

INVITING
JESUS
INTO YOUR
MARRIAGE



Gideon & Faith Bakare

Inviting Jesus into your Marriage

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Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations in English are from the New King James Version (NKJV 2000).

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Do you have any questions? Do you want to receive prayers? Would you like to share with us about how this book has blessed your marriage? We respect your privacy. egouk101@gmail.com or pastor@egoc.org.uk

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Dedication

We dedicate this book to Ben and Maria Pearkes. It is a good thing to wait upon the Lord for the best. We wish you a happy married life and many blessings.

Acknowledgement

We thank the Almighty God who has been the foundation and pillar of our marriage. We have no reason to regret since the day we handed over our lives and marriage to JESUS. We also bless God, being the source of the ideas in this book.

We are deeply indebted to all the brethren who believed in the ministry that God has entrusted to our hands. We appreciate your prayers, undiluted love and willingness to listen to our teachings or read our books. Special thanks to Dr. (Mrs.) Ore Oni and Mrs. Jan Pearkes for helping us to read through the final manuscript.

Finally, we thank our beloved children (Esther and Daniel) who are now making their own contribution to the kingdom.

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Introduction

On the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage (John 2:1-2).

The first miracle that Jesus performed as recorded in the book of John was at a marriage ceremony in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). This deliberate act of Jesus draws attention to the fact that God's recognition for the institution of marriage has not changed. Jesus and his disciples were invited into the wedding and they honoured the invitation.

There was no personal or marital situation that Jesus Christ was invited to in the Scripture that he did not address. He does not appear in places where he is not wanted or invited. Zacchaeus, Jairus, the centurion and a host of others invited Jesus into their homes, and he responded (Luke 19:1-10, Mk. 5:22-24, Matt. 8:5-10). All that he expects from you is to make a move by inviting him.

This book focuses on seven important areas that you **MUST** invite Jesus into if you want to have a lasting

marriage. It maintains that every marriage needs Jesus for it to survive. He is the source of joy, peace, success and prosperity for every marriage. Imagine if Jesus was not invited to the wedding at Cana in Galilee, it would have ended in disaster. When a need for wine arose, their human knowledge would not have been enough to sort it out. What are the needs in your life and marriage? Jesus is waiting right now for your invitation. He is the answer to all the needs in your life, marriage and career. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Chapter 1

Inviting Jesus into Your Heart

This is the foundation for any solid marriage. A substantial number of marital problems can be linked with this area. You and your spouse must be born again. You must have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal saviour before you begin your journey of love. This helps you and your spouse to make Jesus the alpha and omega of your lives. Light and darkness cannot dwell together. It is impossible for a child of darkness to tolerate a child of light. We have said it at many of our singles' meetings that 'if you marry an unbeliever, you have Satan as your father-in-law.' It is a matter of time before he begins to influence things between you and your spouse.

The greatest miracle that can ever happen in the life of anyone is to be regenerated. A life without Christ will end up in crisis, so also will a marriage without Christ. According to Dobson, 'if a husband and wife are deeply committed to Jesus Christ, they enjoy

enormous advantages over the family with no spiritual commitment' (Dobson, 1993: 49).

Inviting Jesus into your heart will help a man to love his wife (Eph. 5:25, Col. 3:19, 1 Pet. 3:7) and a woman to be submissive to her husband (Eph. 5:23-24, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:1). In other words, your love for God will enhance your love for your wife or your submission to God will influence you to respect your husband.

Chapter 2

Inviting Jesus into Your Spirituality

There is a spiritual dimension to every marriage. It has been said that marriage can make or break a person. We want to add that it can cause a spiritual progress or setback for many people. The Bible confirms that the spiritual disobedience of Eve eventually affected Adam (Gen. 3:1-9). Similarly, the sin of Achan affected his entire family (Josh. 7:1-20). On the other hand, the spirituality of Noah benefited his entire family. They were saved from the flood (Gen. 7:7).

Therefore, the spirituality of everyone that is involved in any marriage is important. For example, a high-profile pastor was recently involved in a scandal and the situation affected his entire family as well as all his associates. Being born again is just the beginning of your spiritual journey. There is the need for you and your spouse to grow together spiritually.

Inviting Jesus into your spirituality will enable you to fight any spiritual battle and win it together. You are able to stand in the gap and intercede for each other. You are able to rebuke demonic spirits that may be orchestrating your marital breakdown. You are able to engage in a corporate prayer of agreement. Jesus says, 'for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20). This statement could be applicable to marriage. Jesus will manifest himself where the husband and wife along with their children (if this applies) can come together to pray.

