

“HUME’S HAPPENINGS”

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Greetings brethren ,

Thank you for your support , it is very much appreciated . Following is my report for **September 2024** .

BULK BOOKLETS ORDERS .

1 .

This month I received a call from Jimmy Forbes , a “mid fifties” many years member of a Melbourne congregation , who had just received my monthly Lesson Booklet . This one was entitled , *“Why I believe in God”* .

He phoned me to ask for multiple copies of this booklet to distribute among his relatives , friends , and workmates . It took me quite a few hours to photocopy , staple , and bind these Booklets , then package them up for postage .

2 .

Also this month Andrew Kerihan’s new landlady attended Eastside’s worship and I preached on , “Why was the Bible written?” After the worship I gave her my booklet on this sermon , and a few days later she contacted me and asked for ten copies of this booklet , she plans to mail them to mainland preachers that she knows who are members of denominations .

QUIZ NIGHT .

One of the leading men in “my” Eastside congregation (**Viktor Koskovic**) lives in *“The Mowbray Links Retirement Village”* and sometime last month the Manager of this complex asked me to conduct another quiz night .

On the **13th** of this month , Jackie and I conducted the quiz and there was much laughter , clapping , cheering and competitive spirit during the night , and as people were leaving , many came up to Jackie and I asking , *“Please , when can you do this for us again”* ?

These quiz nights give Jackie and I the opportunity to meet people we never would otherwise, and also to let people know that our motivation for conducting these quizzes is because we are Christians who want to serve other people whenever / wherever we can, and tell them about the gospel.

ANDREW KERIHAN'S LANDLADY.

Andrew is a much loved member at Eastside who lives alone in a delightful two bedroom cottage on a property with the landowner's home just metres away. In recent months a middle aged woman has brought the property and upon learning Andrew was a Christian, she informed him that she was also and was delighted that he was her tenant, so she could have religious discussions with him.

Andrew soon discovered that she is "charismatic", believing in speaking in tongues, miraculous gifts, and baptism of the Holy Spirit etc. Almost every time Andrew leaves his cottage, she comes out of her home and engages him in a biblical discussion, which is very difficult to deal with, given her unscriptural concepts on so many things.

She began attending our worship meetings at Eastside and to my surprise I found her to be receptive to being shown passages of scripture that conflict with her beliefs. Andrew then asked me to preach particular sermons in an effort to convince her of the error of her convictions.

So far whenever she has arrived at Eastside's worship I have preached four sermons on Holy Spirit baptism, what it means to be filled with the Spirit, spiritual gifts having been done away, and why was the Bible written.

After each sermon I give her my Bound, Illustrated Lesson Booklet of that morning's sermon and after the last one mentioned above she requested multiple copies (see point 2 above).

At the moment it is a difficult work dealing with the "baggage" she is carrying in her head, but I plan to keep preaching the word and hopefully she will respond to the truth.

HOBART BROTHER'S TEXT MESSAGES.

I have mentioned before a brother in the church in Hobart who sends me many text messages every day involving spiritual questions that need lengthy replies. Often my reply raises more questions in his mind, which requires additional lengthy replies, all of which eats up considerable time.

This month we communicated back and forth for many days on a large variety of subjects . He lives in his home all alone and has nobody to talk with so I have been the one he relays all his thoughts , concepts and questions to .

HOBART VISITOR .

This month we were pleasantly surprised when Richard Wells , one of the leading men from the Hobart congregation (about two hours from my city) walked into our Sunday morning worship .

Because of my obligation to teaching / preaching every Sunday I don't get to circulate around Tasmanian congregations as I would love to , so it was wonderful to spend some time with Richard .

Richard was a member of the Lindisfarne congregation for over thirty years before they amalgamated with the "old" Eastern Shore church and became the "*Mornington Hill church of Christ*".

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY .

When the old Lindisfarne church was in its infancy , for eight years Jackie and I would leave our home every Tuesday night around **4 . 30 pm** , drive over two hours to Hobart , and I taught their adult Bible Class from 7 . 30 pm to 8 . 30 pm .

We chatted to the brethren for an hour after the class and would try to be back on the highway around 9 . 30 pm , and arrive back at our home about **midnight** . Because I have always began work at **5am** seven days a week , those Tuesdays for all those years were long days for me .

The membership of the Lindisfarne church increased , resulting in them having about five men who were quite capable of teaching Bible classes and preaching sermons (though they found it difficult because they were also engaged in full time secular work) , I felt that they really did not need me to teach their "midweek" class every week . So , I quit making those trips and since then have devoted myself to my "home" church (Eastside) .

NOW I NEED HELP .

Though the Hobart church has about seven men capable of preaching and teaching , because they all work at full time secular employment and have families they struggle to meet their teaching commitment re the "mutual ministry" roster they have compiled . Consequently , they have nobody who can drive to Launceston and relieve me as I did for them for all those years .

At my Eastside church there is only two other men who are capable of assisting me in the teaching program . **Viktor Koskovic** is a fanatical Bible student who teaches our Tuesday night Bible Class by going through the Bible verse by verse using **Robert Harkrider's** workbooks as the basis for Viktor's comments .

Viktor does a wonderful job of teaching this class , but because he needs to spend many hours each week studying and researching , he is not able to contribute any more than teaching this class and presenting a Lord's Supper talk each second week .

Andrew McKerihan is also a devoted Bible student , but because of his full time employment as a Mathematics teacher , he is limited to presenting a Lord's Supper talk every second Sunday .

Which leaves me to teach the Sunday morning Bible Class and preach the sermon every week , and also to deal with literally dozens of logistics , member's problems , and organisational issues re the running of a local church .

While I am thrilled by the fact that my Bound Lessons Booklets are distributed throughout the world every month , I would love to be able to engage in local evangelism and setting up private studies in my home city .

It is frustrating to me that I don't have the time available to distribute the 10 ,000 professionally printed leaflets that I have on hand , leaflets that tell of New Testament Christianity , the Eastside church , and invite people to our meetings or complete a Bible Correspondence course .

Because I need extensive periods of time for studying , researching , preparing Bible Classes and sermons , and organising every aspect of Eastside's existence , I have almost no time left to engage in the evangelistic pursuits that I would love to get involved in .

Consequently , the members we have are wonderfully dedicated to faithfulness and Bible study , but because of their legitimate secular commitments they are not able to engage with me in evangelism .

What I am saying is , **HELP !** If you know of any faithful brethren who would love to spend some time in Tasmania assisting me in teaching , preaching , and / or evangelism , please encourage them to do so .

We are not in a position to offer ongoing financial support , but could assist with return Air Fares (if the brethren could stay for a period of three months) , free accommodation in our "brethren's apartment" and free use of Jackie's Mazda 6 car .

MY WIFE'S SISTER PASSES AWAY .

The sister of my wife Jackie , was found deceased this past week in her home , with her bedridden and Dementia riddled husband in bed and unaware of what had happened .

With the passing of this sister , Jackie is now the sole survivor of what was a family of eleven . She is particularly distraught because we have tried so very hard to talk with this sister and with all her siblings about Jesus and His gospel , but they were always very worldly and uninterested .

Though they were not interested in spiritual matters , I always found it strange that they gave us the impression that they loved us , that we were much more than just relatives , and they were continually turning to us for assistance or advice .

Jackie and I are very close with the daughter of this sister / in law that has just passed , and already in the past few days she has phoned Jackie several times seeking advice on a myriad of worldly issues relating to her mother's passing .

Our hope is that we can somehow use the passing of her mother to stimulate this niece to consider her spiritual destiny .

LESSONS TAUGHT BY ME AT EASTSIDE IN SEPTEMBER .

Most of my Bible class and sermon subjects take several weeks to cover due to the nature of the Eastside members who need constant repetition , detailed explanations , and mutual discussions among brethren re personal applications of Biblical principles in their lives .

