

**A Marriage Insurance Policy**  
**Five Steps To Insure a Strong, Successful Marriage**  
**James Robert Ross**

- 1. Learning:** Take a course in marriage and family life. Before you jump into marriage, find out how it really works.
- 2. Preparing:** Prepare for marriage by doing premarital counseling with your partner using the results of a scientifically validated assessment.
- 3. Waiting:** Don't live together before marriage. Premarital cohabitation increases the odds of divorce.
- 4. Mentoring:** During the first year of marriage get connected to a mentor couple, who can share with you their struggles in making a successful marriage.
- 5. Tending and Enriching:** Set aside time regularly to talk with each other. Nourish your relationship. Take a night out or take a weekend off without the distraction of work and children. Periodically attend a marriage enrichment retreat.

Finally, devote as much effort to your marriage as to your wedding.

*The author, a licensed marriage and family therapist, is the President of the Bluegrass Community Marriage Task Force.*