

The Two Powerful Perspectives That Will Radically Transform Your Marriage

Your perspective matters. Things may look completely different at 35,000 feet from how they look out a car window at 60 miles/hour or even from the highest rooftop in the city. If your marriage could use some help, there are two perspectives that will transform your marriage—your spouse’s perspective and God’s perspective.

When we’re uncomfortable it’s easy to focus only on ourselves. A badly stubbed toe or a persistent toothache can prevent you from noticing almost anything else in the world. Feeling tired or afraid can obscure your view of someone else’s heartache or joy. It may take conscious effort to push pause on the miserable playlist in your own head and pay attention to the perspectives that are more helpful.

The maxim was championed by Stephen Covey, perhaps best known for his persistently best-selling book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*;

Seek to Understand before Seeking to be Understood

How do you do that? By choosing to pay attention to other perspectives.

And the two perspectives that will transform your marriage are your spouse’s perspective and God’s perspective.

Your Spouse’s Point of View

When I talk with a husband or wife complaining about marriage issues, I often ask, “What do you think your spouse would say if I were to ask them about your marriage?” If you haven’t considered that question carefully, the answer can often be

priceless. Except in cases of abuse, addiction or abandonment, marriage issues are not usually about who's right or wrong; they're about working toward an increasingly satisfying solution for both partners.

Even if your spouse *should* pay more attention to you, spend money more carefully, listen more attentively, be more interested in intimacy, help more around the house or consider your needs more, trying to get that *more* by controlling or demanding or manipulating them never works. Your only hope of improving your relationship is to studiously consider your spouse's perspective.

A couple examples:

- Is your spouse not communicating? Perhaps when they have communicated in the past you've responded with anger or irritation or dismissed what they have to say. Perhaps you've expected your spouse to express things as you would instead of welcoming how they *do* communicate. Perhaps their personality demands they think things through before talking about them.
- Is your spouse withdrawing from intimacy? Perhaps they are experiencing medical issues. Perhaps they are struggling with really big sins. Perhaps you have tried to make intimacy about you instead of mutual connection and enjoyment. Perhaps they are struggling with heavy baggage from the past.

Understanding your spouse's perspective doesn't make them right and you wrong, or vice versa. It does mean, however, that you can address the real issue instead of getting emotional or giving up.

If you don't know your spouse's point of view, ask them. Be curious. Explore. Talk about it—not to be right, but to understand more.

God's Point of View

God's perspective will be the most valuable of all. It's easy to pray "God, fix my spouse" instead of investing the time and energy to seek His point of view on the whole situation.

Wherever your marriage is troubled, get alone with God and seriously seek His perspective. Get quiet long enough to hear His voice. You need Him to speak to you about such things as:

- Is your spouse basically a person of good will with some irritating or hurtful habits? Or are they acting out of an evil heart?
- What wounds and baggage has your spouse brought into marriage that are impacting how they are responding now?
- What about your own heart, attitude or behavior has contributed to the troubles in your marriage? How does God want to change *you*?
- Who is God calling you to be to your spouse in this season of your marriage?

That last question is the most important. It may be God needs you to give Him space to work in your spouse's heart and life. It may be He needs you to set some hard and firm boundaries in your marriage. It may be He needs to do some serious work in your own heart and life. It may be He needs you to simply stay the course and rely on Him for courage and grace to remain. It may be He needs you to invest serious effort in learning skills to love your spouse well and influence your spouse in the same direction.

Seek God's perspective on everything: your own heart, your spouse's heart, your marriage and what you are to do about it. Articles, books, podcasts, conferences and so forth are only helpful to the degree they help you see more of God's point of view. Stay focused on His perspective.

Coming to understand both your spouse's point of view and God's point of view will transform your

marriage.

Your Turn: Do you know how your spouse sees your marriage? How much of God's perspective on your marriage do you understand? How are you going to go about seeking to understand these two perspectives? Leave a comment below. {eo}

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