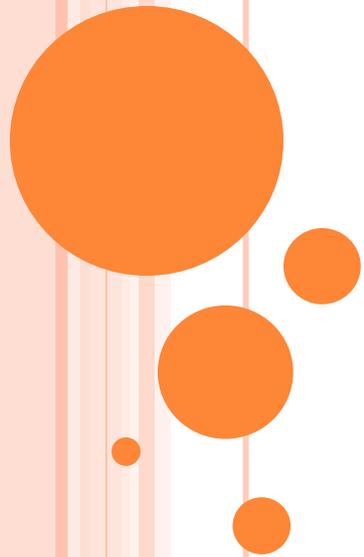


MARRIED COUPLES FROM THE BIBLE

What Can We Learn From Them?



PRAYER OF MARRIED COUPLES - USCCB

Almighty and eternal God, You blessed the union of husband and wife so that we might reflect the union of Christ with his Church: look with kindness on us.

Renew our marriage covenant.

Increase your love in us,

and strengthen our bond of peace

so that we may always rejoice in the gift of your blessing.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



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SOME KEY COUPLES FROM THE BIBLE

1. Abraham and Sarah - Genesis
2. Elizabeth and Zechariah – Luke
3. Mary and Joseph – Matthew and Luke
4. Adam and Eve – Genesis
5. Ahab and Jezebel – 1 Kings
6. Ananias and Sapphira – Acts of the Apostles
7. Ruth and Boaz – Ruth
8. Hosea and Gomer – Hosea
9. Tobias and Sarah – Tobit
10. Priscilla and Aquila – Acts, Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Tim
11. Philemon and Apphia – Philemon
12. Bride and Groom – Song of Songs



FAITH IS A MATTER OF THE HEART

- “Faith” in the Bible – Hb, Gk, Lt = “set one’s heart upon”
“that wh/ one holds dear”
- Heart → One’s true, inner being; one’s core, place where a person meets God
- Faith involves the entire person
- Relational
- Act of TRUST more than concepts, Verb more than a noun
- Faith involves choices for living well – Gen 15:6



I. HEARTS FOR GOD

Abraham/Sarah, Zechariah/Elizabeth, Mary/Joseph

- God's initial contact + challenge
- Confusion/questions/doubt
- Trust in God's plan – Hearts for God
- Reassurance through God's grace + joy



“Abraham, the great model of faith, emerges as a curious ***mixture of faith and doubt, of certainty and confusion***... In the Bible, faith is not viewed in the sterile and rationalistic sense of ‘assent of the mind to certain truths or propositions about God.’ It is not the mind that believes; it is rather the person... ***Faith, in the Bible, is a loving trusting commitment of the whole self to God, a holding on securely to God in spite of everything.***

At times we are confused; we struggle and doubt. This is not opposed to faith; it is part of faith, the part that says ***we care enough about our relationship to God to question and argue (Gen 15:2-3) and even at times to laugh (Gen 17:17).***”

Fr. Michael Guinan OFM, The Pentateuch



"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

Thomas Merton



FOR REFLECTION

1. When have you and your spouse experienced confusion, doubt and uncertainty in discerning God's plan for your life?
2. How do you assist each other in discerning / trusting God's plan for you?
3. Where did you both encounter the reassurance of God's grace?



II. DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

Adam /Eve, Ahab/Jezebel, Ananias/Sapphira

- A/E → SIN = Alienation from God, self, others, creation
 - ❖ Hide, ashamed of nakedness, bicker/blame, expelled
 - ❖ Sin separates, God unites (Gen 1-11)
- A/J → Self-willed, self-absorbed, unloving, insensitive, death-dealing, disrespectful
- A/S → Dishonesty, deceit, hypocrisy, pretense to God and the community of faith



FOR REFLECTION

1. How do you as a couple keep pretense and selfishness from seeping into your marriage?
2. How do you address it if it does? How approachable are you?
3. What are the risks of husbands and wives being transparent with each other?



III. MARRIAGE ESSENTIALS

- **Ruth and Boaz**

 - hearts trusting in and radiating God's love

- **Hosea and Gomer**

 - broken hearts seeking reconciliation

- **Tobiah and Sarah**

 - two prayerful hearts seeking union

- **Priscilla and Aquila + Philemon and Apphia**

 - serving hearts seeking community



FOR REFLECTION

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. Discuss how your marriage reflects the love that Christ has for the Church
2. How is your marriage a witness of faith within your parish community?



IV. DESIRE FOR GOD

- CCC 27 – “The desire for God is written in the human heart”
- Love poetry in *Song of Songs*
 - Groom praises bride: 4:1-4, 9-11
 - Bride praises groom: 5:10-16
 - 8:6 – “Set me as a seal on your heart...”
 - “Their effusive love for each other speaks to the *loving desire* at the heart of a marriage.” USCCB
 - Psalm 63:2-9 – “For you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts...”
 - Psalm 42:2 – As a deer longs for running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God”



GOD AND HIS PEOPLE: THE GREATEST LOVE STORY IN THE BIBLE

- “At its heart, *the entire Bible is the story of the love God has for the people* he created in his own image and likeness. Though we often reject his love, God never withdraws, never walks away, even sending his only-begotten Son.” USCCB
- **Rev 21:2 – “I saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”**



FINAL PRAYER

Holy God,

We thank you for the gracious gift of faith.

With the apostles before us, and all those holy couples of faith in the Bible, we ask that you open our hearts to the power of your Word.

And increase our faith that we may be bold followers and joyful witnesses to the message and mission

Of your Son, Our Lord,
Jesus Christ.

Amen



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