

Life, Love and Family Daily Fact Sheet
Dr. Tim Clinton

"Marriage 9-1-1"

- **5 Steps for Divorce Proofing Your Marriage** (Clinton & Trent, 2009):
 - **Have a Dream**—all couples need to have a dream for their marriage. Without a dream, there is less reason to make the relationship work. The Bible says that where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov. 29:18). Give attention to love, which involves passion (the physical needs of both partners), intimacy (the emotional and relational aspect of marriage—being best friends), and commitment (the willful decision to provide unconditional love and support no matter the circumstances).
 - **Make Deposits**—you can't withdraw money from a bank account where you have not made a deposit. Love is often viewed the same way. Love banking involves making more emotional deposits than taking emotional withdrawals from the relationship. Research shows that couples need between four and twenty positive interactions to outweigh one negative interaction.
 - **Be Invested**—relationships take work and they are not easy to build or maintain. Both partners must invest time and effort into the relationship. Pay attention to significant events (traditions and anniversaries), the needs of your partner (small and large), present moments, and companionship (communication, closeness, and partnership in everything).
 - **Be God-Centered**—God needs to be seen as the center of the relationship. God needs to be the unmovable force to hold on to when it seems that everything else is fleeing away. As both partners grow closer to God, they inevitably grow closer to one another.
 - **Accept Positive Influences**—sources of influence that grow your marriage include your spouse, marriage mentors, your pastor, trusted friends, and a professional counselor.
- **Key Characteristics of Infidelity** (Clinton & Hawkins, 2009):
 - Tragically, infidelity in marriage is becoming increasingly common. Christians are just as likely to be tempted to marital unfaithfulness as non-Christians. Women are as likely to have an affair as men.
 - Poor communication, unresolved conflict, and/or unrealistic expectations leading to marital dissatisfaction are common reasons for extramarital affairs. Any perceived need that goes unfulfilled in marriage will seek its expression elsewhere.
 - Spouses may become involved in affairs because they are exposed to situations for which they are unprepared or have not set wise boundaries.
 - Many affairs begin so gradually as well-meaning friendships that the people involved are unaware of how the relationship is changing until significant behavior occurs.
 - Infidelity can also stem from emotional deprivation in childhood when a person had a constant hunger for approval and attention. If the spouse cannot fulfill these needs, the person will feel cheated and let down and will seek the attention of others outside the marriage relationship.
- **Quotes:**

- *"The family circle is the supreme conductor of Christianity."*—Henry Drummond
- *"Problems aren't really the issue in marriage; it's what you do with those problems that makes all the difference."*—Tim Clinton
- *"Your marriage can send a message to your kids, in that whatever unites you is bigger than that which divides you."*—Elizabeth Marquardt
- *"God is still in the business of healing relationships."*—Tim Clinton
- *"A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian...and most of all, his family ought to know."*—D.L. Moody
- *"Your past does not determine who you are. Your past prepares you for who you are to become."*—Joel Osteen
- *"I have known many happy marriages, but never a compatible one. The whole aim of marriage is to fight through and survive the instant when incompatibility becomes unquestionable. For a man and a woman, as such, are incompatible."*—G.K. Chesterton
- *"If your marriage has any value for God, all hell will be against it."*—Tim Clinton
- *"Where there's marriage without love, there will be love without marriage."*—Benjamin Franklin
- **Divorce Proofing: Countering Disaffection in Marriage** (Clinton & Trent, 2009)
 - Disaffection refers to the negative transformation of marital love and commitment—the process by which love grows cold and the desire to leave the marriage or hurt one's spouse replaces former love.
 - Often disaffection involves an unintentional severing of emotional ties of love and affection.
 - If people are willing to step back and review their marital story, they will usually find a pattern of thoughts and behaviors that led to the disaffection.
 - Since harmful patterns are predictable, couples can work to stop them and save their marriage. More than just keeping their marriage afloat, they can reverse the process and breathe new life into their relationship.
 - Disaffection in marriage is not a mystery, it is a common virus. Interestingly, the process begins with everyday life and pressure. Consider the following:
 - **Stress:** Some marriages have been battered by life stresses, such as financial troubles, losses, health problems, or overly demanding work schedules. Spouses must deal with stress by considering the demands in life and their ability to cope with those demands. Develop a plan for better coping and stress reduction.
 - **Sin and Selfishness:** Sin is part of our nature. As Christians, we seek to be victorious over sin but we often fail. Being honest, seeking forgiveness, and staying deeply invested in one's spouse is the only remedy.

- **Satanic Assault:** Since Adam and Eve, Satan has had the poison arrows of hell aimed at the intimate bond of marriage. He is the great confuser and ultimate liar. He magnifies people's weaknesses and fears, using them as wedges in their marriage. Couples need to stay focused on the Lord and pray for their marriage. They need not fear Satan but they do need to understand his tactics and influence.
- **Unrealistic Expectations:** The gap between unrealized expectations and reality is filled with disappointment. If your expectations for marriage are unrealistic, you are setting yourself up for a fall. Unrealistic expectations must be fought with realistic biblical ones. You must understand that no one is perfect; no one person will ever fulfill all your needs. Only God can do that.
- **Childhood Scripts:** It is believed that the majority of what drives us as adults happened to us in our early years. These "scripts" are ones we faithfully follow, reinforced as we hold tightly to them. They also impact how we give and receive love. Unresolved physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, parental divorce, abandonment, gross failure, and emotional loss need to be dealt with before the Father so they don't infect a couple's marriage.
- **Busyness and Time Pressures:** Relationships and intimacy take time, time to understand, enjoy, and respond to one another, time to satisfy another's needs and have one's own needs satisfied. But, with life being lived on the run, there is little time—unless you make the time. To stay close, schedule time regularly just to be together.

- **Verses:**

- *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*—**John 10:10**
- *"Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off."*—**Proverbs 23:18**
- *"He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind, and the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted."*—**Proverbs 11:29**
- *"Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband."*—**Ephesians 5:33**
- *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."*—**Ephesians 5:25**
- *"Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*—**Hebrews 13:4**
- *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."*—**Proverbs 18:22**

- *“For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’”—Jeremiah 29:11*
- *“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”—Galatians 6:9*

Endnotes

Clinton, T. & Hawkins, R. (2009). The quick-reference guide to biblical counseling. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Clinton, T. & Trent J. (2009). The quick-reference guide to marriage & family counseling.