Other things that can enhance your spirituality together include personal and family devotion in the morning and evening, Bible study, church attendance, total obedience to the word of God and the Holy Spirit etc. The more you gain maturity in your personal spiritual life the more you will mature in your interaction with your spouse. However, the less spiritual you are in the things of God the more you are opening yourself and your marriage to spiritual attack.

Chapter 3

Inviting Jesus into Your Communication

The Webster's dictionary defines the word communication as the 'act of imparting, conferring, or delivering, from one to another; as the communication of knowledge, opinions or facts.' It is the 'intercourse by words, letters or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions, by conference or other means.' It is a medium of passing a message from one person to another.

The use of words can be powerful. Words can build up and they can also pull a person down. Words can motivate and they can discourage. Words can bring joy into your heart and they can also become a source of sorrow. Good words can transform your life forever, but bad words can cause a serious damage that may last for a lifetime.

When you study the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, one of the unique features about him was his good use of communication. He gave appropriate responses

whenever he was asked about something. Even when he was provoked by his enemies, he chose his words carefully. The same Jesus can help you to communicate well in your marriage.

Nobody knows how to communicate well unless the Lord gives them the ability to do so. A master's degree in mass communication does not make you a better communicator. Even your natural oratory skills are not sufficient for effective communication in marriage.

Inviting Jesus into your marital communication will help you in three important areas:

Firstly, it will help you to know the limit of your communication. You will know when to start and when to stop. An ordinary statement or joke can be easily misinterpreted by your spouse.

Secondly, your words will be seasoned with salt. The power of the Holy Spirit in you will help you to use appropriate words whenever you speak. Whatever you say, you will be able to say it with love.

Thirdly, you will speak and your spouse will understand. In other words, the Holy Spirit will help your spouse to interpret or decode the words accordingly. In addition, you will be able to think very well before you speak because you are being guided by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, invite Jesus into your marital communication and you will be able to take your marriage and relationship to the next level.

Chapter 4

Inviting Jesus into Your Finances

Money matters can be crucial for the survival of any marital relationship. It is sad to note that the love of money has destroyed many contemporary marriages (1 Tim. 6:10).

There is always a debate about how couples should spend their money. Detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this book, but we shall discuss it briefly. Three proposals have been put forward so far:

First is the joint account approach. This is a situation where couples decided to put all their income together. Then, they make a decision on how to spend it together.

The second approach is the common purse. This is when a husband and wife agree to contribute a portion of their income into a common purse while maintaining their financial freedom to spend the rest as they desire. The money contributed into the

common purse can be used for projects, investments, mortgage, rent, children's education, family car and other expenses.

The third approach is total financial independence. This is when a husband and wife have resolved to earn and spend their money separately. They can decide to help each other in times of need, but there is no obligation for them to do so.

All these approaches have advantages and disadvantages, but each couple will have to make a decision on what is suitable for them. Inviting Jesus into your finances will help you to build trust and transparency for your spouse. You will become selfless and not selfish. You will be able to avoid unnecessary waste. Money will no longer rule or control your marriage, but you will control it. You will be able to agree on a family budget and invest wisely for the future. You will also be able to fulfil your stewardship of money to the Lord.

Above all, Jesus will become the source of your blessing. You will receive divine direction on money matters. Then, he will help you to rebuke the

swarming, crawling, consuming and cutting locusts that are ravaging your family resources (Joel 2:25).

Chapter 5

Inviting Jesus into Your Personal and Marital Challenges

Life is full of challenges and no one is immune from them. Nevertheless, we can rely on Jesus for the grace to overcome them. Personal and marital challenges can come in various forms. They include infertility, debt, poor communication, boredom, sexual problems, difficult in-laws, rebellious children, health problems, pressure at work, joblessness, sickness, Satanic attacks, infidelity, selfishness, bereavement, separation and divorce etc. All these and many others have been addressed in our book titled '*Overcoming Tension Points in Marriage*' (Bakare, 2011).

Jesus is the answer to your marital tensions, he can sort them out. The Bible says, 'in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us' (Rom. 8:37). There is no challenging situation that Jesus Christ cannot sort out (if you allow him to do so).

It has been proven scientifically that stress can easily make people grow grey hairs. A number of people are now being sectioned for mental health treatment as a result of marriage failure and other relationship problems. Others have the tendency to misbehave whenever tension is too high for them.

