

How to Pray 'On Target' With Your Spouse

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet who complained a lot to God. He thought God needed to show up and handle all the foolishness and sin that was evident among His people. So God shocked Habakkuk by announcing that He was preparing the Babylonians to bring a judgment upon His people.

In Habakkuk 2:3, God explained, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (NIV).

Did you catch that line: "For the revelation awaits an appointed time"?

Some months before my wife, Vicki, confronted me about my failure to consistently lead us in prayer for one of our children who was struggling, this verse had impressed that concept upon me. It is about God's sovereignty. God reveals in His timing.

When the light goes on in our lives, usually it is not because we learn new information. Often we already have the information, and what we need is the revelation. In the mystery of God, it is also about His "appointed time."

This is a mystery to me. Sometimes I think God's timing is pretty bad, don't you? But we are not God. Certainly only God always understands the reason for His timing. Sometimes we have a glimpse of understanding, but frequently we are in the dark. It is an evident call for us to trust Him.

That afternoon with Vicki, I had the revelation! As all of this came tumbling out of my wife's heart—I literally lifted up my hands, as if being arrested, and said, "Guilty ... Guilty

as charged!" The conviction of God fell heavy upon me. The alarm was ringing with more force and volume than ever before, and I couldn't hit the snooze button any longer. I was really broken. I felt terrible. I confessed to Vicki, "It hardly seems sufficient to cover the scope of what we are talking about here, but I want to tell you I am sorry. With all my heart, I am so sorry!"

It is a wonderful thing to realize the attendant grace of God. As the revelation of conviction and repentance fell upon me, simultaneously a firm resolve gripped my heart. I said, "You know what Vicki? By the grace of God, this is not going to happen again. I promise. It is not going to happen again!" I sensed my words were at the level of the vows I had given her at the wedding altar.

I continued, "The best we can, within the reasonable limitations and realities of life, we are going to pray together. I know life is very busy, unpredictable, a moving target, but daily prayer together will be the goal. And I am going to take the lead in initiating. I vow to be intentional."

Suddenly, I even knew how we were going to make this work.

I told Vicki, "Here is how we are going to do it. We are going to pray the Bible! We will let the Bible literally be the guide for our prayers. The Bible will be our template. We are going to intentionally follow God's Word in our prayers—Scripture praying.

"We will read a paragraph of the Bible together—see how the Holy Spirit might speak to our hearts—and then we will let the text of the Bible be the guide for what we will pray back to God.

"We will run on the tracks of the Scriptures to give us the ideas and content for our prayers. Then we will pray about a few of the other things that are immediately at hand in our

lives, family and ministry – and that is it. We will keep it short and then we will be on our way.”

Since it is one my favorite books of the Bible, I suggested we start with the book of Hebrews. And you know what? It was just awesome!

Think about it! What could be better than praying the Word of God itself? The will of God, the truths, principles, prayers, praises, values, and doctrines of God.

Perhaps you have heard of “expository preaching.” An expository preacher preaches through the Bible, verse-by-verse, paragraph-by-paragraph. He allows God’s Word to bring forth the message for God’s people. The Bible becomes the guide to provide the content, ideas, concepts, and exhortations of his preaching and teaching. This approach allows the message to emerge from the Word of God.

So let’s call our approach “Expository Praying.” We can follow the Bible with our prayers. God’s Word will be the guide to show us the topics, ideas, praises, and requests. In doing so, we allow God to show us what to pray about. We “call out” God’s Word in our prayers. The Bible gives us the tracks to follow, and in this way, we can be sure our prayers are on track.

I am either not creative enough or spiritual enough to pray with the same person on a daily or very regular basis and sweep the heavens with all kinds of “thees,” “thous,” spiritual insights, and wonderful intercessions. Praying every time about basically the same things in the same way, I would be boring and/or bored in short order.

But by following the Word of God and by letting the Bible literally be the text of our prayers, then the Bible will take care of keeping our prayers fresh. It will enable us to be as creative and comprehensive as the Bible itself! We will be praying “on target”—the Word and will of God over our lives,

family and ministry—in an ever fresh and empowered manner.

*This second in a series of three articles is adapted from “Just Say the Word: A Simple Way to Increase Your Passion for God and Your Wife” by **Sam Ingrassia**. [Click here for part one.](#) For more information about creating spiritual intimacy by praying with your wife, please visit .*