Also , I encourage members to ask questions re anything they do not understand or even something that is a side issue to what we are actually studying at the time . Thus it is very rare for me to ever complete a lesson in one Bible class .

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS .

September	1	-	<i>"The Mosaic period of time"</i> .
	8	-	<i>"The Mosaic period of time"</i> .
	15	-	<i>"The Mosaic period of time"</i> .
	22	-	<i>"The Mosaic period of time"</i> .
	29	-	<i>"The Gospel period of time"</i> .

SUNDAY SERMONS .

September	1	-	<i>"Holy Spirit baptism"</i> .
	8	-	<i>"Filled with the Spirit"</i> .
	15	-	<i>"Hindrances to conversion"</i> (Non - Christians) .
	22	-	<i>"Why the Bible was written"</i> .

29 - "Hindrances to conversion" (Christians).

MIDWEEK BIBLE CLASS .

September	3	-	Viktor	taught	Colossians 1 .
	10	-	Viktor	taught	Colossians 2 .
	17	-	Viktor	taught	Colossians 3 .
	24	-	Viktor	taught	Colossians 4 .

Following is a repeat of the items that form the basis of my activities each month .

REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES .

Set up school .

Jackie and I arrive about one hour early on Sunday morning along with two other members and we set up an "auditorium" in the gymnasium of the Ravenswood Heights Primary School .

"Friend day" lunch at our house for brethren and visitors after Sunday worship on the second or third Sunday in the month .

Midweek Bible Class : Continues to be at my house .

Study periods : Preparing sermons and Bible classes for Eastside's meetings .

Lesson booklets : Ongoing typing , photocopying , stapling , and binding of new and replacement booklets for requests , and for display at our church meetings .

Study packs : Ongoing photocopying , stapling , and packaging of these as time permits .

Letterboxing : Jackie and I make every effort to continue this project on a weekly basis , but often a lack of time does not allow this to happen . Thank you once again for your wonderful support , please visit us if you ever get the opportunity to do so ,

Yours in Christ ,

Barry Hume .

P . S . HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY MARRIAGE

I have attached another one of my sermons for you to see how and what I preach

HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

A . STORY .

I heard about a little four - year - old girl who had a hard time grasping the concept of marriage . Her father got out their wedding album , thinking visual images would help , and explained the entire wedding ceremony to her .

When he was finished , he asked if she had any questions , and she said , *"Oh , I see , is that when Mummy came to work for us" ?*

B . THIS LESSON ?

It is a great joy for me to conduct wedding ceremonies , or even just attend a wedding as a guest . Preparing for a wedding ceremony causes me to reflect a great deal on marriage , and I want to share some of those thoughts with you in this lesson .

The story is told about a native village in South America that was built right on the edge of a cliff , and they had a problem because old people and little children were wandering over the cliff and hurting themselves . In fact , some of them had broken bones and some of them actually died from the fall .

So they had a town council meeting and said , *"What are we going to do about this problem" ?* , and the town

council decided they would build a hospital at the foot of the cliff .

And that's what has happened in our Australian marriage situation . We've said , *"Let's get counselors to counsel people who have marriage problems"* .

Well , that's fine for those who are already hurting , but I think it's much wiser to talk in advance about what we can do to prevent the problems arising .

C . OUR NEED TODAY .

We need to encourage all people to work at having the very best marriages and families that they can have , and to teach their children (before they even get married) how to have strong , happy families .

That's why I want to talk in this lesson about , *"How To Have A Happy Marriage"* - **Prov 5 : 18 - 19** **Eccl 9 : 9** .

We all need to learn together about how to make our marriages the very best they can be . But where do you turn to find out how to have a strong marriage ? In reality , I think there are two sources .

SOURCES **OF GUIDANCE**

A . GOD AND BIBLE .

