



## **New Beginnings Marriage Ministry**

**Living Joyfully and United as One**

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one." Matthew 19:5-6a

**Louis and Donna Markos  
Married August 12, 1989  
Ann Arbor, MI**

### **New Beginnings: How did you two first meet?**

Donna: We first met at a graduate student bible study at the University of Michigan.

Louis: I was getting my MA/PhD and Donna was getting a second bachelor's in nursing (we are the same age). It was actually a graduate chapter of IVCF and we met at the Bible Study.

### **New Beginnings: What did you love about the other when you first met?**

Louis: I am an English professor who specializes in British Romantic Poetry, and I had always thought my meeting with my future wife would have to be very romantic (that is to say, love at first sight with lightning going off in the sky). As it turned out, Donna and I began as good friends, and our relationship grew out of that. I actually struggled a bit with the Lord over that. I saw that Donna would be a very good match for me, but where was the love at first sight?? The Lord worked with me on that, and I decided to take the plunge and date her in earnest. So our friendship matured into love, and I think that is a very good thing and a stabilizing thing as well. I first loved Donna's sweet and gentle character. I think of a line in King Lear: "Her voice was ever gentle, sweet, and low... an excellent thing in woman."

### **New Beginnings: What do you love about the other today?**

Donna: When we first met he was funny, intelligent and Godly... and he still is!

Louis: I love that she is a good mom and a reliable one who is very involved in the kids' education. I love that she is supportive of the student ministry that goes on in our house (often late into the night). She is quiet and doesn't say much but is supportive. I love that she is not worldly or materialistic or vain but is very sensible and industrious and reliable (really just like the Proverbs 31 wife!). We still have fun and enjoy simple things as we did when we first met and married. We've both kept "down to earth" and flexible.



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### **New Beginnings: What strength do you bring to the marriage?**

Louis: Donna is not very decisive about many things, so I make decisions and steer the family, which I believe I should be doing anyway as a Christian husband (though Donna is much more forward in making decisions having to do with the kids). I am organized about family time and about the ministry out of our home and I work to keep things in balance. Also, I keep (our marriage) injected with romance and fun, and I work hard to avoid any kind of (marital) apathy. I always approach Donna and tell her that I love her.

### **New Beginnings: Was there ever a time in your marriage when you considered giving up and how did you get through that time?**

Donna: When our first child was small I felt like giving up (I don't think Lou knows this) but decided to stay because I felt I did not have permission from God to leave. Children do need two parents to raise them.

Louis: There have been some tough times when I felt Donna was not being responsive enough or thankful enough and was too negative about things in general. I've also struggled with terrible chemical allergies that have put a strain on the family. My most important strategy for getting through these things has been, quite literally, to count my blessings. When I get mad at Donna, I simply sit down and, in my mind, count up all the things I love about her and for which I am thankful. That puts things in perspective, and I can go on.

### **New Beginnings: How would you describe your marriage today?**

Donna: Our marriage is still a work in progress.

Louis: I think it is even stronger than it was seven or eight years ago. I think we are better at communication and just calmer in general. I think we communicate better than we did and have become more flexible and patient. We went on a cruise for our 20th anniversary, and it was truly wonderful.

### **New Beginnings: What role does God play in your marriage?**

Donna: God is the glue that keeps us together.



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Louis: When I get mad at Donna, I can forgive her because God forgave me. The Lord is the one who hits me on the head sometimes and tells me to calm down. The Lord has showed me that being the head of the family does not mean making decisions that are good for me, but that are best for the whole family. We are very much joined by the ministry we do out of our home, and we do pray together. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the two into one, and it is Christ's love for the church that shows me how I should love Donna.

### **New Beginnings: What scripture verse best describes your marriage?**

Donna: Joshua 24:15b "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Louis: I really look to the verse that says "Let not the sun go down on your anger." I do not let anger simmer but work things through as soon as I can. I think we really do reflect the call in Peter and Paul for the husband to love his wife and the wife to respect her husband. We try hard to live up to those verses.

### **New Beginnings: What tips do you have for other couples striving for a lasting and loving marriage?**

Donna: Let God have control in your own life and let Him guide you in your relationships. God is much better at changing hearts than we are; let HIM do the changing because it may be YOU who needs to change! Sometimes both parties need a change of heart.

Louis: First, communication really is key. Second, don't let the sun go down on your anger. Third, if the husband feels that he no longer loves his wife, he needs to start treating his wife AS IF he loves her. Once he starts treating her with love, the love feelings will slowly return. The same is true for the woman who feels she no longer respects her husband--she needs to start treating him AS IF she respects him, and the feelings will follow. Traditional Christians usually speak of the wife submitting, and that is true, but she can only submit if she respects him--and her respect for him needs to be as unconditional as her husband's love for her needs to be... equally unconditional. And be patient with each other!