

2 Tools That Can Make Your Marriage Rock Solid

Faithfulness in a marriage goes further than physical faithfulness.

In this article, I want to tell you about two forms of faithfulness that are key factors in the health of a marriage. These are spiritual faithfulness and emotional faithfulness.

Spiritual faithfulness is a critical form of faithfulness in a Christian marriage. Spiritual faithfulness means putting God first in absolute loyalty. This means that you as an individual will develop and maintain the spiritual muscle of faithfulness through prayer, study, fellowship and service. We express faithfulness to God individually by aspiring to know, love and serve Him alone more and more over our lifetime.

We as individuals are faithful to God. This is the first and probably most critical aspect of faithfulness. If we don't individually maintain a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we will weaken the very foundation of our marriage.

Spiritual Faithfulness

This also means that we agree to grow together toward Christ. We are committed to the principle of seeking God together.

I want to take a moment and expose you to a great idea that I noticed really helps couples who attend our Intimacy conferences we do around the country. Most of you have accepted God as Father—Jesus' teachings about God often paradigms God as a father. I don't think anyone who is a Christian would argue that God is our Father.

Yet I want to take this a step further. God is not just your

Father; He is also your Father-in-law because He is also the Father of your spouse. Hence, He is your all-knowing, omnipresent Father-in-law. He sees how you treat your spouse, and what you say about them to yourself and others.

Now I am sure in most cases when you got married, you maintained a relationship with your natural in-laws. For some this may include a few holidays a year, occasional phone calls, visits or vacations together.

Could you imagine, under normal circumstances, marrying your spouse and never seeing your in-laws again? That would seem odd at best and very rude at worst. Yet that is exactly what some Christians do with God. It's as if they say, "Thanks for the spouse." And yet they never bring their spouse back to their Father-in-law, God.

They don't pray together; they rarely discuss God's will or His Word. Oh, they don't mind going to church, but privately they never go visit the Father-in-law who not only gave them their Christian spouse, but also specially made that special person just for him or her.

So, I think part of spiritual faithfulness is being faithful to be spiritual together. This includes praying together, having times of worship together, getting in the Word, having spiritual conversations and seeking God's will for each other and their family. The love agreement of faithfulness is definitely one that includes spiritual faithfulness.

As a counselor, I know some of you have an unsaved or difficult spouse. For you, do your own spiritual faithfulness. I spoke at a "Winning at Marriage" conference in which we had couples pray together. The next day a man shared a testimony that his wife praying with him the day before was the first prayer they had together in 20 years. This was really a testimony of faithfulness to God, and God eventually breaking through.

Emotional Faithfulness

Emotional faithfulness is also an important part of marital faithfulness. Emotional faithfulness means that your spouse is the person with whom you really share your heart or emotional self. They are not second to your parents, friends, coworkers or even your children.

Emotional faithfulness means putting your spouse first (after God) in your relationships with absolute loyalty. They are the ones whom you let see the core of your being.

Now as a Christian counselor, I realize most of you have little to no training in emotions. If this is you, I strongly recommend the book *Intimacy: A 100 Day Guide to Lasting Relationships*. In this book, I outline a feelings exercise you can do to identify and communicate your feelings with each other. This skill takes about 90 days to achieve a good skill level in emotions.

Once you have this skill, it makes emotional faithfulness much easier. I can tell you I am so glad I can share my heart and feelings with Lisa on a daily basis. Because of this consistent behavior, she is the safest person on earth to me.

I encourage you to continually work on your spiritual and emotional faithfulness in your marriage. Take time to pray with your spouse, remember that God is your Father-in-law as well as your Father and keep your spouse in top priority in your earthly relationships.

Use these tools to strengthen the faithfulness of your marriage today. {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books, including *The 7 Love Agreements*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, ; on hisFacebook;

by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.