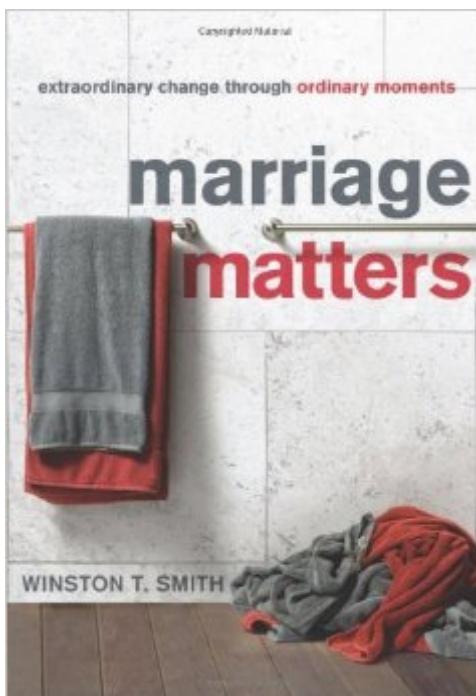


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# Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change Through Ordinary Moments



## **Synopsis**

He snapped at her at breakfast. She brought up a past mistake. He walked out angry. She left without saying good-bye. Just one day in an ordinary marriage. But what if things could be different? What if the ordinary moments of annoyance, conflict, pain, or cold indifference could become moments to understand God's incredible agenda for love and begin something new? This book offers a simple, yet powerful prescription for changing marriages one ordinary moment at a time. Change begins with understanding how and why small disagreements evolve into major problems, taking practical steps to love one another more effectively, and learning how to take those same steps over and over again. Interactions that used to devolve into pointless annoyances and fights can become opportunities for God's love to become increasingly evident and powerful. Winston T. Smith takes abstract, biblical principles and applies them to the concrete details of life so that ordinary marriages can become extraordinary.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Marriage Matters is written by Dr. Winston Smith a counselor and faculty member at CCEF (Christian Counseling Education Foundation). Having read several books by New Growth Press, the publishing arm of CCEF, I eagerly awaited reading Marriage Matters and it did not disappoint. In fact, this book exceeded my expectation which is something that rarely every happens. Having read widely on the topic of marriage, I can honestly say Marriage Matters is the one of the best marriage book I have ever read right along with Dr. Paul Tripp's book, What did you expect?Marriage Matters is a book that can be used in seminary classrooms, Sunday school class, or read for devotions. I

recommend this book not only for married couples but also for singles to learn what a God honoring marriage is. Typically most marriage books will focus on a few problems with marriages and then seek to offer solutions to those problems by appealing mostly to secular models. *Marriage Matters*; however, is different from vast majority of marriage books, I have read in that it does not load you down with self-help but rather explains what the Bible teaches on topics related to marriage. Along the way, Mr. Smith offers personal stories and examples from his own marriage which helpfully illustrate the point he is making. It is not often that I read a book that is not only very well written as this is, but is also written from a biblical-theological framework that brings honor to Christ and accomplishes its intended purpose. *Marriage Matters* not only accomplishes its goal, but in the view of this reviewer exceeds it. *Marriage Matters* simply put is one of the best books I have read on marriage ever, as well as one of the best books I have read all year.

*Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change through Ordinary Moments*. It is not good grammar to begin a book review with Wow. I need to say it anyway. *Marriage Matters* really made sense to me. Written by a Christian Counselor, this book deals with our emotions and behavior in light of Scripture. *Marriage Matters* begins with three points for how marriages change to Glorify God. 1. Marriages Change when we recognize God's agenda for so called ordinary moments. 2. Marriages change when we are willing to love in practical, Christ-like ways even in difficult moments. 3. Marriages change when we're willing to love consistently, over time, not because our spouses change, but because we're in a growing relationship with God. Winston Smith builds a sturdy book (almost 300 pages) upon these ideas. Our foundation is point 1: understanding God's agenda for our marriage. We find His plan in Scripture's definition of marriage. Winston Smith points out that when Paul and Peter write about marriage in the letters, they always focus on Jesus Christ. Seeing the eternal purpose for our marriage girds us with strength to press on in the valley, and heartens us with the vision of what will be in our Marriage to Christ. Our Marriage drives us very close to Christ, making us more like Him, because we can't live in intimate union with a sinful person until we live in union with our Savior. We cannot love until we know our Lover. The hard times sculpt us into His image. Our marriage is also evangelism. We show a love starved world the love that God puts in us for our spouse, a love we only have because of God in us. 2. Part two gives us a glimpse of Extraordinary Love in Marriage.

I now have three, primary "go to" books for premarital and marital counseling: "When Sinners Say 'I Do'" by Dave Harvey, "What Did You Expect?" by Paul Tripp, and most recently, this book by

Winston T. Smith. Smith is on staff at CCEF (Christian Counseling Education Foundation) and has done married couples a great service through this book. By first reminding us that God is in the ordinary moments of life, Smith helps husbands and wives refocus on those kinds of ordinary moments to change their marriage for the better. I think the most helpful part of this first section of Smith's book is how he has the reader asking, "What do I worship? Who do I worship?" The answer to these two questions will determine the direction the marriage will take from that point onward. Looking to Christ and the extraordinary love shown to us by Christ brings the second section of the book into even sharper focus. How you view your spouse, how honest you are in your marriage, whether you see conflict as something to be avoided or faced head-on regardless of the consequences, even how you forgive or seek forgiveness all have to do with how you see Christ and how He has regarded you. Put Christ on the periphery, and your marriage is in for big trouble. Exult in the extraordinary love Christ has shown us, and these parts of your marriage will start to take shape in a way which honors God. Grace is what sustains us throughout. It's what enables us to see ordinary moments as extraordinary because God is in them. In the third and final section of the book Smith really shines. Chapter 16, "Growing in Grace," along with Chapters 12 & 13 are worth the price of the book alone.

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