

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a grassy hill at sunset. The man is on the left, wearing a dark green long-sleeved shirt, with his back to the camera. The woman is on the right, wearing blue jeans, sitting cross-legged and holding the man's hand. The background is a soft, golden glow from the setting sun over a field of tall grass.

Marriage Through the Middle of the Pandemic

Luke 6:46-49

TWO FOUNDATIONS – ONE STORM

Luke 6:46-49 So why do you keep calling me Lord, Lord! when you don't do what I say? I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built. But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.

OUR MARITAL FOUNDATION IS CRITICAL

The house on a solid foundation will survive the "storms of life."

Pandemic

Health Issues

Racial Issues

Politics

Injustice

Unfairness

Economics

Debt

Surprise

The houses looked identical on the outside, but only one house would stand the test. The house on sand collapsed... *into a HEAP OF RUIN.*

Psalm 127:1 *Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted.*

INTENTIONALITY IN MARRIAGE

A healthy marriage is hard work, consistency, grace, love, mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, relational, emotional, and spiritual maturity.

Bringing the Word of God into the center of our marriages and actually applying and integrating God's word, requires intentionality!

Our faith is made known by the storms. The pandemic is challenging our FAITH and revealing the STRENGTH of our FAITH.

One key tactical plan of the enemy to break down marriages and families is through isolation and disconnection.

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT!

Consistent PRAYER together and DEVOTIONALS are essential to marital health.

Ephesians 6:18 *Pray at all times and on every occasion...be persistent in your prayers.*

PRAYER: We TALK to God **Philippians 4:6-7** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

PRAYER: We LISTEN to God **Jeremiah 33:3** *Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*

A COUPLE THAT PRAYS TOGETHER WILL STAY TOGETHER

Clinical research demonstrates that couples experience a great number of marital benefits when they regularly pray together. It increases forgivingness, emotional and sexual fidelity, relational happiness, trust and unity. It even improves conflict resolution, realizing that we have been unconditionally forgiven by God, so we are better able to forgive our partner.

Why is a couple's prayer life such an important aspect of marital happiness?

Christian couples experience a "spiritual connectedness" toward each other when they communicate together with the Lord who is our "marriage advocate." In prayer the Lord becomes an intimate partner in the relationship. The Holy Spirit's presence and connection glues or holds the relationship together.

PROTECT THE MARITAL FRIENDSHIP

Marital friendships are built, remodeled, repaired, refreshed and maintained.

Negative Bias: Learning to see and affirm the positive is important to a marriage. We can change our negative bias.

Research has shown that people tend to focus more on the negative as they try to make sense of the world (pandemic).

A negative bias influences motivation to complete a task. People are less motivated when an incentive results in gaining something, but are more motivated when an incentive avoids the loss of something.

Studies have shown that negative news is more likely to be perceived as truthful. Since negative information draws greater attention, it also may be seen as having greater validity.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO OVERCOME TODAY'S NEGATIVE BIAS

Romans 12:1-2 *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

1. Reflective Journal Writing Deuteronomy 31:19
2. Thought-Stopping Philippians 4:8
3. Kind Words Proverbs 25:11
4. Change The Way You Think 2 Corinthians 10:5
5. Change Self-Limiting Statements to Questions Matthew 19:26

GUARD YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:23-27 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

Guard your hearts with spiritual, emotional and relational boundaries.

Be protective by filtering the ear and eye gateways into your mind.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

