

Compatibility – The Evidence of Oneness

Chapter 4

Audio Lesson: FAM04



Objective: To understand the importance of compatibility in marriage.



Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

—Ephesians 5:21, 22, 25

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. . . . Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

—1 Peter 3:1-2, 7

Compatibility is the evidence of the oneness God designed for a husband and wife. Compatibility is a very important part of a good marriage. The original meaning of compatibility was “two people who have decided to suffer with each other through all of the difficulties of life.” Yet today the concept of compatibility includes not only our physical relationship but also our values, spiritual maturity, moral issues, how we spend our time and money, what marriage partners both want for their children, and every other area of life together. Your spiritual compatibility with your spouse will be the foundation upon which you will be able to define the roles and responsibilities each of you must fulfill in your relationship.



Compatibility is one of many reasons that the most important communication relationship in a family is the one between husband and wife. I have heard many devout marriage partners confirm the reality that when they are right with the Lord and with their spouse, they can handle any hardship. That is a good summary of the meaning of compatibility. In order to maintain compatibility, we must accept our spouse with all of his or her strengths and weaknesses. Many people think they can change their spouse, but that does not work. Instead of focusing on the points of incompatibility, we must focus on the positive aspects of compatibility.

The Bible gives us several instructions about how husbands and wives should relate to each other. They are all based on having the kind of love in marriage that Jesus has for us. When we have that kind of *agape* love, compatibility grows and marriages are strengthened.

1. **True** or false? It is important for parents to communicate with children and to teach children how to communicate with them.
2. **True** or false? It is important for parents to spend time with their children.
3. **True** or false? Suffering is a normal part of life.
4. True or **false**? It is good to suffer alone and not share problems with anyone else.
5. True or **false**? God's Word says that incompatibility is a good reason for divorce.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. What normally happens when people divorce their spouse in order to marry another?
 - a. They usually find that they are much happier.
 - b. They are usually disappointed to find that they have exchanged one relationship with pluses and minuses for another relationship with pluses and minuses.**
 - c. They usually discover that all their problems have disappeared.
 - d. They are always much more committed to the second marriage than they were to the first one.
7. Which of the following is the best way to improve your compatibility with your spouse?
 - a. Try to change your spouse's habits, attitudes, and personality.
 - b. Pretend to be exactly the way your spouse wants you to be.
 - c. Accept your spouse as he/she is.**
 - d. Always do whatever your spouse tells you to do.
8. Which of the following areas of compatibility should we focus on in our marriage?
 - a. The negative side—all the ways we are not compatible
 - b. The positive side—all the ways we are compatible**
 - c. The superficial issues that do not involve deep discussion
 - d. Whatever other people are saying about us

9. Which of the following are important areas of compatibility in marriage?
- a. Physical
 - b. Spiritual
 - c. Values
 - d. Personality
 - e. **All of the above**

10. What aspects of a relationship are affected by our values? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. **Money**
 - b. **Time**
 - c. **Disciplining children**
 - d. **Desires and goals for children**
 - e. **Desires and goals for the marriage relationship**
 - f. **Roles for men and women**

11. To what does Scripture compare the relationship between a husband and wife?
- a. The relationship between two sheep
 - b. The companionship of two children
 - c. The difference between night and day
 - d. **The relationship between Christ and the Church**

12. How does Scripture portray a husband's role?
- a. As a master
 - b. As a slave
 - c. **As a shepherd**
 - d. As a sheep

13. What do we need in order to have the kind of love God desires for us in marriage?
- a. **Supernatural grace**
 - b. Self-will
 - c. Natural strength
 - d. Strong feelings that never waver

14. How are men supposed to love their wife and children? (see Ephesians 5:21-28)
- a. As a demanding master
 - b. By always doing what they want
 - c. Only by providing a good income
 - d. **In the same way that Christ loved the church**

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

—Ephesians 5:21-28

15. How are women supposed to be submissive to their husband?

- a. By always doing exactly what he says
- b. By never disagreeing with him
- c. By letting him lead as a shepherd**
- d. By constantly telling him how to lead



What characteristics and attitudes do you value in your spouse? What characteristics and attitudes does your spouse value in you? In what ways do you think you can improve your compatibility by focusing on these attributes?

Husband, are you loving you wife as Jesus loves the Church? What can you do today and this week to show God’s love for your wife?

Wife, are you showing proper submission to your husband as the Church is to be submissive? What can you do today and this week to demonstrate Godly submission?



Thank God for the different ways He made men and women and for the ways husbands and wives complete each other. Ask Him to help you focus on the ways you and your spouse are compatible and to strengthen your unity. Ask God to help you know and experience His love more and more so you can love your spouse as you should. If you are not yet married, ask Him to help you become the kind of person who will fit with the spouse He has planned for you.



Going Deeper

1. What are the advantages to a family of a regular “round-table” discussion? _____

2. Is incompatibility a valid ground for divorce? Why or why not? _____

3. What is the only hope of meaningful change for a husband, or a wife? _____

4. Discuss four areas of compatibility in marriage that are covered in the lesson. _____

5. What is Scripture’s guidance on role-definition? Is this culture-relative or *supra-cultural*? _____

6. What is Scripture’s assignment for men in marriage? _____

7. What is Scripture’s assignment for women in marriage? _____
