

How God Is Working in Your Miracle Marriage

Let's hold hands and walk through this process of the miracle of marriage. I do this so you can see the journey of God walking with you in your miracle process.

Your miracle of marriage started way before your wedding day. Just as a sonogram shows, the miracle of life, a child, occurs way before birth. It's that moment or series of moments when you are realizing that this is a special person to you. It seems undeniable. You ache for them. When you are with them, there is a love and respect for each other. You work through some issues that bond you further together, and you know they are the one for you. Your miracle was conceived here, surrounded by warmth and love, respect, quality communication, quality time and positive reinforcement from your peers and/or family over time.

Then there's a pulsing as your miracle of marriage moves more toward its third trimester. You get engaged, and now the third trimester is in full swing. The stresses of the upcoming marriage expose some ideas or relationships that raise questions. Your future marriage is having to solve problems and is not just entertaining one another. Family loyalties are challenged, and painting a picture of your wedding and honeymoon together exposes your early negotiation conflict abilities, different roles or the absence of any of these structures in your life. Your maturity or immaturity is also challenged in this third and final trimester of a developing marriage.

The day comes when you arise early for the big day, dressing in outfits that are totally amazing. You look and feel better than any other day in your life. She walks down the aisle like an angel, you say the vows, till death do you part, kiss each

other and it's official—your miracle of marriage is birthed.

Now your miracle of marriage is officially an infant. In this stage, as with a baby, you both need to focus on the immediate needs of survival. You have immediate needs for food, shelter, cars and jobs. In this stage, you're learning new things about your spouse at a rapid rate, including their eating, sleeping and relationship habits. You're navigating sexual appetites and boundaries as a newborn marriage as well. You are also filtering through both spouse's friends, determining who is good for the marriage. You may still have some of your previous habits such as dating, quality time, talks, infatuation and gratitude for your spouse.

The marriage continues to grow year after year. You may buy a new car, a house, start to invest money, establish a church family and hopefully tithe. Your marriage in this toddler stage is stabilized financially, relationally, vocationally and spiritually as it starts to take roots. In this stage of marriage, you have established the bigger boundaries and try to be reasonable in your marriage as you both are maturing, barring any serious addictions or personality disorders.

For many couples, it's at this point when they feel stable, are in love with each other and want to start having children. She gets pregnant and now the marriage is in the elementary years of its life. Pregnancy demands that both spouses mature even more. She has more needs now along with doctor's appointments, and he gets concerned about her, as well as how to provide for his future family.

This elementary stage is critical before your marriage goes to the next stage. In this stage, your values can change significantly. You start a whole new series of negotiating family-type issues, along with new conflicts and clarifications which occur as you both, as a couple with God, become one flesh for this child.

The child is born, and you're officially parents. There's not enough preparation for this junior high stage of your marriage. You figure out some of the earlier roles, how to live without as much sleep, spending more money or time and as the child matures, both of you become more selfless. You grow a lot in the junior high stage of marriage, especially as you have multiple children.

Now your marriage's high school stage begins as children continue to grow through their toddler, preschool, elementary and junior high school years. Their growth through these stages continues to clarify your values as a couple. Hopefully, during this stage of your marriage, you're still dating each other, are attending a local church and have some friendships as you create an environment for your children to prosper.

Then your marriage goes to college as your children go through high school. Adolescents require a significantly different set of tactics for the marriage to do well. Your children now have abstract reasoning and sexuality to manage at the same time. Giving your adolescent child wings and teaching them how to make decisions is different than having them obey you. Your marriage will have further value clarifications and conflicts as the three of you: God, husband and wife become one in order to begin to launch these children into their own faith, their giftedness and preparing them for the following stages of independence from you.

As they leave, one by one, you realize, "We did it!" They have moved out of your house and are starting a life, career and relationships independent of you. You, as empty nesters, are now in the young adult stage of your marriage.

This is a very critical point of a marriage. If you have abandoned each other during the parenting years, a new commitment to the spouse will be necessary as you deal with this stage of marriage. Often in this stage of marriage, your

level of financial preparation and marital preparation will start paying off in freedom, or your lack of preparedness for the future will be an issue to address.

In this stage, you can have more time together, re-explore and re-clarify goals for your marriage, recapture romance, have a healthy dating and sex life and breathe a little. Your marriage often stabilizes for a period of time in this young adult stage of marriage. In this stage, your children often get married as well and start their journey of life.

A new person may be added to your marriage here. This time the baby you're holding in the delivery room isn't yours, it's your children's child; your grandbaby. They tell me all grandbabies are perfect, and it's at this time your marriage moves into its midlife stage.

You hopefully still have good health; one or both of you may be toward the end of a career or are starting retirement. You're aware of your financial needs and adjust accordingly. You have friends and hopefully some hobbies or ministry you're involved with. This season also has you clarify values and is often a stable season of a marriage in many respects.

Here your marriage begins to enter its final stage, that of a senior marriage. This stage will have its challenges with possibly health, finance and family issues. However, if a couple remains intimate and prayerful, they can drink from the sweetness of both becoming more Christlike through all the stages of marriage. If you didn't let this miracle of marriage allow you to become Christlike, this stage of marriage will truly be a challenge.

Eventually, death temporarily takes one of you. My hope is that I get to be married to Lisa in that thousand-year reign with Christ on the earth and live close by her in heaven since she is my best friend in the world.

I hope you enjoyed this panoramic view of your miracle. I

realize everyone doesn't have these exact steps and that tragedies can alter your life. However, I do think overall, it's largely helpful to see the movie of your marriage rather than just a photograph. Some photographs in a marriage can be of not the best moments, but the overall movie can be tremendous. This miracle of your marriage is progressive, and the miracle of God walking through each stage is truly the sweetest part of your marriage journey.

The theme of this movie is God walking with you and your spouse on a unique journey to reveal Himself and to make you one. Your unique movie is amazing with an amazing God who makes each scene its absolute best for others to behold His story through you.

Your marriage is a testimony so that the lost and the saved can say, "I see God here and here..." "Look how they climbed out of that or avoided this." Your marriage is a progressive story, and you both play a significant part in giving God glory as you progress through this miracle called marriage.
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