

## Diligence, Discipline and the Delights of Marriage

Over and over again we are asked by different folk to tell them the secret of our enduring and happy marriage. And each time we mention the aspect of working hard over the long haul to keep our marriage alive and growing.

We do not have any magical formula. There is no magical formula. Bringing two different individuals, from two different cultures and backgrounds together so that they become truly “one” is not a work that is accomplished overnight. Or even a work that is ever complete.

We, like every other couple, have needed to remain vigilant and diligent. If there is a secret to the blessedness of our marriage, it is an open secret. Simply stated, we’ve taken God’s Word seriously from the very beginning. We do not believe that it is “old hat” or out of date as far as how God planned for couples to enjoy life together. On the contrary, it is being proven and will always be proven that the seemingly smarter ideas that people dream up about how couples could and should live together come and go like clothing fashions. Whereas God’s truth remains anchored for all time as the way, if obeyed, to experience God’s awesome favour upon our lives.

Far be it from us to even imagine that we’ve always done it right or that even now, after 43 plus years of marriage, we’ve got it all down pat. Come and live with us for a while and you’ll witness that like every other couple we do have our moments.

But the difference between a blessed and growing marriage and all the rest is how the individuals in the marriage respond to those hiccups in their getting along with each other – the small annoyances as well as the weightier issues that take a lot longer to deal with. All we’ve done is with God’s great patience and grace just keep diligently refusing to accept a mediocre level of relationship. Years ago we set our sights on excellence in every area of our relationship, including in the physical intimacy area. We wanted to keep enjoying our marriage right through to the older years (when is *that!*?). We’ve refused to let the little foxes spoil the vines.

Early in our marriage, we made a choice to make our marriage relationship a priority, 1) because we wanted to really enjoy it (put negatively, the last thing we wanted was to have a marriage that would slowly die on the vine, that would grind to a slow and painful halt somewhere down the track); and 2) because we realised our responsibility to set a godly example in marriage to our children, and also to others among whom we minister.

Yes, we do really enjoy one another and behind the doors of our home, we live together in peace and love and joy. We’re also having a great time as a couple serving the Lord together. But let it be heard loud and clear – the real secret of our blessed marriage is not our diligence and discipline but the profound and enduring faithfulness of God’s Spirit who motivates, leads and energises us day after day, week after week, to live as a married couple and as individuals within that marriage for the honour and glory of God.

Hornsby, NSW  
August 18, 2006