

4 Ways You Can Build Your Marriage During Social Distancing

This is such a unique time in which we are living. No one could have foreseen this global COVID-19 pandemic nor the ripple effect on economies and the daily life of people across the globe. The spread of the coronavirus and all of the related shutdowns have brought us to a stark dichotomy. While we are separating from the rest of the world through social distancing, we are spending constant time with our immediate families. In real time, many are experiencing the opposing truths of two well-known cultural proverbs: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," and "Familiarity breeds contempt."

But for the Christian marriage, for the marriage that seeks to bring God great honor and reflect Christ's relationship with the church, we have the opportunity to throw those cultural proverbs into a blender. Christian marriages can create a new proverb: "Familiarity makes the heart grow fonder."

As God ordained our marriages, He created one flesh out of two people. And, in times like this, we have the golden opportunity to live daily as one flesh in increased ways. This begs a very important question—what can we do to build into our marriages during this time of social distancing and isolation?

Here are four ways you can build your marriage during social distancing:

1. Create memories. A lack of time together often keeps us from making great memories. Work schedules, long commutes, soccer practice, dance lessons and social obligations often limit our time with our spouses. For many of us, this pandemic has drastically changed our schedules and has opened up an

unlimited amount of togetherness. Take advantage of that opportunity by packing a picnic lunch and throwing a blanket on your lawn. Make your own movie theater popcorn and watch a new movie. Share your favorite memes with each other and enjoy the gift of laughter. Take a virtual tour of a museum together.

2. Catch up on conversations. If your marriage is anything like mine, there are important topics that can get bumped down the to-do list. This is a perfect time to catch up. Create a list of all of the things you need to discuss, both important and mundane, heavy and light, as well as personal and family-related business. Then pick a time of the day or a day of the week and gradually work through the list. If you don't complete a conversation, that's OK. You have tomorrow or next week to continue. You'll be amazed at the growth God creates in your marriage when you discuss the things you've put off for weeks, months or years. As both husband and wife earnestly desire to please God in these conversations, you'll find more than sufficient grace from above to be make these times constructive.

For this idea in particular, you'll find helpful tips in my book, *With These Words: Five Communication Tools for Marriage and Life*. It will provide help and guidance as you catch up on conversations.

3. Learn together. Find some common areas of interest and learn something new. Read a book together on the topic, watch a related YouTube video or listen to a podcast. Also consider areas of your walk with Christ where you can learn together. Maybe you've heard your pastor share a number of quotes from an author you found helpful. This is a great time to get one of his or her books and read it. Perhaps you want to grow as a couple in a specific spiritual discipline, or joy, contentment or evangelism. Get recommendations for a resource from your pastor or a trusted friend and get busy learning side by side.

4. Develop routine. Most of us are finding our daily routines entirely disrupted. Employees are working from home. Homemakers now have a spouse in the house all of the time. The kids are not going out of the home for school, and they're always underfoot. This can all result in a lack of order that can quickly generate anxiety and conflict. To combat this tendency, create a routine. Create a daily or weekly schedule for your new reality. Set aside specific time for your kids and specific time for your spouse. Keep a normal wake time and normal bedtime. Each of these practical rhythms can serve to establish a sense of normalcy and healthy relational habits.

Think Creatively

Some of these ideas will be more useful to you than others, depending on your individual situation. Use these suggestions to spur on your own creative thinking. We know God desires for us to cherish our spouse in all seasons and to grow together in Christlikeness. Hidden within this global pandemic are boundless occasions to do just that. Don't miss them. Seize the opportunities of this unique season and come out of this crisis stronger and healthier as a married couple. {eo}



Rob Flood serves as a community and care pastor at Covenant Fellowship Church in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. Here his responsibilities include marriage ministry and counseling. The Floods have six children who provide an array of excitement to the home by bringing their varied giftings and personalities. Together, Rob and Gina enjoy caring for marriages of all ages, opening the Word of God, and spending time with family and friends. With These Words: Five Communication Tools for Marriage and Life is his first book.

Follow Rob Flood's blog at He can also be found on Facebook at (@RobFloodAuthor), Twitter (@RobFloodAuthor) and Instagram (@RobFloodAuthor).