First of all , we have to find out what God has to say . It only makes sense that God , who designed marriage and the family , would be the one that we would turn to for guidance in having a strong marriage - **Gen 2 : 18** & **22 - 24** **Ps 127 : 1** .

I bought a Dell computer , and if I have a problem with it , I can contact the technical support people at the Dell Company . They are the ones who designed it , they are the ones who built it . They know better than anyone else how to fix it .

The same thing is true of marriage and God, and in the Bible, God has given us some clearly defined guidelines for marriage, it is God's "Marriage Manual", it is where we ought to go to for "Technical Support" re how our marriages today should operate - **2 Tim 3 : 16 - 17**.

B. HUMAN EXPERIENCES.

Secondly, I think we can turn to the centuries of human experiences, both positive and negative, to learn what works and what doesn't re making a success of marriage.

The Bible clearly teaches the principle of following the example of others who live right - **Heb 6 : 11 - 12** & **13 : 7** **Jms 5 : 10**.

Erma Bombeck once said, *"People are always asking couples whose marriages have endured at least a quarter of a century for their secret for success. Actually, it is no secret at all. I am a forgiving woman. Long ago, I forgave my husband for not being Paul Newman"*.

That piece of advice may help a bit. But several years ago, a group of marriage counselors wanted to find as much information as they could on strong marriages. So they placed a short ad in about 50 newspapers across the country.

The ad said, *"If you live in a strong marriage, please contact us. We know a lot about what makes marriages fail, but we need to know more about what makes them succeed"*.

So the letters poured in. Questionnaires were mailed to the people who responded. More than 3,000 couples participated. These strong, happy marriages have come from all economic levels, different races, differing educational levels, even different countries.

One of the most surprising things to emerge is that six key qualities for making a strong marriage were mentioned time and time again by all of these couples. The researchers found that in spite of cultural, political and language differences, all the families, in every country shared these six attributes.

So , I want to share these six qualities with you in this lesson , and ask that you take special notice of how they agree with God's instructions in His "Marriage Manual" , the Bible .

COMMITMENT

A . JOKE .

I like the joke that says little Mary was at her first wedding and was just amazed by the entire ceremony . When it was over , she asked her mother , *"Why did the lady change her mind" ?* Her mother asked , *"What do you mean" ?* *"Well , she went down the aisle with one man , and came back with another one"* .

B . SAD SITUATION TODAY .

Some married couples seem to change their mind just about that quickly . There are too many divorces taking place today because there was never any commitment in the marriage in the first place .

Many get married with the attitude that treats marriage like a pack of chewing gum . You take the first stick and chew all the sweetness out and throw it away , then you get another piece and chew all the sweetness out and throw it away , then you get another piece and that's what is happening in many marriages today .

C . A LIFETIME CONTRACT .

Apart from our commitment to God , our commitment to our marriage should be the number one priority in our lives . In a strong marriage , both spouses are deeply committed to each other and devote themselves to helping and supporting each other .

When Jesus said , *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife , and the two shall be one flesh What God has joined*

together, let no man separate" - (Matt 19 : 5 - 6), He had in mind a commitment.

A successful marriage begins with commitment, not just one of spoken vows, but the deep - down resolve to make the marriage succeed.

Paul said, *"The married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living" - Rom 7 : 2.*

D. A COMMON SCENARIO.

A couple shares a deep romantic relationship, and they pledge themselves to each other in marriage. If they have a traditional ceremony, the vows will say something like, *"For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part".*

But, before long, the honeymoon passes, and the realities of life set in. The courtship idea that, *"no matter what problems we have, we can work them out because we are so much in love"*, seems to be a part of the past.

The problems become a burden. There isn't enough money, the spouse isn't as handsome or as beautiful as before, there is an extended illness, someone gains a lot of weight, babies' nappies need changing, tempers flare, hurtful things are said, suspicions crop up, and jealousies arise, disturbing personal habits develop, one doesn't live up to the expectation of the other, and so there is nagging.

E. THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

The fact of the matter is that in every marriage relationship, difficulties come, and life loses the exhilaration of the courtship and the honeymoon. It becomes ordinary or perhaps below ordinary.

And that's where commitment comes in. Romance alone cannot sustain a marriage, but committed love will. Strong, happy marriages are not the ones without any hard times, these married couples don't live in a bubble, sheltered from all of the problems that everybody else has.

They have their problems , but their problems don't destroy their commitment to each other . No matter what happens , they are going to be there for each other .

Anecdote .

People need the attitude of the grandmother who , with her husband was celebrating their golden wedding anniversary . One of her grand - daughters said to her , "*Grandma , you and grandpa have been married for fifty years , have you ever thought about divorcing him*" ?

Grandma gasped and said , "*Divorce ? No , not once*" ! Then she grinned and said , "*But several times I thought about killing him*" !

What about us ?

The truth is , no marriage is without problems and without disagreements , but if both spouses have a really strong commitment to making the marriage a success , they can work through any problem and any disagreement that may arise .

The excellent wife in **Prov 31 : 12** , "*Does good to her husband and not evil , all the days of her life*" .

Husbands are to , "*love their wives , just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her*" - **Eph 5 : 25** .

SPEND SUBSTANTIAL

QUALITY TIME TOGETHER

A . STRANGERS IN THE HOME .

When 1500 spouses were asked the question , "*What do you think makes a happy marriage*" ? they didn't list money , cars , or fine homes . More than anything else , they said , "*Doing things together*" .

Today's families are more mobile than they've ever been . We have got so many activities going on , keeping us scattered in all directions , rarely seeing each other for days at a time .

In a family where each parent has a car, and older children also drive, home often seems more like a pit stop on the race track of life.

But even being at home doesn't guarantee that spouses spend time together. Couples who spend hours each day watching television in the same room may not have any idea what is going on in each other's daily lives.

We can live together for years without ever really knowing the people who are closest to us.

B. WHAT ABOUT OUR CHILDREN ?

I heard about a young lady who was about to be married, and her father was a multi-millionaire. When she got married, she was standing at the back of the auditorium and her father was about to walk her down the aisle to the front. And her father turned and said to her, "*We haven't spent much time together, have we*" ?

The truth was, he hadn't spent any time to speak of with her, and now he was trying somehow or other in his own inept way to say something to his daughter before he gives her away. "*We haven't spent much time together, have we*" ? And she made a one-word answer, "*Nope*".

What we need to think about is this, what is going to happen when your children are ready to walk down the aisle ?

C. THINK ABOUT SAMUEL .

In the Old Testament, Samuel was a great man of God, who was powerful in prayer, trustworthy, he called Israel to repentance, and was remembered after he had died -
Heb 11 : 32 - 34 Ps 99 : 6 1 Sam 7 : 3 - 6 & 25 : 1
1 Chron 9 : 22 .

But his sons were evil, "*His sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain, and took bribes, and perverted justice*" - **I Sam 8 : 3 .**

Now, we're not told the reason, but I think it's possible, just possible, that Samuel didn't spend much time with

his children . We are told , "He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal , and Mizpah , and he judged Israel in all those places" - **I Sam 7 : 16** .

Even a preacher needs to be concerned with taking time out for his family . There is a desperate need for families to spend time together , this is a prime characteristic of strong families , they take time to be together , they do a lot of things together , they work together and play together .

D . WHAT ABOUT TODAY ?

We live in a hectic world which makes togetherness very difficult , so how do spouses find time to be together ? Let me suggest to you that time doesn't just happen , you don't just open the closet door and , lo and behold , I've got 24 more hours ! You don't find time .

If you're going to spend more time with your spouse , it's going to have to be time that you took from something else that you were doing . I don't know of any other way to work it . It's a matter of priorities - **Eph 5 : 15 - 16** .