Some people have confessed to us that sometimes they felt like shouting at their spouse, but the Holy Spirit would say ‘no, don’t say it.’ Sometimes they felt like getting angry with their spouse, but Jesus would whisper to them to ‘calm down and not react.’ Sometimes they felt like moving out of their matrimonial homes, but Holy Spirit would say ‘no, don’t do it.’ Sometimes they felt like leaving their spouse alone to face the consequences of his or her action, but Jesus would say ‘no, don’t do it.’ In other words, others may be doing it, but as a child of God, you can’t.

Inviting Jesus into your personal and marital challenges will enhance your ability to cope well with life situations. You will be able to rest in the Lord and hand your challenges over to him. You will enjoy God’s presence in the midst of the storm. There is an

assurance that your tears will not last forever. The Bible says, 'weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning' (Psalm 30:5b). All you need to do is to acknowledge the fact that you cannot help yourself and then allow Jesus to help you.

Chapter 6

Inviting Jesus into Your Temperament

A temperament is the natural disposition or individual's character, personality and way of thinking. It answers the question of why certain people behave in certain specific ways.

We need to state categorically that the discussion of temperaments did not originate from Scripture. It has a link with medieval thinking. It belongs to the philosophical or psychological analysis of human behaviour. Therefore, it has been hugely debated among Bible scholars, exegetes, thinkers, Christian psychologists and counsellors who have arrived at different conclusions. The debate is still on-going.

However, the contemporary application of the results from social sciences, psychology etc to biblical interpretation has encouraged many Christian authors to subscribe to this analysis. One of them is the famous American Christian author - Tim LaHaye.

According to LaHaye (1984), there are four different temperaments or personality traits. The first is sanguine. This is the temperament that plays. Sanguine people want to enjoy life and they know how to make other people happy. They are funny, active, friendly, generous, proactive and compassionate. They are able to sell anything because they are charming and approachable. Many great actors, orators and successful sales representatives were sanguine. However, they can be too emotional and unreliable in keeping appointments. They want to please everybody, but they will end up pleasing nobody including themselves. Some may struggle to be faithful in their marriage because of external admirers.

The second is choleric. This is the temperament that acts. Choleric people are task oriented. They are ambitious, energetic and passionate about what they do. They are full of strength and they make the same demand from others. They tend to achieve so much within limited time. Many great and successful military or political leaders were choleric. However, they want to dominate and manipulate others. They will not cooperate if they are not in charge. They can

find it difficult to forgive others when they are offended. Therefore, they can be vindictive and uncompassionate.

The third is phlegmatic. This is the temperament that rests. Simplicity is the rule of the game for phlegmatic people. They are kind, loyal, consistent, relaxed, calm and easy-going, rational and intelligent, sensitive and observant. Most good administrators, statisticians and event organisers were phlegmatic. However, they can be lazy, shy, extremely passive and resistant to change.

The last, but not the least, is melancholic. This is the temperament that thinks. Melancholic people are self-reliant and independent. They are considerate, thoughtful, creative and well organised. Many of the great philosophers, scientists, thinkers and inventors were melancholic. However, their perfectionist tendencies can cause them to moan about the behaviours of others. Similarly, their total focus on unfinished tasks can affect their social relationship with others. In addition, they rarely get annoyed, but when they do, it can be disastrous.

From the above discussion, we can see that all the temperaments have their strengths and weaknesses. Relevant here is LaHaye's proposal about 'the Spirit Controlled Temperament' (LaHaye: 1994). He rightly argues that when you allow the Holy Spirit to control your temperament, the weaknesses inherent in it will be transformed to the glory of God. In his 2002 publication entitled '*I love you, but why are we so different?*' LaHaye answers the question of how temperament relates to marriage. He notes that many marriage problems can be resolved when you seek to understand the temperament of your spouse.

Inviting Jesus into your temperament will help you to deal with your natural dispositional weaknesses. The apostle Peter in the New Testament appeared to be a sanguine person, but he was transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The apostle Paul, on the other hand, eventually overcame the unforgiving element in many choleric people when he accepted John Mark back into his team (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11).

Chapter 7

Inviting Jesus into Your Sexuality

This is another important area where the devil wants to cripple your marital life. It is an area where many people have got it wrong. Think about this, the devil will try to use every possible means to motivate two unmarried people to engage in sex before marriage. But he will try to separate a legally married couple from having sex because of petty misunderstanding or extra-marital affairs. He has deceived many people to believe that what they get outside is better and sweeter than what they get from their spouses. Sometimes the excitement for each other may suddenly disappear between the couple.

