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### **What's God's purpose for marriage?**

- Once couples came to understand God's purpose for their marriages, they discovered a new and exciting dimension to their lives together.

### ***GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE***

Jesus said this of marriage: "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate" ([Matt. 19:4-6](#)).

- Marriage is God's joining together a man and a woman to create a union through which He can accomplish His purposes and be glorified. Marriage is not just a human contract or agreement. It is a divine creation. God has a special purpose for each couple He unites. He is so committed to the sanctity of marriage that He hates divorce ([Mal. 2:16](#)).

***What does it mean to be one flesh?*** It implies that your life is not your own. You are not two separate individuals trying to work out a coexistence. You are one. When your spouse feels pain, you suffer too. When your spouse experiences spiritual victory, you are victorious as well. When God has a plan for the wife, it means God's activity will affect the husband.

***What if the husband wants to move forward with God, but the wife is unwilling?***

- Should I go on without her? **Our response:** is "***You are one flesh***". You cannot leave your spouse behind.

***What if the wife senses that God wants us to be more involved in missions, but the husband haven't heard God say anything to him?*** **Our response:** "You are one flesh. If God spoke to your spouse, He has just spoken to you!" Because you are one flesh, you need to adjust your life to a word God speaks to your partner.

- Pray together and trust the Holy Spirit to bring clarity and assurance about the direction of His calling. Then you can walk together with confidence.

***Do you think pre-marital counseling is beneficial?***

- I always strongly advise couples coming to me for premarital counseling to consider carefully where God is leading their potential partner. After they are married, God's directives to one will directly affect the other.

***Do you give up what God said to you before you were married?***

- Some people had a clear sense of God's leading in their lives in one direction, but after they married, they rejected everything God had previously said to them because their spouse was not interested in those things.

***How does hearing impact oneness?***

Being one with your spouse is critical to your ability to hear from God. That is why the apostle Paul warned believers not to marry unbelievers (**2 Cor. 6:14**). Paul said it is like trying to mix light and darkness. They cannot become one spiritually because they are opposite in their fundamental nature.

***How does couples Spiritual Intimacy impact their walk with God?***

The spiritual intimacy you have with your spouse will affect your walk with God. The apostle Peter said a husband who mistreats his wife will find that his prayers are hindered **(1 Pet. 3:7)**.

- That is also why it is wise never to allow your anger or a damaged relationship to remain unresolved **(Eph. 4:26)**.

**(2 CORINTHIANS 6:14)** “Do not be yoked together those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?”

**(1 PETER 3:7)** “Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

**(EPHESIANS 4:26)** “Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger.”

### **JOINING GOD’S ACTIVITY IN YOUR SPOUSE’S LIFE**

One of the most exciting things you can do is to look to see where God is working in your spouse’s life and join Him! You can do this in several ways:

**1. Regularly pray for and with your spouse.** God knows what your spouse is going through better than you do. He knows her fears and insecurities. God knows what He intends to do through your spouse’s life. Praying regularly for your spouse enables you to gain God’s perspective. Couples can easily frustrate each other. If you look at your spouse only from a human perspective, you will see his or her limitations, failures, and weaknesses. When you look at your spouse from God’s perspective, you will see his or her unlimited potential in the hands of God. As you pray, God can alert you that you need to take a specific action, such as offering a word of encouragement or giving a note or a gift. God may show you abilities in your spouse that she does not see in herself. As I prayed for Marilyn, God affirmed to me that she has wonderful insights into walking with God that can encourage others.

***How would you characterize your prayer relationship with your spouse up to this point in your marriage?*** Check one or write your own.

- ☐ a. We have learned to pray in agreement and unity—what a blessing!

☐ b. We have had our personal prayer times but have not prayed together regularly.

☐ c. My spouse hesitates or will not pray with me.

☐ d. I am hesitant to pray aloud with my spouse.

☐ e. Other:

**2. Regularly ask your spouse spiritual questions.** Some Christian couples never speak to each other about God's activity. They may assume God is working, but they never talk about it. Ask each other questions like "What has God been showing you in your quiet times? Has God placed a particular burden on your heart as you have prayed?"

- Your spouse is the best person to talk to God's about his activity in my life. As we relate what we have been hearing God say, the wife may recognize things missed. Together we hear far more from God than we do separately.

**3. Review your spiritual markers as a couple.** As God leads couples in their marriage, they will experience key moments when God clearly, unmistakably speaks. Identify these spiritual markers and periodically review them as a couple. This helps in two ways. First, it prepares you to understand where God is leading you. When I came to my official age of retirement, I, like everyone else my age, had to decide what to do. Should I join a country club and buy a set of golf clubs?

- As we review what God had done in our lives as a couple, we realized that all of our married life had prepared us for what God want to do through us next. We can respond to each new invitation God gives us because we have a clear sense as a couple of the way God has led us to this point in our lives. A second benefit of reviewing your spiritual markers as a couple is that it provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate God's activity in your lives.

***What are two things you and your spouse could do that would draw you closer to the Lord and to one another?***

**4. Minister together as a couple.** God led you to your spouse for a reason. He had a purpose in mind. One purpose is to produce godly offspring (**Mal. 2:15**). If couples look for God's activity together, they will discover there are ways God wants to work uniquely through them together to accomplish His kingdom purposes.

*What are some ways you and your spouse are presently joining God's activity together?*

**5. Give together.** Many Christian couples faithfully give their offerings to the Lord each month but have never discovered the joy of giving together. God is at work in the world around you. He wants you to become involved both personally and financially. We should be determining together where God wants us to invest the money, He has given us. We support not only our local church but also various ministries around the world. This involves far more than writing a check. It includes seeking together how God wants us to invest our finances in His kingdom. Together we are laying up treasures in heaven.

- God has called all of us to be on mission with Him. One of the first places we must seek His activity is in the life of the person we are most intimately related to. If God has given you a life partner, you will want to be involved in the great work God intends to do in his or her life.

## **SUMMARY STATEMENTS**

*Regularly pray for and with your spouse.*

*Regularly ask your spouse spiritual questions.*

*Review your spiritual markers as a couple.*

*Minister together as a couple.*

*Give together.*