

Fulfilling Your Divine Calling in Your Marriage

Servant Marriage is a response to the calling we all already received the moment we said, “I do.” All the courting, dating, emotional intimacy, quality time and resources culminated into the primary lifelong relationship we call marriage.

For some, years or decades may have passed since they received their calling to be married to the one with whom they would be given the privilege of serving alongside on their journey called life. However, in current culture, many couples are getting a quite different result from the happily ever after we have all heard about. Some feel alone or merely tolerated in marriage. Others feel unappreciated or exploited. Still others feel stuck or trapped “until death do us part.” Marriage challenges Christians, and some do not make it—their marriages end in divorce.

How is it that so many start the race of marriage, but growing numbers of them do not cross the finish line of “until death do us part”? As a Christian counselor working with couples in distress for more than a quarter of a century now, I think I have learned quite a bit as I watched brave couples address their wounds, bad ideas, unproductive practices and attitudes, and move toward picking up new ideas to change their marriages for the better.

One of these new ideas is learning that they are servants in their marriage and are responsible for how they believe and behave, and that they will stand before the Lord and give an account of how well they served their spouse—not how well they got served.

When you hear a young man or woman say, “I’m called,” what

images come to your mind? Probably several. You might think of the person who goes down to the altar of your church and feels at a very deep level that they are “called” to be a missionary, preacher, or teacher.

When they “receive the call,” everything changes. The way they look at themselves is totally different than moments before receiving the call. They suddenly have a purpose for their lives and a sense of knowing why their Creator has made them. They also seem to have a passion for their newfound calling. I do not mean just an emotional temporary high, but a strong multi-decade passion for their area of ministry.

This calling is much more than their present 9 to 5 job. It is an expression of who they are, almost at a DNA level. This person becomes their calling. We all know someone who is so passionate about something that it really becomes who they are. Their passion is what we think about when we characterize the person in our minds.

Just as we have a calling to a vocation and/or ministry, many of us have a calling to marriage. If marriage is part of your calling, it is important to understand it if you intend to grow in it. Without understanding the call to be married, you will look at marriage mostly through secular lenses and focus your evaluation of the marriage on how happy you are, and not on how well you are serving your spouse.

Here is just a little bit more about calling. When you answer your cell phone, it has a cool feature on it that tells you who is calling (if you have them in your contacts list). It is important to know who is calling you. When anyone is called to a vocation, ministry, or marriage (and so on) who does the calling? God.

God, the Almighty, the awesome, all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful Creator is the one who calls you into salvation, ministry, vocation, and yes—He alone has called you into

marriage. He alone is the one to whom you will answer for the quality of service toward your spouse. He alone will move you into various stages of preparation and progress as you pass through the various adventures of marriage.

It is God who has called me to serve Lisa. She alone is my first ministry—above my children (as wonderful as they are), any public ministry or vocation or responsibility, my house responsibilities, workouts, hobbies or adventures. The only calling above ministry to Lisa is my ministry to love and serve my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Accepting my role as a servant (and the ongoing revelations of what that means) has so far been a 29-year journey of growth, repentance and expansion of my servant heart toward Lisa. I started off young, immature, selfish, impatient and unkind—like many married people do. Today, I accept my role as a servant. I am called to serve, period. {eoa}

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