

Identifying Your Marriage's God-Ordained Mission

Why did you get married? Are those reasons still applicable today? Do you and your spouse agree on the *why* of your marriage? Might God have a purpose for your marriage? Do you know what your mission in marriage is?

You might have gotten married for any number of reasons. Perhaps it was kind of expected, and getting married just happened. Perhaps you were in too deep already in terms of sex or pregnancy, and felt you “had” to get married. Or perhaps it was a calculated decision based more on convenience, status, money or other reasons.

All of those reasons have mostly to do with the past. They may or may not have been wise reasons to get married at the time. But few couples take the time to consider the future, to craft a vision for their marriage, to seek to understand what God's purpose for their marriage may be.

Like all of life here on earth, marriage is not for the purpose of happiness, needs getting met or sex. In a healthy marriage, many of those desires are satisfied in part, but those things are not big enough to qualify as your mission in marriage. More importantly, God designed marriage as a laboratory where we learn to love well.

How well is your marriage fulfilling that purpose?

And on a more personal level, have you taken time to consider what *your* mission in marriage is individually?

The Purpose for Your Marriage

If you aim at nothing, you'll get there every time.

That's a principle in almost any area of life. The only way

you will become physically fit, save money for the future or grow a meaningful career is if you aim at that big goal. Jesus held out a big goal for His followers: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19a). Talk about mission impossible!

Embracing such a mission is only part of the equation. It’s the same in your marriage. Where are you steering this boat? So many marriages disintegrate into a miserable detente, or worse. That doesn’t have to happen to you.

I heard one husband describe how he invited his wife into a restorative marriage. He painted a picture of what they would strive to create together—a marriage where they would build each other up and provide a place of safety and nurture, and where they would provide that kind of space to others who they would invite into their home. They host scores of guests in their home each year, because they purposed to build that kind of marriage.

I talked with another couple recently who both grew up in very unhealthy families. They are now intentionally building a marriage together that will leave a very different legacy, one in which their individual family curses stop with them, and through which their children-to-come will experience safety, fidelity and faith.

Such marriages don’t happen by default. They happen on purpose.

Defining Your Marriage Mission

Within the framework of learning to love well, there are many possible healthy godly focuses for a marriage. This is not some mystical ginormous future “thing”; it’s simply heading somewhere on purpose. It’s as much choosing your mission in marriage as finding it.

When Al and I married, we came to understand a great deal

about God's *why* in bringing us together. There were broken places in each of us that our marriage helped to heal. There were things each of us learned. Our marriage provided the foundation for the beginning of this ministry. I now see myself as carrying on that mission in many ways.

So for you, in defining your mission in marriage, let me suggest these steps.

1. Seek God's Perspective

It always starts there, of course. Why did He bring you together? Where is His miracle-working power being demonstrated in your marriage right now? Are there ways in which your marriage is impacting God's kingdom in a positive way? Those are clues to God's specific mission for your marriage.

How does God see your marriage and its future? That might include things like:

- Becoming a demonstration of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Building children who will make a difference for God's kingdom.
- Sharing God's love with people in desperate need.

Your understanding of God's purpose for your marriage will morph and change; that's OK. Seek whatever degree of understanding God gives you for this season.

2. Get Specific

Imagine your marriage a year from now, 10 years from now, 50 years from now. What does it look like? More importantly, what do you want it to look like? And what is different in the world and in God's kingdom because of your marriage?

Consider making notes, writing things down, creating as vivid a picture of that as you can. Again, it won't be perfect. It

will change. This is defining what you are aiming toward.

3. Communicate About It

Some people recommend a yearly marriage retreat where you and your spouse review the different areas of your marriage and work to come together on the big picture. That's a brilliant idea. You can think of it like a corporate yearly offsite for your marriage. Where are we now? Where are we headed? What have we learned? What actions do we need to implement or adjust to accomplish our mission?

This is *not* about one spouse telling the other spouse what will happen. It's a time of intentionally listening to each other, prayerfully seeking God's input and steering the boat in the same direction.

I encourage you to try such a retreat with your spouse for a day or so. You'll be glad you did.

Your Turn: *Do you have a mission, a vision for your marriage? What does that look like? Leave a comment below.* {eo}

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