Let me make a suggestion to you . Plan one day a week for the two of you to be alone together , and do something special . Go for a drive somewhere , walk along a beach , cycle through a country town , have a picnic in a park .

It doesn't matter so much what you do as long as you're doing things together as a married couple who are devoted to being each other's best friend , and relying on each other for strength - **Eccl 4 : 9 - 12** .

APPRECIATION

A . WORDS THAT EDIFY .

The members of strong marriages like each other , and keep on expressing their appreciation ! They give each other very positive feelings of self - worth . They make each other feel good about each other , they follow the advice of Paul in **Eph 4 : 29** .

Feeling appreciated by others is one of the most basic human needs. Too often, our married lives are filled with criticism, sarcasm, and put-downs. We need that positive affirmation that comes from a husband who, *"loves his wife just as Christ loved the church"*, and a wife, *"respecting her husband"* - **Eph 5 : 25 & 33**.

Strong married couple's talk positively about each other, and they do so to each other as well as with outsiders. Let me suggest to you that you get together with your spouse sometime and write down 10 things you like about each other.

Give each other compliments regularly, give hugs and kisses on a regular basis. Tell your mate, *"I love you"*, several times a day. Seek to build up rather than to tear down.

COMMUNICATION

A . VITAL FOR HAPPY MARRIAGE .

Someone has said that in the first year of marriage, the man speaks and the woman listens, in the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year, they both speak and the neighbours listen.

That is not what I mean by communication. In strong marriages spouses communicate with each other often. They talk to each other about anything and everything. They also listen to each other. Remember when you were dating, you spent a lot of time talking to each other.

You could spend hours on the phone at a time, sharing your opinions and your preferences, or just talking about what's going on. But then you get married, you get to know each other and you quit talking and quit listening.

Women complain more than anything else that their husbands don't communicate. The husband comes home from work, plops down in his easy chair, turns on the TV or looks at the paper. He's not interested in talking and he's sure not interested in listening - **Prov 18 : 13**.

B . STORY .

A little girl and a little boy were at day care one day, and the girl approached the boy and said, *"Hey*

Tommy, want to play house" ? He said, "Sure ! What do you want me to do" ?

The little girl said, "I want you to communicate your feelings". Tommy said, "Communicate my feelings ? I have no idea what that means". She says, "Perfect, you can be the husband".

C. MEAL TIMES.

If we want strong marriages, we've got to learn to communicate. Talk about what's on your mind. James said in **Jms 1 : 19** to be "*quick to hear*". Listen to your husband or wife. Listen to their problems. Listen to how their day went, no matter how trivial it may seem to you.

Let me suggest that one opportunity we can use is eating meals together. Maybe you have never ever thought of dinner as an opportunity for communication, but it's a chance for you to be together at the same time without any distractions, a time to talk.

Meal time can be a time to focus on each other, share experiences, solve problems, ask questions, teach, learn, listen. Again, the important thing is not so much what is discussed but that there is that opportunity every day for communication in the marriage relationship.

THE ABILITY TO **COPE WITH CRISIS**

A. WHY IS IT SO ?

Strong marriages are not marriages without problems. But, instead of being crushed, they're able to rise above the difficulties and challenges of life, and come out even stronger.

James says that we should view trials as a testing of our faith, that will result in a greater ability to endure, resulting in our eternal salvation - **Jms 1 : 2 - 4** & **12**.

Having said that, the truth is, problems will pull strong marriages together and pull weak marriages apart. But why is that ? Faced with the same problem, why does one marriage disintegrate while another one pulls through ?

Why is it that some marriages, no matter how serious their problems, always find ways to cope and emerge as strong as ever? I think there are several factors that are involved.

They talk about the problem.

We've already talked about the importance of communication, but good communication is even more important (and more difficult) when serious problems arise.

Talking about marriage problems is an essential first step toward finding out how serious they are and looking for answers.

They are optimistic by nature.