Solomon was the wisest king in Israel, but he became the most foolish king because he did not invite God into his sexuality. He ended up with 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). David was one of the most spiritual kings in Israel, but he became a carnal king at a point when he did not allow God to control his sexual urge (2 Sam. 11:1-5). Samson was the

strongest judge in Israel, but he became the weakest man when he could not control his sexual urge. He fell into the lap of Delilah (Judges 16:16-21).

Inviting Jesus into your sexuality will make a huge difference. It reminds you of the fact that you do not own your body, it is God's temple. It cautions you to use your sexuality positively. This will help you to deal with the challenge of uncontrolled thoughts and improper relationships with members of the opposite sex. You will be able to guard your ears against enticing or flirty conversations and your eyes against provocative dresses. You will be committed to your spouse and restrain from physical affection for other admirers. It warns you about the need to manage your sexual fantasies. It reminds you that human beings are not like animals that cannot control themselves.

Inviting Jesus into your sexuality helps you to offer your body to the Lord as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). It helps you offer your body to your spouse as part of your perfect worship. You will be able to address issues of inadequate sex (1 Cor. 7:1-5) in a godly manner. In other words, it helps you to see sex

as a gift from God and not as an instrument of emotional starvation.

You can never be satisfied with your sexuality without inviting Jesus into it. In our contemporary society, some males want to be females and some females want to be males. There are many beautiful girls and attractive young men out there, but the most beautiful and the most attractive ones are yet to be born. The implication is that you will always see somebody that you admire; but inviting Jesus into your sexuality will enhance your sense of contentment with your spouse.

Jesus taught that in the Old Testament law, you are considered guilty of adultery when you are caught in the act; but under his new dispensation, merely thinking about it makes you an adulterer.

Conclusion

Jesus is the answer, the foundation and pillar upon which every marriage must stand if it is to last. Jesus said, ‘without me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5c). In other words, your marriage cannot withstand the contemporary life challenges without Jesus. If Jesus is not there in your marriage, you will feel like fighting every day. You will be tempted to think that you have married the wrong person. Then other men or women will appeal to you more than your spouse.

Marriage is a union of two imperfect people, but the one that makes the difference is JESUS. The journey to marital success begins when you invite him into your marriage. Inviting Jesus into your life (regeneration) could be a once in a lifetime experience; but inviting him into your marriage should be a continuous process. It should be a regular practice as you face different challenges and situations.

Are you ready to walk along with Jesus every day and at every stage of your marital journey? What role do

you want Jesus to play in your life and marriage? Have you invited Jesus into every area of your life? Are you getting the value for your marriage? Do you know that Jesus can help you to add value to your life and marriage? All you need to do is to take a step of faith and invite JESUS into your marriage.

Solution Prayer Points

- Lord I enthrone you in my life and my marriage in Jesus name.
- Let your mercy cover all my previous marital mistakes in Jesus name.
- Father Lord, transform all the weaknesses of my temperament in Jesus name.
- I shall not ruin my marriage as a result of personal carelessness or foolishness in Jesus name.
- Henceforth, help me Lord to surrender my life, spirituality, communication, personal challenges, finances, temperament and sexuality to you in Jesus name.
- Oh Lord, give me the grace to trust you with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding in Jesus name.

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Other Spiritual Materials from the Authors

Solution Books

- The Christian Youth and Pre-marital Sex
- The Power of Communication in a Christian Home
- The Little Things that Matter in Marriage
- Choosing a Life Partner Without Tears
- Listening to God in the Midst of Many Voices
- Overcoming Tension Points in Marriage
- It is Possible
- Inviting Jesus into your Marriage
- Divine Connections: A Biblical Perspective
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Rev. Dr. Gideon and Pastor Mrs. Faith Bakare are anointed servants of God with a difference. They are seasoned pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, counsellors and prayer warriors. They have passion for family and God has used them to bless many people. They have jointly ministered in many local and international conferences.

About the Book

Inviting Jesus into your Marriage is a timely call for you to surrender your life and marriage to Jesus. Then, you can smile at every storm because the Master is involved in your marital journey.

Dr. Tayo Bolujoko

Nigeria

I recommend this short but powerful book with great enthusiasm. Your life and marriage will never remain the same again if you follow the inspiring principles in this book.

Pastor Christian Olatunbosun

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