

The Health of Your Marriage Could Hinge on This Act

Part of a healthy marriage is setting aside time for each other. Just the two of you: no kids, no parents, no friends, no co-workers, no Maytag repairman.

Next comes the real work: guarding the time and making it happen.

Let's say you and your wife have a weekend getaway planned; you're starving for time together. And then it happens—a last-minute crisis assignment at work. Together you must decide what to do. Seeking the Lord's guidance is critical.

One option? Tell your boss he'll have to wait. Some might say such a response is a strong stand for your marriage. Others might see it as adding stress to your marriage because, when you return from your weekend of bliss, you may be looking for new job!

What's a time-starved couple to do? The Bible advocates discernment in all situations. If you seek the Lord and ask Him for wisdom to prioritize your time together—and for the strength to maintain that priority—decisions become much clearer for you as a couple (Matt. 7:7; James 1:5). Granted, inescapable circumstances will detour the best of intentions. Selma and I tried for six years to make a romantic trip to San Antonio. Illness, family emergencies and 9/11 derailed early attempts, but we finally made it there!

But don't leave your time together to chance. Several years ago I began putting dates and getaways with Selma on my calendar. When I receive an invitation to a ball game, a golf outing, or another event, I check my schedule. If Selma's name already occupies the time slot, I simply respond, "I have a commitment." The response I give speaks clearly about my

commitment to Selma and to our marriage:

1. Dating my wife is important to me.
2. Most often my time with Selma is a higher priority to me than the other option.
3. My example can serve as a model to my friends about the value of investing time in your marriage.

The next time life offers you an alternative to the time you've planned with your spouse, pray for discernment. Work diligently to determine if the opportunity can fit in a different time slot. If not, make sure your mate knows and agrees with that determination, and then immediately reschedule the couple time on your calendar. Each time our San Antonio plans were derailed, we immediately set a new date. We learned a quick reset of plans keeps your spirits up.

Actions do speak louder than words. Show your mate how much you value your relationship. Make your marriage a priority, schedule couple time often and show the world that your relationship is a commitment worth keeping.

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