Successful marriages deal well with problems because they look for the positive rather than the negative. They take a position like, *"We can handle this, we are the kind of marriage that can do it"*. Or, *"This problem has its good aspects, it is bringing us closer together, it is making us more mature"*.

Research shows that when married couples define a crisis as being survivable, they gain the strength to solve problems or at least to adjust to them - **Phil 4 : 13**.

They turn others for help.

A lot of married couples try to keep their problems a secret and try to manage by themselves.

Whether it's because of a fear of rejection or a fierce spirit of independence, it puts the marriage at a serious disadvantage - **Prov 12 : 15**.

Every study ever conducted shows that couples who seek advice and help from friends, relatives, and community groups, were distinctly more successful than the ones who didn't - **Prov 11 : 14**.

It might seem absurd to say that families who survive a crisis are better off than if trouble had never come to them, but thousands of couples have said that their marriages are stronger as a result of what they have gone through.

The strong , happy marriages are those who are able to cope with crisis - **1 Pet 1 : 6 - 9** .

POSSESSING

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

A . VITAL COMPONENT .

The importance of religion is a subject that is seldom discussed in sociological studies , yet , researchers have found it to be a recurring motif among strong and happy marriages , and that is because , *"Unless the Lord builds the house , they labour in vain who builds it"* - **Ps 127 : 1** .

Religion plays a vital part in the life of a strong , successful marriage when spouses go to worship together , but it's far more than just that .

They also live their faith at home , because they have strong spiritual values , and they tend to be loving , kind , and forgiving toward each other .

A strong marriage must be built upon religious faith , where both husband and wife are consciously submitted to the will of God . Faith in God , faith in Christ , faith in the scriptures , these are fundamental to a successful marriage .

Through this faith we find the guidance we need in a complicated and confusing world , and through this faith we find the strength for times of crisis .

Spouses in strong marriages recognise that in the scriptures God has provided us with , *"everything that pertains to life and godliness"* (**2 Pet 1 : 3**) , and they regularly study the Bible together , and pray together .

But , above all , they live their faith in such a way that every day their spouse can see Christ living in them - **Rom 8 : 29** .

CONCLUSION

A . SUSTAINED EFFORT .

These six characteristics of strong families are deceptively simple . One might ask the obvious question , "*Why isn't every marriage a strong and happy one*" ? The reason is clear .

Putting these principles into practice takes a great deal of effort . Understanding what we need to do to make our marriages work is only the first small step . Achieving that involves sustained effort for the rest of our lives together .

We must be , "*doers of the word , and not merely hearers who delude themselves*" - **Jms 1 : 22 - 25** .

B . TOO DIFFICULT ?

Maybe all of this seems to overwhelm you . It not only seems difficult to put into practice , it seems impossible . Christians who are married recognise the "all but impossible" task of being what they should be , in marriage , or anywhere else .

Rather than being defeated by this fact , we freely admit it . But our relationship with Christ offers us power through prayer .

In this power , we find divine help that makes possible what would otherwise be impossible - **Jms 5 : 16 - 18** .

Christians have a double defense . When we become Christians , we adopt a new outlook on life because of our faith . This gives us a positive perspective to marriage . It helps us to make marriage as good as it possibly can be - **Rom 6 : 3 - 6** **Col 3 : 1 - 11** .

Then , we have God's promised help . This carries us further on the way than we could ever go alone . Even marriages that seem beyond repair can be salvaged when both partners sincerely seek God's help daily - **Phil 4 : 6**
1 Pet 5 : 7 .

C . THE SOLUTION .

It stands to reason that God , who designed human beings and marriage , would be the one to provide guidance and power for a successful marriage . Marriage involves people , so if people are what God wants them to be ,

then marriages will be what God wants them to be -
Rom 12 : 1 - 2 .

These things can only happen if we are God's people ,
living according to His "Marriage Manual" , rather than the
ways of the world . May God help each of you to follow
His will , and may He bless your marriage as you allow God
to make it all He intended it to be - **Col 2 : 8** **1**
Pet 5 : 6 .