

PREPARING TO BE AN ETERNAL FAMILY

By Marco Castro Castro

There is no magic recipe for success in marriage, but the ingredients are always the same.

My wife and I observed with sadness and amazement as some of our friends went through the process of divorce. The first thing we felt was the fear that this would happen to us if we found ourselves facing difficult challenges in our marriage. When a serious crisis did arise in our marriage, we decided to give ourselves one last chance—but to do it in the right way. We had already been trying for some time to solve our problems by taking one another's thoughts and feelings into consideration. Our relationship would improve temporarily, but after a time our problems always returned.

Not until we realized that the Lord needed to play a prominent role in our marriage did our marriage begin to change. We realized that we were never going to be able to work through, much less solve, our conflicts by ourselves. Putting aside our pride, we did something we hadn't done before. We forgot our own opinions and asked the Lord what He wanted

of us. Only when we included Him did our marriage start to improve—gradually and in His way and in His own due time.

It has now been several years since we knelt at the altar of the Santiago Chile Temple, and we have faced many challenges and much adversity. Looking back, we can say that everything we have gone through has been for our good. The adversity has taught us to be

humble and has made us stronger. We are still learning how to put our lives in order—both of us learning to work together as equal partners in love and understanding—and the effort has been worth it.

There is no magic recipe for success in marriage. The ingredients are found, as they always have been, in the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, as a family, we have written a declaration that we use alongside the proclamation





BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

“Successful eternal marriages are built on the foundation of

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and adherence to His teachings [see “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129]. I have observed that couples who have made their marriages priceless practice the patterns of faith: they attend sacrament and other meetings every week, hold family home evening, pray and study the scriptures together and as individuals, and pay an honest tithing. Their mutual quest is to be obedient and good.”

Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy, “Marriage: Watch and Learn,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 83.

on the family issued by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ Our declaration, titled “Preparing to Be an Eternal Family,” begins with these words: “We, the Castro Martínez family, testify that marriage is ordained of God and that family relationships can be eternal through the Atonement of Jesus Christ if we are obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.”

What follows are 17 principles that in our judgment encompass the basic gospel values that will give us the greatest chance for success in our marriage and in our family. Our list is by no means revolutionary; it includes

things such as personal and family prayer, scripture study, weekly family home evenings, attendance at Sunday meetings, regular temple attendance, treating one another with love and respect, and giving service. We also realize that principles by themselves have no effect whatsoever—we have to put them into practice.

Putting aside our pride and incorporating the Lord and His will into our marriage have put us on the path to becoming an eternal family. ■

The author lives in Valparaíso, Chile.

NOTE

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.