

And by the way, don't forget that what God has provided for us, that we naturally in our flesh don't want to do, is most definitely in our own best interests.

This proves once again that we are all our own worst enemy. It reminds you of a child who refuses to be obedient to his parents' wishes even though it's in his own best interest, doesn't it?

[67 : 39] Well, it's because that's precisely what it is. Christians are very capable of behaving like disobedient, spoiled, spiritual brats. And we all have this capability.

But only those who admit it, confess it, and forsake it can go on to maturity. Those Christians who refuse stay stuck in spiritual infancy, stay stuck in not enjoying an abundant life, and stay stuck in a marriage that is not on the rock.

Brethren, we are persuaded better things of you. Those references, Ephesians 4, Philippians 2, Colossians 3. Marriage is mostly spiritual, revisited.

Because Jesus Christ is the solid rock foundation under every Christian marriage, that simply means the couple has all they need upon which to build the superstructure of their marriage, the upper stories, if you will.

But does Christ himself do the building of those upper stories of your marriage? Obviously not. If he did, no Christian marriage would fail. But many do.

[68 : 48] What Christ has laid and provided is the solid foundation, which is himself. But how and what each Christian couple builds upon that foundation rests with their decisions, not Christ's.

Our Lord wants all married Christians to have a wonderful marriage relationship. But he's not going to override the couple's own volition and decision-making abilities in order to make it happen. God does not make Christian people be happily married and wonderfully fulfilled in their marriage. The free will or volition God gave to each of us is what we use for making decisions. Sometimes it's a well-informed decision we make that later proves to have been good. Sometimes it was a poorly thought out, selfish, bad decision that sadly lacked good information. And still it was our decision. It is strange indeed how quickly some Christians can actually lay blame on God for their own poor choices. In fact, we can even at times fault God for not suspending the law of cause and effect, so we don't have to pay the consequences for our wrong decisions. [69 : 57] It's wrong decisions, often on the part of both mates, that produce shaky marriages that many times do not survive. And all of this, of course, points to the necessity of making our decisions based upon the best information at hand.

And that consists of what God has set forth in his word as to what constitutes a marriage on the rock, how it is achieved, how it is maintained, as to how it is to grow stronger and deeper year by year.

There is no place that provides this vital information except the word of God. And this is the most important part of the Christian marriage, the spiritual.

For most who marry, sad to say, even among many Christians, marriage is social, physical, economic, legal, cultural, traditional, all of which are true.

But what's missing? The spiritual. Not only is the spiritual often missing, it is the very most important component of marriage, period.

[71 : 01] If this be true, and the Bible insists it is, is it any wonder that multitudes of marriages that ignore it, often even Christians, is it any wonder they are far removed from having a marriage on the rock?

And even those who agree that the spiritual component is important, usually interpret that to mean, well, you should attend church together. Brethren, what is amazing is that there aren't more marriages in trouble than there are.

Let me ask you this question. If the spiritual is the most important component to a marriage, what do you have left when you omit the most important component of any entity?

What do you have left? You've been listening to Marriage on the Rock. A preview of CD number 2 of Marriage on the Rock.

The next CD number 2 will focus on a detailed examination of the spiritual assets God has provided for every Christian married couple. Failure to implement these assets makes a marriage on the rock impossible.

[72 : 19] But how can these assets be implemented so as to enjoy the fruits thereof if one doesn't know what they are, much less how to apply them? We will begin with a detailed explanation of these wonderful God-provided realities that, when implemented, do indeed produce a marriage on the rock.

Please remember, we are not talking about creating a perfect marriage. Such cannot be realized by imperfect people. But we do speak of an enormously satisfying marriage that enjoys the bliss the couple anticipated when they married.

And it just keeps on getting better and better year by year. If you already have that kind of marriage, then you are blessed beyond words, because many Christians do not.

So we encourage all who are already enjoying a marriage on the rock to continue with us nonetheless for two important reasons. Number one, you'll strengthen and deepen the wonderful marriage you already have, and perhaps you will hear something you will be able to share with someone who is struggling in their marriage, far removed from a marriage on the rock.

You could be the catalyst in aiding their hurting marriage, perhaps even to the point of saving it.

And wouldn't that be a wonderful and satisfying reward? Now, in addition to what Christ said in Matthew 7 about building one's life upon the solid foundation of his own words, a phrase is found in Ephesians 1.3 that also provides the basis for our teaching about a marriage on the rock.

[73 : 51] The Apostle Paul states that God has already blessed believers with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. But what does that mean? Spiritual blessings are not material blessings, such as health, wealth, possessions, earthly benefits, etc.

Spiritual blessings are related to the exalted position every believer possesses by virtue of being in Christ. By being in Christ, we have available to us assets or resources the world knows not of. Unfortunately, many believers do not know of them either, and this leads them to lead spiritually and emotionally impoverished lives, and most definitely have an impoverished marriage. Among these resources provided for believers are the numerous spiritual truths, principles, and dynamics that, when applied by the believer, simply produce astounding results. These principles and how they work will be pursued on upcoming CDs of Marriage on the Rock. They are simple, yet profound. You will see what we mean.

[75 : 01] Is there a cost involved for this material? Yes, there is. Not in money, but in fulfilling those two commitments mentioned earlier on this CD, tracks 9, 10, 11, and 12.

You may want to review them because they are so critical. Without these commitments, there will be no motivation to implement the principles that are forthcoming on these later CDs.

If you are, and if your mate is, welcome aboard. You are in for an unforgettable and life-changing ride, and will arrive at a Marriage on the Rock.

If either mate is unwilling to make these two commitments, the one who is, can still derive insight and help with your marriage, but there will be a serious handicap because of the very nature of marriage requiring dual participation.

What one committed partner can gain will certainly be helpful, and provide a better understanding of the one not willing to commit or participate. There is always the hope and desire that the partner who is unwilling may change their mind, would certainly pray to that end, and encourage your prayers for your mate to join you.

[76 : 17] Upcoming CDs will spell out the spiritual nature of marriage, and will describe the assets and principles that God has made available for you to put into practice. They will work for everyone who has made the critical commitments.

They will not work for those who haven't. Also, be advised, this upcoming material is not a quick fix for an ailing marriage.

It's not a miracle worker that makes everything wonderful in six easy steps. It will take time and effort on the part of both, which brings us back to the importance of those commitments.

Most of the time required will be spent by listening to the three and a half minute segments, and then discussing with your mate the content of that segment.

Some segments will generate more discussion than others, some less. Proceed at your own pace. Repeating segments, if necessary, could be helpful. Time spent together in going over this material will be far more profitable and beneficial to anything on television.

[77 : 25] And do what you can to avoid interruptions from other sources. Also, it's best to plan your time together when both are well rested, rather than late at night when you've had a hard full day behind you.

This will require some planning, but the payoff will be more than worth it. And I want to pray for you right now. Loving Father, we are grateful that, by your grace and provision, you have made all that is necessary for a wonderful marriage available to all who are in Christ.

And our prayer is that hearts and minds will be receptive for the upcoming truths from your word.

We ask for a facility of understanding and comprehension be provided by your spirit to all who are eager to receive what you have for them.

We are truly grateful for those listening and already enjoying a marriage on the rock. And we pray that their prayers for other believers who do not yet enjoy what they have.

Thank you again for the rich and satisfying life of marriage that you make available to all who are in Christ. And thank you for the remedial steps we can share to help hurting marriages enter into and enjoy a wonderful marriage on the rock.

[78 : 44] We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.