

# Is Your Marriage Paradigm Biblical?

Marriage paradigms you may have collected and created throughout your life are often at the core of how you operate in a marriage. These paradigms or ideas may be very biblical or very unbiblical. These paradigms may be very healthy or unhealthy, self-serving or giving. Whatever the paradigm, the paradigm has power. In Proverbs 23:7, it says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

I can tell you as a Christian psychologist that this Scripture is so true. The paradigm you collected and created will be how you behave in your marriage. These paradigms create the framework or worldview you have of marriage, your role in marriage, and your expectations of your spouse in marriage. Your paradigm affects how you wake up and greet your spouse (in tolerance or celebration). Your paradigm determines who gets the other a cup of coffee, cooks meals, cleans up, creates wealth, pays bills, initiates sex and creates romance and so on. You can see how powerful paradigms can be in the way you believe and behave in your life.

However, rarely has anyone sat you and your spouse down and said, "Let's go through your paradigm about your marriage." It's my experience that the paradigms are the roots that create the fruits in your marriage. For better or worse, you'll cling to a known paradigm regardless if it's healthy or unhealthy if that paradigm isn't exposed and thought through differently.

In my thirty years of experience, I've learned that if a person's paradigm of marriage is more functional than relational, this in and of itself can create havoc in 10 to 20 years of marriage. The lover-spouse paradigm is a relational paradigm that keeps both of you continuing to aim at staying a

lover.

In a strong marriage one, two or three paradigms can exist that you need to expose, challenge or even change to accommodate your marriage. Your marriage has bonded two beings from different paradigms, some of which might not be the best for your marriage.

Our paradigms come from what we have seen or heard over the course of our life up to our wedding day. I think that is why Proverbs 4:23 tells us that above all else to “keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”

When someone creates a paradigm and questions it, that’s one thing. However, when someone creates a paradigm and believes it with their heart, that becomes a whole other matter. As I said earlier, Proverbs 23: 7 states, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

The heart is where we believe. The Bible says, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). The heart is actually the most powerful thing we possess. When we believe something in our hearts, then our minds, wills and emotions fully support this belief.

For example, if for whatever reason someone really believes they’re worthless, they’ll behave in worthless ways regardless of God’s love, or their parent’s and spouse’s love. If someone believes they’re worthy of love, they won’t accept disrespect or behavior toward them in a less than worthy way. More than anything, what we truly believe in our heart influences our behavior.

Our beliefs are the fuel for every paradigm we currently believe in all areas of our lives. When we believe our paradigm, it grows and grows whether it’s true or not. However, when we stop believing a paradigm, it dies, often instantly. I remember clearly as if it was yesterday when Lisa

rolled over in bed years after we were married and said, “I really love you.”

I can't explain it, but at that moment I really “believed” her. Once I believed her, all the previous paradigms instantly vanished. I can't tell you how many thousands of times I've seen that when someone believes a new paradigm, all the old ideas almost instantly disappear.

It's like when we really believe we are forgiven of all sin (past, present and future) by Christ and we fully let that in our hearts, we are changed. The past is gone, grace is real, and we become different.

I've counseled beautiful, smart women who believed they were unattractive and unlovable. I've also counseled men who were millionaires and billionaires and believed they're unlovable and worthless. Facts are not necessarily when someone believes something in their heart.

Remember from history there was a time around the Christopher Columbus era that everyone thought the world was flat. They not only thought it, they believed it with their heart (paradigm). The church and political leaders of that day would persecute those who thought the world was round. Today we think this is ridiculous.

However, as a Christian psychologist, I can tell you that many a husband and wife fully think and believe in their paradigm of marriage or the role of the husband or wife with all their heart—regardless of facts or futility. {eoa}

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